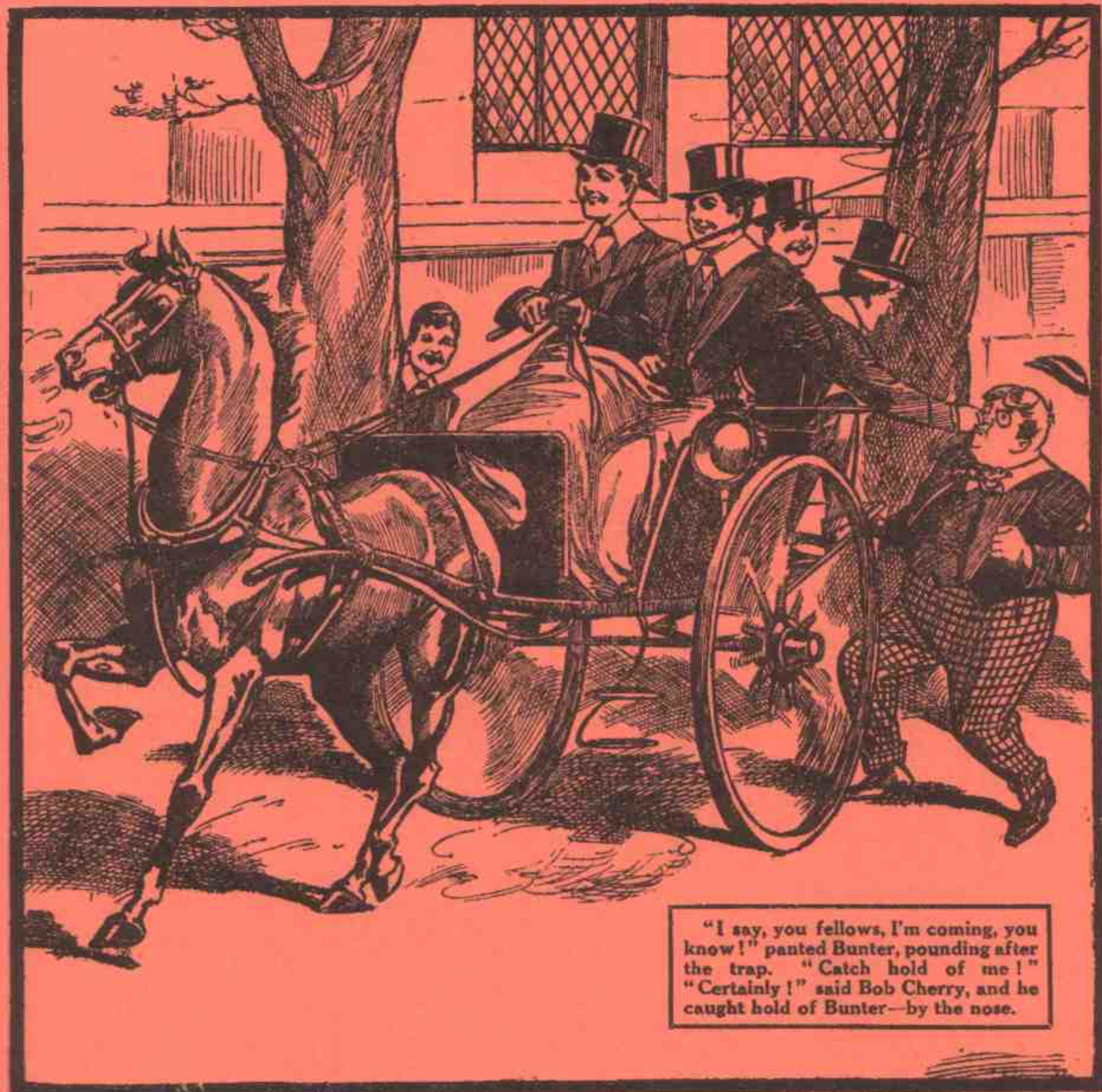


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"I say, you fellows, I'm coming, you know!" panted Bunter, pounding after the trap. "Catch hold of me!" "Certainly!" said Bob Cherry, and he caught hold of Bunter—by the nose.

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THE FIRST CHAPTER. Meeting Mauly's Uncle!

"MY lord, the carriage waits!"
Bob Cherry made that remark humorously as he looked into Lord Mauleverer's study in the Remove passage.

Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, was extended upon a luxurious sofa, with his hands behind his head, and his knees drawn up. He was apparently contemplating the study ceiling with great attention. He turned his head slightly, and gave Bob a gentle nod.

"My lord—"

"Yaas," said Lord Mauleverer.

"The carriage waits!"

"All serene; let it wait," yawned Lord Mauleverer.

Harry Wharton's voice came along the passage.

"Tell that silly ass to buck up."

Bob Cherry grinned, and picked up a cricket-stump, and came towards the schoolboy earl with a business-like look. The noble slacker eyed him somewhat apprehensively.

"My dear fellow—" he began.

"My lord, the carriage waits," said Bob. "In other

words, you silly chump, the trap has come round, and we're waiting for you."

"Yaas."

"Well, are you coming?"

"Yaas."

"Well, gerrup, then," roared Bob.

"Tired."

"Ah! You want bucking up," said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "You must be simply fagged out by lying on that sofa. There's nothing like the end of a cricket-stump in the ribs to buck a fellow up. Try it! You see—"

"Ow!" gasped his lordship, bucking up very suddenly, and rolling off the sofa. "Yah! Don't be a rough beast. I'm coming."

"I'll help you along," said Bob, jabbing at the elegant form of the schoolboy earl with the stump. "That's right, out you go, get a move on, run for it—"

"Yaroo!"

Lord Mauleverer dodged out of the study, and ran for his life. Bob Cherry followed him with a chuckle. His lordship was a born slacker, and often seemed too tired to live; but Bob Cherry had energy enough for two, and he was always willing to place his energy at the service of his noble friend.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and a glorious summer's afternoon. The cricket ground was crowded, and there were three matches going on at once. But Harry Wharton & Co., of the Lower Fourth, were not thinking of cricket, for once, on that particular afternoon.

Outside the schoolhouse was a trap, and in the trap were Nugent, and Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Wharton was standing by the horse, which showed some signs of restiveness, as Bob Cherry came out with the schoolboy earl.

"Buck up!" said Wharton. "We don't want to be late."
"Yaas," said Mauleverer, with a sigh. "It's jolly warm, ain't it. I say, there's only room for four in that trap."

"We're going to make room for six," said Bob Cherry. "We've got a specially good gee-gee. Up you get."

Lord Mauleverer paused with his foot on the step, and an expression of deep consideration on his face. The juniors watched him with grinning faces. Lord Mauleverer would sometimes expend half an hour in finding a reason why he should not exert himself for five minutes.

"I say, begad, you know," said Lord Mauleverer. "Upon the whole, perhaps you fellows had better go and meet my uncle, and I—h'm—I'll stay here, you know, and welcome you when you get in, you know."

"Up you get!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yaas, but—oh!"

Bob Cherry hoisted the noble earl into the trap, and he fell with a bump among the feet of the fellows there.

"Stay there," said Nugent, putting his feet on his lordship's back. "There isn't much room to sit up, and I want a foot-rest."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you know—oh! D-d-don't!" Lord Mauleverer struggled to his feet, in a somewhat dusty state, and sat down wearily. "All serene; I'll come."

Bob Cherry jumped in after him, and Harry Wharton mounted and took the reins. A fat junior came hurrying out of the Schoolhouse, blinking excitedly through a very large pair of spectacles, as the trap began to move.

"I say, you fellows, hold on—I'm coming."

"Begad, there won't be room for Bunter," said Lord Mauleverer, who was tightly squeezed between Nugent and Bob Cherry—more tightly, perhaps, than there was occasion for. "I say, I'll get out and let Bunter have my place, if you like."

"Drive on!" said Bob.

The trap rattled away towards the gates. Billy Bunter rushed after it, and caught hold behind, his little, fat legs going like clockwork to keep pace with the trap.

"I say, you fellows, I'm coming, you know. Stop that blessed trap till I get in. You might lend me a hand, Bob Cherry, you beast—I mean, help me in, old fellow. Catch hold of me."

"Certainly," said Bob; and he caught hold of Bunter—by the nose, between his finger and thumb.

"Groogh!"

"That all right?" asked Bob.

"Gerroogh!" spluttered Bunter. "Led go by dose, you beast! Ib you don't led go by dose, I'll bunch your silly head. Led go!"

Bunter hung on to the trap desperately as it rattled down the drive. Bob Cherry held on to his little fat nose, and Bunter glared at him through his spectacles, with fury in his looks. There was a yell of laughter from the fellows in the Close.

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Led go by dose!" stuttered Bunter. "Loog here, I'm gumming! I know you vellows are going to have a veed, and I'm gumming. Led go by dose!"

"Let go the trap, then," said Bob grinning. "We're not going to have a feed, you fat duffer. We're going to meet Mauly's uncle."

"You've got ginger-beer there," said Bunter. "I saw

id. Led go by dose, you rodder!" The pressure upon his nose impeded Bunter's utterance to some extent. "Led go! You're nod going to leabe me oud of a feed, you rodder! Groogh!"

"Give him some of the ginger-beer," said Bob. Nugent picked up a bottle from under the seat and opened it.

Pop!

The bottle was turned upon Bunter's crimson face. A stream of foaming ginger-beer swamped upon his flushed countenance, and he let go the trap with a spluttering roar. Bob Cherry let go his nose at the same moment, and the fat junior sat down upon the gravel.

The trap rattled on.

"Groogh!" gasped Bunter. "Beasts! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter struggled to his feet, and shook a fat fist after the trap as it turned out of the gateway and disappeared.

The chums of the Remove laughed gleefully as they rattled down the long, white road to Friardale. They were in great spirits. A drive in the leafy lanes on a sunny afternoon was always enjoyable, and they enjoyed it. Lord Mauleverer's uncle, Sir Reginald Brooke, was coming down to the school in his car, to visit his noble nephew; and it was Harry Wharton's idea to meet him on the road, and escort him to Greyfriars in triumph. The juniors had received many kindnesses from Mauleverer's uncle, hence their desire to show him honour. Johnny Bull had brought a mouth-organ with him, to distinguish the occasion with musical honours, and as soon as they were outside the school-gates he produced his instrument of torture and blew upon it to get his hand in, as it were, ready for the meeting.

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Mercy!" said Nugent.

"Chuck it!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "If you want to play that thing, Johnny, you ought to learn to play a tune on it."

Johnny Bull paused in his musical efforts for a moment, to bestow a withering glare upon Bob.

"You silly ass," he said, in measured tones. "I am playing a tune."

"Oh! My mistake! What tune is it?" asked Bob innocently. "Something by Wagner or Richard Strauss, I suppose—or a little of both?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"When we meet Sir Reginald's car, I'm going to play 'A Fine Old English Gentleman!'" said Bull.

"Good wheeze. Why not practise it now?"

"That's what I'm doing, you fathead," yelled Bull.

"Oh!"

Johnny Bull, with a glare of scorn, recommenced. Nugent stopped his ears, and Bob Cherry assumed an expression of patient suffering. Wharton, who was driving, looked round.

"Johnny, old man, you're frightening the gee-gee!"

Johnny Bull snorted.

"You silly asses haven't any ear for music!" he said.

"Not that sort!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Look after that gee-gee, Harry. Whether it's the mouth-organ or not, he looks as if he means business!"

Wharton gripped the reins. The horse was certainly very fresh, but Wharton was a good driver. As the trap drew near the cross-roads, bowling along at a great rate, there was a sudden zug-zug-zug of a motor-bicycle, and a dusty rider came whirling round the corner at a great speed. The horse, already restive, started and shied, and as the motor-cyclist went whirling by the animal dragged furiously at the reins and galloped madly on.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry, as he was thrown violently against Lord Mauleverer. "Look out, Harry! Hold the beast in!"

Wharton did not reply. His grip on the reins was like iron, but the powerful horse was too much for him. The juniors clung to the trap and to one another as it raced on.

With a clear road before him, Wharton would have had the animal under control again in a couple of minutes. But at the critical moment there came the warning note of a motor-car from the direction of the village.

Zip-zip-zip!

It was a big, handsome car, with an old gentleman inside. The chauffeur sounded his horn frantically as he caught sight of the trap and the plunging horse bearing down upon him. But the tooting of the motor-horn finished the business for the startled horse. He was quite out of hand now.

The juniors held their breath, their faces going quite pale. For a moment it seemed as if there would be a frightful accident; but the driver of the car saved the situation. With cool promptitude he turned the car upon the belt of grass beside the road, avoiding the runaway almost by a hair's-breadth. The juniors went flashing by in the trap; and as they rushed on they heard a crash and a yell, and saw

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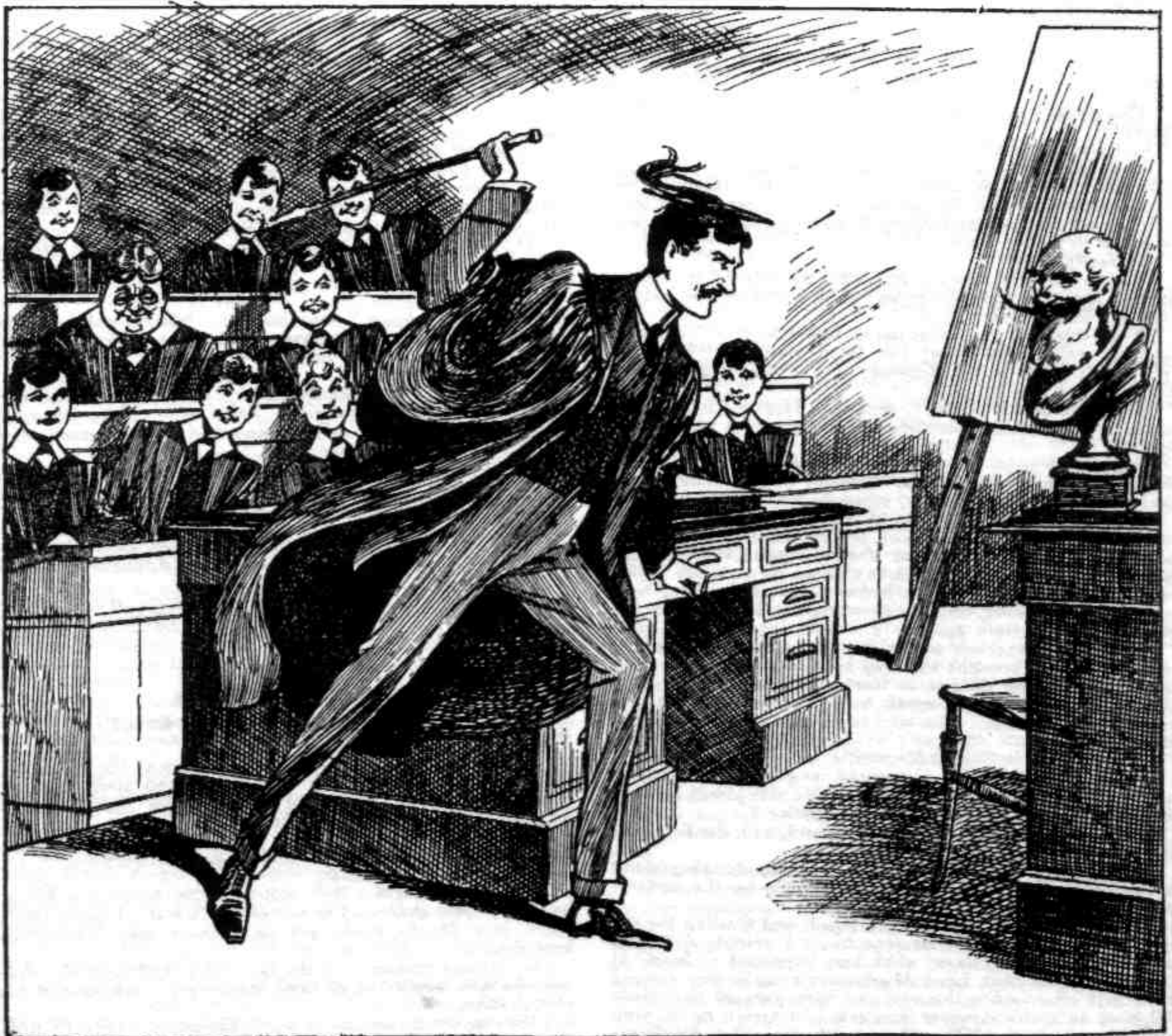
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Mr. Capper made a spring to the grate, and snatched up the poker. Then he made another spring back to the table, and with one mighty blow the Form-master smashed Socrates into powder. "Socrates' bu'st!" murmured Bob Cherry. (See Chapter 9.)

that the car was on its side against the hedge, throbbing like a wild animal suddenly caught, and the chauffeur was struggling in the ditch.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not According to Programme!

"**B**EGAD!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.
 "Pull him in, Harry!"
 "The car's over!"
 "Begad! It's my uncle's car!" groaned Lord Mauleverer. "Poor old Uncle Reggie!"
 Wharton was dragging furiously at the reins. He pulled the frightened steed in at last, and brought him trembling to a halt; but they were almost a quarter of a mile from the scene of the accident.
 Wharton jumped down, and secured the reins to a tree beside the road.
 "Come on!" he exclaimed. "Hoof it! I won't trust that beast again!"
 The juniors dashed back along the road.
 It did not take them long to reach the spot where the car had been overturned. The old gentleman had clambered out, and was trying to assist the chauffeur, who was groaning in the ditch.
 "Not hurt, Uncle Reggie?" gasped Mauleverer.
 "Oh, it's you, is it?" said Sir Reginald Brooke. "Help

my man up, my lads. I'm afraid he's hurt. No, I'm not hurt myself!"

The juniors lifted the chauffeur out of the ditch. The ditch was a dry one, and he had fallen into a bed of ferns and nettles. His face was very pale as they lifted him upon the grass.

"Where are you hurt, Thompson?" asked the baronet anxiously.

"It's my arm, sir—only a sprain, I think," said the man. "But the car—the axle's gone, sir. I couldn't do anything but turn it off the road, or—"

"You did quite right," said Sir Reginald. "You prevented a bad accident. I shall not forget this, Thompson. Never mind the car now. We can send mechanics from Courtfield to look after it. My lads, where can Thompson be taken to be cared for? Is there a hospital here?"

Wharton shook his head in dismay.
 "Nothing nearer than Courtfield, sir," he said. "That's six miles from here."

"Not a cottage hospital in the village?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

The baronet knitted his brows.

"That is bad. There is a doctor's, I suppose?"

"Yes, there's a doctor in Friardale," said Harry. "If the car can't be moved, we can get him to the doctor's in the trap."

"Very good! I suppose that is the best that can be done,"

said the baronet. "I will do what I can for him while you fetch the trap here."

Wharton hurried away, and soon returned with the trap. Thompson was lifted into it.

"We're awfully sorry this has happened, sir," said Wharton. "We were coming to meet your car, and—and—"

"The gee-gee was frightened by a motor-bike," said Bob Cherry.

The baronet nodded.

"Well, well, it could not be helped," he said. "Perhaps, however, I had better drive the trap into the village. One of you can get in with Thompson, and the others might stay with the car to see that nothing happens to it till I can get assistance to have it removed."

"Certainly, sir!"

Wharton mounted into the trap with the injured chauffeur, and Sir Reginald took the reins. The dismayed Co. stayed with the disabled car.

"Well, this is a go!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Johnny, old man, you'd better play the Dead March in 'Saul,' or 'We Won't be Home till Morning,' if you want to play something!"

"The go-fulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "I trust the esteemed chauffeur is not seriously injured!"

"Begad! I hope the doctor won't be out!" said Lord Mauleverer, shaking his head. "There ought to be a hospital or something, you know, somewhere!"

It was a disastrous ending to the little outing. The juniors consoled themselves with the reflection that it might have been much worse. But for the promptness of the chauffeur in avoiding the runaway horse, it certainly would have been much worse. The Removites waited a long time by the overturned car, and it was nearly two hours before the trap appeared in sight again.

"The doctor was out seeing his patients," Sir Reginald explained, as he brought the trap to a halt. "It was very unfortunate. This district is very much in want of a cottage hospital. I shall speak to Dr. Locke about it, and see what can be done. You boys had better come back to the school now."

"But the car, sir?" said Nugent.

"I have telephoned to Courtfield, and they are sending men from the garage to take care of it. They will be here soon, and the car will be safe till they arrive."

So the juniors climbed into the trap, and, with Sir Reginald still driving, they returned to Greyfriars.

The baronet was very thoughtful, probably thinking about the suffering entailed upon the injured man by the want of provision for accidents in the village.

Sir Reginald went in to see the Head, and Gosling led the trap away, till it should be sent for. A crowd of fellows gathered round to learn what had happened. Most of Greyfriars knew that Lord Mauleverer's uncle was coming down that afternoon in his car, and they guessed that there had been an accident when they saw him arrive in the trap with the juniors. Billy Bunter shook a fat forefinger reprovingly at the Famous Five.

"Jolly well serves you right!" he said. "I was quite willing to drive the trap for you; and if I'd driven this wouldn't have happened!"

"Oh, rats!" said Wharton crossly.

"I guess you wanted me to drive," remarked Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee junior. "I guess—"

"Guess again!" growled Bob Cherry.

"You should have called on No. 7 Study for a driver," said Peter Todd, with a solemn shake of the head. "You see—"

And Vernon-Smith chimed in:

"You ought to have a notice on your trap when you go out driving, you know—'DANGEROUS TO CYCLISTS!' or, 'MOTOR-CARS PROCEED WITH CAUTION!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It wouldn't have happened if I'd been in the trap!" said Billy Bunter, with a sniff.

"Well, no: it would puzzle a horse to bolt with your weight behind it!" said Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Oh, go and eat coke, all of you!" said Harry Wharton. "Come on, you chaps—no time to jaw to these duffers! We're going to look after your uncle, Mauly!"

"Good egg!" said Vernon-Smith. "Take him out for a drive—and Mauly will come into the property!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Remove marched away, leaving the juniors chuckling. They went to No. 1 Study to consider the important question of the entertainment of the honoured guest. Billy Bunter followed them there. Billy Bunter had a remarkable gift for scenting out a feed, and he was never left out of one if he could help it.

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"I say, you fellows—" he began, blinking into the study.

"Clear off!" roared Bob Cherry.

"But, I say, I want to help you, you know," said Bunter. "I suppose you're going to stand Mauly's uncle some tea, after nearly killing him—"

"You—you fat toad—"

"Well, you did nearly kill him, you know. But if you want to have a really good feed, I'm willing to take the whole matter into my hands, and arrange it for you. You know how I can cook!" urged the Owl of the Remove.

Bob Cherry made a rush at the fat junior, and Bunter whipped out of the study. Bob slammed the door with a slam that rang the length of the Remove passage.

"The fat bounder!" growled Bob. "Now, we've got to look after Mauly's uncle. You must make him come to tea in the study, Mauly."

"Yaas!"

"He's an old sport," said Nugent. "Some old johnnies would be awfully ratty at having a car busted like that, and he takes it like sugar. I think he ought to be encouraged."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas," said Lord Mauleverer. "We'll have tea in my study, and I'll make him come. Ask some of the fellows—specially Penfold. You fellows can come and help me do the shopping. I've got a tenner here."

The study door cautiously opened again, and a fat face looked in.

"I say, you fellows—"

Whiz!

A cushion, hurled with deadly aim, smote the Owl of the Remove under the chin, and he disappeared into the passage with a yell.

And the juniors proceeded to prepare the entertainment for Mauly's uncle, without any further kind offers of assistance from the Owl of the Remove.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Takes the Matter in Hand!

"THIS way, sir!"

Sir Reginald Brooke looked down at the fat junior with a smile. He had just come out after speaking to the Head, and he was glancing round for his nephew when Billy Bunter came up.

"You are Mauly's uncle, sir?" asked Billy Bunter.

"I am Lord Mauleverer's uncle," said the baronet.

Bunter nodded cheerfully.

"Yes, that's right. He's called Mauly here, you know, by all his close chums. I'm one of the closest. I really don't know how Mauly would get on without me. We're like brothers."

The baronet looked over the fat junior, and nodded. Perhaps he was wondering at Lord Mauleverer's selection of his closest chum.

"We want you to come to tea in the study," pursued Billy Bunter. "I hope you will, sir. We've all been looking forward very much to your visit, sir. Mauly and I have talked about nothing else for weeks."

"Indeed?" said the baronet. "That is very odd, as I did not write to my nephew until a couple of days ago to tell him I was coming."

Billy Bunter coughed.

"I—I mean, we've been talking about the time you would come, sir, and we were jolly glad to hear you were coming at last. I told Mauly I was going to stand a feed to celebrate it, so I hope you'll come, sir. We shall regard it as a high honour."

"I will come with pleasure," he said. "In fact, I should very much like to have one of the study brews my nephew has told me about. Pray lead the way."

"This way, Sir Reginald," said the delighted Bunter, and he "Sir Reginalded" Sir Reginald incessantly as he piloted him up to the Remove passage, for the benefit of other fellows he passed. "Mind the step, Sir Reginald. It's rather dark at that corner, Sir Reginald. This way, Sir Reginald. Here's Mauly's study, Sir Reginald."

And Bunter ushered the honoured guest into Lord Mauleverer's study. The baronet looked round him with a critical eye. The study was empty so far, Mauleverer and his chums being busy at the tuck-shop. Lord Mauleverer had a study to himself in the Remove, and it was a larger room than most, and very luxuriously furnished. Furniture in the junior studies was very frequently in a state of great dilapidation, but the schoolboy millionaire was something of a sybarite, and as he spent money like water, his quarters certainly did not want for comfort.

"The young dog seems to have made himself very comfortable here," the baronet remarked.

"Yes, I gave advice in the furnishing," said Bunter modestly. "Mauly really couldn't have done it without my help. I always like helping Mauly—we're quite inseparable."

"Indeed?"

"Oh, quite!" said Bunter. "I was coming with him in the trap to meet you, Sir Reginald, but was prevented by a pressing engagement. The captain of the school wanted my advice about some changes in the First Eleven, you know. I—Ahem!"

Billy Bunter broke off as a crowd of juniors poured into the study. Harry Wharton & Co. had arrived, and most of them were carrying packages and parcels. They gave Billy Bunter expressive looks, which the fat junior apparently did not see. Bunter was very short-sighted, and he could be perfectly blind when he chose.

"Begad! Found your way here, nunky," said Lord Mauleverer with satisfaction.

"Yes, your friend showed me here," said the baronet.

"Oh, Bunter?" said Lord Mauleverer. "Thank you, Bunter! Good-bye!"

"Got all the things, you fellows?" asked Bunter calmly, secure in the certainty that the juniors would not throw him out in the presence of the honoured guest. "I hope you haven't forgotten anything. What kind of jam is that, Cherry?"

"Plum!" growled Bob.

"You should have got strawberry. I can't offer Mauly's uncle plum-jam. Go and change it, and buck up!"

Bob Cherry glared at Bunter. But for the presence of Sir Reginald Brooke, the Owl of the Remove would have been slaughtered upon the spot. But naturally Bob did not want to entertain the esteemed guest with a view of juniors punching one another. Billy Bunter had to be put up with, unless some peaceable means could be found of getting rid of him.

Bunter knew his advantage, and realised it fully, and proceeded to make the most of it.

"Better cut along to No. 1, and get some crocks, Wharton," he said. "Now, don't stand there staring when Sir Reginald is ready for his tea; just buzz off!"

Harry Wharton gasped, and went. He stopped in the passage to shake his fist in the air, and then went for the extra crockery.

"We shall want some chairs, too," said Bunter, calmly assuming the direction of affairs. "Sir Reginald will take the arm-chair, won't you, Sir Reginald?"

"Thank you!"

"Four more chairs from somewhere," said Bunter. "Cut off, Nugent and Bull, and get them. You can have some out of No. 7 if you like. You go and help them, young Perfold. Make yourself useful."

"You come and help us, will you, Bunter, old fellow?" asked Frank Nugent, in a honeyed voice.

Billy Bunter closed one eye for a moment. He knew better than to trust himself outside the study with the exasperated juniors.

"No, I'm looking after the tea," he said. "Buzz off, and don't waste time talking."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Nugent, as he quitted the study.

Johnny Bull and Penfold followed him. Johnny Bull's face was expressing such dreadful ferocity that it was just as well to take it out of Sir Reginald's sight.

"You sit down, Mauly, old man," said Billy Bunter kindly. "You're tired."

"Begad, so I am, Bunter," said Lord Mauleverer, sitting down on the sofa. "By the way, if you don't mind, whose is this study, yours or mine?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"My dear Mauly, I'm taking all the trouble off your hands. I won't have you worried. I'll keep these chaps up to it. Bob Cherry, don't light the spirit-stove in the grate here; you'll make the room smell of that blessed spirit, and Sir Reginald won't like it. Take it into your own study, and make the tea there."

"You fat villain!" murmured Bob, under his breath.

"What did you say, Cherry?" asked Billy Bunter loudly.

"All—all right," murmured Bob.

"Buck up, then," said Bunter. "Don't be all the afternoon about it, you know. Sir Reginald wants his tea."

"Don't mind me," said the baronet, laughing.

"Oh, you must be hungry after a journey, Sir Reginald," said Bunter. "Besides, I want my tea. I have to rag these chaps a bit to keep them up to the mark, you know. They're frightfully slow, and Cherry and Bull are rather stupid."

"Begad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer.

Johnny Bull came into the study with a chair in each hand as Bunter made his complimentary allusion. Bull's face was a study.

"Here are the chairs!" he said.

"Set them down, then," said Bunter sharply. "Put them—ow—ow—ow, you silly ass! I didn't say jam them on my feet. Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at, you silly

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EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

chumps. You are a clumsy ass, Bull. If we hadn't a guest here I'd box your ears."

"You—you—you'd what?"

"Box your ears!" said Bunter. "Now, don't talk. Get the table set."

The juniors exchanged helpless glances. They would have given whole terms of pocket-money to grasp hold of William George Bunter, and hurl him headlong into the passage. But Sir Reginald was looking on, and it was out of the question.

"You haven't changed that jam yet, Cherry!" snapped Bunter.

"I'm not going to," growled Bob.

"Don't jaw! Buzz off, and do as you're told," said Bunter.

"I'm managing this little feed for Mauly. Now go and do as I tell you, and don't talk."

Bob Cherry looked at him, and was so overcome that he took the jam-pot under his arm, and left the study. He paused in the doorway.

"Will you come with me, Bunter?" he asked sweetly.

"No, I won't," said Bunter promptly. "You're old enough to fetch a jar of jam without my help, I suppose. Mind you bring the right kind, this time, or I shall have to send you back again. And don't waste time."

Bob Cherry went down the passage. He flourished his right fist in the air, hitting at imaginary fat faces as he went. When he returned with the new jam, tea had started in the study, Billy Bunter doing the honours.

"Open it!" he said, as Bob put down the jar. "Don't spill it!"

Bob Cherry gasped, and opened the jam.

Billy Bunter was already distinguishing himself. It was a very handsome spread, and the best things that Mrs. Mimble's tuck-shop could supply were there, and plenty of them.

Sir Reginald was smiling genially as he took tea with the juniors. The scene reminded him of his own schooldays—further back than he liked to remember.

In spite of the obnoxious Bunter, the tea-party was very cheerful. When he had once started eating, Bunter paid very little attention to anything else.

"Begad, it's jolly to have you here, nunky," said Lord Mauleverer, with an affectionate glance at his relative. "Nother cup of tea for nunky."

Sir Reginald smiled as he sipped his sixth cup of tea.

"You will see me down here again," he said. "I shall be coming down to open the new Cottage Hospital before very long."

"The new what, sir?" exclaimed Wharton.

"I have been talking the matter over with Dr. Locke," the baronet explained. "We both consider that there is a crying need for a Cottage Hospital in the village; it was borne in upon my mind by what happened to-day. I have decided to provide the necessary funds for its erection, and it will be opened as soon as the buildings can be erected."

"Begad, that's rippin' of you, nunky!"

"It's jolly good!" said Harry Wharton. "The Friardale folk will be grateful. We'll have all Greyfriars there for the opening ceremony."

"Yaas, begad!"

"Greyfriars ought to contribute something towards the exes," said Johnny Bull. "I suppose there will be contributions, sir?"

The baronet smiled.

"Yes; a contribution list will be opened. I shall ask Mr. Lambe, the vicar, to take it in charge, and I am sure he will do so. But the necessary sum will be guaranteed by me, so that the building operations can commence at once."

"We'll have a fund in the Remove!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Good!" said Billy Bunter. "I'll take it in hand. You can rely on me to raise money enough for one bed at least, Sir Reginald."

"I should be very pleased if you boys wished to have a hand in it," said the baronet. "It would show a proper regard for the distress of the poor. Any sums you raised could be paid to Mr. Lambe's fund."

"Leave it to me, sir," said Billy Bunter. "I'll keep 'em up to the mark. I'll give a ventriloquial entertainment, perhaps, and raise a good bit that way. I'll use my influence with the Sixth Form, and make 'em subscribe. You rely on me."

The baronet rose.

"And now I think I hear my car below," he said. "I shall have to say good-bye. Come for a stroll with me round the school first, my boy."

"Yaas," said Lord Mauleverer.

"I'll come with you," said Bunter, who had no desire to be left alone with Harry Wharton & Co. "I'll show you—ow!—ah!—oh!—leggo!"



A hand was clapped over Billy Bunter's mouth, as the baronet, apparently deaf to his exclamations, quitted the study with Lord Mauleverer.

Bob Cherry closed the door.

"Now——" he said.

"I—I say, I want to speak to Mauly—something important——" gasped Bunter.

"Mauly doesn't want to speak to you!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Now, you fat boulder, you're going to pay for your awful cheek. Collar him!"

"Oh! I—hoh!—hah!—leggo!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter descended upon his back on the hearth-rug, and lay there gasping, blinking up in terror at the juniors, as they gathered round him, and debated as to what kind of torture he should be put.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Doom!

BILLY BUNTER lay upon his back, and blinked up at the juniors round him through his big spectacles, not venturing to move. Harry Wharton had picked up a cricket-bat, Nugent a stump, and Johnny Bull the poker. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had taken a large toasting-fork in his hand, and Bob Cherry was opening his pocket-knife with an air of dreadful deliberation.

"I—I say, you fellows——" muttered Billy Bunter feebly.

"Silence, knave!" said Bob Cherry, in a deep voice. "Art thou prepared to meet thy doom?"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"I should suggest hanging him," said Nugent thoughtfully.

"Only hanging is too good."

"The too-goodfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh solemnly.

"Besides, it would need a chain-cable to bear his weight," said Bob Cherry, with a shake of the head. "We haven't any chain-cables."

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I know you're only rotting, you know," murmured Billy Bunter, though his little eyes were growing big and round with terror behind his glasses. "I—I say, you know, don't play the giddy goat, you know."

"I'm sorry, Bunter," said Wharton, shaking his head. "But we are fed up with you. You have spoiled a good tea-party, and imposed yourself upon an honoured guest. You are an unpleasant beast. The hour has come!"

"The comefulness is terrific!"

"Now, all together!" said Wharton. "Killing porpoises is not a crime, especially porpoises like Bunter, but we had better all hit at once, so as to be equally responsible in case anybody should make a fuss afterwards."

"Hold on a minute till I get my knife open," said Bob Cherry.

"Buck up, then. It isn't fair to keep Bunter in suspense."

"Sha'n't be a tick."

Bunter's eyes dilated with terror. The faces of the juniors were so serious and solemn that, in spite of his conviction that they could not be in earnest, he quaked in every fat limb.

"I—I say, you know, don't play the giddy ox," he murmured. "I—I was really trying to help you out, you know. You fellows don't know how to entertain a baronet. Now, I've mixed with a lot of titled people, you know——"

"Silence, knave! Wilt thou perish like Ananias, with a lie upon thy lips?" demanded Frank Nugent, in the best style of the Junior Dramatic Society.

"I'm not going to perish at all, you beast!" roared Bunter.

"I know you're only rotting. Lemme gerrup, you beast!"

The fat junior made a movement to rise, and Johnny Bull promptly planted a boot upon his chest, and flattened him down upon the rug again.

"Ow! Look here, I'll tell Peter Todd——"

"Are you sorry you planted yourself on our tea-party, and scoffed the feed?" demanded Wharton.

"No! Yes, yes!"

"Are you sorry for all your misdeeds?"

"Ow! Yes!"

"Good! Then you are in a suitable moral state to be slaughtered. Are you fellows ready?"

"Quite ready!"

"Have you any last wish to express, Bunter?"

"You—you rotters——"

"Any message to your titled relations?" asked Nugent.

"Any instructions to the Postmaster-General about your postal-order?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cackle not!" said Bob Cherry. "This isn't a laughing matter—not for Bunter. Now I'm ready. Which is the best place to stick a pig?"

"Where would you like it, Bunter?"

"You rotters!" howled Bunter. "Lemme go! I won't do it again! Ow!"

"Too late! Now, then, all together!"

The cricket-stump, and the bat, and the poker, and the toasting-fork, and the pocket-knife were raised at once.

"Smite!" shouted Wharton.

Billy Bunter closed his eyes in sheer terror.

Crash!

The poker descended upon the fender, with a crash that seemed like thunder to Billy Bunter's terrified ears. He gave a yell of agony.

"Ow, ow, ow! Help! Fire! Murder! Rescue! I'm killed! Ow!"

He squirmed off the rug and scrambled up, and made for the door.

"Smite again!" roared Wharton.

Crash!

"Yaroo!"

Billy Bunter tore the door open, and dashed into the passage. He tore down the passage for his life, and reeled back with a yell as he collided with Peter Todd, who was coming out of No. 7 Study. Peter grasped the fat junior and stopped him.

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" demanded Peter.

"Don't stop me!" yelled Bunter. "They're after me—the murderous villains! I'm wounded—I'm bleeding to death! I'm murdered! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A roar of laughter followed Bunter down the passage. Peter Todd fixed a grip upon the fat junior's collar, and shook him.

"You silly ass!" he exclaimed. "What's the matter with you?"

"They've killed me—I mean, they tried to kill me!" gasped Bunter. "I've been smited—I mean smitten, with a poker and a cricket-bat and a—battle-axe. My neck's broken, and my head is nearly cut off. I'm bleeding all over!"

"I don't see any of the gore," said Peter Todd. "You silly chump, they've been rotting you!"

"Ow! Don't shake me like that!" howled Bunter. "If you make my glasses fall off—ow!—and they get broken—yow!—you'll have to pay for them. Groogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fathead!" said Peter Todd, shaking his study-mate as a dog might shake a rat. "You are a disgrace to Study No. 7! You're not hurt at all!"

"I'm bleeding to d-d-death!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd swung the fat junior into Study No. 7, and plumped him down in the armchair.

Bunter sat there and panted. He realised, rather late, that he had not been hurt.

"You ought to be slaughtered!" said Peter Todd severely.

"You shoved yourself into Mauleverer's study without being asked, because they couldn't kick you out while Mauly's uncle was there!"

"Oh, really, Todd——"

"You are a cadger and a funk, and a disgrace to the study," said Peter, frowning. "What's the use of my trying to make No. 7 top study in the Remove if you keep on disgracing it in this way?"

"Look here——"

"I've promised you a licking every time you disgrace the study," resumed Peter, picking up a cricket-stump. "I'm a fellow of my word."

"I—I say, Todd—I——"

"You don't want me to break my word, I suppose?" said Peter sternly.

"Yes—no—but—ah—oh! Yah! Ow, ow, ow!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yah! Oh! Yaro-o-o-o-op!"

"Do you think that's enough?" asked Peter.

"Ow! Yow! Yes! Quite enough! Yah!"

"Very well," said Peter, throwing down the stump. "I'll take your word for it. But if you play the rotten funk again, there's some more where that came from. Understand?"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"Understand?" roared Peter.

"Ow! Yes! Ow!"

"Good! I'm going to make a man of you, Bunter, if I break a cricket-stump over it!"

"Groogh!"

ANSWERS

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 287.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.



"Now then, all together!" The cricket-stump, and the bat, and the [poker, and the toasting-fork, and the pocket-knife were all raised at once. "Smite!" shouted Harry Wharton. (See Chapter 4.)

Billy Bunter shook a fat fist after Peter Todd as he turned towards the door. Peter—who seemed to have eyes in the back of his head—swung round.

"Hallo! What does that mean?" he inquired.

Bunter, caught in the act, stood with his fat fist in the air, blinking at his study-leader.

"Well?" said Peter grimly.

"I—I—I was only stretching myself," murmured Bunter feebly.

"I'll stretch you!" growled Peter, making a movement towards the stump again.

Billy Bunter whipped out of the study and fled. He did not stop till he was in the shady Cloisters, where he relieved his feelings by sparring furiously in the air, hitting terrific blows at imaginary Peter Todds and Bob Cherries.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Not a Crowded Meeting!

THERE was a meeting in No. 1 Study after the departure of the baronet, and the chums of the Remove consulted with great earnestness on the subject of the subject of the Cottage Hospital at Friardale. It was agreed on all hands that it was "up" to Greyfriars to have a hand in

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that philanthropic undertaking, and it was agreed even more unanimously that it was the business of the Remove to see to it. Lord Mauleverer, who was rolling in money, would willingly have provided the necessary sum to have a bed named after the school; but that, of course, could not be allowed. All the fellows were called upon to stand their "whack," according to their means; and the question was how the money should be raised. The result of the consultation in Study No. 1 was a notice that appeared on the school notice-board the next day, in the handwriting of Harry Wharton:

"NOTICE!

"It having been decided by an Influential Committee to raise a Fund for providing an Extra Bed in the Friardale Cottage Hospital, a meeting will be held in the Rag this evening, at seven o'clock precisely, to discuss Ways and Means.

"The chair will be taken by H. Wharton, Esq.

"All are invited to attend, seniors and juniors alike. It is hoped by the Committee that all Greyfriars will pull together as One Man on behalf of this really Charitable Purpose.

"(Signed) H. WHARTON, Capt., Remove."

NEXT
MONDAY:

MAGNIFICENT SPECIAL SUMMER NUMBER OF THE "MAGNET."

PRICE
TWO PENCE.

When the fellows came out from morning lessons a crowd collected round the board, and the notice was read with many comments.

Noble as the object of the meeting was, it must be confessed that most of the fellows seemed to look upon it with a humorous eye.

"I think I can see the Fifth and Sixth following the lead of a Remove kid!" remarked Coker, of the Fifth, with a snort.

"Or the Fourth," said Temple, the captain of the Fourth Form. "Catch me attending a meeting with H. Wharton, Esq., in the chair! Rats!"

Those remarks showed how much the enterprising Removites had to expect from Higher Forms.

Harry Wharton caught Mr. Capper, the master of the Upper Fourth, as he came out of the Form-room. Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, was away ill, and the Remove were at present under the charge of Mr. Capper. Mr. Capper had found his charge very troublesome—the Remove were not the best-behaved Form at Greyfriars. The Upper Fourth and the Lower Fourth were generally on fighting terms, and given to ragging one another now that they found themselves temporarily in the same Form-room. Even Harry Wharton & Co., though they are the heroes of this story, were not models, and they had received more lines from Mr. Capper in a week than Mr. Quelch usually gave them in a month. But Wharton's manner was overflowing with respect, and indeed veneration, as he bore down upon Mr. Capper in the Form-room passage.

"If you please, sir—" he began meekly.

Mr. Capper looked at him somewhat severely.

"I shall expect your lines by tea-time, Wharton," he said.

"Ahem! Yes, sir! I—I wasn't going to speak about the lines, sir," said Harry. "We—we want you to help us, sir."

"Indeed?"

"We're raising a fund for a bed at the Cottage Hospital, sir," explained Wharton.

"Ahem!" said Mr. Capper. "Any—er—contribution that I may—er—be inclined to make I shall—er—send to Mr. Lambe!"

"And we want to use your name, sir," said Wharton, gliding off that delicate matter. "We are holding a meeting about it, sir, and I expect the whole school to take it up with—with enthusiasm. We are going to allow the Sixth to join with us in it."

Mr. Capper smiled.

"I trust the Sixth Form will not disappoint your expectations, Wharton," he said. "I have my doubts. But I trust so."

"May we say that the meeting is held under your patronage, sir?" asked Wharton meekly. "Just to show that you—you approve, sir."

Mr. Capper looked quite genial then.

"Certainly, certainly, my boy!" he said. "I certainly approve of your object. You may certainly use my name."

"Thank you very much, sir. If you wished to subscribe to the fund—"

"Yes; in that case I shall—er—communicate with Mr. Lambe," said Mr. Capper. And he walked on before that topic could be pursued.

Wharton pushed his way through the grinning crowd in front of the notice-board. With a flourish of his pencil he added a line to the notice:

"Under the Patronage of Mr. Capper, M.A., Master Fourth Form."

"Like your cheek to ask Capper!" growled Temple.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Wharton," said Coker genially.

"If you like, I'll come and take the chair at the meeting, and see if I can get some of the Fifth to come."

"Chair will be taken by H. Wharton, Esq.," said Harry.

"Can't you read?"

"Look here, you cheeky young bounder—"

"But all the Fifth will be welcome," said Harry cheerfully. "I hope you'll roll up in your thousands. It's all for charity, you know—a most noble object."

"You cheeky young ass—"

"How much can I put your name down for, Coker?" asked the captain of the Remove, taking out his notebook.

"Nix!" said Coker. "I'll hand you a thick ear, if you like. That's all you'll get out of me. I've got nothing else to give."

"Yes, you have," said Nugent. "You've got a thick head, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker sniffed, and walked away.

"I suppose you Fourth-Form chaps are going to support us?" demanded Wharton, looking at Temple, Dabney & Co.

"I'll tell you what," said Temple generously. "I'll take

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,

Every Wednesday.

the chair, if you like, and undertake the management of the whole business. What do you say?"

"Oh, I say rats! We're not looking out for chairmen."

"Cheeky ass!"

And Temple walked away after Coker.

"Doesn't look as if it will be an enthusiastic gathering of the whole giddy school," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Well, we'll have all the Remove, at any rate. You're coming, Smithy—"

"Looking for a chairman?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Rats! No."

"'Fraid I've got another engagement."

"Go and eat coke, then! Bolsover, old man—"

"Want a leader and general manager?" asked Bolsover major, with a chuckle.

"Of course not. We're managing it all—No. 1 Study. But you—"

"Got another engagement, thanks."

"Ass! Peter Todd—or Alonzo, whichever you are, we shall expect you to back us up at the meeting."

Peter Todd grinned.

"No. 7 Study never plays second fiddle. I'll take the matter in hand if you like, and make it a huge success—"

"Br-r-r-r-r-r!"

At seven precisely Harry Wharton entered the Rag, to open the meeting. Nugent and Bob Cherry followed him in, and Johnny Bull came a few minutes later with Lord Mauleverer. Penfold and Mark Linley dropped in, and then Tom Brown. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh came in last—and he was not followed by others. The influential committee waited a few minutes, some of them grinning—but there were no more arrivals. Wharton went to the door and looked out into the passage.

"This way to the meeting!" he called out.

But only a chuckle replied from the fellows in sight. Wharton turned back into the Rag, looking a little blue.

"We're all the meeting!" he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Never mind; let's get to business," said Nugent consolingly. "After all, we can run it without those rotters!"

"Yaas, begad!"

"Hear, hear!"

And the meeting got to business.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Self-denial Week!

"GENTLEMEN—"

"Hear, hear!" roared Bob Cherry, with all the force of his lungs, at the same time clapping his hands and stamping upon the floor with both feet.

Harry Wharton paused, and glared at his enthusiastic chum.

"What are you making that frightful row for?" he demanded.

"I'm backing you up! Must let the fellows outside know that it's an enthusiastic meeting," Bob explained. "We've got to make enough noise for fifty."

"Look here—"

"Bray-vo!"

"This meeting has been called—"

"Hurrah!"

"Shut up!" roared Wharton.

"Eh! Don't you want an enthusiastic reception?" demanded Bob.

"You silly chump! I want to make my voice heard."

"Well, I was only backing you up like a chum, to show the rotters outside that there's lots of enthusiasm going," said Bob, in an injured tone. "But have your way; I'll be as mum as a boiled owl."

"Gentlemen, it will cost something like twenty quid to found a bed at the cottage hospital—"

"Excuse me," said Lord Mauleverer. "You mean to find a bed?"

"No, ass! To found a bed."

"But you can't use the past participle as an infinitive," said his lordship. "Find, finding, found. You can't say 'to found.'"

"I shall say to confound, if you don't shut up," said Wharton. "When I say found, I don't mean found, I mean found, fathead!"

"Begad, that's quite clear. Go on!"

"To found a bed," said Wharton, with a withering look at his lordship, "means to found it—a foundation. Greyfriars was founded, wasn't it, fathead? If you look in the records, you'll find that it was found—I mean it will be found that it was founded. Well, we're going to find—I mean found—a bed in the Cottage Hospital."

"I see! Travel on!"

"The patients will find the bed that we found," explained Nugent solemnly, "when the bed is founded, the patients will find it jolly useful, and after it is founded—I mean finded—that is to say—"

"Order! Silence for the chair!"

"All right; we're talking about beds, not chairs. I was only going to say that the bed will be founded in the hospital, but it is to be hoped that the patient won't be found-dead in the bed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shurrup! What we've got to do now is to found the money to find the bed—I mean to find the money to found the bed. The foundation of this bed will reflect glory upon Greyfriars, and the mere idea ought to excite the whole school to—to—"

"To its foundations!" suggested Nugent.

"To emulation," said Wharton sternly.

"Well, that's a good word," admitted Nugent. "I'll back that both ways."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shurrup! As the other fellows are not entering into the scheme, we are left alone to raise the money for the find—I mean the found—that is to say, the fund. The question is, how are we going to do it?"

"Now you're talking!" said Bob Cherry.

"Not all being millionaires like Mauly, we can't hand out all the money in the noble cause of charity that we should like to. Our pocket-money is not unlimited, and such as it is, we want it for our pressing needs."

"Hear, hear!" said the juniors, with hearty concurrence.

"At the same time, the money's got to be found—"

"You mean the bed's got to be found," said Lord Mauleverer.

"The money's got to be found, fathead, to found the bed. I was thinking of a dramatic performance to find the money to found the bed, but the chaps are fed up with 'em—and they wouldn't come unless we paid 'em—and that wouldn't raise money. Bunter has offered to give a ventriloquial entertainment, but nobody at Greyfriars would be found dead at one of his ventriloquial entertainments if he could help it. The only way to raise the money is by voluntary subscriptions; and how are we going to do that when our pocket-money is limited?"

"Puzzle: Find the fund to found the bed!" murmured Nugent.

"Therefore, unless you fellows can suggest something better, we shall have to adopt a scheme I have already thought out," said Wharton firmly.

"Go it!"

"You've heard of the Salvation Army, I suppose?"

"My hat! Yes. What the dickens—"

"We're going to imitate one of their methods—"

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I shouldn't fancy myself in a poke bonnet, you know, and I can't play a cornet."

"Ass! We are going to imitate a method they have for raising the wind—a jolly good method, that would reflect credit on any army," said Wharton. "They have a self-denial week—chaps go without things, you know, and save up the money."

"That will suit me," said Nugent. "You'll find my self-denial very weak."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's what we are going to do," said Wharton firmly. "In the first place, it will be a lesson to us in—in temperance and sobriety and—and unselfishness and things, to go without our accustomed little luxuries, and devote the money to the necessities of poorer people than ourselves. Don't you think so?"

The meeting did not look enthusiastic.

"It will be an example to all the Remove, and show that this Co. is willing to lead even when there's unpleasant duties to be done."

"Ye-e-es."

"It will be a shining example to all Greyfriars—which is really what the Remove is called upon to supply."

"Hear, hear!"

"Then from this day forth—"

"Lemme see, that will be Saturday," said Nugent.

"What?"

"This day fourth—I suppose you mean fourth from now—"

"You ass! From this day forth—starting from to-day, to put it in language simple enough for your intellect, we are going to self-denial ourselves—I mean to deny ourselves—and every time we deny ourselves something we'll put the money in a box, and keep it towards the fund."

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EVERY
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

"Ahem!"

"When we start, the other fellows may take it up," urged Wharton.

"Hum!" said Johnny Bull. "I don't see them breaking their necks to do it, I think."

"Those duffers in No. 7 Study will have to. We'll put it to them that it's up to them to raise as much as we do, or stop gassing about being top study in the Remove."

"I can see Billy Bunter denying himself anything," grinned Tom Brown.

"I don't think!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Well, if the other chaps don't take it up, we shall get all the more credit."

"But it isn't credit we want—it's cash."

"Fathead! Now, are you all going to back me up?" demanded Wharton. "After all, if it's a bit uncomfortable it's a new idea, and it's up to us to supply the school with new ideas."

Nugent groaned.

"I suppose you are going to have your way," he said. "All right—I'm on! From this day forth, or fifth, or anything else you like, I'm a self-denialer."

"Hands up for a self-denial week!" said Harry Wharton.

"Begad! I'm sorry I came to this meeting," murmured Lord Mauleverer. "It's not quite cricket to spring a thing like this on us, you know."

"Hands up!" roared Wharton.

"My hat! It sounds like Dead-shot Dick in an American thriller," grinned Nugent. "Hands up! Your money or your wife—I mean your life!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hands up, fathead!"

The juniors put their hands up. There was a plentiful lack of enthusiasm in the cause of self-denial, but they were loyal to their leader. Harry Wharton had his way, as he generally did when he had made up his mind.

"That's settled, then," said Wharton, with satisfaction. "Gentlemen, the meeting is now over."

"Hear, hear!" said the meeting, with some approach to enthusiasm at last.

"Good egg!" said Johnny Bull. "It's warm, you fellows—come round to the tuck-shop and have some ginger-beer, after our exertions."

"Hurray!"

"Hold on," said Wharton, taking a money-box from his pocket. "How much are you going to spend on the ginger-beer, Johnny?"

Johnny Bull stared.

"Blessed if I know—I'm in funds, so it's all right. As much as the chaps can mop up," he replied.

"Noble youth!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"How much can you fellows mop up?" asked Wharton.

"Oh, a few gallons each!" said Penfold, laughing.

"Say twopence each," said Harry Wharton. "Now, there are nine of us. Nine twopences is eightpence. Johnny; that treat will stick you up for eightpence."

"Well, suppose it does?" said Johnny Bull, puzzled.

"What on earth are you driving at, Wharton?"

"This!" said Harry, holding out the money-box.

Johnny Bull glared at it.

"What's that?"

"That's a collecting-box."

"What for?"

"For the Cottage Hospital. This is our self-denial week. Instead of mopping up ginger-beer, and wasting eightpence in riotous living, we're going to put the eightpence into the box for a start."

Groan!

It was a deep, deep groan, an expression of the fervent feelings of the whole company.

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Johnny Bull. "I'm thirsty! Couldn't you put off your self-denial week till the winter?"

"Shell out!"

"But I say, you know—"

"Eightpence, please!"

Johnny Bull groaned, and clinked a shilling and a sixpence into the collecting-box. Harry Wharton restored it to his pocket with a great deal of satisfaction.

"That's a start!" he said. "We shall get a good sum together at this rate. Now let's go and have tea. You can come round to the tuckshop with me, Franky, to get the jam—it will run to jam this evening."



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"Will it?" roared Johnny Bull. "How much is that jam going to cost?"

"Ahem—sevenpence!"

"Then you jolly well bung the sevenpence into that blessed box!"

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

And Wharton, with a somewhat queer expression upon his face, slipped the sevenpence into the collecting-box; and there was no jam for tea that evening in Study No. 1.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Does Not Like It!

OF all the "wheezes" that had ever proceeded from Study No. 1 in the Remove, none had excited so much interest as this latest one. When the Remove learned that a self-denial week had been instituted among Harry Wharton & Co., they yelled with merriment over it. The general belief was that it would last about a day—perhaps less.

Harry Wharton & Co. took the matter very seriously. Indeed, for the fellows who were participating in the self-denial week, it was no laughing matter. Their leader kept them grimly up to the mark, and his collecting-box was always ready.

It was surprising to find the number of things that a fellow could do without. Jam-tarts when he wasn't hungry—lemonade or ginger-beer when water would do as well—ran away with a great deal of money, which was now transferred from the tuckshop to the collecting-box. Johnny Bull requested Wharton to ascertain the opinion of Mrs. Mimble, who kept the tuckshop, upon the matter, but Wharton didn't. Mrs. Mimble would probably not have been enthusiastic.

The self-denying juniors did their best to gain proselytes, but they did not find the task easy. Self-denial did not seem to appeal to the Removites in an attractive light. Indeed, they were much more inclined to chip the self-deniers than to imitate their example.

Only in Study No. 7 was there any spirit of emulation; and that spirit was confined to Peter Todd.

As Peter Todd declared that No. 7 was top study in the Remove, he felt that it was up to him to equal the devotion of the Famous Five and their backers; but he realised that he would have difficulty in convincing his study-mates of that.

He broached the subject when the four were at tea—Peter, and his cousin, Alonzo Todd, and Billy Bunter, and Tom Dutton, the deaf junior. Peter was accustomed to laying down the law in his study; but on this occasion he approached the subject with tact.

"You've heard what those bounders in No. 1 are doing, I suppose?" he remarked.

Bunter sniffed.

"Silly rot!" he said. "Pass the jam!"

"What do you think, Alonzo?"

Alonzo Todd beamed upon his cousin.

"It is a most creditable idea, and worthy of emulation, my dear Peter," said Alonzo, in his own peculiar flow of language. "I am sure that my Uncle Benjamin would approve of it."

"Rot!" said Bunter. "They'll chuck it up soon. Is that all the jam, Peter?"

"Yes, porpoise!"

"Never mind; it will be enough for me," said Billy Bunter, helping himself to all the jam. "Pass the toast, Alonzo!"

"What do you think of the idea, Dutton?" asked Peter Todd.

"Eh?"

"What do you think of the self-denial week?"

"Yes, please, put plenty of sugar," said Dutton.

"Wha-at?"

"Always like my tea weak," said Dutton. "Strong tea is bad for the nerves. But I'll have three lumps of sugar."

"Ass!" roared Peter. "I was speaking of a self-denial week. Are you game to go in for self-denial in this study?"

"I don't see why it should be muddy if Bunter made it properly. Anyway, I'll have it weak!" said Dutton.

"Oh, ye gods!" groaned Peter Todd, and he put his mouth to Dutton's ear and bawled: "We're going to have a self-denial week in this study, like the chaps in No. 1."

"Oh, rot!" said Dutton.

"It's up to us to raise as much money as they do!" bawled Peter.

"Oh, all right," said Dutton, "I don't mind! If you can get Bunter to self-deny, I don't mind doing it!"

"Indeed, I should be pleased," said Alonzo. "It is true that I have no money, but if I had I would contribute it with pleasure."

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Every Wednesday.

"I'm not going to have a hand in any such rot!" growled Bunter. "I'm not going to injure my health by going short of jam tarts. No fear!"

"You're going to follow the study!" said Peter Todd.

"Oh, bosh!"

Peter Todd rose to his feet.

"Would you do me the favour of repeating that remark, my cherished and esteemed Bunter?" he asked, with much graciousness of manner.

"Ahem! I—I mean, it's a jolly good idea," said Bunter hastily.

"That's better!" said Peter, sitting down again. "And you are going to back me up, Bunter. I rely on you."

Bunter glared at him through his spectacles.

"Look here Todd, I'm not going to do anything of the sort. I have to consider my health. You know I'm delicate. But I'll tell you what, if you think that self-denial is a good thing—a really good thing—"

"Of course it is!" said Peter.

"And the more a chap does the better—"

"Certainly!"

"Then you can do a double lot, and I won't do any," said Billy Bunter. "You're welcome to my share—quite welcome!"

"Well, a chap can have too much of a good thing," admitted Peter. "Anyway, you're in it with the rest. It will do you good, too, and perhaps bring down your fat. How many sardines have you had?"

"Only ten—"

"Then leave them alone. We're going to make that lot last over to-morrow, and put the money in the box," said Peter Todd. "In the future, when you're going to spend any money in reckless extravagance, remember that you're to put it in the box, and if you don't, I shall scalp you!"

"Yea—catch me!" murmured Bunter, under his breath.

"Eh! What did you say?"

"I—I said I'll do exactly as you wish, Toddy, old man."

"I hope you mean that," said Peter. "You'll have to do it, whether you mean it or not. I shall keep an eye on you. If this study doesn't raise as much as No. 1, there will be a row!"

"I—I say, I've got an idea for raising money," said Bunter. "Why shouldn't I give a ventriloquial entertainment—"

Peter Todd shook his head.

"The chaps are fed-up with your ventriloquism, Bunty, my son. Besides, we've got to show that we're as capable of self-denial as anybody else. We've got to show that we despise mere bodily comforts," said Peter loftily.

"But I don't!" howled Bunter.

"Then you must learn to. I'm going to set you an example," said Peter Todd, taking a little leather bag from his pocket. "I've got this to collect the money in. Here's eighteenpence, that I was going to stand you fellows ices with. I'm putting that in the bag for a start."

"I—I say, I'd rather have the ices, if you don't mind, Toddy."

"But I do mind," said Peter. "You can't have the example and the ices, too."

"B-b-but I'd rather have the ices than the example. I—I'll set you an example myself, if you like."

"That's one-and-six!" said Peter, unheeding. "It's got to mount up. If it doesn't mount up, you'll hear from me. I have spoken! Wah!"

Billy Bunter only groaned. When Peter Todd spoke, he always meant what he said, and Billy Bunter simply shuddered at the prospect of a self-denial week.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Trouble in the Form-room.

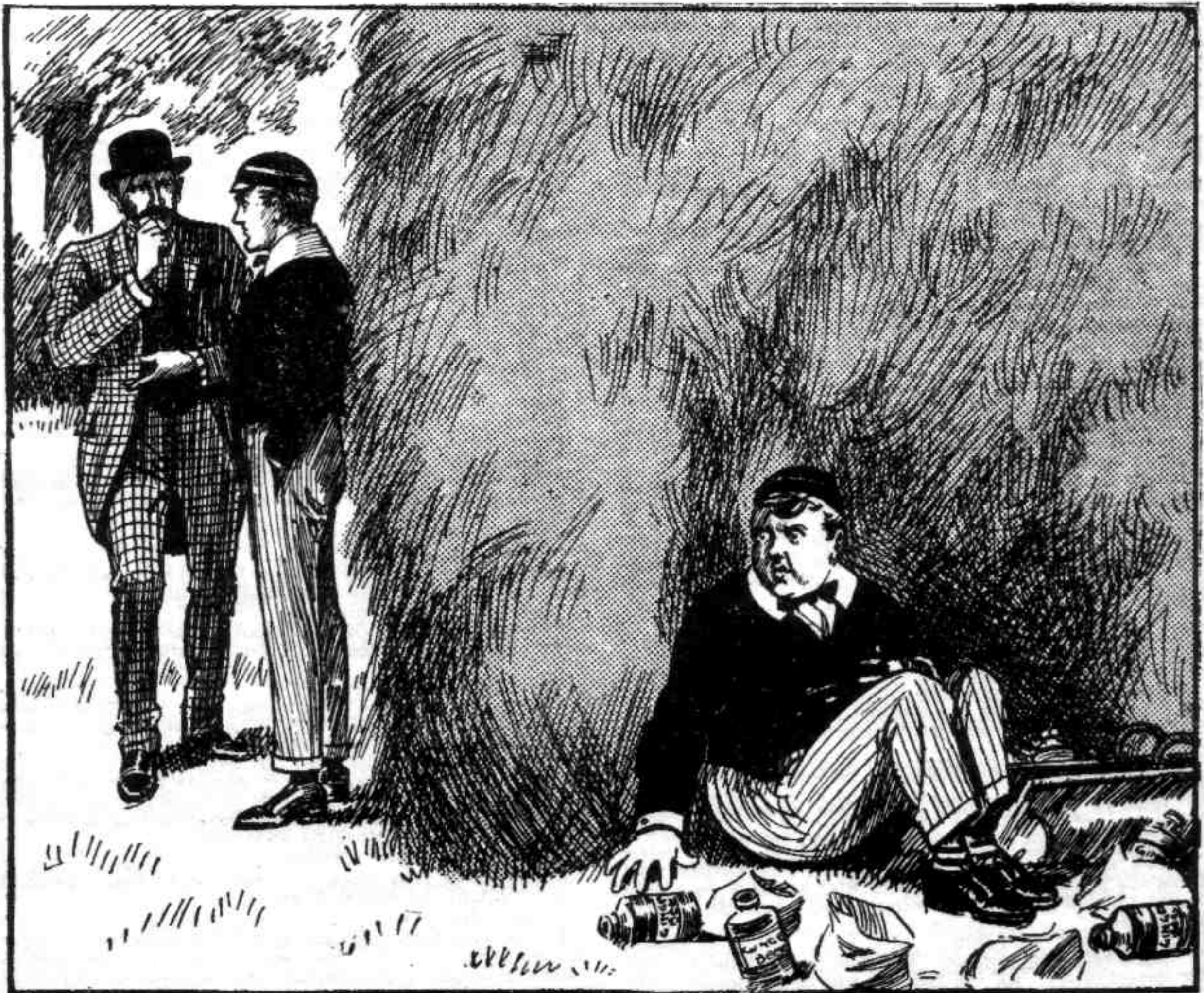
MR. CAPPER was exasperated.

Mr. Capper had cause for exasperation.

The illness of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, although not serious, was bad enough to keep him away from his duties at Greyfriars. The Head intended to engage a temporary master for the Remove, until Mr. Quelch's return; but being an extremely conscientious old gentleman, he would not be satisfied with anyone who did not fulfil all the requirements to the utmost. Some little time, therefore, was elapsing before the post was filled, and in the meantime, the Remove were "planted" on Mr. Capper.

Mr. Capper wished for Mr. Quelch's recovery as fervently as the Remove-master could have wished it himself. He wished, too, that the Head was not quite so particular in his selection of a merely temporary master. Meanwhile, he had the pleasure of instructing the Remove—and it was a very doubtful pleasure.

Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, did not con-



Fatty Wynn was in the midst of his feed when he was startled to hear voices near at hand. One of the voices he recognised as that of Cutts of the Fifth, and what the unwilling listener heard brought a flush of anger to his face. "The rotter!" muttered Fatty. "So Cutts is betting on the Wallaby match!" (An incident from "PLAYING TO WIN!" the splendid, long complete school tale by Martin Clifford, which is contained in this week's issue of "THE GEM LIBRARY." Out on Thursday. Price One Penny.)

veal their opinion that the Removites were troublesome kids, and intruders in the Form-room.

And the Removites cheerfully repaid the lofty disdain of the Fourth-Formers with such chipping and ragging as they could venture to indulge in, in the presence of the worried Mr. Capper.

When Mr. Capper was irritated—as was frequently the case with so large a class upon his hands—his irritation was generally turned upon the Removites. It cannot be denied that they generally deserved it. But they did not like it; and, having the idea in their heads that Mr. Capper was "down" on them, they indulged in the pleasure of pulling Mr. Capper's leg as often as they could.

They had various ways of making themselves obnoxious in the Fourth Form-room.

Vernon-Smith would sometimes construe so much better than Temple, who was head of the Fourth, as to make Temple green with envy. Then he would assume such a stolid stupidity on another occasion as to make Mr. Capper pink with rage.

Tom Dutton's affliction of deafness was an affliction to Mr. Capper, as well as to himself. Mr. Quelch was used to him; but Mr. Capper wasn't, and had no desire to be.

Billy Bunter, too, considered the absence of his Form-master a good excuse for slacking, and he slacked to such an extent that Mr. Capper had frequent recourse to the cane in

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dealing with him, thereby earning Bunter's unending hatred. Some of the Removites, too, would cheerfully find fault with Mr. Capper's methods, mentioning that Mr. Quelch was a great authority from whom there was no appeal.

It was not surprising that Mr. Capper's temper suffered—and still less surprising that the delinquents were made to suffer in consequence.

On this particular morning, when we present Mr. Capper to the reader in the above-mentioned state of exasperation, a practical joker had been at work in the Form-room. Mr. Capper was a great Greek scholar, and was supposed to be at work upon an edition of Plato that was to astonish the world some fine day. He had a large bust of Socrates in the corner of the Form-room, and would frequently instruct his class in some of the sayings of that great man, as reported by his chum Plato. Mr. Capper was very proud of that bust, and so he was doubly exasperated when he found that some person or persons unknown, had decorated Socrates with a false moustache, gummed on, and fastened a clay pipe in his mouth. A touch of paint at the corners of Socrates' mouth, too, gave him an absurd appearance of laughing; and the whole crowd of juniors, when they came in to morning lessons, burst into a roar of laughter at the sight of Socrates in his corner.

The juniors by no means shared Mr. Capper's reverence for the Athenian sage; indeed, they alluded to him—out of

their Form-master's hearing—as "Old Socks," and even as "Socky." Mr. Capper, surprised by the roar of laughter from his pupils, looked round to discover the cause, and he stood almost rooted to the floor at the sight of Socrates, grinning at him, with a moustache and a pipe.

It was evident that in his present state Socrates could not possibly be used to point a moral or adorn a tale.

"G-g-good heavens!" ejaculated Mr. Capper. "Who—who has dared—dared to desecrate my bust!"

He ran across to Socrates, and tried to drag off the decorations. The pipe broke in his hand, leaving the sage with the stump in his mouth; but the moustache was too tightly gummed to be removed, and the paint was dried hard, and could only be removed by patient scraping.

The Fourth and the Remove were chuckling gleefully. They disliked "Old Socks" intensely, and were glad to see him thus disrespectfully used.

But their chuckles died away as Mr. Capper turned his gleaming eyes upon them. The Form-master was seriously angry.

"Who has done this?" he thundered.

There was no reply.

"I demand to know the name of the author of this—this outrage!" exclaimed Mr. Capper. "I have little doubt that it was a Remove boy."

Now, this was unjust; the Removites didn't like Socrates, but they disliked him less intensely than the Fourth-formers, who had him, like the poor, always with them.

"It was probably you, Vernon-Smith," continued Mr. Capper. "You have taken most trouble to make the results of your Form-master's illness as unpleasant to me as possible."

"Oh, no, sir!" said the Bounder.

"I demand to know who the culprit was!" exclaimed Mr. Capper. "Unless I am told, I shall detain all the Remove for one hour this afternoon."

There was an indignant murmur from the Removites.

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Capper.

"'Tain't fair, sir!" said Bob Cherry sturdily.

"What! What!"

"'Tain't fair that we should be detained more than the Fourth, sir."

"Indeed! You venture an opinion upon my fairness, Cherry!"

"Yes, please, sir," said Bob innocently.

"You will take a hundred lines, Cherry. Perhaps you know the name of the—the ruffian who has thus desecrated the bust of the greatest of Grecian sages!" said Mr. Capper majestically.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Bob.

"Then hold your tongue. You will take a hundred lines for impertinence. All the Remove will be detained for one hour after lessons."

There was a buzz this time.

"Silence!" shouted the angry Form-master. "I will not have this noise. The Remove will be detained, unless the perpetrator of this outrage chooses to confess. I therefore appeal to the boy who has done it to stand up."

Tom Dutton rose in his place.

Mr. Capper's fierce eye, roaming over the class, had caught Dutton's inquiring gaze, and the deaf junior, hearing only the words "stand up," supposed that the Form-master was speaking to him. So he dutifully stood up.

"Ha, Dutton!"

"Yes, sir."

"It was you, then?"

"Eh?"

"Come out before the class, Dutton!" shouted Mr. Capper.

"Certainly, sir," said Dutton, in surprise, and he stepped out before the master's desk, where Mr. Capper was selecting a cane.

"You have been guilty of a desecration, Dutton," said Mr. Capper. "I trust you are aware of the enormity of your offence."

"I suppose I've got as much as any of the Fourth-Form chaps, anyway, sir," said Dutton sulkily.

"Eh? You have what?" exclaimed Mr. Capper.

"Sense, sir. I don't see why you should say I haven't any sense—"

"Boy, I did not say so! You did not hear me."

"No, I don't know that I fear you, sir," said Dutton. "I don't see anything to be afraid of. I haven't done anything."

"You have desecrated my bust—you have laid sacrilegious hands upon the bust of Socrates!" thundered Mr. Capper.

"No, I haven't, sir," said Tom, in dismay.

"What! You told me that you had!"

"Yes, he does look bad," agreed Dutton. "Looks funny, if you ask me, sir. But I don't know anything about it."

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

"Did you, or did you not, disfigure my bust in that ridiculous way?" shrieked Mr. Capper.

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Then why did you say you did?"

"No, I don't know who did, sir."

Mr. Capper breathed hard through his nose. The juniors tried hard not to giggle. It was not safe to giggle with the Form-master in his present temper.

"You rose when I called upon the guilty person to confess!" said Mr. Capper. "Did you not mean that you were the person? If you did not, what did you mean?"

"Not all that, sir."

"What!"

"It was only a lark, sir; I shouldn't call it mean," said Tom Dutton innocently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" shouted Mr. Capper, glaring round at the Fourth and the Remove. "I will not have this unseemly merriment. Dutton, I am convinced that you are affecting a greater degree of deafness than you are afflicted with. Is that the case?"

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir!"

And Tom Dutton turned to go back to his Form.

"Dutton! Where are you going?" shrieked Mr. Capper.

Dutton stared at him in astonishment.

"Didn't you tell me to go back to my place, sir?"

"I—I did not! I—I— But it is useless to talk to you! I am convinced that you are not so deaf as you affect to me. Hold out your hand!"

"For how long, sir?"

"What! What!"

"For how long am I to stand, sir? You told me to stand," said Dutton, eyeing the Form-master with some alarm, as if beginning to doubt his sanity.

"I—I—I— Hold out your hand!" roared Mr. Capper.

"What for, sir?" asked Dutton, hearing correctly this time.

"For the cane, of course!"

"Oh, no, sir; it won't be necessary for you to use force, sir," said Dutton. "But I don't think you ought to cane me when I haven't done anything."

"Your hand, sir!" bellowed Mr. Capper.

Dutton held out his hand sulkily, and Mr. Capper gave him a swipe with the cane that made him utter a yell. The Form-master was in a state of exasperation that made him hit harder than he was really aware of.

"Ow! Yow!" roared Dutton.

"Now go to your place, and don't make that ridiculous noise!" fumed the Fourth Form-master.

"Yow! Ow, ow!"

Dutton went back to his place, with his hand ducked under his arm, gasping. And there was a murmur of indignation from the Remove. Dutton had certainly been exasperating, but it was due to his deafness, and Mr. Capper had been hasty. The murmur made the Form-master glare about him with angry eyes.

"Silence!" he exclaimed. "How dare you make a noise in the Form-room!"

"Mr. Quelch doesn't cane Dutton for being deaf, sir!" said Peter Todd indignantly.

"I have caned Dutton for impertinence. I shall now cane you for impertinence, Todd! Hold out your hand!"

"Oh, crumbs! Ow!"

"Now silence! We shall now proceed with the lesson, and any disorderliness will be most severely punished!" exclaimed Mr. Capper. "Bunter!"

"Ye-e-es, sir?"

"What are you eating?"

"N-n-nothing, sir!"

"What! You venture to lie to me, Bunter, when you have your mouth stuffed full of something, probably indigestible pastry!" shouted Mr. Capper.

"I—I— Grooh! Splutter! I—"

"What is it, you greedy and disgusting boy?"

"Only a j-j-jam-tart, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I was hungry, sir! I'm not allowed to have enough to eat in my study, sir, and—"

"You must not bring jam-tarts or other disgusting and indigestible compounds into the Form-room, as you know very well, Bunter! Hold out your hand!"

"Oh, crikey! Ow! Ow!" moaned Bunter.

"Awfully handy with the cane this morning, ain't we?" murmured Bob Cherry.

He did not intend Mr. Capper to hear that remark, but the Form-master seemed to have ears of remarkable sharpness that morning. He swung round on Bob like a flash.

"You were talking, Cherry! I will have silence in my class, although it has been invaded by a band of unruly rascals from a lower Form! Hold out your hand!"

"Ow!"

Mr. Capper laid his cane upon the desk.

"We will now proceed!" he said. And they proceeded—the Fourth-Formers grinning and the Removites in a state of deep and suppressed indignation, all the deeper for being suppressed.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. Socrates' Bust!

THERE seemed to be thunder in the air in the Fourth Form-room that morning.

Mr. Capper was ready to break out again on the slightest provocation, and the Removites were in a humour to give all the trouble they could.

Whenever Mr. Capper's eyes fell upon the bust of Socrates they gleamed with indignation, and Billy Bunter, following his glance there several times, was seized with an idea.

Bunter was still smarting from his caning, and the idea of avenging the wrongs of the Remove by ragging Mr. Capper appealed to him. Mr. Capper was quite ignorant of Bunter's curious gifts as a ventriloquist, though Mr. Quelch had sometimes caned him for displaying his peculiar powers in the Remove-room.

"My hat!" murmured Bunter, his eyes gleaming vengefully. "I'll make him sit up, Toddy! You leave it to me!"

"Br-r-r!" said Peter Todd. "Better not get his eye on you again, fathead! You'll get it in the neck next time!"

"He doesn't know," murmured Bunter.

"Eh? He doesn't know what?"

"About my being a jolly clever ventriloquist."

"Well, I don't know about your being a jolly clever one," said Peter disparagingly.

"Oh, really Todd—"

Mr. Capper looked round with gleaming eyes.

"Someone is talking!" he said. "I will not have chattering in this class! I think it was you, Bunter!"

"Oh, no, sir!" said Bunter promptly.

"What! You were speaking to Todd."

"Not at all, sir; I simply said—ahem!—I mean, I didn't say anything at all, sir! I hope I know better than to talk in the Form-room, sir!"

"Apparently you do not, Bunter! You will take a hundred lines!"

"Oh, you rotter!" murmured Bunter.

"What did you say, Bunter?"

"I—I said you're very kind, sir, and—and I hope we shall be with you a long time, sir! It will be quite rotten for us when Mr. Quelch comes back, sir!"

"Pray do not talk nonsense, Bunter!"

"I—I mean, it will be jolly when Mr. Quelch comes back, sir, and we don't have to come to you any longer!" stammered Bunter.

"Take another hundred lines for impertinence, Bunter!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And another hundred for a ridiculous and vulgar ejaculation, sir!" roared Mr. Capper, who was now fairly upon the warpath.

Bunter did not ejaculate again, but his little round eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. He had three hundred lines to do, and he knew that Mr. Capper would exact every one of them. The punishment was quite out of proportion to the offence, and Bunter might be excused for feeling decidedly "ratty."

Mr. Capper, irritated by the ridiculous appearance of Socrates in his new guise, turned the face of the bust towards the wall. That was the opportunity of the Greyfriars ventriloquist.

As Mr. Capper came back to his desk, a voice proceeded—or, at all events, seemed to proceed—from the bust in the corner.

"Turn me round again!"

There was a gasp from the whole class. Mr. Capper spun round, and fixed his eyes upon the bust.

"G-g-goodness gracious!" he exclaimed. "What was that?"

"Turn me round again, please!"

"W-w-w-what!"

"Waltz me round again, Willie!" went on Socrates.

Mr. Capper stood motionless, breathless. If he had not heard it with his own ears, he could not have believed it. For a moment it seemed to the amazed Form-master that the spirit of the original sage had returned, and taken up its abode in the bust, and had a decided objection to being turned face to the wall in the corner like a naughty boy.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Capper. "I—I must be dreaming!"

"Waltz me round again, Willie!" said Socrates, with a tone of impatience in his voice.

"Dear me!"

Mr. Capper made a quick stride towards Socrates. An instant's reflection showed him that the voice could not possibly proceed from the bust; besides, Socrates himself would certainly have spoken in Greek, not in that extremely modern English.

Mr. Capper looked behind the pedestal upon which the

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bust was supported. There was not room there to conceal the smallest fag in the First Form. But Mr. Capper looked, and found that the space was empty.

He came back towards his class with a worried brow. It was a very hot day, and it occurred to Mr. Capper that the heat might have affected him to the extent of causing him to imagine that he heard voices.

He looked at his class; they were grinning. Billy Bunter had his eyes cast down. The Form-master was about to speak; but Socrates started first.

"Are you going to turn me round, Capper?"

The Form-master passed his hand across his heated brow.

"It is no dream!" he murmured. "I am awake—I am sane! A voice really proceeds from that bust! It is amazing, but it is true! Temple!"

"Yes, sir?" grinned Temple.

"Did you hear a voice from that bust?"

"From that bust!" said Temple, who knew that the voice had come from Billy Bunter. "Oh, no, sir! How could a voice come from a bust, sir?"

"It is extraordinary!" said Mr. Capper, flushing, and convinced by Temple's reply that the heat was causing his imagination to play him tricks. "I thought—that is, it appeared— But no matter! We will resume—"

"I'm waiting to be turned round!" said Socrates.

Mr. Capper jumped, and turned quite pale.

"Turn me round, Capper!" said Socrates plaintively.

"Xantippe never used to treat me like this! I wish I was back at Athens—I do, really!"

Mr. Capper held on to his desk for support, his glassy eyes fixed upon the bust.

"I wish my pal Plato was here!" went on Socrates. "He wouldn't allow me to be treated like this!"

"Temple! Wharton! Did you—did you hear a voice proceed from that bust?" murmured Mr. Capper, hardly able to speak.

"From the bust, sir?" said Wharton, in surprise.

"Yes; that bust of Socrates!"

"But a bust can't speak, sir!" said Wharton, in surprise.

"Are you ill, sir?"

"Ill!" said Mr. Capper, passing his hand over his brow.

"I—I—perhaps I am ill. I must be ill. I certainly fancied that I heard a voice proceed from that bust! It was an absurd mistake, of course—a very absurd mistake!"

But Mr. Capper, as if moved by some power he could not resist, went into the corner, and turned the bust round, so that it faced the class again. The juniors exchanged joyous grins, and Peter Todd gave Billy Bunter a rapturous dig in the ribs that made him gasp.

Mr. Capper scanned the bust closely, and Socrates certainly seemed to grin at him; but that was the effect of the painted corners surreptitiously added to his august mouth.

The Form-master came back from the bust, looking very pale and disconcerted. But his troubles were not yet over. He had hardly reached his desk, when Socrates continued his remarks:

"Where's my pipe?"

"What!"

"Where's my pipe, Capper?"

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

Mr. Capper gave the class a furious look. The sudden burst of laughter convinced him that the juniors had heard the voice as well as himself.

"This is some trick!" exclaimed the Form-master, and he rushed to the bust. "There is some contrivance here—some mechanism—"

He broke off as he scanned the bust. There was certainly no appearance of any speaking mechanism about it. Some wild suspicion of a tiny phonograph or a mechanism of that kind was in Mr. Capper's thoughts; but there was no sign of it.

He backed away from the bust, still keeping his eyes fixed upon it. Socrates waited till he was at a distance, and then started again.

"Give me my pipe, Capper! What a worry you are!"

"Bless my soul!"

"Sha'n't! Give me my pipe!"

"There—there is some wretched trick in this!" gasped Mr. Capper, glaring at the grinning juniors. "I am aware that the bust is hollow. Someone has contrived to place some kind of talking-machine inside it. I demand to know how this was done, and who—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Socrates.

"What-a-at!"

"Ring off! You talk too much!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This—this is infamous!" exclaimed Mr. Capper. "It is a trick—it must be a trick! I—"

"Rats!" said Socrates.

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PRICE
TWO PENCE.

Mr. Capper glared at the bust. Such language was not to be endured, even from the great sage of Athens. Mr. Capper made a spring to the grate, and grasped the poker. Then he made another spring to Socrates, with the poker whirling in the air.

Crash!

There was a wail of anguish as the poker smote the top of the bust, so life-like that Mr. Capper uttered a cry of consternation. The bust, smashed into pieces by the doughty blow, tumbled into fragments on the floor.

"Socrates' bu'st!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Capper, confounded by observing that there was no trace of a talking-machine in the ruins of the bust. "I—I will have order in this class! It—it is some trick—some wretched prank! If I hear—hear anything out of the usual in this room again this morning, I will cane the whole class, without exception!"

And the voice of Socrates was heard no more.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Postal-order.

BILLY BUNTER chuckled as he rolled out of the Form-room after morning lessons. He had three hundred lines to do; but he felt that he had scored over Mr. Capper. Temple of the Fourth clapped him on the shoulder in the passage.

"Good for you, Tubby!" he grinned. "We've got rid of that blessed bust now; we sha'n't have old Socky planted on us any more. Many thanks!"

"The fact is, Temple, I did it just to please you," said Bunter. "I say, could you lend me five bob till my postal-order comes—"

"All right, Dab; I'm coming!" said Temple.

"I say, Temple, you know—"

But Temple was gone.

Billy Bunter snorted. Temple was very pleased with the destruction of Socrates, but evidently not to the extent of a loan of five shillings.

"Post in yet, Trotter?" asked Billy Bunter, as he met the page in the hall.

"Not yet, Master Bunter," said Trotter. "'Ere any minute now!"

"Don't hurry off, Trotter," said Bunter, detaining the page with a fat forefinger on his arm. "I want to speak to you, Trotter!"

"Yes, Master Bunter?"

"You're a jolly intelligent chap, Trotter. You ought to be better than a boot-boy—you ought to be something very much better. Don't you think so?"

"I dunno, Master Bunter," said Trotter, puzzled.

"When I leave school I'm going to do something for you," said Bunter. "I shall speak of you to some of my titled relations, Trotter."

"I'm sure you're werry kind, Master Bunter," said Trotter, concealing a grin with a grimy hand.

He had heard of Billy Bunter's titled relations before.

"Not at all, Trotter," said Bunter condescendingly. "I consider you a very deserving chap. I intend to take a lot of notice of you—in fact, you may depend upon me to see you placed in life. I may make you my butler!"

"Thank you kindly, Master Bunter!"

"You deserve it," said Bunter, with an airy wave of a fat hand. "You will do me credit in my—my ancestral halls, Trotter. By the way, I'm expecting a postal-order. I believe you get pretty good wages here, Trotter?"

"I don't complain, Master Bunter."

GOOD TURNS!—No. 4.



A Magnetite
doing
a good turn
to his
chum's
favourite pet.





The juniors held their breath. For a moment it looked as though there was going to be a fearful accident. But the chauffeur saved the situation. With cool promptitude he turned the car into the grass by the roadside, avoiding the trap by a hair's-breadth. (See Chapter 2.)

"Very good! I suppose you wouldn't mind advancing me five bob, and taking my postal-order when it comes—"

"Coming!" called out Trotter, apparently hearing a bell at that moment; and he made a dive for the stairs.

"Here, Trotter! You low cad! You—you rotter! This is what comes of being kind to the lower classes!" growled Bunter, as he walked away grumbling.

"I say, Wharton," he said, as he came upon the captain of the Remove in the Close, "I happen to be expecting a postal-order—"

"Same old postal-order?" asked Wharton.

"Ahem! No, another one. Would you mind handing me over—"

"Not at all," said Wharton cheerfully, as he gave Billy Bunter a push with his hand, and the fat junior went over promptly.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Beast!"

Wharton walked away, and Bunter blinked after him furiously. The fat junior was in a most exasperated frame of mind. Peter Todd was enforcing the self-denying ordinance, and Bunter had found his usual little luxuries cut off. And,

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as it happened, he really was expecting a postal-order this time. But he was in the position of the boy in the fable who cried "Wolf!" so often when there was no wolf, that when the wolf really came no one believed him. Bunter had attempted so often to get credit for an expected postal-order, which had never arrived, that he had not the slightest chance of success now that there was one really coming.

The fat junior stood disconsolate, debating in his mind whether the postal-order would come in time for a snack before dinner, and whether there was any device he had left untried for raising money on his expectations. A clap on the shoulder interrupted his meditations.

"Ow!" said Bunter. "Todd, you silly ass—"

"Just thinking it out?" asked Todd.

"Yes," said Bunter.

"Good!" Peter Todd took out his little leather bag.

"How much?"

Bunter blinked at the bag through his spectacles.

"What's that for?" he demanded.

"Weren't you just thinking out how much you could contribute to-day?" asked Peter Todd.

The fat junior snorted.
 "No, I jolly well wasn't! Look here, Todd, I'm fed up with this self-denial rot—I am really. I'm simply fed up with it!"
 "Well, that's all the better for you," said Todd cheerfully. "You're not likely to have anything else to get fed up with till the end of the self-denial week!"
 "I say, Todd, will you lend me five bob out of that bag? I've got a postal-order coming—"
 "Oh, don't be funny!" remonstrated Peter.
 "But I have, really!" said Bunter, almost tearful in his earnestness. "I really have one coming this time, Toddy. It—it isn't from a titled relation; it—it's from my uncle, the town councillor in Puddleton. He is really going to send me five bob!"
 "Bats!"
 "Honour bright!" said Bunter. "Now, look here, you give me five bob out of the bag, and you can have the postal-order when it comes!"
 "Are you asking me to embezzle the Cottage Hospital funds?" roared Peter Todd, in a terrific voice.
 Bunter jumped.
 "Nunno! Oh, no! Just lend me five bob out of the bag—"
 "That bag is inviolable, you fathead! It would be embezzlement to touch it! Besides, I don't believe in your postal-order. I've heard of it before!"
 "It's really genuine," said the unfortunate Bunter. "If it doesn't come by this post, it will be here by tea-time!"
 "I'll believe it when I see it!"
 "Hallo, Bunter!" sang out Tubb of the Third. "Here comes the postman! This is where you get the postal-orders!"
 And there was a cackle from a group of fags. But Billy Bunter did not mind the cackle. He rushed away to meet the postman, and Peter Todd followed him.
 "I say, you've got a letter for me!" exclaimed the Owl of the Remove. "Bunter—William George Bunter—W. G. Bunter, Esquire—"
 "Yes, sir!" said the postman, handing the letter out of the bag.
 Bunter blinked through his glasses at Peter Todd with great triumph. He opened the letter with a flourish, and waved a postal-order in the air. It was a postal-order for five shillings. Quite a crowd of fellows gathered round to stare at it.
 "My only hat! He's really got a postal-order at last!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Bunter, old man, is that the one you were expecting last term, or last Christmas?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Five bob!" said Hazeldene. "My hat!"
 "The five-bobfulness is terrific."
 "Who said the age of miracles was past?" grinned Vernon-Smith.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Billy Bunter snorted.
 "Anyway, I've got the postal-order," he said. "I hope you won't be silly asses enough in future to doubt my statements. My rich relations—"
 "His rich relations produce five bob among the lot of them in a whole term," remarked Vernon-Smith. "They must be simply rolling in money."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Well, it's a real postal-order, and not a ghost!" said Peter Todd. "It's strange but true—truth is stranger than fiction, you know. Bunter, old man, this postal-order has come in the nick of time."
 "Yes; I shall be able to get a snack before dinner now—"
 "You will be able to contribute five shillings to the self-denial fund."
 "Eh?"
 "Getting deaf?" said Peter pleasantly. "Here's the bag."
 "The—the bag!"
 "Yes. Put it in!"
 "P-p-p-put it in!" stammered Bunter.
 "Yes!" roared Peter.
 "P-p-p-put what in?"
 "The postal-order, of course. It's your contribution to the fund. This is where you self-deny, and set a shining example to the other fellows."
 Billy Bunter gave his study leader a glare of concentrated fury.
 "I'm not going to do anything of the sort!" he roared. "Blow the fund! Blow the Cottage Hospital! Blow you!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "The blowfulness is terrific!"
 "Now hand it over!" said Peter Todd. "Don't be a pig. Bunter. Alonzo has put in more than five bob already, and Dutton has contributed the price of the new bike-lamp he was going to get, and is making the old one do. I've put in the price of the birthday present I was going to buy my Uncle Benjamin. You can't be backward after that. Shove it in!"

"I won't!" roared Bunter.
 "His one little ewe-lamb!" sighed Bob Cherry. "Poor old Bunter! He wasn't born to be a self-denier!"
 "Are you going to contribute that postal-order?" demanded Peter.
 "No, I'm not!" roared Bunter. "I'll see you blowed first."
 And Bunter made a rush and escaped into the School House. There was a roar of laughter from the juniors.
 "Bring that contribution here!" roared Peter Todd.
 But Bunter was gone. Peter Todd, with a very incensed look, followed him into the house, but Bunter was out of sight. Todd hurried out again and stood guard over the tuck-shop, where, of course, Bunter would be coming to cash the postal-order sooner or later. Five minutes later the fat junior came in sight, looking round him cautiously as he came across the Close. He caught sight of Peter Todd at the tuck-shop, and ran.
 "Come back!" roared Peter.
 Billy Bunter disappeared round the house. And Peter Todd did not see him again till they met in the dining-room for dinner. Peter had not the contribution, and Bunter had not had the snack, and the famous postal-order was still unchanged. And the grinning Removites were very interested to see how that peculiar contest would end.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.
Billy Bunter Takes Up Greek.

"LOOK out, Bunter!" yelled Bob Cherry, when the Removites came out of the dining-hall after dinner. The Owl of the Remove blinked round nervously. Peter Todd was just about to link arms with him when Bunter dodged away.
 "Bunter, old fellow—" said Peter, in honeyed tones. Bunter backed away in alarm.
 "You keep your distance, Toddy," he said. "I know what you're after, and you're jolly well not going to have it!"
 "Now, look here, Bunt, you may as well hand over that contribution."
 "I'm not going to," said Bunter. "I've been famished in the study. There won't be a decent tea to-night, you know that. If I don't have a snack my health will suffer. I'm bound to spend this postal-order on having a little snack, from a—sense of duty to myself."
 "And what about the self-denial fund?" demanded Peter indignantly. "You haven't contributed anything so far, excepting a French penny."
 "Oh, bust the self-denial fund!"
 "What about the noble cause of charity?" grinned Vernon-Smith.
 "All rot!" granted Bunter. "I don't believe in hospitals. If the doctors want patients to practise on, let 'em pay for 'em themselves. I knew a chap once whose life was saved by an accident—the car broke down that was taking him to a hospital for an operation. Upon the whole, I'm opposed to hospitals on principle."
 "Are you going to hand over—"
 "No, I'm not!" snorted Bunter.
 "Rank rebellion!" grinned Vernon-Smith. "Bravo, Bunter!"
 "I'll give him bravo Bunter!" growled Peter Todd. "I'll —"
 Billy Bunter dodged away. Mr. Capper was in the passage, and the Owl of the Remove took shelter under his wing, so to speak.
 "I—I say, sir!" stammered Bunter. "Would you mind lending me your—your Plato, sir?"
 That was a short cut to Mr. Capper's tenderest affections. The Fourth-Form master beamed upon Billy Bunter.
 "Certainly, Bunter!" he said. "Come into my study."
 "Thank you so much, sir!"
 And Bunter, with a triumphant blink over his shoulder at the exasperated Peter Todd, followed the master into his study. The juniors in the passage chuckled gleefully. Peter could not follow the recalcitrant Bunter there to collect the contribution.
 "The fat rotter!" growled Peter. "I'll scalp him for this! He seems to have forgotten who's head of No. 7 Study."
 "I wouldn't stand Capper and Plato for five bob, though," said Bob Cherry. "Capper will start expounding Greek to him. It's worth five quid, not five bob!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 And indeed Bunter, as soon as he was in Mr. Capper's study, found that he had escaped out of the frying-pan into the fire. In that study he was safe, and his postal-order was safe, until afternoon lessons, but it was at the terrible price of hearing Mr. Capper expound upon his favourite theme. If Billy Bunter hated anything more than self-denial, it was

study; and of all kinds of study, the learned languages were the most distasteful to him. He had to grind Latin, as it was compulsory, but wild horses would not have dragged him to the study of Greek. And he had an intense and personal dislike for Socrates and Plato.

"Pray sit down, Bunter," said Mr. Capper, beaming, and opening a gigantic volume on the table. "I may say, Bunter, that I am pleased—surprised and pleased—by this interest you have evinced in one of the greatest of sages of ancient times."

"The fact is, sir, I've always been deeply interested in Socks, sir—I mean Socrates," said Bunter. "I was very shocked, sir, at the way the bust was treated in the Form-room. I am not surprised that you were annoyed, sir. The most reckless boy, sir, ought to have some respect for a great Roman like Socrates."

"Ahem! A great Greek, you mean, Bunter—but your sentiment is undoubtedly excellent," said Mr. Capper. "On reflection, Bunter, you need not do the lines I imposed upon you this morning."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" said Bunter.

"Your interest in this subject does you credit," said Mr. Capper. "You do not, I believe, take Greek, Bunter?"

"No, sir. Linley does, and Bob Cherry's been doing Greek lately. They like it. I think—" Bunter was just going to state what he thought upon the subject, but he checked himself in time. "I think it's a wonderful language, sir, and I've often longed to take it up as a study."

"My dear boy, I should be very pleased to render you any assistance in my power," said Mr. Capper genially. "I have an edition of Plato in English, which I can lend you—you may take it with you."

But Bunter did not want to leave the Form-master's study yet. He knew that Peter Todd was waiting outside. The fat junior intended to remain in his present safe quarters till the coast was clear, even at the expense of beginning Greek.

"I suppose it's ever so much more interesting in Greek, sir," he suggested.

"Undoubtedly, and more instructive," said Mr. Capper. "But as you do not know Greek—"

"I was wondering whether you'd give me a few hints about beginning the study of Greek, sir," said Bunter modestly. His keen ear had caught the sound of a footstep outside, and he knew that Peter Todd was there.

Mr. Capper beamed.

"Bunter, I cannot say how pleased I am at this—this desire to improve your knowledge. I have looked upon you as an idle boy, and I find I was very much mistaken. I beg your pardon, Bunter!" said Mr. Capper generously.

"Not at all, sir!" said Bunter. "A chap doesn't want to appear to be a swot, sir—the other fellows are liable to chup him—that's how it is, sir. But I'd rather study Greek than—than anything else I can think of, sir."

"Draw your chair to the table, Bunter. I will give you some preliminary instruction in the Greek alphabet," said Mr. Capper.

Billy Bunter suppressed a groan. He listened intently; if Peter Todd was gone, he would gladly have escaped with Plato in English, without any instruction in the Greek alphabet. But he heard faint sounds from the passage, which proved that his study-leader was still there.

Peter Todd was waiting outside the Fourth Form-master's study to catch him as he emerged. Probably he foresaw that Bunter would not be able to stand much Plato, and would attempt to escape sooner or later. And Peter was patient—he was willing to wait.

"Take your pen, Bunter—here is a pen."

"Thank you, sir."

"Write down, first, the names of the Greek letters, and then I will show you how to form them," said Mr. Capper: "Alpha, beta, gamma, delta, epsilon, zeta, eta, theta—"

Billy Bunter wrote them down slowly. He proceeded to the end of the Greek alphabet, and having finished with omega, he laid down the pen.

"Now, alpha, that is A," said Mr. Capper. "The capital letter is exactly the same as in English, you perceive, and the small letter is very similar—you appear to be listening to something else, Bunter. What is the matter?"

"I—I thought I heard—somebody—something," stammered Bunter.

"Pray pay attention. The second letter, beta, is B, and—dear me! Bless my soul!"

Billy Bunter had almost resolved to chance capture by Peter Todd rather than proceed further than Beta in the Greek alphabet. But in the nick of time he bethought him of his ventriloquism. From the direction of the door came a

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ONE
PENNY.

voice that ought to have been Peter Todd's, and certainly sounded as if it was.

"Chuck that rot!"

Mr. Capper started to his feet. His impression was that Peter Todd had shouted that disrespectful remark through the keyhole.

"Good gracious! That was Todd's voice, was it not, Bunter?"

"It sounded like it, sir," said Bunter demurely.

Mr. Capper picked up a cane, and made one long stride to the door. He flung the door open, and there was Peter Todd in the passage, leaning against the opposite wall, waiting. He glanced at Mr. Capper, surprised by the fury in his looks.

"Todd!" thundered the Form-master, "this is too much. I have never heard of such insolence. Never, sir, in my life. If I had not heard with my own ears, sir, I should refuse to believe it. I should absolutely refuse, sir. You are an impertinent young rascal, sir."

"I, sir!" gasped Peter in dismay. "I—I—"

He had no time to get further. Mr. Capper grasped him by the collar with his left hand, and wielded the cane with his right. The cane rose and fell with rapidity and force.

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

"Ow!" roared Peter. "I say, sir, what's the—yaroooh—matter? I—ow—oh—d-d-don't—yah! Great Scott!—oh, crumbs!—yah! Oh!"

"There!" gasped Mr. Capper. "Now go!"

He released the astonished junior. Peter Todd was only too glad to go. His impression was that Mr. Capper had suddenly gone mad, and was dangerous. He fled down the passage the instant he was released. Mr. Capper, breathing hard, turned back into the study.

"I do not think we shall be interrupted again," he said.

Bunter was on his feet now. The coast was clear, and he did not mean to continue the study of Greek just then. Socrates and Plato could be saved up for a rainy day.

"I think I'll go and learn the alphabet by heart now, sir," said Bunter hurriedly.

"Then I can learn to write it afterwards."

"Very well, Bunter."

Billy Bunter took the sheet in his hand, and left the study. He did not take the

same direction as Peter Todd, but went upstairs, and looked out of a window. He caught sight of Peter in the Close, keeping guard on the tuckshop. Billy Bunter shook his fist from the window at his study leader, and groaned. His postal-order was still safe, but the snack appeared as far off as ever. His only consolation was to tear into fragments the sheet upon which he had written the Greek alphabet, and jump on the fragments.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Short Commons.

BOB CHERRY looked into Study No. 1 at tea-time.

Harry Wharton and Nugent were there, getting tea. They called it tea, as usual, but, as a matter of fact, there was no tea. That cheerful beverage was seen no more in Study No. 1. On the table was a jug of milk—a small jug—and a large jug of water. There was a loaf, and there was butter. There was plenty of loaf, but not very much butter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Just going to enjoy yourselves?" asked Bob.

Frank Nugent made a grimace.

"We're self-denying," he groaned. "Have you come to tea? You're welcome—there's plenty of bread and lots of water."

"Thanks!" said Bob. "I was thinking of coming to tea, because we're self-denying in my study. Marky is going it strong; but I don't think I'm quite famished enough for bread and water. Good-bye."

And Bob Cherry departed grinning.

The chums of Study No. 1 sat down to tea. Frank Nugent measured out a sparing allowance of milk, and filled up the cups with water. Then he picked up the sugar-tongs, and paused.

"Shall we have sugar in it?" he demanded.

"One lump," said Wharton. "Two lumps a day; and we can make our stock of sugar last the rest of the week, and shan't have to buy any."

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PRICE
TWO PENCE.

"Good!"

Nugent dropped a lump of sugar into each cup.

Johnny Bull looked in. The expression on Johnny Bull's face was somewhat lugubrious. He had a two-shilling piece in his hand.

"Where's the box?" he asked.

Wharton held out the collecting-box. The florin clinked into it, and Johnny Bull sighed.

"Had tea?" asked Nugent.

"They're having it in my study," said Bull. "Rake and Fishy are having a regular feed. They asked me to stand my whack—of course I couldn't. I brought the two bob here."

"Good for you!" exclaimed Wharton. "You'd better have tea with us."

Bull's face lighted up a little. It was evident that he was hungry. Johnny Bull was a sturdy fellow, and he had a healthy appetite.

"What have you got?" he asked.

"Plenty of bread—"

"Oh!"

"And some butter."

"Ah!"

"And milk and water—not too strong."

"Um!"

"But you're quite welcome," said Nugent. "In fact, anybody's welcome to this—I'd rather somebody else ate it. Wharton, don't you think it would run to a new loaf?"

Wharton shook his head.

"My dear chap, we can't waste nearly a whole loaf. I know it's stale, but then stale bread is good for the digestion, you know. There's a silver lining to every cloud."

"I shall want some new teeth soon, then," growled Frank. "Johnny, old man, will you have some of this loaf? You can have as much as you like."

"Thanks," growled Johnny Bull, "I won't rob you."

And he departed.

Nugent munched stale bread with a scrape of butter on it. Harry Wharton sipped his milk-and-water, and regarded the provender with a thoughtful eye.

Billy Bunter blinked in at the door cautiously. He gave another cautious blink up and down the passage, and then stepped in quickly and closed the door, and stood panting. The chums of the Remove looked at him curiously. Bunter looked very much like a hunted criminal, who felt the police close upon his track.

"I say, you fellows," the fat junior began.

"Sit down," said Nugent. "Pile in. Will you have bread-and-butter or butter-and-bread? And milk-and-water, or water-and-milk. Take your choice; and don't spare the grub."

Billy Bunter cast a glance at the tea table, and sniffed.

"I haven't come to tea," he said. "I'm dodging that beast, Todd. He's after my postal-order."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at," granted Bunter. "I'm simply famished, and I want a feed. I can't get to the tuckshop—the beast is watching it. He's left Tom Dutton inside the tuckshop, and Alonzo outside it; and he's stalking me round the place like a beastly bloodhound. If the beast spots me, I shall have to dodge into old Capper's study and learn the beastly Greek alphabet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you chaps, will you change the postal-order for me?" pleaded Bunter, "and then cut down to the tuckshop and get me some grub. I—I'll stand you some jam-tarts if you get me the tommy without Todd spotting it."

"Can't be did," said Wharton with a shake of the head.

"We can't help you to swindle Todd in this way."

"Swindle!" yelled Bunter indignantly. "It's my own postal-order, ain't it?"

"No; it goes to the fund. You've got to follow your leader," said Wharton severely. "Think of the poor poor. Think of the honour to Greyfriars to have a bed in the Cottage Hospital named after the Remove. Go and put the postal-order in the bag at once."

"Rats! Blow the poor. The poor never did anything for me," growled Bunter. "Besides, I don't believe in hospitals. I don't believe in giving money to charities recklessly. Look here, will you go and get some grub for me? We'll have a feed here—I'll stand it. You must be tired of bread-and-scrape by this time. You can get stuff as good as that if you have tea in hall. Look here—"

"I'll tell you what," said Nugent. "You needn't contribute that postal-order to Peter Todd's fund. Shove it in the box here instead."

"Good idea," said Wharton heartily. "It will be safe then."

Bunter glared at them.

"Well, you silly asses—" He broke off as there was a sound of a footstep in the passage, and trembled. "Oh, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 287.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

crumbs, there comes that awful beast, Todd, after my postal-order. Don't tell him I'm here, you fellows. Give me a chance to get out if the awful beast comes in."

Bunter flattened himself against the wall behind the door, so as to be concealed from sight when it opened. There was a tap, and the door opened, and Peter Todd stepped in. He glanced round the study, but did not see Bunter. The door hid him from sight.

"Have you come to tea?" asked Nugent genially. "Will you try the loaf? There's a chopper in the cupboard. Lots of water, if you're thirsty—the milk's running short, but there's plenty of water—good and clear from the crystal spring—"

"I'm looking for Bunter," said Peter. "The beast is dodging me, trying to keep that postal-order that belongs to the fund. Have you seen— Oh, my hat!"

Bunter whipped out from behind the door, dashed out of the study, and slammed the door behind him. Todd stood for a moment in astonishment, while Wharton and Nugent yelled with laughter.

"My hat! He was here all the time—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Todd tore the door open and dashed out of the study.

"Ha, ha, ha! I wonder who'll get that postal-order?" chuckled Nugent. "Will you have another cup of milk-and-water, Harry?"

"Grooh—no! Have you had enough to eat?"

"Enough of that!" said Nugent, with a grimace.

"The loaf will last us all the week at this rate."

"I think it will last all my life," said Nugent.

"That was a good suggestion of Bunter's," Wharton remarked thoughtfully. "We'll have tea in hall—it's no worse than this—and save the expense altogether. We can sell off what's left of our provisions to the fellows."

"Well, there's only two-thirds of a loaf left, and about a dozen lumps of sugar," growled Nugent. "It won't swell the fund. Sure you won't have another cup of water?"

"Ugh—yes!"

"Then we've had tea!" said Nugent, rising from the table.

"Feel bloated?"

"Ahem! It's good for us!" said Wharton. "There's no doubt whatever about that—a week of self-denial is good for anybody. But—but I'm glad it's only for a week."

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Hide and Seek!

BILLY BUNTER made a sudden dash across the Close to the tuckshop.

He had left Peter Todd seeking him in the upper passages, following on his track like a Red Indian seeking a deadly foe. Bunter, with masterly sagacity, had dropped from a window to the roof of an outhouse, and reached the ground. Relieved of the tracker for the moment, at least, he descended upon the tuckshop. Peter had left Alonzo and Dutton there to keep guard, knowing that that was the place Bunter would make for if he eluded pursuit.

Alonzo was seated on the bench outside the tuckshop reading, and he was so deeply interested in his volume that he did not look up as Bunter came by. Billy Bunter tiptoed carefully past him into the tuckshop, and gasped with relief. One enemy was passed; but he still had Tom Dutton to deal with. The deaf junior was inside the shop, and he was on the watch. Dutton had made a generous contribution to the study fund for the Cottage Hospital—and, naturally, he meant that Bunter should be generous too.

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Dutton, as Bunter rolled in.

"I—I say, Dutton," panted Bunter. "Peter Todd wants you! He—he—he's sent me to say so. He's fallen down-stairs and broken his neck—I mean his leg—"

"Eh?"

"Peter's had an accident!" roared Bunter. "He's fallen out of a window and sprained his head—I mean his ankle. He's dying fast. Will you go to him?"

"Who is? Grahame White?"

"Eh? Who's talking about Grahame White?" snorted Bunter.

"You said somebody was flying past."

"Dying fast!" shrieked Bunter.

"Poor chap!" said Dutton. "Has there been an aeroplane accident?"

"It's Peter Todd."

"What rot! Peter can't go up in an aeroplane, and he's not got one, either. I say, Bunter, I'm here to collect that postal-order—"

"The Head wants you, Dutton," shrieked Bunter, changing his tack.

"I don't care whether he likes boiled mutton or not,"

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Every Friday.

said the deaf junior, in surprise: "What are you getting at?"

"You are to go to the Head at once."

"That's what I want you to do; hand it over at once," said Tom Dutton, holding out his hand. "Now, sharp's the word, and don't talk any more rot about aeroplanes or boiled mutton, but hand out that postal order."

Billy Bunter groaned. Coker, of the Fifth, came into the tuckshop with Potter and Greene of that Form. Coker threw a half-sovereign on the counter in his usual lordly manner.

"Ginger-pop—and ices!" he said.

"Yes, Master Coker," said Mrs. Mimble.

"I'm waiting for that postal-order," said Tom Dutton, who had inserted his knuckles into Bunter's collar, and was holding fast. "Hand it over!"

Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. His postal-order was in great danger now, for Dutton was a determined youth. But once more the skill of the Greystriars ventriloquist came to his aid.

"You Fifth-Form bounders, get out of here!" came a wonderful imitation of Dutton's voice—which Dutton himself was too deaf to hear.

Coker, and Potter, and Greene, who were waiting for Mrs. Mimble to serve their ices, swung round in anger and indignation.

"What's that?" roared Coker.

"Get out of here, or I'll boot you out!"

Coker gasped.

"Well, of all the cheek! I'll jolly soon show you whether you'll boot me out!" he roared. "Collar the cheeky kid, you fellows!"

Coker, and Potter, and Greene piled on Tom Dutton instantly, and wrenched himself away from Bunter. The instant he was free, Billy Bunter whipped out of the tuckshop and ran. Tom Dutton would have rushed after him, but he was in the grasp of the Fifth-Formers.

"Leggo!" he roared. "Wharrer you up to? Chuck it!"

"Boot us out, will you?" said Potter.

"Wallop him!"

"Eh?"

"Bump him!"

Tom Dutton, utterly amazed by the attack of the Fifth-Formers, was bumped and rolled over on the floor, and Coker emptied a glass of ginger-beer over him, and Potter smashed an egg on his neck. Then he was rolled out of the shop, and left gasping.

"Dear me!" said Alonzo, looking up from his book. "What ever is the matter with you, Dutton?"

"Ow! Coker's gone mad! Oh!"

"You look wet, my dear Dutton, and somewhat eggy. Pray allow me to assist you to your feet," said Alonzo. "You had better go and obtain some soap and water, and perform a very necessary ablution, Dutton."

"Eh?"

"You require some ablutions!" bawled Alonzo.

"I'm staying here to watch for that villain Bunter," growled Dutton. "Lend me your handkerchief. I'm not going to take my eye off the tuckshop—the fat villain will blue that postal order if I do."

And Dutton mopped away the egg and ginger-beer with the handkerchief Alonzo kindly lent him, and remained on guard. Billy Bunter was watching him from behind a tree in the Close, hoping to see him depart; but that was another of Bunter's many disappointments.

"Oh, the rotters!" groaned Bunter. "I'm getting famished, and I've left it too late for tea in hall now—and, oh, the beast! I'll change into another study, and let them see how they can get on without me, the rotters. As if a chap can't do as he likes with his own postal-order! I shall have to go down to Uncle Clegg's in the village—the beasts!"

There was evidently nothing else to be done. Bunter blinked round cautiously, and started for the gates. He was within a few yards of the open gateway, when he caught sight of a well-known figure standing in the road. It was Peter Todd, and he was looking in the direction of Friardale. Evidently Peter suspected that Bunter might have dodged out to go down to the village with the postal order.

Billy Bunter halted, with a gasp at his narrow escape, and dodged behind the porter's lodge; only just in time, for Peter, having scanned the road, came back into the gateway. Billy Bunter lay low, in fear and trembling. If once Peter's grip fastened upon him, it was all up with that postal-order—he knew that. Peter Todd stopped outside the lodge, and called to Gosling the porter.

"Have you see Bunter this way, Gossy, old man?"

"No, I hain't, Master Todd," replied Gosling; "and wot I says is this 'ere, I don't want to, neither."

Peter Todd hesitated. Bunter hoped that he would go

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ONE
PENNY.

away, and then the fat junior could have dodged out into the road and run for it. Hide and seek was an exciting game, but Bunter had had quite enough of it.

But Peter Todd did not go. He gave a shrill whistle—that shrill whistle which made fellows throw things at him, and which even Tom Dutton could hear. The deaf junior came hurrying down to the gates.

"Got him?" he exclaimed.

"No. Have you seen the beast?" asked Peter.

"Oh, no, he won't get a feast if we keep our eyes open!" said Dutton. "He came to the tuckshop, and I collared him, and then Coker set on me for nothing at all, and I had to let him go, and he scooted."

"Stay here and see that he doesn't get out," said Peter. "I'll give him a wallop when I nail him. I'm fed-up with his rot."

"Off his dot? Well, I don't know, but he was certainly talking a lot of queer piffle to me—talking about aeroplanes flying past, and boiled mutton, and things. Shall I wait here?"

"Yes!" roared Peter.

"Right-ho!"

Tom Dutton leaned on the gate to keep watch and ward. Peter Todd walked off, with his eyes well about him. Billy Bunter crouched behind the porter's lodge and groaned. His escape was cut off now. Dutton guarded the way to the village—Alonzo was on guard at the tuckshop—and Peter Todd was stalking him. Matters looked very serious for Billy Bunter's postal-order now.

Peter stopped at the tuckshop, kicked Alonzo's book out of his hands, and bade him with dreadful threats to keep a careful watch, and then went over to the School House. Billy Bunter ventured out of his hiding-place at last. His fat face lighted up as he caught sight of Sammy Bunter, his minor, in the Close. Sammy grinned as his fat major bore down on him.

"Todd's looking for you," he remarked.

"I know he is, the beast!" growled Bunter. "Sammy, old man, will you get me some things at the tuckshop—change my postal-order. Bring 'em to the box-

room, and I'll go halves with you—I will really.

"I'm on!" said Sammy.

Bunter took out the famous postal-order.

"I've filled it in," he said. "Mrs. Mimble will change it. Mind, Sammy, you're not to scoff the stuff—bring it to the box-room, and we'll go halves."

"You scoffed my tarts the other day," said his minor.

"I'll give you twice as many out of this. Get jam-tarts, and cake, and dough-nuts, and ginger-beer," said Bunter. "Mind, bring it all to the box-room."

"That's all right," said Bunter minor, and he ran off with the postal-order. Bunter major followed him dubiously with his eyes. He had his doubts about his minor, and only a case of desperate necessity could have induced him to trust money into Sammy's hands.

But it was the last chance. Ere long Peter would have stalked him down, and then the postal-order would have disappeared into the fund. It was better to trust it to Sammy while he had a chance.

Bunter rolled into the house, and was making his way to the box-room, when Peter Todd sighted him. In a moment the Owl of the Remove was in Peter's grip.

"Now then," said Peter, holding out the leather bag with one hand, and shaking Billy Bunter with the other. "Shell out! Five bob for the fund."

Bunter grinned. He could afford to grin now.

"I'm sincerely sorry, Toddy—" he began.

"I don't want your sorrow—I want the cash!" said Todd. "Shell out!"

"Sorry; I've spent it."

"No, you haven't," said Peter calmly. "I've been watching you too well for that. You haven't had a chance. Are you going to hand it over, or shall I—?"

"I—I've given it to Wharton for his fund!" gasped Bunter.

"Liar!" said Peter, cheerfully. "But I'll ask Wharton."

"Cut along and ask him, and—"

"Yes, and you'll cut along with me, too," said Peter Todd, marching Billy Bunter to Study No. 1 by main force. He kicked open the study door. "You here, Wharton?"

"Hallo!" said Harry. "So you've caught him?"

"Have you been bagging my fund for your fund?" demanded Peter.



NEXT
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PRICE
TWO PENCE.

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I made a mistake!" murmured Bunter. "I really meant to say, Toddy, that I lent it to— to Coker—"

"Will you lend me a cricket-stump, Wharton?" asked Todd politely. "I've got to give Bunter a tip about telling the truth."

"Hold on!" roared Bunter. "I—I've handed it to my minor. It's spent now. It's spent, you beast! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton.
Peter Todd glared at Bunter. He could see that the fat junior was telling the truth this time. He bumped Bunter down in the passage, and flew to the stairs. He descended the stairs three at a time, colliding with Micky Desmond en route, and hurling him upon the middle landing.

"Tare an' 'ounds!" roared Micky. "Is it mad ye are, ye thafe of the worruld? Sure I—"

But Peter Todd did not stop to listen. He dashed out of the School House, and sped across to the tuckshop.

"Alonzo! Seen Bunter minor?" he gasped.

"Yes, my dear Peter, Bunter minor is in the shop—"

Peter rushed in. Bunter minor was seated upon a high stool at the counter, with a jammy grin on his fat face. Empty plates and glasses were in array before him. Sammy was just demolishing the last tart as Peter came in. Sammy was very much like his major, and he had understudied Billy to the life this time. He had forgotten all about the appointment in the box-room. He had started with a snack, and the "snack" had extended, until the five shillings' worth of tuck had been consumed. Half a tart, and half a glass of ginger-beer remained out of Billy Bunter's postal-order.

Sammy Bunter blinked round at the excited Removite through his spectacles, and his jammy grin grew broader.

"Where's that postal-order?" roared Peter.

"Cashed!"

"Where's the change?"

"Spent!"

"Then where's the grub?"

Sammy patted his fat waistcoat.

"Eaten!"

Peter Todd glared at him. The hide and seek was over, but the postal-order had been run down a little too late. Peter Todd's feelings were too deep for words. He grasped

Sammy Bunter, and yanked him off the stool, stuffed the remaining piece of jam-tart down his neck, and emptied what remained of the ginger-beer over him. Then he strode indignantly from the tuckshop, leaving Sammy roaring.

Ten minutes later Billy Bunter looked in, and found Sammy engaged in desperate efforts to get jam out of his collar.

"Did Todd get the stuff, Sammy?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"Grooh! No, he didn't! Groogh!"

"Oh, good! Where is it?"

"Groogh! I ate it—to save it from him, of course."

"Why, you—you—you fat rotter!" roared Bunter. "You you—"

"Never mind, he hasn't got the postal-order!" grinned Sammy. "It's still in the family, at any rate."

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Saved!

THE self-denial week was drawing towards its end, and the funds in the rival studies were mounting up. Peter Todd was perhaps a more enterprising collector than Harry Wharton, and he carried his little leather bag into all quarters for subscriptions. He was not wanting in nerve, and he even suggested to Loder of the Sixth to do without cigarettes for a week, and put the money in the bag. He made that suggestion in Loder's study, and he left the study "on his neck." But he was not always unsuccessful, and a good many fellows put subscriptions in the bag to get rid of him. Tom Dutton and Alonzo backed him up nobly, but Billy Bunter could not be excited to enthusiasm.

The loss of his postal-order had quite disgusted Bunter with the whole scheme, though that famous remittance had not gone to the fund. And commons were short in Study No. 7. True, Billy Bunter contributed very little to the study funds, but he was accustomed to taking the lion's share of the feeds there, and now that the feeds were "off," Bunter was in a state of continual exasperation.

It was useless to appeal to Peter Todd for sympathy. When he told Peter that he was going into a decline, Peter bucked

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him up with a cricket-stump, and Bunter showed so much activity in getting away from the cricket-stump, that it was evident that he was not going into a decline.

Lord Mauleverer, too, had fallen from grace; but as his contributions to both funds were already munificent, he was allowed to fall away. Tom Brown and Mark Linley and Penfold were heroically "sticking it out," but the idea had caught on no further. The Remove, as a whole, only grinned over it, and the Upper Fourth sniffed. But the funds were mounting up, and both the rival collectors were in high hopes that a sufficient sum would be raised to found the Greyfriars bed in the Friardale Cottage Hospital.

"That bed will be wanted as soon as it's founded, Toddy," said Bunter, lugubriously, as they went into the hall to tea one afternoon. Study No. 7 had tea in hall now, as well as Harry Wharton & Co. "I shall want it. I can feel that I'm going to be seriously ill."

"All the more reason why we should found the bed," said Peter Todd cheerfully. "And, of course, you'll be entitled to the use of it."

"I think you're a hard-hearted beast!" groaned Bunter. "I say, Toddy, you had a remittance this morning from your Uncle Benjamin?"

"Yes. I'm bunging it into the fund."

"But I say, just listen to reason a minute. You want to put it into the fund, don't you?"

"Of course I do, ass."

"In fact, it will be a pleasure to you?" said Bunter.

"Yes, in a way."

"Well, then, as this is self-denial week, don't you think you ought to deprive yourself of that pleasure?" urged Bunter. "You could self-deny yourself that way, you know, and—and lend me the remittance."

Peter Todd grinned.

"I can't eat the school tea, you know," said Bunter pathetically. "Doorsteps and weak tea—you can't expect it. Suppose we have a pot of jam this time, Peter?"

"Rats!"

"Some sardines, then?"

"More rats!"

"Well, if I perish miserably, my death will lie at your door, Peter," said Bunter, with a deep groan.

"Oh, that's all right," said Peter. "In that case, I'll sell your things for the benefit of the fund. Your bike would fetch something."

"You—you beast!" said Bunter.

Billy Bunter ate his tea gloomily. The school tea was solid and healthy, if not particularly "tasty," and there was enough of it. But Billy Bunter was not content with bread-and-butter and watercress, and one slice of cake. The less he had of the fleshpots of Egypt the more he thought about them, and he was getting into a really desperate frame of mind.

And all the Remove fellows were unsympathetic. When he looked into anybody's study, on the chance of being asked to tea, he was reminded that it was his self-denial week, and that cold comfort was all that was given him.

When Mr. Prout took calling-over that evening Billy Bunter did not answer to his name. The Owl of the Remove was absent.

"Anybody seen my porpoise?" asked Peter Todd, as the juniors came out of the hall.

"Gone off somewhere to die quietly, perhaps," suggested Bob Cherry.

"My dear Cherry," said Alonzo Todd, "I am shocked by the levity of your remark. Perhaps we had better search for Bunter, my dear Peter."

"Perhaps we had, my dear fathead!" growled Peter.

All the juniors joined in looking for Bunter. They felt pretty certain that the Owl of the Remove was malingering somewhere, in the hope of touching Peter Todd's hard heart. They looked for him round the Close and the Cloisters, but he was not to be found. Then Bolsover major looked out of the dormitory window and shouted to the fellows below.

"I've found him!"

"In the dorm.?" demanded Peter Todd from the Close.

"Yes; he's here!"

"Alive or dead?" queried Bob Cherry.

"A little of each, I think," said Bolsover major.

The Removites hurried up to the dormitory. Billy Bunter was stretched upon a bed, in a negligent attitude, with his eyes closed. In the dusky dormitory his fat face looked very pale, and there were dark lines under his eyes.

Peter Todd was about to yank off the bed, when that strange pallor struck his eyes, and he paused.

"Great Scott! He does look seedy!" he exclaimed.

"He looks very pale," said Mark Linley, puzzled. "I don't believe he's ill, though."

There was a deep groan from Bunter.

"Good-bye, you fellows!" he said faintly.

"Eh? What are you saying good-bye for?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"I'm dying!"

"Rats!"

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NEXT MONDAY: MAGNIFICENT SPECIAL SUMMER NUMBER OF THE "MAGNET." PRICE TWOPENCE.

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"Oh, really, Wharton, I suppose a chap ought to know whether he's dying or not!" exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly. "Look here, I'm perishing——"

"Perishing fibber!" murmured Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've felt it coming on for some time," said Bunter feebly.

"I forgive you, Todd!"

"What!" ejaculated Peter.

"I forgive you! You've brought me to this! But I don't bear any malice. Don't make a row, you fellows—let me perish in peace!"

"You'll perish in pieces if you don't stop that rotting!" growled Peter Todd.

"I forgive you, Peter! I forgive you, Dutton!"

"Eh?" said Dutton. "What are you going to give me?"

"I forgive you!" yelled Bunter, with sudden energy.

"Can't you hear me, you silly chump?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give me a jump?" said Dutton. "Did you say jump, or bump? If you start giving me a bump, you'll jolly soon get bumped yourself, I can tell you!"

"Take him away!" moaned Bunter. "Don't let him vex my last hours. I feel that I've only got a few minutes to live!"

"Well, he can't vex your last hours if you've only got a few minutes!" said Nugent. "Do you mind if he vexes you last minutes?"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"How many minutes, Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry, taking out his big silver watch. "I'll time you. Don't start till I say 'Go!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Cherry, he looks very pale, and there are dark rings under his eyes," said Alonzo reprovingly. "I fear that he is ill."

Bunter groaned, to back up this statement with the best possible evidence. But the heartless Bob Cherry only chuckled.

"He played this dodge once before," he remarked. "He's been rubbing chalk on his chivvy to make him look pale, I'll bet you my hat!"

"What!" roared Peter Todd.

He switched on the light in the dormitory. Billy Bunter blinked like an owl in the sudden illumination. Peter Todd dabbed at his fat face, and his fingers came away whitened.

"Oh, the awful fraud!" he gasped. "There's chalk on his chivvy and pencil under his eyes! He's been making up his mug to take us in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter, you fat fraud—you horrible spoofer——"

"Ow! I—I'm dying!"

"Hold on, Toddy!" said Bob Cherry, as the leader of No. 7 Study was about to grasp Bunter. "Don't you know your natural history? Porpoises in a state of exhaustion can be revived by water!"

"Good egg!" exclaimed Peter Todd.

He rushed to the nearest washstand, and grasped the jug. Billy Bunter sat up on the bed in alarm, with a sudden return of lifelike energy.

"I—I say," he gasped—"I say, you know—— Ah—yah—bah—grah!"

Swoosh!

The water came down upon him in a flood. Billy Bunter roared and spluttered, and rolled wildly off the bed, and landed with a terrific bump on the floor.

"Yaroooh! Ow! Beast! Yah! Oh!"

There was a yell of laughter. The swamping water had washed the chalk from the fat face of the Owl of the Remove, and he had resumed his usual ruddy complexion with startling suddenness.

"Grooh! Oh, you rotters! Ah! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groogh! I'm wet! I'm soaked! I—— Oh, you beasts!"

The juniors streamed out of the dormitory, yelling with laughter. Billy Bunter towelled himself in a state of wild fury. But he was not found in a dying condition again. Perhaps the water had revived him—or perhaps he was afraid it might be used to revive him a second time. And when he came down, and received congratulations upon his sudden and complete recovery, he only snorted.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Last Chance!

"MAULY, old man!"

"Yaas."

Billy Bunter came cautiously into Lord Mauleverer's study, and closed the door behind him. The schoolboy earl was seated in a luxurious armchair, and

he had his elegant boots resting upon the table. He turned his head slightly to look at Billy Bunter.

"I say, Mauly, you know this is the last day of the fund."
"Yaas."

Lord Mauleverer, who had been wakened out of a nap by Bunter's entrance, closed his eyes again. Bunter bent his ear to the study door and listened, as if fearful of pursuit. Lord Mauleverer breathed gently and steadily.

"I say, Mauly," said the Owl of the Remove, coming back towards his slumbering lordship. "My hat! He's asleep! Beastly slacker! I say, Mauly!"

He shook the schoolboy earl.

"Begad!" Lord Mauleverer opened his eyes lazily.

"Yaas! Is that you, Grunter?"

"My name's Bunter," growled the fat junior.

"Yaas. I always forget names. I meant Hunter," said Lord Mauleverer amiably. "I say, Hunter, would you mind going out very quietly? I'm going to sleep."

"Look here, Mauly—"

"Yaas, beastly hot, isn't it?" said Mauleverer, closing his eyes again. "Close the door quietly, won't you, Grunter?"

Billy Bunter breathed hard through his nose.

"Look here, Mauly," he said, shaking his lordship again. "Wake up, you chump—I mean, old fellow! It's important."

"Tired."

"The fund closes to-day, and that blessed self-denial week is up!" said Bunter. "It's left us all stony, and there won't be any tea in the study this afternoon—ahem!—that isn't what I was going to say, really— Wake up!"

"Yaas."

"You know we want to beat No. 1 Study's collection, Mauly, old fellow."

There was a gentle snore.

"Mauly! You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "Wake up!"

"Oh, begad! Did you speak to me, Bunter? Warm afternoon, ain't it?"

"We want the collection in our study to beat Wharton's collection!" howled Bunter.

"Yaas."

"Well, we haven't got quite enough."

"Sorry. Good-bye!"

"I'm not going yet, ass!"

"Sorry—I mean, all right," said Lord Mauleverer. "Were you speaking to me about anything, Shunter?"

"We want our collection to beat No. 1 Study's, or to equal it, at least," urged Billy Bunter. "I know you are standing a tenner, anyway, but I was thinking that you wouldn't mind helping me out."

"Tired."

"Look here—"

"I wish somebody else would come along and help you out!" sighed Lord Mauleverer. "Try and walk—and shut the door after you."

"You silly fathead!"

"Yaas."

"You howling idiot!" roared Bunter.

"Yaas."

"You—you burbling, chortling chump!"

Snore!

Billy Bunter shook Lord Mauleverer violently. The schoolboy earl groaned, and opened his eyes once more, and blinked at the Owl of the Remove.

"Begad! You still here, Bunter?" he asked.

"Yes, I am!" growled Billy Bunter. "I was telling you that the collection in our study is five bob short of the collection in No. 1 Study. We want to make it even."

"I hope you will, dear boy."

"I'm going to use a postal-order I'm expecting, to set the matter right," Billy Bunter explained.

"Yaas."

"Only, the postal-order hasn't come yet," said Billy Bunter. "It may be delayed till Monday. It is very unfortunate, and I'm going to write to the Postmaster-General about it. It's scandalous the way my postal-orders are delayed!"

"Yaas."

"So I want you to advance the five bob, to buck up the fund, and I'll let you have the postal-order on Monday. See?"

"Yaas."

"Good!" said Billy Bunter, rubbing his fat hands together with satisfaction, and at the same time listening for footsteps in the passage. "That will be all right, then, Mauly."

"Yaas."

"You don't mind lending me the five bob?"

"Yaas."

"You—you blessed magpie! Can't you say anything but 'yaas—yaas'?" shrieked Bunter.

"Yaas."

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Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

"Give me the five bob, then. I suppose you've got five bob?"

"Yaas."

"Hand it over, then."

"Can't."

"Why not?" demanded Bunter warmly.

"Tired!"

Billy Bunter glared at the slacker of the Remove, as if he meditated perpetrating an immediate assault and battery upon the noble scion of the House of Mauleverer. But he realised that that was not the best way of securing the coveted five shillings. He shook the schoolboy earl by the shoulder again, and Lord Mauleverer groaned.

"Begad! What is it now, Punter?"

"Bunter, you idiot!"

"Yaas, I mean Bunter you idiot."

"You—you—look here, if you're too lazy to get up, tell me where the money is," said Billy Bunter. "I want to get off. Todd may come along any minute and—and—ask me if I've got it, I mean. Where is the cash?"

"There's a purse somewhere—on the table very likely," said Lord Mauleverer, without stirring.

Bunter blinked round the study. There certainly was a purse on the table, and he picked it up and opened it.

"There's only half-a-quid here," he said.

"Well, won't that do?" asked Lord Mauleverer plaintively.

Bunter grinned.

"Oh, yes, that'll do! Am I to take this?"

"Yaas."

"Good! Thanks! I'll be off now."

"Yaas."

Billy Bunter moved towards the door. He halted as he had his hand upon the handle. There were footsteps in the passage, and Bunter knew those quick, heavy steps. Peter Todd was coming. Billy Bunter jumped back from the door as though the handle had suddenly become red-hot.

"I—I say, Mauly," he gasped, "Todd's coming!"

"Yaas."

"He mustn't see me here!" gasped Bunter. "Don't mention you've seen me; don't say anything about me. You won't give me away, will you?"

"Yaas."

"Oh, you—you idiot!"

Billy Bunter darted behind a screen in the corner, just as the study door opened, and Peter Todd came in.

Lord Mauleverer's eyes had closed again. It was a blazing afternoon, and he was sleepy. Peter Todd grinned as he looked at the noble slacker. Peter was looking very satisfied, as though things were going well with him. He lifted his boot and gently poked Lord Mauleverer in the ribs with the toe of it. The slumberer opened his eyes with a start.

"That you again, Bunter, you worrying beast?" he murmured.

Behind the screen, Billy Bunter shook his fist.

"Hallo! Bunter been here?" said Peter Todd cheerfully.

"Did he tell you that we're going to count up the plunder now, Mauly?"

"Yaas—I mean, no."

"Well, come on."

Lord Mauleverer groaned.

"Can't you let a chap who's tired-out have a little nap on a hot afternoon?" he pleaded. "First Bunter, and then you! There are some banknotes in the table-drawer, if the five bob isn't enough."

"Eh? What five bob?" demanded Peter Todd. "I've come to take you to the meeting, not to ask you for money. You've stood your whack—ten quid on your own. Bunter hasn't been asking you for tin, has he?"

"Yaas."

"Oh, the fat fraud! Have you given it to him?"

"Yaas."

"How much?" roared Peter Todd.

"Yaas."

Peter seized the schoolboy earl by the shoulders and bumped him out of the armchair. Lord Mauleverer sat on the Persian rug.

"Begad!" he murmured.

"I give you one second to get up, before I jump on you!" said Peter Todd.

Lord Mauleverer reluctantly rose to his feet.

"Oh, begad, what fellows you are!" he murmured. "Well, if I've got to come, I've got to come. What do you want me for?"

"We're meeting in No. 1 Study to count up the loot," said Peter Todd. "All the subscribers have got to be present when the money's counted, fathead! You're the biggest subscriber, and we want you. How much have you given Bunter?"

"Five bob."

"What for?" demanded Peter.

"To make your collection equal to Wharton's," yawned

Lord Mauleverer. "I—I say, couldn't you take another pound, and leave me out of the meeting?"

"The fat fraud! Why, the money hasn't been counted yet, and I believe we shall have more than Wharton!" roared Peter.

"Begad!"

"How long ago was he here?" asked Peter, greatly incensed. "The fat swindler! I'll teach him to use the name of the fund to squeeze loans out of silly asses—I mean, I'll teach him not to! Where is he now?"

"Yaas."

"You—you ass!" Peter Todd roared. "Where is the fat bouncer? I want to scalp him! I'm going to make him disgorge! Where is he?"

Lord Mauleverer grinned. He was wide awake now, and he knew that Billy Bunter was quaking behind the screen, but he would not give him away.

"Begad! Let's go to the meeting!" he said.

"I've got to find Bunter!"

"Begad! I'm quite anxious about that meeting, you know," said Lord Mauleverer. "Come on, Toddy—never mind Bunter now, my dear fellow."

And Lord Mauleverer quitted the study. Peter Todd followed him, with a snort. As they went down the Remove passage, Billy Bunter emerged from behind the screen, gasping.

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Bunter. "That was a narrow shave! B-b-but how am I going to get to the tuck-shop without that beast Todd spotting me? He's quite capable of making me hand this half-quid over to Mauly, though I'm going to—to give him my postal-order for it on Monday. I—I shall have to be jolly careful."

Billy Bunter stole out of the study. He tiptoed down the Remove passage, and then stopped in dismay. The door of No. 1 Study was wide open, and a murmur of voices and a clinking of coins proceeded from it. The rival Co.'s of the Remove were there, counting up the spoils, and Bunter certainly could not have passed the open door without being seen.

"Oh, what rotten luck!" groaned Bunter. "I—I can't get past! And—and they won't be long counting up that money, and then Todd will be looking for me! Oh, crumbs!"

There was evidently no time to be lost. Billy Bunter scuttled back along the passage, and into the box-room, and clambered out of the window. With slow and heavy efforts, the fat junior lowered himself out, and scrambled to the ground. Then, gasping for breath, he dashed off in the direction of the tuck-shop.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Success!

"GENTLEMEN, we have met to count up our ill-gotten gains!"

"All present?" asked Harry Wharton, looking round the study. "Where's Bunter?"

Wharton and Nugent, Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, Hurree Janset Ram Singh, and Tom Brown, and Mark Linley, and Penfold—all had turned up. Peter, and Alonzo, and Lord Mauleverer, and Tom Dutton had joined them. But William George Bunter was conspicuous by his absence.

"All parties concerned must be present," said Wharton, pausing.

"Oh, never mind Bunter!" said Peter Todd, with a grunt. "He's been squeezing a loan out of Mauly, pretending it was for the fund, and I'm going to scalp him! He won't come."

"Then we proceed?" said Harry.

"Yes; get a move on!"

"The proceedfulness is terrific, my worthy chum!"

Wharton opened the money-box on the table, and turned out the contents. There were all sorts and conditions of coins, pennies predominating, though there were a goodly number of sixpences and shillings, and two-shilling pieces and half-crowns.

"Looks a lot," said Bob Cherry. "We shall beat your study, Toddy."

"Count up the plunder, and see," said Peter.

The coins were separated, and counted in little piles. Wharton and Peter Todd counted them in turns, to make sure of the amount.

"Four pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence-halfpenny!" exclaimed Harry Wharton triumphantly. "That will take a lot of beating, Toddy! I'll shove fivepence-halfpenny to it now to make it an even five quid."

"Five quid!" said Peter Todd. "Well, that's not so bad—but I think we shall beat it."

And he turned out the leather bag.

There was a cascade of coins upon the table, and the juniors counted them up with the greatest care and exactitude.

"Four pounds eighteen shillings and tenpence!" said Peter Todd.

"Licked!" said Nugent.

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EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

"Hurrah for No. 1 Study!"

"Rats!" said Peter Todd warmly. "I'm putting a bob and twopence to this to make it an even five quid, same as you did. There you are! Five quid each study—honours divided."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Mauly puts a fiver to each collection," said Peter Todd.

"Yaas!"

"That makes up the required twenty pounds to found a bed at the Cottage Hospital, and name it after the Remove!" said Peter triumphantly.

"Hurrah!"

"Twenty quid! Bravo!" said Johnny Bull. "Shows what can be done by self-denial—and especially by Mauly contributing fivers."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We hand this over to Mauly, to be sent to Sir Reginald Brooke," said Peter Todd. "Now, about the name of the bed; I suppose there isn't much doubt about that? It had better be called the No. 7 Study Bed."

"Rats!"

"The No. 1 Study Bed would be nearer the mark," said Wharton warmly.

"Now, look here——"

"Look here——"

"Begad! Call it the Remove Bed," suggested Lord Mauleverer; "appropriate, you know—any poor beggar who's shoved into it would be glad enough to be removed!"

"Make it the Greyfriars Bed!" said Bob Cherry. "That will please all parties. After all, we had some contributions from the seniors, you know. Loder put a French penny in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I agree to the Greyfriars Bed!" said Peter Todd.

"Done!" said Wharton.

"Good egg!" said Frank Nugent. "And I think we're to be congratulated on having been able to find that we've found the fund to found the bed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And now," said Bob Cherry, "who says ginger-beer? My self-denial has left me weak——"

"Ginger-beer!"

"There's exactly ninepence left!" said Bob Cherry. "That's what I've got—and I'll self-deny myself the pleasure of adding it to the fund—so come along to the tuckshop!"

And, the money having been safely disposed of, the Removites crowded out of the study, and made their way to Mrs. Mumble's little establishment. As they left the School House Peter Todd caught sight of a fat, breathless form dashing into the tuckshop.

"Bunter," he ejaculated, "come on!"

They crossed the Close, and marched into the tuckshop.

"Hand over the plunder, you fraud!" said Peter Todd sternly. "You've squeezed it out of Mauly, pretending it was for the fund. Shell it out!"

"Begad, it's all right, my dear fellow——"

"It isn't all right!" roared Peter Todd. "No. 7 Study doesn't allow it. Bunter, you fat fraud, shell out—at once!"

"Grooh! I—I've s-s-spent it!" gasped Bunter.

"Oh! Have you paid for these things?" asked Peter, surveying an enticing array on the counter—very enticing indeed to the juniors after their week of self-denial.

"Grooh! Yes!"

"Then I'm afraid your cash is gone, Mauly—but it's all right! We came here for a feed—and it's Bunter's treat! Help yourselves!" said Peter Todd hospitably.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Removites helped themselves liberally. Billy Bunter glared at them almost speechlessly in his wrath.

"You—you rotters!" he roared. "Lemmy feed alone! I—I——"

"Pile in!" said Peter calmly. "Bunter stands the feed. He is going to urge you to pile in——"

"Yah! I'm not! I——"

"Or else I'm going to sling him out, and he won't get any himself——"

"Oh! I—I—I——"

Peter Todd pushed back his cuffs.

"What did you say, Bunter?"

"I—I—I said, it—it's my treat, you fellows—pile in!" he stammered.

And the fellows piled in—with appetites sharpened by a week of self-denial—and the rate at which that feed disappeared was a record.

THE END.

(Next Monday's tale of the Chums of Greyfriars is 50,000 words in length, entitled "Shunned by the Form," by Frank Richards. The Grand Summer Number also contains, among other splendid features, another long, complete story, entitled "For Name and Fame," by Peter Bayne. Order Now. Price 2d.)

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MONDAY:

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— By **SIDNEY DREW.** —

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is surrounded in his magnificent London residence by his friends Ching-Lung, Barry O'Rooney, Gan-Waga the Esquimo, and Prout & Co.—the stalwarts of the millionaire's famous submarine, the Lord of the Deep. After a period of inaction there is a rumour afloat that Ferrers Lord is about to start upon one of his great expeditions again. Meantime, the millionaire himself is devoting all his attention to a curiously carved narwhal's tusk which he has picked up in an East-End curio-dealer's shop. The tusk proved to be hollow, and to contain some gold coins, and a small wad of parchment, which bears a strange message from the sea. This tells of a mysterious floating island inhabited by strange monsters, which Ferrers Lord determines to go in search of. Thurston immediately christens the phantom island "Mysteria" in advance. All hands board the Lord of the Deep, which slips out of its secret cave on its mysterious new quest. Ferrers Lord makes for an uncharted island, which he intends to use as his headquarters, and, arrived there, he lands with a party to make the acquaintance of the inhabitants, leaving Prout in charge of the launch. Prout captures a wonderful talking cockatoo, which has evidently escaped from some vessel, but which is now enrolled as one of the crew of the Lord of the Deep, as James Jimson, A.B. Back on the submarine, the adventurers at last catch sight of "Mysteria." The mysterious island—bare and ghostly-looking—appears to be floating in the sky. It is a mirage, but, as Ferrers Lord points out, there can never be a mirage without a substance. Later on in the day the men are sky-larking, when the telephone bell rings.

"Me and Maddock and Barry wanted in the saloon," reports Prout.

(Now go on with the story.)

Gan-Waga Causes Trouble and Gets a Taste of The Rope's End.

Maddock and Barry gave their locks a hasty combing with their fingers and emptied their pipes, Gan, left alone, was suddenly startled by the sound of a gruff voice making remarks in a mysterious tongue.

"Bobbie-ooga—yalla bag—flossy—chunchase—obblebob—snidle," it remarked.

"Hunk!" gasped the Eskimo. "What's dat?"

"It's me," said the voice—"Bobbie-ooga."

"And it's me, too," added another voice—"Snidle-oo."

Then two hands appeared between the scuppers and the rail. Had not Gan-Waga recognised the voices he would certainly not have recognised the strange visitors as Ching-Lung and Joseph, the man of saws and chisels.

"Is the boss at home, Gan?" said Ching-Lung. "We've called for the rent."

"Ho, ho, hoo!" chuckled Gan. "You likes a nightmares, Chingy! Oh, butterfuls! I wants to be a savages, Chingy."

"Well, you can want," said his Highness. "We are the only savages on in this scene. 'Cos why? He can't speak the language, can he, Joe?"

"Obblebob—snidle," grunted Joe. "Obbleybibs—yalla-bag—flossy!"

"Beautiful indeed!" grinned the prince. "You want your throat rubbing with sandpaper. Does it hurt you to gargle like that?"

"No; it's a gift," said the carpenter. "Tell you what, sir; we'd better be hidin'. They'll soon find out the bluff we played hon the telephone."

"It won't be from Thurston, for he's sound asleep."

Gan-Waga craned his neck. "Somebody's comings now, Chingy," he said quickly.

A low awning had been erected aft to give the men shelter from the hot sun. Ching-Lung tugged at a knot, and a corner of the awning fell, making a good hiding-place. The two "savages" dived into cover.

"If you as much as smile, Gan," said Ching-Lung, "I'll grill you!"

"Better come in, toos, den," remarked the Eskimo wisely. "I must laughs, Chingy; not helpses laughs."

Herr Schwartz, half grilled by the heat of the galley stove, trotted out of the conning-tower. Leaning idly against the rail, he made himself a cigarette, and began to fan himself with his cook's cap. He sighed luxuriously as the fresh breeze played upon his heated brow. Then, with a furtive glance around to make certain that no one was near, he took a long pull at a flat, black bottle.

"That ain't cold water—" began Joe, in a hushed whisper.

"Silence, silly goat!" said Ching-Lung. "You're a savage!"

"Yalla-bag—flossy—snidle!" muttered Joe. "By gum, I'd forgot, sir! Bobbie-ooga, and the same to you and many on 'em, thank 'ee!"

"Well, you needn't swear like that just because I told you the truth. You're a horrible ugly savage."

"A bad 'nough nasty savages," added Gan-Waga. "Nasty blobble-ooga!"

Herr Schwartz, the centre of interest, folded his arms, assumed a tragic air, and walked towards the bows.

"Then up I came with my little lot," giggled Ching-Lung. "Go and talk to him, Gan, and then we'll come and chase you."

Gan-Waga winked, and crawled out. He waddled across the deck.

"Ho, ho, hoo!" he laughed. "How you was, hunk, Mr. Skirts?"

The cook jumped at this unexpected interruption. Then he waved his arm disdainfully.

"Shaf!" he growled. "I to nod know you. Pegone! I vant you nod. I vas ruminating, und mine thought dey vas distarp py you."

"Not knows ruminatings," said Gan-Waga. "but likes yo', Mr. Skirts—likes yo' butterfuls faces and hairs. Ho, ho, hoo! Dey bofes so nicer and curly. I should like to kiss yo'. He, he, he, hee! Why yo' hairs so curly, hunk? It jes' like de shavingees Joe plane off de boards. I ax Chingy dat, and him say it all de sames. Yo' head's woods,

and yo' plane de curly bits up. Ho, ho, hoo! Ho-o-oo-oo! What yo' laughs at, hunk?"

But the cook was not laughing at all. Gan-Waga, he knew, was Ching-Lung's bosom friend, and therefore a deadly foe to be watched and disturbed.

"Go away, animal!" he roared. "I vas nod having nodding to do mit you. Ach! Pegone ad vonce!"

"Den yo's not lets me kisses yo? Oh, do let me kisses yo!"

"Hog!" cried the chef. "I would sooner be gissed by ein gonger-ee! Ged away! A-r-r! Ged away! Pegone!"

"Ho, ho, hoo!" gurgled the Eskimo. "I a bigs, butterfuls chiefs, and yo' only silly tater-boilers! How dares yo' misults me? I kills men fo' dats. Now I killses yo', Mr. Skirts! Yo' not kisses me now? Ah, butterfuls! I love killings tater-boilers. Come alongs and be killses!"

Gan gave the chef a tap in the ribs, and brandished his fist close to his nose. Herr Schwartz uttered an involuntary "Ouch!" and tapped Gan on the shin with his boot. This little pleasantry was so painful that Gan-Waga, who had had no intention of being unkind, held out his left hand.

Suddenly Herr Schwartz—perhaps he was short-sighted—inspected the fist closely and violently—in fact, he hit his nose against it, and, putting up his hand to protect his nose against another shock, placed it in Gan-Waga's eye. Gan fancied he saw a comet with a fiery tail. He wanted a comet to tame and teach to sit up for biscuits and lumps of sugar.

He made a frantic clutch at it with all his eight fingers and two thumbs. The comet was too clever to be caught. Gan missed it, but found the chef's hair instead. Not being a professional hairdresser, Gan may have been rather rough. At any rate, Herr Schwartz howled a shrill howl, bounced into the air, and came down on Gan's only corn with both feet.

Then they embraced each other and began to dance.

Dancing is slow work without music, so they obtained a lively tune by playing the kettledrum on the face and ribs of each other. They were both endeavouring to waltz lying down—a most difficult thing to do, by the way—when Joe and Ching-Lung, bursting with laughter—crept out of their hiding-place.

"Obble—snidle—yalla-bag—floffy!" they bellowed.

Gan-Waga rolled clear of the chef's tender embrace. Herr Schwartz was getting tired, but he forgot all about that when he saw those two terrible savages bounding towards him. He got up and ran for his life in Gan-Waga's wake.

Gan fell down, and the chef rolled over him, but was on his feet again in a second, shrieking for help. Putting on a terrific spurt, he gained the conning-tower. Joe pricked him gently with a spear to increase his speed.

There was a thud and a volley of howls. Maddock and O'Rooney were coming up just as Herr Schwartz was going down. The chef had his full speed gear on at the time, and the four reached the bottom in a writhing heap.

"Joe," said Ching-Lung, listening to the bumps and roars from below, "it's a dog-fight, isn't it?"

"Sounds like it, sir," replied Joe. "They're ruffians, sir!"

"Scoundrels!" said Ching-Lung. "Low, vulgar wretches! How hoarse they are! They must be thirsty, Joe."

Joe closed one eye. Gan had one eye closed permanently, but he winked the other. Swiftly he dipped the bucket overboard.

"By hokey, I'll do murder for this!" came up the ferocious roar of Mr. Thomas Prout.

"Oi'll squeeze the loife out of yez!" wailed Barry.

"What the—Leggo! Who's bitin' me neck?" bellowed Maddock. "Souse me, I'll—Ow! Souse me, I'll—Ow! Souse me!"

"How could we refuse the darling duck?" said Ching-Lung. "It would break his heart. Souse him, chaps!"

They shot the contents of the three buckets downwards, and listened again.

"I guess we'd all better go for a swim, sir," suggested Joe.

"I rather fancy it would be more healthy, Joseph," agreed his High. "Oh, what rude people!"

With three gentle splashes they dropped overboard. Then Barry, Prout, and Maddock, soused and savage, bounded on deck. Ching-Lung and Joe were struggling to drag Gan-Waga's fat body through a port-hole. Gan was a tight fit, and he stuck.

"By hokey," thundered Prout, "here's one of 'em! Quick—sling me a rope's-end!"

"Here yez are, ould man," said Barry.

Prout leaned over and used the rope. Gan's legs kicked

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ONE
PENNY.

out spasmodically, and muffled squeals of woe arose. Then the Eskimo shot inwards and vanished.

"Did ye lay it on?" asked Maddock viciously.

"By hokey," said Prout, "did I! What do ye take me for? Lay it on! I nearly cut the freak in two!"

"Always the same, bedad!" groaned Barry. "Whoy didn't yez cut ut roight in two when yez were about ut? Oi say, Tommy, luk at me! How much of my face is lift afther bumpin' down that ladder?"

"More than enough to make any man as sees it have fits and jump overboard," said Prout politely.

"Didn't Oi always tell yez he wasn't a man at all, at all?" said Barry, appealing to the bo'sun. "Didn't Oi?"

"Who says so? Why?" demanded Prout. "Who says I ain't a man? Speak up, or I'll drop on you and squash you flat, by hokey!"

"Pace, and Oi'll explain," said Barry, edging towards the ladder. "By your own wurrds, av yez had been a man, yez wud have had a fit and jumped over the soide. But yez aint' a man. Pooh—bah—yah! Bald-headed monkey, get your hair oiled, and thin hang yourself wid that bit of rope!"

Placing his thumb disdainfully to his nose, Barry vanished like one of the beautiful visions supposed to be seen by gentlemen who indulge in lobster salad and cucumber at supper.

An Early Concert—Mosali's Strange Warning—Orders to Sail—Gan-Waga joins the Picnic Uninvited—Fireworks.

"Great gingerbread!" said Ching-Lung, sitting up among the blankets. "Who's shying bricks through the windows?"

He heard a muffled uproar that reminded him of forty German bands all playing different tunes during an explosion of bombs and rifles.

Then the screen of his porthole was pulled aside, letting in the sunshine, and revealing the smiling face of Joe, who carried a cup of coffee.

"It's the niggers, sir!" grinned the carpenter. "Ain't the music grand? I reckon they're playin' 'The Lost Cable.' It's a lump too thick to be 'The Lost Chard.' I take it, Mr. Rupert's as savage as a bear wi' bunions, sir, an Prout's gone for his gun."

"Get me a ton of cotton-wool to stick in my ears, Joe!" sighed the prince. "How many of them are there?"

"About twenty sir. It sounds more like ten million, don't it? Anythin' I can do, sir?"

"Yes, go and gag the lot! Oh, mercy!"

Joe opened the porthole. A hideous clamour came in that made his Highness of Kwai-Hal writhe and dive under the clothes.

It was the voice of Gan, the lark-like warble of the Eskimo. Gan evidently appreciated the music, for he was singing; and when Gan-Waga sang, the whole world lay down, so to speak, and shrivelled.

"If that don't bring on thunderstorms," remarked Joe as he departed, "I'm a one-eyed Dutchman, with ninety-nine wooden legs and the mumps."

Ching-Lung swallowed down his coffee, and, rolling out of bed, made straight for the deck in his pyamas. Gan-Waga's dulcet notes swelled higher and higher.

The prince found two men lying at the bottom of the ladder, squirming and moaning as if they had taken poison.

They were Barry O'Rooney and Ben Maddock. Ching-Lung walked over to them, but they only squealed, and begged him plaintively to kill them and put them out of their agony. Death was preferable to Gan-Waga's singing.

He made another ghastly discovery on gaining the conning-tower. Prout was stretched on the floor, to all appearances stone-dead.

He opened one glassy eye, and feebly beckoned with his hand. Ching-Lung knelt to catch the last message from the steersman's pallid lips.

"Yes, Tom?"

"Too late!" gasped Prout. "The secret is—is—"

"Yes, tell me quickly!" said Ching-Lung, wringing his hands. "Oh, Tommy, bear up, if only for one moment! Don't die with a crime upon your chest-protector. What is it? Speak! Tell me before you snuff it what is this dreadful secret?"

"Flat—flat—flat!" said Prout, with a terrible effort. "Flat—Ah!"

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TWO PENNY.

"Yes, yes—the secret?"

"Flatirons c-c-can't grow whiskers!" panted the steersman. "By hokey, they can't!"

Then a soft smile wreathed his bearded lips, a look of content crept over his rugged features, his tender eyes closed, and his head fell back.

"Once more he has told the bitter truth!" said Ching-Lung. "No wonder he died!"

The dead and dying, however, soon came to their senses, and crowded up to see what was going on.

The deputation of natives, eighteen in all, squatted on the deck in a semi-circle. They did not wear a great deal of clothing, but they wore very large smiles, and hammered and scraped hideous sounds out of primitive drums and fiddles.

Gan-Waga, one hand raised to the sky, and the other resting on his heart, trilled merrily, greatly to the satisfaction of the visitors, who seemed to think he was a new species of nightingale.

Two of the crew, dressed in smart uniform, and armed with rifles, stood on guard.

"Barry," said Benjamin Maddock, "he's swallowed a box of fireworks, and they're goin' off hinside 'im!"

Ching-Lung darted forward and clapped an empty bucket over the songster's head. Still Gan-Waga continued to warble, and the bucket imparted a tinny strain to the notes that set Prout's teeth on edge.

"Take him away!" shouted Ching-Lung.

"Where to, sir?"

"Anywhere. Gag him, muzzle him, and pile twenty million feather-beds on top of him! Put him in a canary-cage, and then twist his neck!"

Gan-Waga was bundled from hand to hand and dumped down like a sack. The ear-splitting music ceased, and a fat little man, wearing pearl earrings, and an old white macintosh without sleeves, bowed to the prince, impressed doubtless by Ching-Lung's blue silk pyjamas.

"Speakee English?"

The native shook his head.

"Bedad, phwat ignorance for an ould reprobate loike that!" said Barry, causing a laugh. "He's sivinty, av he's a day, and Oi c'u'd spake English whin Oi was a kid of four!"

"Rats!" said Maddock. "You can't speak Henglish at all where you come from, souse me!"

"And, troth, they spake ut a jolly soight worrse where yez come from, honey," retorted Barry, "and that's the solemn truth of ut!"

"Don't wrangle," said Ching-Lung, "or I shall have to start the band playing again!"

"Whist!" said Barry warningly. "There's the chafe!"

As Ferrers Lord advanced, the man in the tattered macintosh salaamed until his forehead almost touched the deck.

The crew lined up and saluted. Prout hurried forward with a deck-chair, and the millionaire sat down.

"You are welcome to my vessel, Mosali," he said, "and your children are also welcome. I come to you in peace, and shall load you with many gifts. I seek not to rob you, but to enrich you. Why did you attack us? What did you fear?"

"We fear the smoke-boats and the white men, who steal our young men and carry them away to make them pearl-divers and slaves," answered the native. "But we fear you not. You are a true man."

Ferrers Lord nodded, and smiled. Though almost stamped out, blackbirding—as the kidnapping of the islanders is called—still exists on a minute scale.

At one time it was a profitable trade, but the watenful gunboats and more stringent laws have practically killed it in the Southern Pacific.

"Well, we are not slavers," said the millionaire. "We need no pearls, seals, or goats, and we sell no rum."

Mosali heaved a little sigh at this last information. He was fond of rum. His followers, too, shook their heads mournfully.

"Then what does the white chief need in the Island of the Twin Pillars?"

"I want to hear about the island that floats. In my own home I learned strange stories of it."

The savage recoiled. Then his followers began to sway their bodies from side to side, and to utter deep moans.

"Poor chaps!" murmured Barry. "Oi believe they've been ating green apples, or ilse cowl'd cabbage, and ut's given them a bad tummy-ache!"

"By hokey, I'd like to know what they're yarning about!" added the steersman.

Suddenly the fat little man drew himself up to his full height, his eyes flashed, and he looked almost dignified.

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"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
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He pointed his forefinger at Ferrers Lord, and a torrent of words poured from his lips.

"White man," he cried, "turn back! Evil alone comes to them who seek Eglanta, the dark daughter of the seas. When she comes from her deep cavern, the skies grow black, the earth shakes and spits forth flame. The seas eat up the land. With our best and most beloved ones she feeds her monsters. Our sacrifices avail nothing; our prayers are unheard. Stranger, turn back! For many years she has let us dwell in peace, but if you anger her vengeance will also fall upon us."

"Have you seen this island, then?"

The man shuddered.

"Long ago," he answered; "but ask me not. It rained fire, and thousands perished. She spares none."

"But where was it?" persisted Ferrers Lord. "Have you heard rumours of it lately?"

"I would see this strange ship, if it is not witchcraft," said Mosali, abruptly changing the subject.

"Get these fellows something to eat," said the millionaire, "and treat them well. One can't get blood out of a stone. Ching, and nothing but a torture-chamber would wring what I want to know out of these idiots!"

"Then old macintosh won't be pumped, Lord?"

"Not at all. We must find Mysteria without his help. The little I have learned, making allowances for his flowery style, fits in well with my own theories. When Mysteria appears, the sky turns black, the earth shakes and spits flame. They put it all down to the sweet disposition of some old sea-demon called Eglanta, who lives on the island. I gather that she is a lady."

"Widow, spinster, or married woman?" grinned Ching-Lung. "If she's single or a widow, she might fall in love with Prout."

"He manes, av she's stone blind, Ben!" Barry whispered to Maddock.

"And we sail?" asked Hal Honour.

"To-night, Hal. It is useless to waste our time. The men may have their run ashore, as I promised."

The natives embarked in their two canoes as happy as sand-boys. Ferrers Lord had been generous, and the good-natured crew had also added a number of trifling articles that filled the simple hearts of their dusky visitors with great delight.

The millionaire had strictly forbidden the men to accept anything in return, whatever its value; but Gan-Waga, who ignored all orders, traded a bunch of fish-hooks and a knife for a bow and half a dozen arrows.

"I've a jolly good mind to go and sneak on you, souse me!" said Maddock, who had witnessed the transaction. "Just you goes agen horders, you chunk of suet, which is rank mutiny, and then you cheats the poor, higgerant savage. You're a nice chunk of beef-tea, you are!"

"Nots cheats dems kite-faces!" snapped the Eskimo. "I gives dems fish-hookses and butterfuls knife."

"Fish-hooks," sniffed Benjamin, "you got a 'undred of them for a tanner; and that knife, I knows it. There was only 'alf a blade in it, and that wouldn't cut your 'ead, which is soft enough, souse me! I calls it robbery, piracy, and roguery! Nobody but the stepbrother of a bob-tailed Polar bear would ha' done it!"

"Oh, yo' talkses sillynesses!" said Gan. "Him was a butterfuls knife, hunk. Chingy finds him in de saloons. Chingy saws it."

"If it's the one he showed me, it was a very good knife," said the prince; "and cheap at five or six shillings. It had an ivory handle, if I remember rightly, and contained a corkscrew, scissors, a small tape measure, and— Hi, what's wrong, Ben? Have you lost your railway-ticket?"

The bo's'un was searching his pockets frantically.

"Murder!" he roared. "He's gone and guv away my knife! Where is he? I'll wallop him to batter! I'll eat him on toast! Where is he?"

But Gan-Waga had emigrated to a healthier climate. The deal recalled to him the sage advice of Ching-Lung—that it is foolish to quarrel with a man bigger than yourself, unless you have a gun or a pickaxe in your hand.

Maddock searched for him in vain. Gan was hiding in a place where no one dreamed of looking or dared to go. He was in the millionaire's cabin, and he did not creep out until he heard the churning of the launch's screw.

Hal Honour and Ferrers Lord were seated under the awning. Gan-Waga had no intention of remaining behind, so he dropped overboard, and swam towards the shore. The men had already landed, and Gan saw Maddock, O'Rooney, Prout, and another man walking together over the white sand apart from the rest. He landed, and shook himself.

"Where my Chingy, ugly faces?" he asked the first sailor he met.

The seaman grinned, and, pointing to a gap between two

sand-dunes, informed the Eskimo that his Highness and Mr. Thurston had gone that way.

"If you nots tells me truthfulnesses," remarked the son of the North, "I makes yo' squeals out for yo' mudders when I comes back."

Then he set off at a waddling trot to find Ching-Lung.

"Pouf! Bad 'nough hots!" he gasped. "Ooh! Bad 'nough warms! Norful! Norrible warm!"

"Then, why the marling-spike don't you open the winder?" growled a voice.

Carpenter Joseph sat in a little hollow, smoking his pipe.

"Seen my Chingy?" inquired Gan-Waga, halting.

"Let me think," said Joe slowly. "Have I? Hold hon a bit. Yes, I have!"

Joe was slow and deliberate enough to madden a saint. Standing behind Gan-Waga, he struck a match, and pretended to light his pipe; but, instead, lighted something else, that he attached to the back of Gan's damp coat with a bent pin.

"D'ye see that bush?"

"See him wid bofe eyeses!" said Gan.

"Then sprint as 'ard as you can go, and p'r'aps you'll catch him. 'Ere, I'll be a pal and pace you. Come along."

Gan-Waga ran his best. It was only about ten yards to the summit of the sandy ridge. Joe ran for three-quarters of the distance, and then dropped on his hands and knees, and followed as fast as he could.

Bang!

The loud explosion close behind him made the startled Eskimo bound into the air. Before he touched earth again there was another tremendous bang. Gan-Waga dropped on the very top of the ridge, and there was a steep descent on the other side. Bang! bang! bang! came the loud reports, and accompanied by jets of flame and flying sand, smoke and desperate howls.

Fireworks.—The Signal for Flight.

Gan-Waga whirled over and over down the slope, and burst through a clump of tall grass and came to a stop with his feet in the small of Mr. Thomas Prout's back and his fist in Mr. Benjamin Maddock's ear, and instead of apologising for such rudeness, the only thing he remarked was:

"Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!"

To be on good terms with the cook is the height of wisdom. Barry, Prout, and Maddock were of that opinion. They had asked Herr Schwartz to come ashore with them, and they also hinted broadly that exploring islands was hungry work. The chef, taking the hint, had made up various parcels of bread-and-cheese and cold meat to refresh them after their toils, and he had added a large stone bottle of ale. The bottle was heavy, and, possibly owing to the climate, they had all been seized with a violent fit of hunger and thirst barely five minutes after landing.

As Prout put it, the beer would get warm and muddy, by hokey, and the sandwiches stale and dry if they carted them about; and Benjamin added flatteringly that nobody could talk better sense than Tom Prout when he liked, souse him! And so, finding a suitable and secluded spot, they had uncorked the bottle, unwrapped the sandwiches, and were preparing to enjoy themselves when the first bang sounded on the festive air.

"By hokey, somebody's shootin' mighty close to us!" said Prout. "I 'ope they won't put any pellets in us."

Bang, bang, bang! And a terrible howl.

"Dunder! Somevon vas shod!" screamed the cook.

Prout sprang to his feet, only to fall again, and a human bomb burst through the grass, discharging howls, flames, smoke, and explosions, and scattering picnickers and picnic like chaff before it.

On the ridge Joe, who had fastened the big cracker to Gan-Waga's coat, lay down, and kicked with all the wild, delirious joy of a man who has bought a second-hand waistcoat for ninepence, and found a five-shilling piece in the pocket.

The bang-banging ceased, and the smoke cleared away, and four men sat up among the ruins of the feast. Herr Schwartz, who imagined that they were being attacked by a large body of natives, armed with nothing smaller than siege guns, was already a quarter of a mile away, and making good time towards the equator. Barry took in a deep, hoarse breath.

"Ut's him!" he said. "And all the beer's gone!"

Gan-Waga resembled a heap of sand more than a human being, but they recognised him.

"Yes, by hokey," growled Prout, "it's him!"

"We might have knowed it was him, souse us!" said Maddock, in terrible accents. "Dig a 'ole, and we'll bury it!"

(There will be an extra long instalment of this grand serial story in next Monday's Magnificent Special Summer Number of "The Magnet Library." Don't fail to order your copy in advance. Price 2d.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 287.

NEXT MONDAY: MAGNIFICENT SPECIAL SUMMER NUMBER OF THE "MAGNET." PRICE TWOPENCE.



GREYFRIARS LYRICS.

BY

The "MAGNET"
Library's Own
Rhymester.

No. 2.—BILLY BUNTER.

You've doubtless heard of "W. G."—
Not Grace, but simply Bunter—
Who, though he eats enough for three,
Is hungry as a hunter.
He pouches pies and scoffs jam-tarts
A dozen to the minute;
In fact, when Bunter really starts,
An ostrich isn't in it!

He follows on the new boy's trail
As grimly as a warder,
And unto him unfolds a tale
About a postal-order.
He cadges crowns, or even pence,
"To be repaid to-morrow,"
And varies with his victim's sense
The sum he hopes to borrow.

A fabricator, as a rule,
Is much inclined to try us;
The "Peeping Tom" of Greyfriars School
Gives points to Ananias.
He rolls out fibs in such a way,
'Tis strange how he conceives them;
They have one drawback, sad to say—
For not a soul believes them!

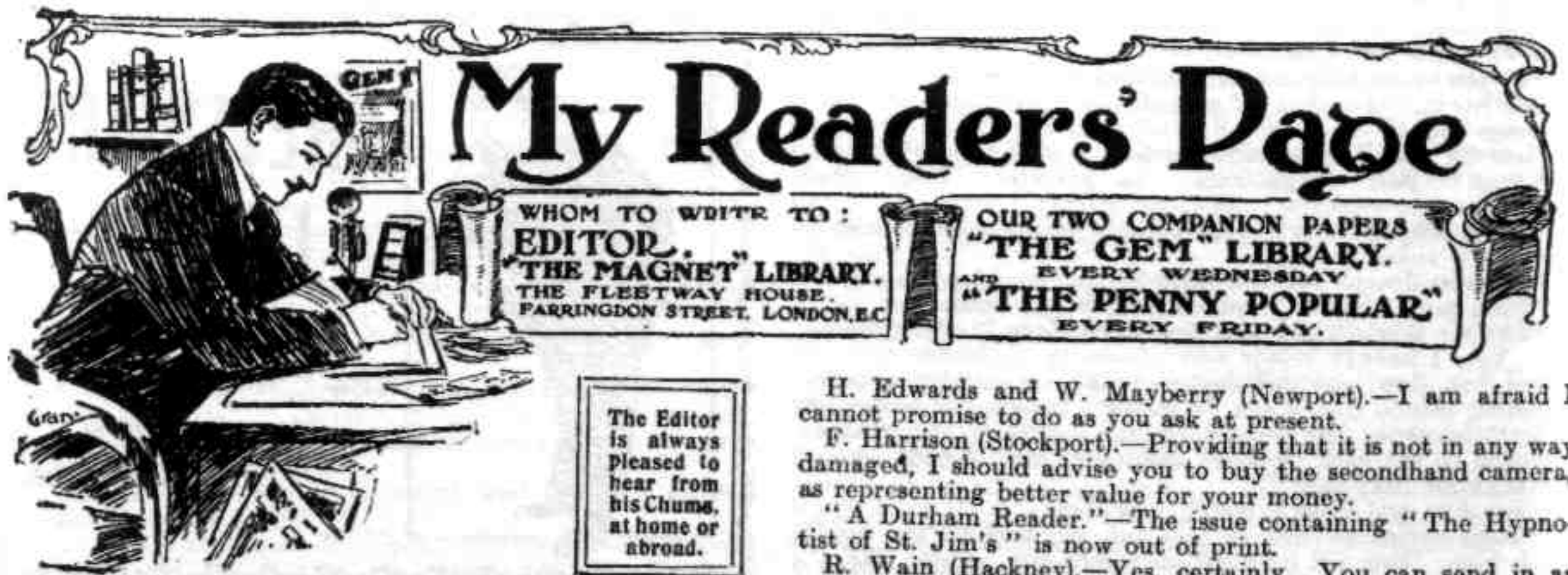
The good old days have taken flight,
When kings were held to ransom;
Yet Bunter, though he's not a knight,
Imagines he is handsome.
Says he: "Indeed, I'm wondrous fair—
A fine and handsome lad I!
And pretty maidens everywhere
Present me with the 'glad eye.'"

He thinks he is a ladies' man,
And when Cliff House makes merry,
He joins the revels if he can,
But keeps away from Cherry.
For Bob, in thought for Marjorie,
Won't let a pig confront her;
He puts this down to jealousy,
Does fat, misguided Bunter!

Thus Bunter figures in our eyes—
A fellow always slacking;
Who never cares for exercise,
And needs a world of whacking!
To sum him up in good round terms
(I don't think I should risk it!)
Of all the meanest, craftiest worms,
Why, Bunter takes the biscuit!

The Subject of Next Monday's Lyric
will be

MARK LINLEY.



WHOM TO WRITE TO:
EDITOR,
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
EVERY WEDNESDAY
AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR"
EVERY FRIDAY.

The Editor
is always
pleased to
hear from
his Chums,
at home or
abroad.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

I have a grand surprise in store for my readers, for next week's issue will be a

SPECIAL SUMMER NUMBER of the "Magnet" Library,

containing many grand new features of special interest. Foremost of all, of course, will be a grand

50,000-word Long School Story

of Harry Wharton & Co., by Frank Richards, entitled

"SHUNNED BY THE FORM!"

and a rattling good tale it is, too, as my readers will readily admit as soon as they have perused it. The next item is a magnificent story of love, the Turf, and an aeroplane, entitled:

"FOR NAME AND FAME!"

By Peter Bayne.

Then there is a special innovation which will be of particular interest to all my Boy Scout "Magnetites," consisting as it does of the reproduction of some splendid and unique photographs of the

GREAT SCOUT RALLY.

Another of the popular series of

"Greyfriars Lyrics"

will appear, in which "The Magnet" Library's own rhymster extols the sterling worth of Mark Linley, the Greyfriars junior who once worked in a Lancashire mill.

Another of the

"Good Turns"

series, about which I have received so many appreciative letters from my chums, will also be on the programme; while, in addition to other good things, there will be the usual

Comic Supplement,

and, of course, that most popular feature,

The Chat Page.

This grand issue will be distinguished by what will be quite a new departure in the history of "The Magnet" Library, viz.:

A GRAND COLOURED COVER,

printed in many gay tints on fine art paper. Next week's Summer Double Number is an issue to be looked forward to, and the advance demand for it is already enormous. Under the circumstances, therefore, all my chums will be well advised to order their next week's "Magnet" Library from their newsagents well in advance.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

W. J. E. (Liverpool).—The scholars of Greyfriars bathe in the Sark.

"Habit" (Manchester).—Carry acid tablets, and when the craving to smoke comes on suck one of these.

E. J. P. (Exeter).—Try a caustic pencil, obtainable from your chemist for 6d. Moisten the wart night and morning, and very carefully pencil it with the caustic.

H. Edwards and W. Mayberry (Newport).—I am afraid I cannot promise to do as you ask at present.

F. Harrison (Stockport).—Providing that it is not in any way damaged, I should advise you to buy the secondhand camera, as representing better value for your money.

"A Durham Reader."—The issue containing "The Hypnotist of St. Jim's" is now out of print.

R. Wain (Hackney).—Yes, certainly. You can send in as many storeyettes as you like.

Will Mrs. Carlton accept my best thanks for her suggestions, and her further efforts to popularise our three companion papers?

Miss Sophia Jonas (Victoria Park).—Thank you for letter and verses.

E. P. Duffield (Norwich).—I am considering your suggestion.

"A Constant Reader" (Clapham). You should oil your bat with linseed-oil. Ceylon stamps are obtainable from Stanley Gibbons, 391, Strand, W.C.

PLAIN TRUTHS ABOUT THE STAGE.—No. 2. By an Actor.

After the last penny is gone, and you think that it is time you were making a start, you find that these people have no influence, and cannot get an engagement for themselves, much less anybody else. You will have lost both time and money and perhaps you will lose heart as well, and cease to bother about the profession.

Well, if you possess real talent, and make up your mind to "get there," there is a way—a genuine and well-ordered mode, whereby the wish of your heart may be gratified. It is almost useless to drop round pestering the managers. I say almost, but in some cases it is all right, where such managers conduct an agency, or hold weekly trial classes.

The best way is, firstly, to know yourself to be possessed of talent, then seek out a reliable agency, make your wants known, and trust the manager. For, if you are gifted such a person will be easily able to procure you a "sit."

Such a great actor as Sir J. Forbes Robertson, and other gentlemen high in the profession, have schools under their direction where pupils of promise are received, until such time as an opening can be found for such as are proficient, either with the manager's company, or some other show requiring such a part. The fee is a little more than forty pounds a year; and for such as can afford it, I have no hesitation in saying that it is the best way to prepare for the future laurels.

Study, study, and again—study. The plums of the great art hang high, and it takes years to reach them. For, although you have talent, it is only time and great practice that will give the tone to your acting, and place you with the leaders.

The pay varies considerably, but on the whole it does not come up to great sums one hears of as the nightly salary of some "star." Chorus girls are very badly paid. I remember last year, when in Dublin, having to help a couple of chorus girls over the Christmas season. One pound per week each was the sum paid them for two houses nightly, and a very little extravagance would have left the poor girls homeless.

Then again. When on tour, if the company has not a well-established reputation, there will crop up "vacant dates," which means that the company is idle, and not earning money. Then it is usual to put the whole company on half, or perhaps three-quarter salary. If it so happens that luck is out, then there is actual want.

It will be seen, therefore, that stage-struck boys and girls should consider the matter very carefully, and be very sure of themselves before cutting themselves adrift from their old life, and seeking to gain a footing upon the stage.

The Editor

A Thrilling, Long, Complete Story of Mystery and Adventure which all Magnetites must read!

THE DEATHLESS HORSEMAN!

A Thrilling, Long, Complete Story Dealing with the Adventures of Jack, Sam, and Pete.

By **S. CLARKE HOOK.**



Peering up into the branches of the tree, Sam caught sight of a huge chimpanzee. He pulled the trigger of his rifle, and the next moment the wounded brute dropped right on top of him, sending him rolling over and over. (See this page.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Horseman's Victim—A Weird Apparition—Pete's Uncomfortable Seat.

FROM the cloudless heavens the golden sunlight streamed upon the Sabara—that mighty sea of sand on which lay the bones of many a man who had ventured to cross the treacherous waste to meet a lingering and fearful death.

Beneath the dark shadows of a baobab-tree, on the western slope of the Atlas Mountains, lay the three comrades—Jack Owen, Sam Grant, and the negro, Pete. They were in the territory of the fierce Berbers of the Riff, and well knew that they held their lives in their hands. At any moment those savage warriors might come swooping down upon them, to deal them death, or, worse still, capture them alive; for no race on the face of the earth can vie with the Amazirga tribes, to which the Berbers belong, in deeds of diabolical cruelty towards their captured foes.

Pete, however, was quite at his ease. The heat, which was almost intolerable to Jack and Sam, seemed to suit him. Sprawling on his back, with his woolly head resting on his brawny arms, he sent up clouds of smoke from his pipe, sleepily joining in the conversation.

"At any rate, we've got so far on our adventurous journey without losing our lives, Sam!" exclaimed Jack.

"Nebber lose your lives in dis country!" growled Pete.

"What do you know about it, you silly nigger?" demanded Sam.

"'Spect I was born here, Sammy. Learnt a mighty lot about de country when I was a little baby."

"It's too thundering hot for me!"

"Do you good, Sammy. Turn you de colour ob dis child. And tink what a blessing dat would be!"

"Seems to me one nigger in the camp is quite enough. To my mind— Hi, murder!" roared Sam, as a large piece of dead bough struck him on the back of the head.

"Here, steady, you stupid clown of a nigger! You've about cracked my skull!"

"It was me, old Yank!" came a hoarse voice up the great tree.

"Oh, it was you, was it?" cried Sam, springing to his feet.

He knew the voice was due to Pete's ventriloquism, though he saw another piece of timber coming upon him, and only just leapt aside in time to avoid a blow that would probably have proved fatal.

Peering into the dense foliage of the baobab, or monkey-bread tree, he caught a glimpse of a huge chimpanzee.

"So it was you, my beauty! Well, this is me!" said Sam, levelling his rifle.

He drew the trigger of his repeating-rifle, and a fierce howl answered the shot. The next moment the wounded brute dropped on Sam, hurling him to the ground, and they rolled over and over down the height.

It was quite impossible for Jack or Pete to fire; but they sprang to his assistance, knowing their comrade's peril. For, when engaged, the chimpanzee is even a more terrible foe than the orang-outang, with which it is sometimes confounded, although in reality they are quite distinct.

"Come off dis!" cried Pete, placing his grip round the huge, hairy body, and raising the infuriated brute from the ground. "You fight fair, sah! Golly! Shoot him, Sammy!"

This was an impossibility, without shooting Pete as well; but Jack drew his knife, and plunged it to the hilt into the fierce monster's breast.

Twice he had to repeat the blow before the chimpanzee ceased to struggle. Now Pete released his hold, and the great beast dropped lifeless at his feet.

"Am you hurt, Sammy?"

"You can reckon I am, one way and another!" growled Sam, mopping his face, which was considerably torn.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "You look most amazing scratched, Sammy!"

"That's how I feel, mate. But look at those vultures yonder! Wonder what they are after?"

"Dis pretty object, I 'spect. Golly, he am mighty like you in de face, Sammy. Suppose you neber had a broder in dese parts?"

"Stop your stupid remarks, and let's come and see what those vultures are hovering over. Come on, Jack! You had better be careful of that nigger. He's more dangerous than any chimpanzee!"

Clambering over the uneven ground—for at that part great boulders rose up on every side—they reached the spot over which a flock of vultures were hovering, uttering their hoarse croaks.

Upon the ground lay the lifeless form of a Berber.

"That brutal murder has been committed by a horseman," said Jack, pointing to the ground, on which appeared a number of hoof-prints.

"There's not a doubt about that, mate," answered Sam; "and it seems to me the murderer must have continued to deal blows after his victim was dead, seeing the way he is knocked about. Ah, see yonder! Get to cover! Quick!"

A dozen or more Berbers came galloping towards them round a clump of trees, and the comrades only just had time to gain the shelter of a huge boulder, a little way up the height, when the savage warriors reached the dead form.

They uttered furious yells when they recognised the lifeless savage as one of their tribe, and some of them, who carried muskets as well as spears, fired towards the boulder.

"They evidently think we have committed that abominable deed," said Jack. "We won't return their fire if we can help it. No wonder they are furious at such a crime."

"But we shall have to return it, mate," answered Sam. "They don't mean to let us escape, and I don't mean them to capture us alive if it can be helped. I could send six of those horses riderless across the desert if I had the mind. However, we will see what they mean doing first."

"Don't 'spect dey can bring de horses ober dis ground," said Pete.

(Continued on page iv.)

"That's true enough, mate. But they can get over themselves, while these rocks and bushes will afford them cover."

For some time the Berbers remained talking together; then, springing to the ground and leaving their well-trained horses unguarded, they commenced to clamber up the height, firing each time one of the comrades showed himself.

"I reckon we've been more merciful to them than they will ever be to us," said Sam. "But, boys, I'm not going to be so merciful as to let them capture us, and gouge our eyes out, with a few more devilries thrown in; so here goes!"

Sam levelled his rifle, took quick aim, and fired at one of the Berbers, who was springing up the height, urging on the rest.

The man went down with a shriek, but quickly crept to the shelter of one of the rocks. Nor did any of the rest venture to expose themselves to the hunter's unerring aim.

"This is going to be a waiting job," said Jack, when a quarter of an hour had elapsed without a sign of the foe.

"Tink dey are waiting for us?" inquired Pete.

"You can bet they are," answered Sam. "I expect they want a bit of roast nigger for their tea."

"P'r'aps dey'll try a bit ob Sammy first; den dey will die natural deaths from poison, and we shall be safe, Jack."

"You'll never be safe till you're boiled down into black soup," retorted Sam. "Now keep your eyes open, boys, and if you see— Ah, got you, my beauty!" he added, firing at one of the Berbers' arms, which appeared round a rock. "See so much as an arm, I was going to say, when that interrupted me—why, shoot it! They mean to wait till it's dark, then come upon us from all sides. But that's just what I'm going to stop."

The sun was sinking now, and as the night wind raised clouds of sand over the distant desert a strange red haze appeared above the Sahara. Gradually the intense heat diminished, and as the darkness deepened Sam directed his comrades to follow him.

On their hands and knees they crept through the long grass, which, notwithstanding the ruggedness of the ground, grew to a considerable height at that spot.

Availing of every bush to hide their movements, they worked their way along until they had gained a considerable distance from the boulder.

"Now, listen to me, Pete," whispered Sam. "You've got to make that voice of yours come from behind yonder boulder. Just insult the brutes a bit. Some of them are pretty sure to understand English. I want to induce them to charge at that boulder. If they do, we shall make a rush for their horses, mount, and gallop across the open ground."

"Dat's easily done. You listen to dis child's voice. It will sound more natural to dose savages down below."

"Hallo, you dere!" came a distant voice. "How much longer am you going to keep us waiting? Pretty lot ob timid asses you are to be frightened ob free men! Am you waiting till you get your women to help you? Oh, you can yell, you beauties; but you won't frighten us, and I 'spect you'll yell a bit more when we get at you!"

These words, which were evidently understood, seemed to drive the savages into a state of frenzy. Uttering fierce yells, they sprang towards the boulder.

Pete made his voice come from further up the slope, and, following the sound, the Berbers rushed up the height.

"Now, boys!" cried Sam, darting towards the horses.

The savages heard them, and, yelling out their war-cry, charged towards them, hurling their spears as they came on.

The horses were all together at the bottom of the slope, and the comrades leapt upon the backs of three of them, then dashed across the open ground.

A few shots were poured after them, but all passed over their heads. Probably the Berbers were afraid of hitting their horses, and so aimed too high.

The pace at which the steeds sped was tremendous. The beautiful animals seemed to fly over the ground.

"I reckon I'll make them a little less anxious to come up with us," said Sam, glancing round and firing at one of the pursuers.

"Well done, Sammy!" exclaimed Pete. "You'll fire all right, wid a little practice!"

"You attend to your horse, you silly coon!" growled Sam.

"Golly, de sun am coming up again in a different direction!"

"Hark at the blockhead!" exclaimed Sam, firing another shot, which had the effect of causing the pursuers to rein in.

"It's the moon, Pete!" laughed Jack.

"Don't tink so, sah. 'Spect dat am de sun. Neber saw de moon so red as dat."

"It's no good arguing with the silly nigger!" said Sam.

"If he's made up his mind it's the sun, he'll stick to it like glue. As a rule, though, Pete, the sun does not rise in the night."

"Den dis must be an exception to dat rule, Sammy. Tell you dat's de sun. You am de most obstinate hoss dat eber

lived. Tink we can go a bit slower now. Dey hab given up de chase."

This was not so. The Berbers were still following, although they did not care to get within range of Sam's rifle.

Owing to the drifting sand, the light was very indistinct, and the comrades could no longer see their foes through the haze; but there could be little doubt they would follow by the trail which was perfectly distinct in the sandy soil.

They had proceeded some miles across the sandy desert when a horseman appeared in front of them. His object appeared to be to head them off.

Nearer and nearer he drew, until his almost nude form was distinctly seen in the moonlight.

A spear was in his right hand, and it appeared as though he actually intended to charge at the three men.

Sam knew that if he did so, while they were fighting with him their pursuers would be upon them.

"I'm only going to wound him," he said, drawing the trigger.

"Golly, Sammy," exclaimed Pete, "tink you were aiming at dat sun! You hab missed altogether!"

"It's mighty queer I should miss my aim!" growled Sam. "It's the sort of thing I don't do twice, though."

Again he levelled his repeating-rifle, and emptied the five remaining chambers at the galloping horseman.

He wheeled round, then galloped past the comrades at the speed of the wind, and as he swept by they could distinctly see the fierce features of the rider in the moonlight.

"Well, I'll be shot!" gasped Sam.

"Yah, yah, yah! You can't shoot, Sammy!" roared Pete.

"'Spect the sunlight got in your eyes."

"I expect the moonlight has got into your addled brain. That chap has got five bullets in him!"

"Then he certainly seems to like them!" laughed Jack.

"I really think you must have missed him, Sam."

"Tell you I hit him every time," declared Sam. "You've seen me shoot at a smaller mark than that, boys; but you've never seen me miss my aim."

The atmosphere now suddenly became almost clear, and the moonlight streamed down upon the Sahara, rendering every object visible for miles around.

The comrades could distinctly see their pursuers; then, as that mysterious horseman swerved round the three fugitives, and appeared in full view of the Berbers, they uttered yells of terror, and, reining their horses round, dashed madly towards the hills.

(The conclusion of this magnificent mystery story appears in the issue of our companion paper, "THE PENNY POPULAR," now on sale everywhere. This grand issue also contains a splendid, long, complete school tale by Martin Clifford, and a thrilling, complete story of Sexton Blake, the detective. Get "THE PENNY POPULAR" to-day!)

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