

In this issue: **“THE MYSTERY OF THE SILVER SCUD!”**

A Long and Breathlessly Exciting Complete Story of the Schoolboy Yachtsmen!

No. 758. Vol. XXII. Week ending Aug. 19th, 1922.

The Magnet ^{1 1/2}

Library

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THE “GREYFRIARS HERALD.”



BILLY BUNTER LANDS IN FRANCE! NO ESCAPE FOR THE “BILKER” OF GREYFRIARS!
(A humorous incident from the long complete tale in this issue.)



Address your letters to: The Editor, THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. I am always pleased to hear from my chums.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" Every Monday
 "THE MAGNET" Every Monday
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 "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" Published Yearly

NEXT MONDAY'S PROGRAMME.

For next Monday, the outstanding feature is undoubtedly the thrilling long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of Greyfriars. Personally, although I have, of course, read every story ever published in the "Magnet" Library, I think that our next story is the finest and most thrilling of all.

A baffling mystery surrounds those aboard the Silver Scud, the yacht upon which Lord Mauleverer is entertaining his friends, Harry Wharton & Co.—and one who is not exactly a friend, William George Bunter!

Mauleverer and the others are persistently alarmed by the attentions of Gideon Gaunt, a man whom they have seen but have never been able to catch. He has become the terror of their lives. And next week's story is entitled:

"THE TERROR TRACKED DOWN!" By Frank Richards.

Harry Wharton is attacked by the mysterious foe; and even that fails to deter Wharton from fighting against the man they cannot find. He "carries on," despite his danger and the warning the attack implies; and, in the end, he succeeds in tracking down the man responsible for all the trouble.

The fact that he nearly loses his life in so doing will tell you that the adventure is a thriller.

For sheer excitement, the story of "The Terror Tracked Down" will stand for a long time as one not likely to be beaten. It

surpasses every other story ever written—and a story has to be very good to surpass even one of these published in the "Magnet" Library.

I do not want a single reader of the "Magnet" Library to miss this story. I want every one of you reading this notice to tell every one of your friends that if they really want to read a magnificent, clean, thrilling school story, they cannot do better than order a copy of next Monday's "Magnet" Library.

I have already written to Mr. Frank Richards to compliment him upon the splendid yarn he has sent for publication in next Monday's "Magnet," and I shall be very pleased indeed to tell him what you think of it, so, whilst you look forward to reading the story, I shall be looking forward to hearing from you—and I have to wait a few more days than have you!

ANOTHER SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT.

In the centre of next week's issue of the "Magnet" Library there will appear another special supplement—Gerald Loder's Number of the "Greyfriars Herald."

Gerald Loder, as you know, is a prefect, who has very peculiar ideas. He thinks that the best way to make himself popular is by bullying those smaller than himself. He also thinks that Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove have very little respect for prefects. He is quite wrong in both those ideas, at least. Harry Wharton & Co. have a very great respect for such prefects as George Wingate, head prefect and captain of Greyfriars, and Tom North, Gwynne, and Hammersley. For Loder's sort they have no respect. Bullies never will gain respect, whatever else they secure through their tactics.

Loder's peculiar ideas, therefore, gave Harry Wharton reason to think that his "Herald" would be very interesting if controlled, for one week only, by Gerald Loder himself.

Result—Gerald Loder took on the job, just to air his views, as he put it, and you will see it next Monday in the "Magnet" Library.

The only thing which upset Loder was the fact that, unbeknown to him, one or two articles not compiled at his direction got into the supplement!

THE FIRST OF SEPTEMBER.

It would not be fair if I did not again warn every reader of this paper that the "Holiday Annual" will be on sale on the First of September.

Towards the end of the year, you know, fathers, big brothers, and uncles begin to think about Christmas. Christmas means presents. And boys and girls want presents which please them. That is why so many big brothers, fathers, and uncles keep a locked drawer at home in which to hide copies of the "Holiday Annual."

But not every reader of the "Magnet" Library has uncles or big brothers who want to make them a present of the "Holiday Annual." They have to get it for themselves. It is because I know this that I warn every boy and girl reader of the "Magnet" Library that there is going to be record rush for this year's issue of the "Holiday Annual," and the only way to make certain of a copy of this magnificent volume is by ordering it in advance at your newsagent's.

Some of you, perhaps, have never seen a copy of the "Holiday Annual." It is a volume of well over three hundred and fifty pages, packed from cover to cover with grand stories of Greyfriars, Rookwood, and St. Jim's; adventure stories, sports stories, articles and poems, sketches, and coloured plates, tricks, and puzzles—everything that the modern boy and girl wants.

And the "Holiday Annual" appears once a year, and the First of September is the date for the publication of this year's issue. **DON'T FORGET IT!**

NOTICES.

Correspondence.

A. Thomas, 29, Quarella Road, Bridgend, wishes to correspond with "Magnet" readers interested in bicycles.

Jack Bell, 49, Reid Road, Sth. Dunedin, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with readers of the Companion Papers. Age 12.

W. G. Davies, 62, Woodlands Park Road, E. Greenwich, London, wishes to correspond with readers in France, to improve his knowledge of French.

F. A. Faulkner, 61, High Street, Woodside, Dudley, Worcestershire, would like readers for his amateur magazine, the "Journalists' Review"; can be obtained post free, two-pence, from the above address.

R. Spinks, 13 Platoon, D Co., 4th Battalion K.R.R.C., Quetta, Baluchistan, India, N.W.F., wishes to correspond with readers anywhere.

Your Editor.

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By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the Famous Greyfriars Stories appearing in the "POPULAR.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter's Bath!

"ROLL out, Bunter!"
Snore!
"Brekker in ten minutes!"
Snore!

Billy Bunter, reclining at his ease in his bunk on board the Silver Scud, snored determinedly.

He must have heard Bob Cherry's voice—everybody on Lord Mauleverer's yacht could hear it, for that matter.

But Billy Bunter snored on regardless. Bunter did not see any reason for turning out. It was bad enough to turn out of bed during term at Greyfriars. But at school there was no choice about the matter. On holiday, Bunter preferred to loaf in bed till about half-past nine.

But loafing was a difficult matter when Bob Cherry was a member of the party. Bob himself was bursting with energy, and he had no mercy on slackers.

"Do you hear, Bunter?" roared Bob. Snore!

Bob Cherry strode across the state-room and grasped Bunter's bedclothes. They came off in a bunch, and there was a howl instead of a snore from William George Bunter.

"Yow! Wharrer you up to? Lemme me alone, you beast!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Are you awake now?"

"Beast!"
"Barely time to bathe before brekker!" said Bob Cherry severely.

"Yah! I'm not going to bathe! This is a holiday, isn't it?" howled Bunter. "Besides, I don't need all the washing you do! I'm clean!"

"The cleanliness is not terrific, my esteemed Bunter," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, looking in at the door.

"Yah! Gimme my blankets, Bob Cherry!"

"Aren't you turning out?" asked Bob persuasively.

"No!" roared Bunter.

"Sure?" asked Bob.

"Yes."

"Your mistake," said Bob cheerfully;

"you are! Lend a hand with the fat bouncer, Inky."

"With pleasure, my esteemed chum." Billy Bunter came out on the floor with a bump and a yell. There were footsteps outside, and Harry Wharton and Nugent and Johnny Bull looked in, grinning.

"Pig-killing?" asked Wharton.

"Yaroooh!"

"Only lending Bunter a hand," explained Bob. "He thought he didn't want to turn out—now he's changed his mind. Haven't you, Bunter?"

"Beast!"

"He thinks he doesn't want a bath," continued Bob Cherry. "But he's going to change his mind about that, too. Aren't you, Bunter?"

"Yah!"

"All hands to the mill," chuckled Bob. "He's not a feather-weight. You take his legs, Inky and Nugent."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You other fellows take his arms."

"Leggo!"

Wharton and Johnny Bull captured a fat arm each.

"Now I'll take his ears!"

"Yooop!"

"Now, all together!" gasped Bob. "This way, Bunter! Dash it all, we really need the capstan for this job!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In the grasp of the Famous Five, Billy Bunter was whirled out of his cabin, roaring, tangled in his pyjamas, which, as they were the property of Lord Mauleverer, were much too long for him, though hardly wide enough.

He came out in the midst of the juniors with a rush, and there was a sudden collision in the passage. Mr. Poynings, the mate of the Silver Scud, was coming along, and the merry juniors did not see him in time. They crashed right into the young man and sent him spinning, and staggering back from the shock, they let Bunter roll.

"Wha-a-t—what the thunder—" spluttered Poynings.

"Yaroooh!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Bob Cherry,

staggering against the bulkhead. "Oh, my hat! Sorry!"

"The sorrowfulness is terrific!"

"Awfully sorry!" gasped Wharton.

Poynings sat on the polished planks, quite knocked out, for the moment, by the collision. Bunter sat up a few feet from him, and blinked at him and yelled.

"Ow! My neck's broken! Yooop! Both my legs are dislocated! Ow, wow! Beasts! Help!"

"Good gad, what's the matter?" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer, arriving on the spot from the saloon. "Anybody hurt?"

"Ow! Yes! I'm hurt! Yaroooh!"

Harry Wharton gave Mr. Poynings a hand up. The young mate's rather handsome face was dark with anger—somebody's elbow had jammed on his well-shaped Greek nose, and hurt it. But his looks cleared in a moment, and he contrived to smile.

"You should be a bit more careful with your larking," he said, and went on his way.

"Now for Bunter!" said Bob Cherry.

"Come on, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

"Open the bath-room door, Franky!"

"Yah! Leggo!"

Billy Bunter struggled wildly in the grasp of the merry Removites. But his struggles were in vain. He was borne on into the bath-room, where Nugent had turned on the taps.

"Oh, you awful rotters!" howled Bunter. "I tell you I don't want a bath! I don't need a bath! I'm not going to have a bath! Help!"

Splash!

Billy Bunter sat in the bath, pyjamas and all. He gave a horrified yell as the water swirled round him.

"Grooogh! Yooop! Beasts! Fire! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

The Famous Five crowded out, leaving Billy Bunter to enjoy his bath. It was his first since he had come aboard the Silver Scud, and certainly he ought to

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have enjoyed it. But judging by the sounds that followed the Famous Five as they retreated, the Owl of the Remove was not enjoying it at all.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Hidden Enemy!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's up, Mauly?"

Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, was standing in the passage where the Famous Five had left him. There was a startled expression on his lordship's face. He held in his hand a slip of cardboard, and he was staring at it blankly, almost dazedly.

"Anything up?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yaas."

"Well, what's the merry row?" inquired Bob.

"Look at that!"

Lord Mauleverer held up the cardboard slip. The faces of the Famous Five became grave at once. A brief message was written on the slip, in capital letters. It ran:

THE LAST WARNING!
THE RANSOM, OR DEATH IN
24 HOURS.—G. G.

The Greyfriars juniors looked at the slip, and at one another, with startled faces. That brief message brought back to their minds the haunting mystery of the yacht—the strange, baffling mystery that had already cast a deep shadow over their holiday trip.

"Gideon Gaunt again!" said Nugent, with a quick, startled look round, as if he half-expected to see the man with the black beard and the misshapen nose standing at his elbow.

"Yaas!" muttered Lord Mauleverer. "Where did you get that, Mauly?" asked Harry Wharton quietly.

"Picked it up—just here."

"In the passage?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yaas; a minute ago."

Wharton wrinkled his brows.

"It wasn't there when we came along to Bunter's room," he said. "I'm quite sure of that! We should have seen it."

"Quite sure!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, I saw it lyin' there after you fellows passed along," said Lord Mauleverer. "It's jolly queer, what? That fellow with the boko is still on board the Silver Scud, somehow. I'd better show this to uncle Brooke."

"It beats me hollow," said Bob Cherry, as the juniors followed Lord Mauleverer, in a very grave and serious mood now. "We know jolly well that that blackmailing villain isn't on board—the yacht's been searched from end to end and top to bottom. How did he get the message here?"

"He must be on board," said Harry.

"But he can't be! Where could he be?"

Wharton shook his head.

That mystery was too deep for him, and he gave it up. From the hour the yacht had left England, it had been haunted by the unseen presence of the man with the misshapen nose. The closest search had failed to reveal any sign of a stowaway hidden on board—and yet, unless the man possessed supernatural powers, he was there! He had been seen—he had been touched—Frank Nugent still bore the signs of his struggle in the dark with the ruthless rascal.

"Unless he's a giddy phantom!" muttered Bob. "Dash it all, it really looks as if the ship's haunted!"

"Some of the crew think so," said Nugent, in a low voice. "But that's rot! But—what does it mean?"

There was no answer possible to that question. But the faces of the Greyfriars juniors were clouded by the mystery, and the sense of hidden danger, brought home to their minds once more by the threatening message Lord Mauleverer held in his hand.

Sir Reginald Brooke was at the breakfast table, and there was a slightly worn look upon his kind old face. Mauly's uncle and guardian felt the anxiety of the strange situation more keenly than the light-hearted juniors—much more keenly than Lord Mauleverer himself. Danger, though it was very real and near, made no perceptible difference to Lord Mauleverer's easy, placid cheerfulness.

"What is that, Herbert?" asked the old baronet, as Mauly laid the card on the table beside him.

"Another billet-doux from our giddy friend the enemy, uncle," answered the schoolboy earl.

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Sir Reginald glanced at the card, and started, and bit his lip. It was not the first time, by more than one, that he had read a threatening message from Lord Mauleverer's mysterious enemy.

His face paled a little.

"Where did you get this, Herbert?" he asked, in a faltering voice.

"I picked it up near the bath-room, uncle. It was lyin' on the floor. Left up there for us to see, I suppose."

"Or dropped," said Harry Wharton.

"Yaas, it might have been dropped—only if that merchant with the boko had shown up in the daylight, dear boy, we'd have seen him—unless he's a jolly old bodiless phantom."

"Blessed if it doesn't look as if he is," said Bob.

The juniors turned to their breakfasts; the incident, startling as it was, had not impaired their appetites, rendered all the more healthy by the keen sea air. But Sir Reginald Brooke did not eat. The worn and troubled look settled more deeply upon his face. He was silent for a long time, and when he spoke, his voice was faltering.

"This passes comprehension," he said. "There is no way of explaining it—but this scoundrel, Gideon Gaunt, has access to the yacht—though it is far from land. I cannot understand it—but there it is!

Herbert, my boy, you are not safe from the villain on the Silver Scud."

"All serene, uncle," said Lord Mauleverer carelessly.

"We'll look after Mauly, sir!" said Bob Cherry.

"You were not able to look after Herbert when he was attacked on the last occasion," said the old baronet. "And even now, this message has been dropped almost at his feet, and none of you saw the man. Herbert, it seems to me that it would be wiser, and safer, to turn the yacht back to England, where you will, at least, have the protection of the police."

"And run away from that skulkin' blackguard, uncle?" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer. "Not unless you order me to, sir."

"I am your guardian, my boy, and responsible for your safety," said Sir Reginald. "I cannot protect you from this ruffian."

"I'm not afraid, sir," said Mauleverer cheerfully. "If the rascal shows himself, we'll handle him all right. He can't get at any of us without showin' up. I lock my door at night now an' keep my light burnin', as you told me—I'm safe enough. Nothin' happened last night, you see. The rascal's tryin' to frighten us into shellin' out blackmail."

"He is clearly a desperate scoundrel," said the old gentleman, with a worried brow. "He has powers that I cannot understand. In a former threatening message he directed us to fly the white ensign half-mast as a signal that the ransom for your safety would be paid—"

"You're not thinking of doing that, sir?" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer quickly.

The old baronet did not reply. But it was clear from his look that he was thinking of it. The mysterious presence of the haunting enemy, who could not be discovered, but who seemed to come and go as he chose, while the yacht was at sea, was beginning to tell on the old gentleman's nerves.

"It couldn't be done, sir," said Lord Mauleverer quietly. "Why, if the rascal netted ten thousand pounds by threatenin' us like this, what's to stop him from goin' on? When he wanted more money he would begin again—and what's to stop him, when he seems to have the power of hauntin' us like a ghost? No surrender, sir."

Sir Reginald nodded.

"You are right, Herbert. But—if anything should happen to you on this voyage, I could never forgive myself."

"You wouldn't be to blame, uncle. It would be rotten to give in to that scoundrel—better face anythin' than knuckle under to threats. You're not eatin' your brekker, sir."

The subject dropped; the old baronet remaining silent, and the juniors conversing in subdued tones. When they went on deck later—leaving Billy Bunter alone to a late but ample breakfast—they saw Sir Reginald in consultation with Captain Hawke and Mr. Poynings in the chart-house. Evidently the old baronet was consulting the two officers on the subject of the latest threat from the hidden enemy.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Not Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows—"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Got over your bath, Bunter?"
"Beast!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were leaning on

the deck-rail, watching the cliffs of France growing nearer and nearer over the blue sea. The hot August sun streamed down on the sea and the handsome yacht, as it throbbed on towards the French coast. The five juniors had dismissed from their minds, for the present, at least, the mysterious message from Gideon Gaunt—and Lord Mauleverer, stretched at ease in a canvas deck-chair, certainly looked as if he had not a trouble in the world upon his noble shoulders.

Billy Bunter, fortified with a substantial breakfast, had apparently recovered from his involuntary bath. His fat face was quite bright and cheerful as he joined the juniors on deck.

He turned his spectacles upon the white cliffs that seemed to rise from the sea, and blinked at them.

"Is that England?" he asked.

"France, fathead!"

"Rot!" said Bunter. "The white cliffs of old England—I know all about it. You can't pull my leg!"

"England hasn't a monopoly of white cliffs!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Ours are the best, of course—"

"Hear, hear!"

"But that little lot belongs to Johnny Crapaud," said the captain of the Remove. "We're going to get a run ashore in France to-day."

"Good!" said Bunter. "If it's France you'll be lucky to have me with you. A fellow who can speak splendid French—"

"I'm afraid you won't be able to come ashore, Bunter," said Harry.

"Why not?" demanded Bunter warmly.

"You've got no passport."

"Rot! Passports ought to have been abolished long ago!" growled Bunter. "Like the Government's cheek, I think, to keep up that rot, years after the war. Just to keep on officials, I suppose."

"They ought to be abolished, but they're not," said Harry; "and as the matter stands, I don't think you'd be allowed to land."

"I jolly well shall land!" roared Bunter. "I'm not going to be left on this blessed old tub while you fellows run ashore. You can lend me your passport, Wharton."

"Your name's not Wharton, you ass!"

"I can say it is, can't I?" demanded Bunter—evidently not of the same opinion as the late lamented George Washington, who could not tell a lie—perhaps.

"The photograph's on it, fathead! I suppose they wouldn't be likely to take my photograph for yours, even if you pitched them a whole string of whoppers."

"That's all right," said Bunter. "They'd simply suppose I'd grown a lot better-looking since the photograph was taken."

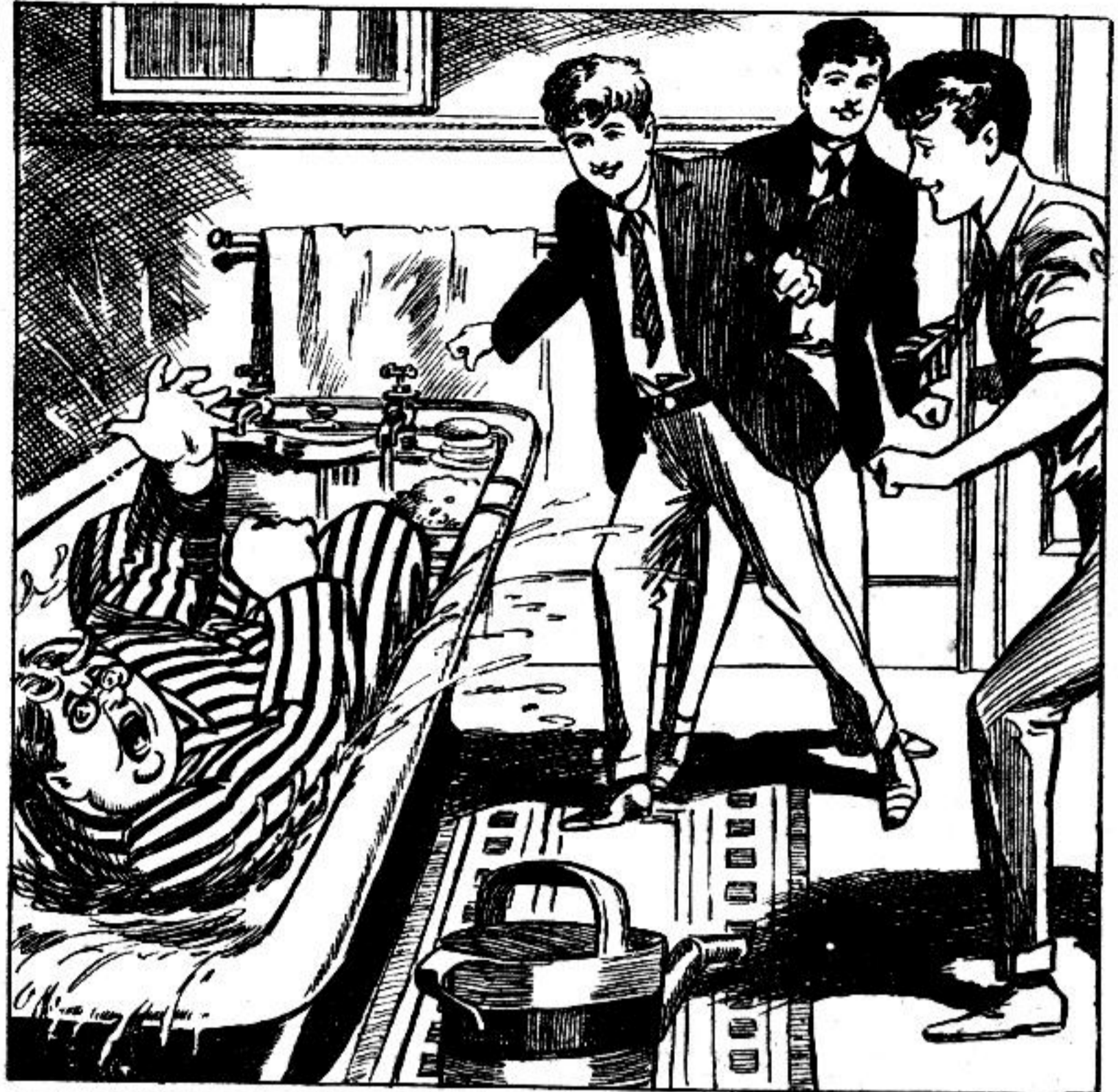
"Wha-a-at?" ejaculated Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So that's settled," said Bunter cheerfully. "I say, you fellows, what's the name of that place? There's a town or something. I can make out houses."

The juniors chuckled. The houses had been visible to them for a considerable time, but they had only just dawned upon the shortsighted Owl of the Remove.

"Blest if I can see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter. "I tell you there's a town there, or a village, or something. I say, Poynings, what is that place called?"



Billy Bunter struggled wildly in the grasp of the merry Removites. But his struggles were in vain. He was borne on into the bath-room. Splash! Bunter sat in the bath, and he gave a horrified yell as the water swirled round him. "Groooh! Beasts! Fire! Help!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five; and they left him to enjoy his bath. (See Chapter 1.)

The mate of the Silver Scud was near the juniors, and he glanced round.

"Le Bosquet!" he answered.

"Is it a port?" asked Bunter.

"No; a French holiday resort."

"What's that big white building with the trees round it?" asked Bunter, blinking at Le Bosquet through his big glasses.

"The casino," said Poynings, and he walked away.

Bunter's eyes glistened through his big glasses. Bunter prided himself upon being a sportsman, though his sporting proclivities did not resemble those of Harry Wharton & Co.

"I say, you fellows, that's ripping!" he exclaimed. "That's the place where they gamble, you know—the casino. I say, what a ripping chance for a little flutter!"

"Fathead!"

"Of course, you fellows ain't sporting," said Bunter disdainfully. "You're tame—very tame! But, I say, when I came on board at Margate, I didn't bring my luggage, as you know. I left all my banknotes locked up in a trunk."

"Must have been a tremendous big trunk, to hold them all!" remarked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"You won't want any money, Bunter, as you can't go ashore," said Bob.

"I'm going ashore, of course. How can I have a flutter at the casino without going ashore? And I shall want some tin."

"Then it's safer locked up in the big

trunk at Margate," said Harry Wharton, with a laugh.

"I say, you fellows, I suppose you can shell out on an occasion like this. You're not going to leave a guest stony-broke, are you, Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"Now, look here, Mauly—"

"Dry up, Bunter," said Wharton. "You're not going ashore, and if you did, you wouldn't be allowed into the casino."

"Who'd stop me, I'd jolly well like to know?" exclaimed Bunter.

"Guardian wouldn't allow it!" said Mauleverer.

Finding it useless to argue with the Famous Five, Billy Bunter walked disconsolately off in search of a little snack.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Trip Ashore!

"SIX for the boat!" said Lord Mauleverer, after lunch.

The Silver Scud was at anchor in the blue bay of Le Bosquet. Three or four other craft lay there, and innumerable boats were gliding over the calm waters. From the trees on the cliff the white casino looked out seaward, dazzling in the sunshine. Harry Wharton & Co. were keenly anticipating a run ashore in a foreign land—though the green tables at the casino did not enter into their imaginations at all. Bunter was the only member of the party for whom that shady folly had any attraction.

NEXT MONDAY! "THE TERROR TRACKED DOWN!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF HARRY WHARTON & CO'S HOLIDAY ADVENTURES. :: By FRANK RICHARDS. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 758.

"I say, Mauly, I'm coming!" said Bunter, hotly and indignantly.

Lord Mauleverer looked perplexed.

"Uncle says that a passport is wanted," he answered.

"Oh, I can wedge in with the rest!" urged Bunter.

"Well, ask nunky," said Lord Mauleverer. "It's for him to settle. What he says goes, dear boy."

Billy Bunter rolled away to seek Sir Reginald. The old baronet was not going ashore himself; Mr. Poyning's, the mate, was going, and he had consented to take charge of the party of juniors. Not that they needed taking charge of, in their own opinion; but Sir Reginald did not see eye to eye with the Greyfriars juniors in all matters.

Bunter was fairly thick-skinned, but even he felt a little abashed as he approached the old baronet. Sir Reginald greeted him with a rather steely glance.

"I want to go ashore with the fellows, sir," said Bunter.

"You have no passport?"

"Left it at Margate with my luggage," said Bunter.

"Well, I understand that foreigners are not allowed to land without passports," said Sir Reginald.

"But—"

"I am afraid that closes the matter, Bunter."

Sir Reginald resumed his paper; and Bunter, baffled, rolled away in a state of great wrath. He found the Greyfriars party going down the gangway into the boat.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ta-ta, Bunter!"

"Beasts!"

The boat pushed off, Billy Bunter watching it row away with a morose eye. Mr. Poyning's was steering. Harry Wharton & Co. felt a little sorry even for Bunter; but in the circumstances it could not be helped. Bunter shook a fat fist after the boat.

It glided swiftly over the blue waters, and was lost among the other gliding boats. Bunter snorted angrily and discontentedly, and rolled disconsolately along the deck. He squatted in Lord Mauleverer's favourite comfortable chair for a time; but he was restless. He wanted to go ashore. Especially he wanted not to miss that chance of a lifetime—a flutter at the white casino on the hillside. He began to "mooch" about the trim yacht, as it swung at anchor, like an animal in a cage.

Without the juniors the Silver Scud seemed very silent and deserted. Captain Hawke was occupied in the chart-room; Sir Reginald Brooke had fallen asleep over his newspaper in the smoke-room. There was a musical tinkle of crockery from the galley, and a drowsy murmur of voices from two or three seamen on deck. Billy Bunter felt immensely bored. If this was yachting, he might as well have stayed on in Margate, he reflected indignantly. Cheeky beasts to go ashore and leave a fellow behind!

Several pleasure-boats, pulling across the bay, passed quite near the anchored yacht, their occupants curious to look at the handsome English craft. Billy Bunter eyed them, and the idea came into his fat mind of begging a passage ashore in one of them. But none of them came near enough for Bunter to get his rather difficult French into operation.

But a rusty-looking boat, with a rusty-looking bearded man in it, came rowing closer at last. The rusty-looking man rested on his oars under the yacht's

counter, fending off with one oar as his boat washed too near, and looking up at Bunter's face over the rail with an inviting grin.

"You want to go ashore!" he called up. "Dix francs. Yes! Good—what?"

Bunter's eyes glistened. He knew that "dix francs" was ten francs, which represented about four shillings at the modern rate of exchange. Unluckily, Bunter's cash supplies were limited to a threepenny-piece and a penny. He hesitated.

"You want to go 'shore!" repeated the boatman. "Fine! Yes! What! Me take! Moi! Fine boat! Yes! Dix francs! Low cheap price!"

"Too much," said Bunter. "Trop, you know."

"Huit francs!" said the boatman.

"One franc," said Bunter.

"Hein! Oh, monsieur!" said the boatman reproachfully. "One franc! No! Non! Pas possible! Joke? Yes! Ha, ha! I row you 'shore—yes! You say sept francs."

"Seven francs!" murmured Bunter. "I—I wonder whether he would take a threepenny-bit for seven francs. After all, it's worth no end of their rotten foreign money. He ought to be glad to

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get it. Besides, I may meet the chaps ashore, and they can pay him, and give him a good tip, too. I—I think I'll risk it."

"You go?" called up the French boatman in his best English. "Oui? Say you shall go wiz I? What? Oh, yes?"

"Wee, wee, wee!" answered Bunter.

"Comment?" ejaculated the boatman.

"Eh? What's common?" asked Bunter. "Wharrer you mean? None of your foreign cheek!"

"Comment?"

"I'll go!" snapped Bunter. "Bring the boat round under the gangway. Lucky those beasts left it there!"

"Monsieur dit—"

"Wee, wee, wee!" howled Bunter angrily, afraid that the captain might come out of the chart-house and put a stop to the proceedings. "Don't you understand your own dashed language? Wee, wee! Je go—I mean, J'irai."

"Ah! Monsieur dit oui!" ejaculated the boatman, comprehending at last; and he grinned—perhaps with pleasure at hearing his own language spoken so nicely.

"Wee, wee!" snorted Bunter.

He rolled away to the accommodation-ladder, and the French boatman had his rusty old craft ready there with great

speed. Bunter gave a quick, alarmed blink round, and scuttled down to the boat and rolled in, narrowly escaping a plunge into the sea. The boatman grinned at him affably, fended off, and put out his oars. And Billy Bunter, with infinite satisfaction, lay back in the stern, with his straw-hat on the back of his head, and watched the white casino grow larger and larger in the dazzling sunshine on the hillside, while the Silver Scud grew smaller and smaller behind.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Misadventures of a Bilk!

FROM a strip of white sand a rock-stair led up the steep hillside to the casino. Several boats with gay awnings were floating there, secured by their painters, and two or three holiday-makers were stepping ashore at the same time that Bunter landed. Bunter's idea was that he would be taken for a holiday-maker who had gone out in a boat, and was returning to the shore, like a crowd of others that sunny August afternoon; and for that reason he had pointed out the casino steps to the boatman for a landing-place.

Apparently he was successful, for no one challenged his debarkation. He grinned with satisfaction as he rolled ashore—so satisfied, that he almost forgot that a little matter still had to be settled with the boatman; that rusty gentleman still had to be persuaded to accept an English threepenny-piece as the equivalent of seven French francs, unless the Greyfriars party appeared in the offing in time. Bunter glanced to and fro, but though he saw crowds of holiday-makers, endless arrays of straw and Panama hats and gorgeous parasols, he saw nothing of Lord Mauleverer's party.

"Sept francs, s'il vous plait, monsieur!" said the brown-faced, ragged-bearded boatman, touching his rag of a hat.

Bunter groped in his pocket. He produced the threepenny-piece with many inward misgivings. Now that the transit was made he felt more doubtful than before as to whether the boatman would regard it as a just equivalent for seven francs.

His misgivings were well-founded. The boatman stared at the little silver coin, and his polite smile was replaced by a heavy frown, which gave his bearded face quite a startling, brigandish look.

"Sept francs!" he repeated.

"I haven't any French money!" explained Bunter.

"Comment?"

"Je n'ai—n'ai pas any argent Francais!" stuttered Bunter. "Comprenez?"

"Mais oui! Payez donc! Sept francs. Cela!" said the boatman, with quite a snort at the threepenny-piece. "Cela! Non! Non! Mille fois non!"

"I wonder what he means by milfaw-nong!" murmured the hapless Owl. "It can't be a French coin, I suppose. The beast looks as if he's going to get excited. I don't want to row with a rotten foreigner. Cheating lot! I'll try him with the other penny."

Bunter added his last penny to the threepenny-piece, and extended his fat palm containing both coins towards the French boatman temptingly.

But the weatherbeaten longshoreman was proof against the temptation. He jumped out of the boat and came closer to Bunter, waving two large brown hands

so excitedly that the Owl of the Remove started back in apprehension of assault and battery.

"Payez done!" shrieked the boatman.

"Payez pour la course! N'est-ce-pas?"

"Blow nepar," growled Bunter. "I don't know what nepar means, but blow it! Do you want the money or not?"

"Je demande sept francs, et une franc pour-boire."

"Eh?"

"Sept francs," shrieked the boatman, "et pour-boire!"

"What on earth is a poor law?" groaned Bunter. "I don't believe he's speaking French at all! It's some dashed dialect, I suppose. Nothing like our French at Greyfriars, I know that."

"Sept francs!"

"Voilà!" said Bunter, again extending the threepenny-piece and the penny.

"There you are! Better than lots of your dashed foreign money! You can buy something with that! Take it or leave it!"

"Payez done!" roared the boatman, now in a state of considerable excitement, and his voice and gesticulations attracted attention on all sides.

"Donk! What do you mean by donk?" snorted Bunter. "Look here—voyez ici—"

"Payez!"

"Take it or leave it! You can't swindle me," said Bunter, apparently unconscious of the fact that it was not the boatman who was the swindler of the two.

"Payez!" shouted the man. "Ah, Coquin! Cochon! Payez done! N'est-ce-pas? Ou le gendarme? Comprenez-vous maintenant?"

Bunter did not understand it all, but he knew the word "gendarme." He knew that meant policeman, and the word sent a cold shiver down his back.

It was quite possible that a policeman, called into the dispute, might suppose that Bunter was trying to "bilk" the boatman! Awful, but quite possible!

The Owl of the Remove glared round him desperately for an avenue of escape. From the foot of the steps in the rock a path ran to the "plage," which was swarming with holiday crowds in the bright sunshine. Luckily for Bunter the boatman was also looking round him now—for a gendarme. His broad back being turned, Bunter seized the opportunity and darted away, heading for the "plage."

Three or four excited voices from on-lookers apprised the boatman that the bilk was escaping. The brown-faced man whirled round after him, and rushed in pursuit.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

Heavy footsteps behind him lent him speed. Bunter raced as he never could have raced on the cinder-path.

He came into the crowd with a rush, and bumped into a military gentleman, with disastrous effect. A pair of red-trousered legs went whirling in the air, and Bunter rushed on, with the outstretched hand of the infuriated boatman close behind.

It is said that fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Billy Bunter was the very reverse of a hero; but even a fellow of iron nerve might have hesitated to land in a foreign country in the way Bunter had done. At the present moment Bunter would have given all the wealth of the casino to be safely treading the deck of the Silver Scud once more. But repentance came too late.

The boatman was close on his track, yelling at the top of his voice. Other voices yelled on all sides. Everybody

seemed interested. A French crowd is never merely a group of onlookers. Every member likes to take part in any proceedings that may be going. A dozen voices addressed Bunter and the boatman—all in French, of course, and the words might as well have been in Greek or Russian, for anything that Bunter understood. Suddenly a strong arm was thrown across his fat chest, barring his way, and he came to a breathless, gasping halt. In another second the boatman was upon him, boiling with fury and indignation.

A brown knuckly fist was shaken in Bunter's terrified face.

"Payez!" roared the boatman. "Sept francs! Ah, cochon que vous etes. Vous ne payez pas! Hein! Nous verrons! Payez done!"

"Qu'est-ce que c'est?" asked three or four voices.

The boatman explained volubly, and half a dozen voices joined in, explaining to Bunter that he must "payer." Bunter waved his hands in reply, and decided that he had better not understand French. He was terrified almost out of his fat wits by this time. It was only too clear that if the boatman did not get his money he would proceed to violence, with the sympathetic encouragement of the thickening crowd—and how could he get his money when Bunter hadn't any? Never had a "bilk" so deeply and sincerely repented as Bunter did at that moment.

"Yaroooh! Help!" roared Billy Bunter, as the exasperated boatman, proceeding from words to actions, collared him violently.

"Payez, ou je—"

"Yoop! Help! Rescue!" roared Bunter in dismay and terror. "Oh, my hat! Gerroff, you beast! Help!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

That familiar exclamation fell like heavenly harmony on Billy Bunter's fat ears. Never since Robert Cherry had learned to speak had his voice been so welcome to any human ear.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Removites to the Rescue!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Bunter!" Harry Wharton & Co. were sauntering along the crowded promenade, with the gay crowd, when Billy Bunter's terrified yells reached them. The chums of Greyfriars were astounded to hear Bunter! They had supposed that he was safe on board the Silver Scud, if they had thought about him at all. But Bunter's dulcet tones were not to be mistaken. They realised that the Owl of the Remove was on shore, that he was close at hand, and that he was, as usual, in trouble.

Bob Cherry pushed his way hurriedly through the crowded circle round Bunter, his comrades following him. That Bunter had brought his trouble, whatever it was, upon himself, the juniors had no doubt whatever. But they felt that it was up to them to lend a hand to a Greyfriars fellow in distress—even Bunter.

"Cherry, old chap!" gasped Bunter.

"What's the row?" demanded Bob.

The boatman gave him a glare, and



The rusty-looking man rested on his oars under the yacht's counter, tending off with one oar as his boat washed too near, and looking up at Bunter's fat face over the rail with an inviting grin. "You want to go shore?" he called out. "Dix francs. Yes! Good?" "Wee, wee, wee!" answered Bunter. (See Chapter 4.)

NEXT MONDAY! "THE TERROR TRACKED DOWN!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF HARRY WHARTON & CO'S HOLIDAY ADVENTURES. :: By FRANK RICHARDS. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 758.

the crowd hustled all the juniors. The better-class promenaders were giving the scene a wide berth, as was to be expected, and the rougher sort had gathered round. There was excitement on all sides, and trouble in the air. But Harry Wharton & Co. gathered round the hapless Bunter, and the Owl of the Remove clutched hold of Lord Mauleverer's arm for protection.

"He's got a row on with a boatman," said Johnny Bull. "Looks like a boatman! Bilking him, I dare say."

"The bilkfulness is probably terrific."
"Oh, really, you fellows, I'm not to blame! Speak to him—put it to him in French, Wharton! My French is too good for these silly fools! They don't understand it. Tell him he's going to have his money."

"Calmez vous!" said Wharton to the boatman. "On payera."

"Tell him he's going to be paid!" howled Bunter.

"I have, ass!"
"It didn't sound like it to me."
Apparently it had sounded like it to the boatman, however, for he became much less excited.

"Payez! Payer done!" came from a dozen voices round. "C'est juste! Payer pour la course! N'est-ce-pas? Pourquoi pas? Payez donc."

"How much does he want, Bunter?"
"Seven francs."

"Well, give it to him."
"I haven't any French money."
"I've got some," said Johnny Bull. "I'll change some English money for you, Bunter."

"But I haven't any English money either."

"What?"
"You—you see, I—I offered him fourpence, and he wouldn't take it."

"Why should he take fourpence for seven francs?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"
"You mean to say you've hired a boat ashore without any money to pay the boatman?" demanded the captain of the Remove wrathfully.

"That's right, kick a fellow when he's down!" said Bunter bitterly. "Go it! Call that sporting?"

Wharton controlled his feelings with difficulty. It was evident that Bunter had to be got out of his scrape, at all events.

The captain of the Remove felt in his pockets and produced a five-franc note and two for a franc each, and tendered them to the boatman. The horny hand closed on them.

"Merci, monsieur! Merci bien, monsieur!"

And the French boatman retreated, and Billy Bunter was marched out of the crowd by the Greyfriars juniors.

"I say, you fellows, where are you going?" asked Bunter.

"There's a band in the gardens," said Wharton. "We're going to listen to it, and have some coffee."

"That's jolly tame," said Bunter. "Must dig up something livelier than that if I'm going to stay with you."

"Well, we're not going to dig up anything livelier," said the captain of the Remove grimly. "Take your choice, old barrel."

"I'm hungry," said Bunter discontentedly.

"Well, you can have a cake with your coffee."

"What's a dashed cake when a fellow's hungry?" grunted Bunter. "If I had a pal with me who was stony, I'd lend him a few pounds to get a blow-out. There's a lot of postal-orders waiting for me in Margate!"

Lord Mauleverer slid his hand into his pocket. A small loan was a light price to pay to be relieved of Billy Bunter.

"Make it a thousand francs, old fellow, and I'll settle as soon as we get back to England," said Bunter.

"Oh gad!"
"Give him ten francs, if anything," said Bob.

"You needn't chip in when my pal Mauly is making me a loan," said Bunter, with dignity. "I say, what's this? What the good of a hundred francs to me?" Bunter blinked with great scorn at the note Mauleverer had dropped into his fat palm.

"No good?" asked Mauleverer.

"Certainly not."
"Sorry! Hand it over, then," said Lord Mauleverer.

The hundred-franc note promptly disappeared into Bunter's pocket. It was apparently some good, after all.

"Now go and feed, and don't worry, Bunter," said Wharton. "When you've fed you'll find us in the gardens. Look for us near the bandstand. We've got to join Mr. Poynings at the boat at six."

"I'm not at all sure I shall be ready to go on board at six," said Bunter calmly. "I may be very busy."

"Don't be an ass. We can't keep Poynings and the boat waiting."

"Why not?" said Bunter. "Poynings is a paid employee, isn't he, and I suppose we can keep him waiting if we want to."

Lord Mauleverer looked round at Bunter.

"You'll be ready to go on board at six, Bunter," he said sharply, "and don't speak of Mr. Poynings like that unless you want a thick ear!"

Bunter sniffed.
"Call that politeness to a guest, Mauly?" he asked.

Bob Cherry took the fat junior by the collar and spun him round.

"Bunk!" he said.
"Peast! Leggo! Yoooop!" roared Bunter, as Bob's boot landed, and helped him to start.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked on into the casino gardens, whence came the sweet strains of the band, while Bunter started for a building, upon the front of which appeared, in large letters, the magic word "RESTAURANT." And for the next hour William George Bunter was the busiest fellow in Le Bosquet.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Meeting!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. had fully enjoyed their afternoon in the pretty seaside town.

They had rambled through the town, and rambled on the hills outside, and bought souvenirs at the little shops in the Grande Rue—which was not very grand to look at—and picture postcards, and had addressed and posted quite a budget of the last-named to friends in England. They had had a good tea, and had been enjoying a stroll along the promenade over the "plage," when they encountered Bunter. Now they were resting at their ease in the carefully-cultivated gardens that surrounded the casino, while the band discoursed sweet music, and gaily-dressed promenaders passed and repassed with a ceaseless buzz of rapid French talk. They had their coffee and little sweet cakes at little round tables under the trees, feeling

quite pleased with themselves and with the universe generally.

It did not even enter their minds to investigate the interior of the dazzling white building embosomed in the trees and shrubs. The casino had no attraction for their healthy minds, and they gave it hardly a thought. The old baronet was well aware that he could trust them to keep out of shady conduct, though he would not have felt so sure about Bunter. Mr. Poynings was in official charge of the party; but, as a matter of fact, Edgar Poynings had left them a few minutes after landing.

Not that it mattered. The juniors had no doubt whatever of their ability to take care of themselves. Poynings had mentioned that he wanted to see an old friend who lived outside Le Bosquet—a French comrade of the war days, the juniors understood—and so he left them to themselves, which they liked all the better. They had no objection to the young man's company, but, naturally, they preferred their ramble without the supervision of an elder.

Having arranged when they were to meet him at the boat, Poynings had disappeared, and the juniors had seen nothing more of him. They did not specially want to till the time came for returning to the Silver Scud.

"Jolly here, isn't it?" Bob Cherry remarked. "I hope Bunter's enjoying his feed! If he stuffs to the tune of a hundred francs he ought to have a good time, even at the present rate of exchange."

"Oh, really, Cherry—" said an unexpected voice behind Bob's chair.

"My hat! Talk of angels!" ejaculated Bob, turning his head. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Any of your waistcoat buttons gone, Bunter?"

"I haven't had half enough," said Bunter peevishly. "The waiter actually had the cheek to want a pour-boire, you know, and as the bill came to ninety-nine francs and ninety centimes, there was only a penny left over for him. I told him he could have it."

"I hope he thanked you on his bended knees!" said Johnny Bull, with sarcasm.

"Eh? He didn't thank me at all," said Bunter. "He gave me the ten-centime piece back. Didn't seem to want it! I thought it cheek. Waved his hands at me, and said something in his idiotic language, sounded to me like fwee—"

"Like what?"
"Fwee!" said Bunter. "Is that a French word? Sounds to me like the way that chap D'Arcy, at St. Jim's, speaks."

"Perhaps it was 'fuyez,'" grinned Wharton. "In that case he meant you were to clear off."

"Like his cheek, then—a good customer like me," said Bunter. "Rotten the way they ask for tips! Never could stand a fellow asking for money. I say, Mauly, will you lend me another hundred francs?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Blest if I see anything to cackle at! You don't want a guest to go hungry, I suppose, Mauly?" said Bunter reproachfully. "Of course, I shall settle up every penny in a very short time, most likely. I expect to have quite a lot of money soon."

"Is your postal-order following you to France?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Don't you butt in, Cherry, when I'm talking to my pal Mauly. Can you make it a hundred francs, Mauly, old dear?"

(Continued on page 13.)



The GREYFRIARS HERALD

THE SCHOOL HOUSE

Supplement No. 86.

Harry Wharton
Editor

Week Ending August 19th, 1922.

LOCKED IN THE LARDER!



The juniors looked into the larder and started back with surprise at the strange white apparition which confronted them. Billy Bunter had the appearance of a snowman. During the night a sack of flour had burst open, and the fat junior was smothered from head to foot. "Great pip!" ejaculated Johnny Bull. "What's happened?"

BOOM!

It was the first stroke of eleven sounding from the school clock-tower. In the Remove dormitory, where the juniors were tucked up in their beds, all was peaceful and serene. But as soon as the last stroke of the hour had died away there was a rustling movement from one of the beds. Billy Bunter sat up, and blinked around him in the gloom.

"Anybody awake?" he murmured.

"Hold that catch!" shouted Bob Cherry, in his sleep. "Don't muffle it, you butterfingers!"

Billy Bunter gave a chuckle.

"The coast is clear," he muttered. "Now for the raid!"

The fat junior threw a blanket around him, over his pyjamas. Then he encased his plump feet in a pair of slippers, and rolled noiselessly out of the dormitory.

Down the stairs he went, proceeding with caution, for the night was dark. And Bunter had no desire to take a short cut to the bottom of the stairs and break his valuable neck.

Billy's objective was the school kitchen. He was feeling extremely peckish, and he prayed that the cook might have left a pie lying about.

Cautiously he shuffled along the winding corridors, until at last he reached his desired haven.

"Now we'll see what we can find!" he muttered. "I won't put the light on, or somebody may spot it!"

Supplement i.]

Billy groped his way round the spacious kitchen, hoping to find something of an edible nature on the dresser or on the table.

He was stumbling to and fro in the darkness, pursuing his quest, when the sound of approaching footsteps came to his ears.

Billy Bunter gave a gasp of alarm. Somebody was coming into the kitchen!

It was a time for instant action.

Bunter happened to be standing in close proximity to the larder door. He pulled it open and popped inside. Then he closed the door, and stepped back into the darkness of his hiding-place, his heart beating fast with excitement.

The footsteps drew nearer. Somebody had come into the kitchen.

There was a sound of a match being struck, and a voice—the familiar voice of Mrs. Kebble, the House dame—murmured:

"Ah! I see I have forgotten to lock the larder door. I had better lock it, in case Master Bunter comes prowling around in the night."

Billy Bunter drew farther back into the larder.

A key was inserted in the lock of the door, and there was a click.

The Owl of the Remove was a prisoner!

The light in the kitchen was extinguished, and Mrs. Kebble, satisfied that the food in the larder was safe from marauders, took her departure.

"Oh, crumbs!" muttered the captive Bunter.

But he was not unduly dismayed. After

all, he reflected, to be locked in the larder was a beautiful death.

The fat junior had matches in his pocket. He struck one. There was a stump of candle on one of the shelves. Bunter lighted it, and the yellow flame threw a ghostly light upon his surroundings.

A mouse scuttled across the floor, and Billy gave a jump. He hated mice.

Bunter then explored the interior of the larder. He found himself in a land of plenty. There was food in abundance stacked upon the shelves—pies and puddings and cakes, and everything that was dear to Bunter's heart.

"Here goes!" muttered the fat junior.

And he commenced operations on a rabbit-pie.

There were no knives or forks in the larder. There was not even a pair of chopsticks. Bunter was compelled to use Nature's own implements—his fingers—but he didn't seem to mind. He made a rapid inroad into the rabbit-pie, and judging by the grunts he emitted, it was obvious that he was enjoying his repast.

Having devoured nearly half the pie, Bunter looked around for fresh worlds to conquer.

There was a jam roly-poly pudding wrapped in a cloth. The pudding was cold, but Bunter was a great lover of cold pudding. He ate a goodly portion of it, and then passed on to something lighter.

A muffled boom came to the fat junior's ears.

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Midnight!

Bunter began to feel uncomfortably full. At first, he had been strongly tempted by the sight of the food. Now it seemed to nauseate him. He wanted to crawl back to his bed in the Remove dormitory, and sleep off the effects of his orgy. But he was a prisoner in the larder, and there he would have to remain until the morning.

The sight of the various foodstuffs which were stacked upon the shelves began to get on his nerves.

"I'd give anything to get away from this place!" he groaned.

But there was no escape for him. The larder would have to serve as his sleeping quarters that night.

Standing against the wall, at the far end of the larder, was a big and bulging sack of flour. Bunter tugged at the sack, and laid it lengthwise on the floor. Then he laid down on it, having first blown out the candle.

It was a long time before sleep visited the eyes of the fat junior.

The larder was a small, stuffy apartment, and was poorly ventilated. It was not exactly the Black Hole of Calcutta, but it ran it very close.

It was about two in the morning when Billy Bunter fell into a fitful slumber.

When the rising-bell rang out on the morning air, Harry Wharton & Co. at once discovered that Bunter's bed was vacant.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Where's our prize porpoise?"

"Gone for an early morning dip, p'r'aps," suggested Nugent.

"Rats! Cold water is Bunt's pet aversion."

"He's not usually an early riser, either," said Wharton. "There's something jolly queer about this."

"Better form a search-party," said Johnny Bull.

The Famous Five hurried through their ablutions. Then they went downstairs to look for Bunter.

"Try Study No. 7 first," said Nugent.

But Study No. 7 was found to be deserted.

The remainder of the studies were visited in turn. But there was no sign of Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. scoured the building, but their fat schoolfellow had vanished completely.

The juniors visited the kitchen last—though that was the place which they ought to have thought of first.

As they trooped in, sounds of muffled groaning came to their ears.

"Ow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

"There's a dog in here somewhere," said Johnny Bull.

"And the whinefulness of the esteemed canine creature is terrific!" said Hurree Singh.

"The sound seems to be coming from the larder," said Harry Wharton. "Let's investigate."

The door was found to be locked. Wharton rapped on it sharply.

"Anybody in there?" he called.

"Yow—yes!"

Wharton fell back in astonishment.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated. "It's Bunter!"

"Come out of it, you fat chump!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—how can I come out, when I'm locked in?"

"I suppose Mrs. Kebble has taken the key away with her?" said Harry Wharton.

"How do I know!" grunted Billy Bunter.

"I heard her come down last night and turn the key in the door, and that was all. Go and ask her for it and let me out, you rotters!"

"All right! Hang on a moment," said Johnny Bull, and he dashed away to Mrs. Kebble's room for the key to the larder.

He came back a little later with the key.

"Mrs. Kebble's not up yet," he said, as he inserted the key in the lock and turned it round. Then the door was flung open, and the juniors crowded round and peered into the larder. They started back in surprise at the strange white apparition which confronted them.

Billy Bunter had the appearance of a snowman. During the night the sack of flour had burst open, and the fat junior was smothered from head to foot. There was flour on his hair, flour on his face, and flour on the blanket which covered him.

"Great pip!" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

"What's happened?"

Bunter didn't stop to reply to the question. He charged through the group of juniors, and made tracks for the Remove dormitory.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 758.

It had been a terrible night for the kitchen-raider. For some time afterwards Billy Bunter felt the effects of his close confinement in the larder and of his gluttonous orgy. It was worthy of note that Bunter ate no breakfast that morning. He also left his dinner untouched.

Not until the evening did Billy Bunter's appetite revert to its normal condition. By this time he had sufficiently recovered to be able to consume the best part of a currant cake which Peter Todd had bought.

Billy Bunter imagined that his exploits in the larder had been overlooked by the school authorities. But even whilst he was devouring the cake Trotter, the page, came in with a message from the Head, requesting the pleasure of Billy Bunter's society for a few moments.

When Billy Bunter knocked at the door of the Head's study, a very stern voice bade him enter, and, quaking with fear, the fat Owl of the Remove entered the dreaded sanctum of the Head of Greyfriars.

"Mrs. Kebble tells me that you had the audacity to enter the larder last night and confiscate a great amount of foodstuff, which you afterwards gluttonously masticated!" thundered the Head.

"Ow, nunno, sir! Not at all, sir! I haven't been near the larder!" stammered Billy Bunter. "If Mrs. Kebble has told you I have, she's not telling the truth. I wouldn't think of doing such a thing. Besides, I had a terrible time, locked up in that small place all the night—I mean—I haven't—that is—"

"Enough!" rumbled Dr. Holmes. "I do not believe a single word you say. You have contradicted yourself in your statements—which proves that you are telling falsehoods. Hold out your hand!"

And in the next few moments Bunter went through the mill. He was given three stinging cuts on each hand, followed by a severe lecture.

Billy Bunter will allow a decent interval to pass before he attempts to raid the school larder again!

COME TO THE COOKHOUSE DOOR, BOYS!

A Ballad of the Kitchen.

By **DICK PENFOLD.**

"This way, you chaps!" cried Skinner.

"How very slow you are!

'Tis good roast beef for dinner;

I scent it from afar.

There's a regular treat in store, boys,

A topping treat in store.

So come to the cookhouse door, boys—

Come to the cookhouse door!"

"I sniff the Yorkshire pudden!"

Cries Bunter, mad with glee.

"Let's hope it is a good 'un,

And big enough for me!

I shall apply for more, boys;

I'll scream and shout for more!

So come to the cookhouse door, boys—

Come to the cookhouse door!"

"There's apple-pie to follow!"

Cries Johnny Bull, with rapture.

"Inside I'm feeling hollow;

A feed I long to capture.

That pie, it tempts me sore, boys,

I say it tempts me sore.

So come to the cookhouse door, boys—

Come to the cookhouse door!"

The dinner-gong is going,

Glad sound to great and small!

A steady stream is flowing

Towards the dining-hall.

So let us gaily roar, boys,

As in the days of yore:

"Oh, come to the cookhouse door, boys—

Come to the cookhouse door!"

EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

A SPECIAL Kitchen Number ought really to be edited by Billy Bunter. But I'm not allowing Billy to have the handling of the **HERALD**. No jolly fear! Coker of the Fifth and Dicky Nugent of the Second have been permitted to become editors for one week, but Billy Bunter, never!

The Greyfriars kitchen is a very fascinating place. It is there that all the school meals are prepared, and it has a pleasant aroma of its own.

At eleven o'clock—the time of the mid-morning break—we generally send a fellow round to the open window of the kitchen to smell what's for dinner. After one or two sniffs he will come back and say "Sausages," or "Steak and kidney pudding." And we go back to the Form-room, looking forward eagerly to the good things to come.

The kitchen is a place that is full of romance, especially to a fellow of Billy Bunter's temperament. Billy would like to live in the kitchen. He often manages to pay it a visit late at night, and to "lift" a rabbit-pie or some other luxury from the cupboard.

Mrs. Kebble is empress of the kitchen. She is the House dame, who supervises the cooking arrangements and so forth. Billy Bunter is always trying to get on the right side of her, but she will not be a party to bribery and corruption.

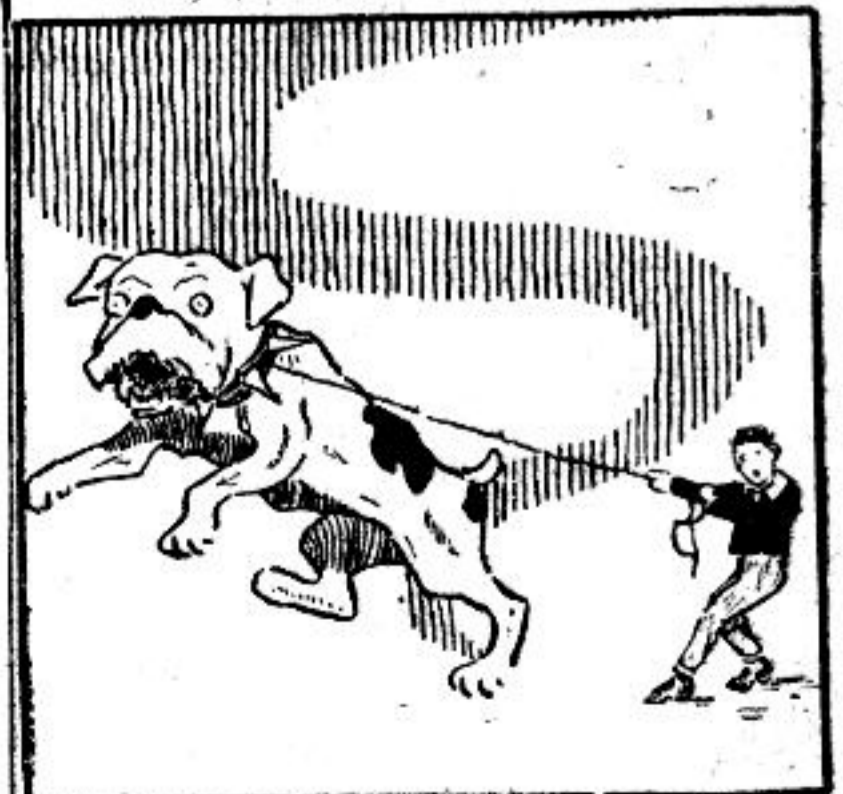
I have no doubt Billy Bunter will be fearfully annoyed when he sees that we have produced a Special Kitchen Number. He will accuse me of queering his pitch and bagging his brainy ideas. But I don't care a bean what Bunter thinks, and I never did! I am just going along to ask him if he would care to contribute a column to this issue. Much as we scorn Billy, we realise that no Kitchen Number would be complete without a contribution from his pen.

There will be another Special Number next week, and it is possible that I may vacate the editorial chair in favour of someone else. Wait and see!

HARRY WHARTON.

HOW I SEE OTHER FELLOWS!

By Frank Nugent.



GEORGE HERRIES.

(St. Jim's.)

[Supplement to



CANDID CONFESSIONS!

By Our Special Representative.

BILLY BUNTER.

"Oh, really, Mrs. Mimble. I consider that's a rotten way to talk about your best customer."

"You never spend a penny in this shop, Master Bunter. You only make yourself a nuisance. I daren't leave the shop for a moment while you are sitting there. I left it one day, and when I came back I found a dish of jam-tarts had disappeared!"

"Nothing to do with me, ma'am," growled Bunter. "It must have been the cat!"

"Nonsense! My cat hasn't a sweet tooth. But I couldn't say the same about you!"

Billy Bunter turned to me with a gesture of despair.

"She's a'ways accusing me of taking her blessed jam-tarts!" he grumbled. "As if I'd do anything of the sort. I simply loathe jam-tarts!"

"That's good!" I said, "because I was just going to treat you to a couple!"

"Oh, crumbs! I—I mean it isn't jam-tarts that I loathe. It's doughnuts. Treat me to a couple of jam-tarts, there's a good chap, and I'll be your pal for life!"

Accordingly, I paid for two succulent tarts, which Billy Bunter devoured with avidity. Never have I seen anything disappear so swiftly as those jam-tarts.

"Now, Billy," I said, "I will continue my catechism. How old are you?"

"Fifteen summers and fourteen winters."

"What do you weigh?"

"Fourteen stone!"

"Oh, help!"

"When I went on the roundabouts the other day, at Courtfield Fair, the horse collapsed," said Bunter.

"I don't wonder at it!" I said. "Did you go in the swing-boats?"

"Yes; and there was a further collapse. I came an awful cropper—dislocated my spine, in fact—and I'm going to sue the proprietor of the fair for damages!"

"Good! What is your favourite book?"

"Mrs. Beeton's Cookery Book!"

"And your favourite song?"

"'I'm for ever going doubles!'"

"What are your accomplishments?"

Billy Bunter took a deep breath, and then began a lengthy recital, as follows:—

"I'm a clever cricketer, a fine footballer, a ripping runner, a stunning swimmer, a brilliant boxer, an excellent editor, a champion chess-player, an admirable athlete—"

"A fearful fibber, and a stuck-up swanker," I concluded. "You've got much too big an opinion of yourself, Billy. If you had been a bit more modest about your accomplishments I'd have treated you to another ice. As it is, I'll have one myself, and you can sit and watch me eat it."

Billy Bunter pleaded and protested and expostulated, but in vain. I demolished the ice in his presence, and then, armed with the fat junior's candid confessions, I strolled out of the tuckshop, leaving Billy Bunter gnashing his teeth with chagrin and astonishment.

There is a grand supplement in "The Popular" every week. It is edited by William George Bunter—so if you want a hearty laugh get

"THE POPULAR"

Every Tuesday.

IRAN Billy Bunter to earth in the tuckshop.

Billy haunts the tuckshop. He never seems to have any money to spend, but he perches himself on one of the high stools, and waits till somebody comes along and takes compassion on him.

On this occasion, the fat junior was gazing longingly at the tub of ice-cream which stood at Mrs. Mimble's feet.

"I say Mrs Mimble," he pleaded, "do give me a strawberry ice, just as a sample!"

The tuckshop dame pursed up her lips.

"No samples are given away in this establishment, Master Bunter," she said, firmly. "Cream ices may be purchased at sixpence, ninepence, or a shilling!"

"But I'm stony—"

"Then you've no right to be loitering in my shop, Master Bunter."

At this juncture I clambered on to a stool, and sat cheek by jowl with the Owl of the Remove.

"Billy," I said, producing my notebook and pencil, "I wish to drag a few candid confessions out of you."

"Oh, really! You won't drag anything out of me until you've fed me with a shilling ice!"

"Make it a sixpenny one," I said, "and I might consider it."

"A sixpenny one!" echoed Bunter, scornfully. "Why, I should swallow that without tasting it! Don't be a mean beast. Treat me to a shilling ice, and I'll confess anything you like."

Reluctantly, I passed a shilling across the counter. And Billy Bunter passed a strawberry ice into his capacious mouth. A few luxurious licks, and the ice had disappeared.

"Now," said I, "we will proceed. What's your name?"

"W. G. Bunter."

"W. G. stands for Wonderful Gorgor, I suppose?"

"Nothing of the sort. My Christian names are William George."

"Have you a father?"

"Of course!"

"What is he?"

"A multi-multi-multi-millionaire!"

"Great Scott! And yet he only allows you fourpence a week pocket money!"

"Millionaires are mean," said Bunter. "If they weren't, they'd never have become millionaires."

"Where does your father live?"

"His country seat is Bunter Court, in Bunkumshire. His town house is Buckingham Palace. The King and my pater take it in turns to live there!"

"Oh! And does your pater possess a sea-side seat?"

"Yes, rather! He owns the whole of Brighton and Margate, and he bought the Isle of Wight for a mere song when property was going cheap!"

"My hat! How many relations have you got?"

"Over five thousand—all titled!"

"Don't you ever get any remittances from them?"

"Yes. I'm expecting a cheque for a hundred pounds at the present moment, but there's been a delay in the post!"

"Don't you take any notice of his cock-and-bull tales, Master Reporter!" chimed in Mrs. Mimble. "Master Bunter is the biggest fibber the world has seen since Ananias!"

Supplement iii.]

KING OF THE KITCHEN!

By Billy Bunter.

IF only I were king of the kitchen—that is to say, in soul charge of it. I should be in my element.

I love the sights and smells that you see and sniff in kitchens. I love the sight of flower and doe and rolling-pins, and I love the smell of roast pork and of sossidges and fried potatoes.

I sometimes dream that one day I shall be put in charge of the Greyfriars kitchen, at a sallery of two thowsand a year. I shall wear a white sheff's coat, and there will be a staff of workers under me. When I say "Come!" they will come. When I say "Go!" they will go—if I'm lucky!

I shall see that the school fare is changed for the better. Every day there will be a fool-corse dinner, as follows:

Ocks-tail Soop.

Skate, Place, or Whiting (or Blacking).

Shoulder of Mutton (or Thigh of Beef).

Duck and Green Peeze.

Fig Pooding.

Storberries and Cream.

A jolly good dinner, that, for a growing boy! And if W. G. Bunter prepared it, it would, indeed, be a dinner pa eggsellence.

What a jolly fine time I should have if I were king of the kitchen! I should go there first thing in the morning—if I didn't sleep there all night—and prepare myself a topping breakfast. Kippers and sossidges and bacon and ommy-lets, and hot rolls and coffee. Then, at about eleven o'clock, I should have another light snack—say, a rabbit-pie or half a dozen hard-boiled eggs. In fact, I think I should have a meal every hour, bekawse Doctor Short, of Friardale, once said to me: "You are one of those people, Bunter, who want a little nurrishment at frekwent intervals."

But, alas! I don't suppose I shall ever preside over the school kitchen. The female cooks will be retained, and there will be no opening for a recy first-class mail cook like me.

The only time I can visit the kitchen at prezzant is during the night. I sometimes creep downstares to see if there are any berglars about, you know. I'm a sort of night-watchman. And when I pop into the kitchen, to make sure everything is all right, I just help myself to anything that the cook has forgotten to lock up.

Bob Cherry declares I shall be locked up myself one of these days. But Bob Cherry's a beest!

I'm going to suggest to the Head that I become King of the Kitchen, but I don't suppose he will agree to my coronation.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 758.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A PLUM-CAKE!

I WAS made behind the scenes at the school tuckshop

Mrs. Mimble made me. She was in a desperate hurry at the time, and she used too much baking-powder. I knew I should taste horrid; but not having a tongue I couldn't tell her so.

Having completed me, and given me a coating of sugar, the good dame exhibited me in the window of the tuckshop.

I didn't stay there long. I saw Dick Penfold of the Remove eyeing me enviously. Then he stepped into the shop.

"How much is that plum-cake, ma'am?" he inquired, pointing at me.

"Half-a-crown, Master Penfold, and cheap at the price."

"Good! I'll take it."

Mrs. Mimble wrapped me in a large paper bag, and handed me over to my purchaser.

I was taken along to Penfold's study, and he cut a very tiny portion off me, just to taste. Then he made a grimace.

"Ugh! What a rotten cake! It doesn't taste a bit nice. I was thinking of saving it for tea, but the best thing I can do is to get rid of it."

Penfold went to the door and glanced out. Bolsover major was coming along the passage with his giant stride.

"Want to buy a plum-cake, Bolsover?" asked Penfold.

"How much?"

"A bob."

"Let's have a look at it."

The bully of the Remove seemed quite satisfied with my size and appearance, for he paid over the shilling at once, and bore me proudly from the study.

Bolsover took me along to his own den, and stowed me away in the cupboard.

"This cake will come in jolly useful," he murmured. "I'm giving a little tea-party at five o'clock."

But before five o'clock came round Billy Bunter appeared on the scene. He crept cautiously into Bolsover major's study, and made tracks for the cupboard.

On catching sight of me Billy Bunter's little round eyes glistened behind his spectacles.

"Oh, what a capture!" he exclaimed.

I was smuggled beneath the fat junior's Eton jacket, and carried away to a deserted corner of the Close.

I knew that my hour had come, that I should be savagely devoured, and I resigned myself to my fate. After all, I reflected, better to perish now than to live and grow stale!

Bunter's jaws were soon busy.

"I don't like this cake a bit!" he muttered. "Rummy sort of taste about it. Still, I've got to eat, or I shall waste away to a skeleton."

Slice by slice I was disposed of, until not a crumb remained to tell the tale.

There was a tragic sequel.

An hour later Billy Bunter was discovered by his schoolfellows rolling in anguish on the old rustic bench. He declared he had been poisoned, and he was led away to the sanny, suffering fearful torments.

"Stolen fruit tastes sweet," runs the ancient proverb. But stolen cakes don't!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 758.

DINING-HALL DITTIES!

By Tom Brown.

There was a young fellow named Snoop,
Who discovered a snail in his soup.

He threw it away,
And I'm sorry to say,
That "cookie" will go through the
hoop!

A scraggy young scarecrow called
Skinner,

Had duck and green peas for his dinner.
But each day, I expect,

In every respect,
He'll grow thinner and thinner and
thinner!

A sturdy Removite named Dutton,
When asked: "Will you have some more
mutton?"

Cried "What do you mean,
You insulting old bean?
You'll be scalped if you call me a
glutton!"

The corpulent Bunter—"Fat Billy,"
Is starting to gorge himself silly.

But one of these days,
When in prison he lays,
He'll be fed on a diet of skilly!

A ravenous fellow named Russell
Exerted his brawn and his muscle

In cutting a cake
Mrs. Mimble did make,
And he managed it after a tussle!

A fellow named Bolsover major
Ate fifteen cream buns, for a wager.

He became very ill,
He's regretting it still,
In the sanny he's quite an old stager!

A foolish young fellow named Stott
Once bolted his porridge red-hot.

He jumped to his feet
With an agonised bleat,
And out of the dining-hall shot!

A merry young soul, Peter Todd,
Once sampled some cutlets of cod.

Said he "How I wish
This was Fisher T. Fish!"
Such cannibalism was odd!

OVERHEARD IN THE DINING-HALL!

By Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch: "Take a hundred lines,
Brown!"

Tom Brown: "What for, sir?"

Mr. Quelch: "You were talking!"

Tom Brown: "Oh, no, sir—it was the
cheese!"

Mr. Prout (carving the roast beef for
the Fifth): "Pass your plate, Coker. I
have left you till last, but I think I can
get one more slice off this joint."

Coker: "You must be a ripping
cricketer, sir!"

Mr. Prout: "Why, Coker?"

Coker: "Because you're making a late
cut!"

Micky Desmond: "Shure, an' this
piece of onion resembles Mr. Quelch
entoiirely!"

Mr. Quelch (sharply): "Why do you
say that, Desmond? How can that por-
tion of onion possibly resemble me?"

Micky: "Because it's 'in a frightful
stew,' sorr!"

Russell: "I didn't expect to see an
acrobatic performance at the tea-table!"

Ogilvy: "What do you mean, fat-
head? There are no acrobatics being
performed."

Russell: "Of course there are! Can't
you see the apple turn-over and the
jam-roll?"

Mr. Quelch: "Why are you not eat-
ing, Hurree Singh?"

Inky: "Because, honoured teacher
sahib, I come from India, and am, there-
fore, a martyr to India-gestion!"

Mr. Quelch: "When winter comes, we
shall want a heating apparatus in the
dining-hall, my boys."

Peter Todd (pointing to Billy Bunter's
mouth): "There's an eating apparatus
here already, sir!"

Skinner: "Why is this vegetable-dish
like Bob Cherry?"

Bolsover Major: "Ask me another."
Skinner: "Because it's full of beans!"

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ON SALE
ON THE FIRST
OF
SEPTEMBER.

THE MYSTERY OF THE SILVER SCUD!

(Continued from page 8.)

"Will you go away and not come back till six o'clock?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"Yes. I know you're only joking, old chap, but I'll do any old thing you like. There!"

Lord Mauleverer flicked a cent-franc note to the fat junior, and Billy Bunter vanished with it at once. Harry Wharton looked at his watch.

"Ten minutes to six!" he said. "Not much time for that fat bouncer to have another feed. We ought really to be moving now. It's some minutes to the landing-stage."

"Oh, Bunter can do wonders with grub in ten minutes!" said Bob Cherry. "Give him ten hours, and he'd eat all Le Bosquet out of house and home! It's a giddy miracle where he puts it!"

"He's not gone to grub this time!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Eh? What's he up to, then?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

Snort, from Johnny.

"Didn't you hear him say he expected to have a lot of money soon? You remember what he was saying on the yacht about having a flutter? And even Bunter couldn't eat any more if he's got outside a hundred francs' worth of grub. And he headed for the casino entrance."

Harry Wharton jumped to his feet with a sharp exclamation. He had been giving more attention to the band than to Bunter.

"My hat! Is it possible? You silly ass, Johnny! Why didn't you say so before he went, if you guessed?" Wharton stood on his chair, and stared in the direction Bunter had taken. "I can't see him."

"Inside the show by this time!" growled Johnny.

"If he's inside he's jolly soon coming outside!" said Harry Wharton grimly. "Mauly's guardian trusted us to keep clear of that muck. Bunter's bound to play up; and if he doesn't, we'll jolly well make him! Get a move on!"

The juniors rose from the chairs. The "garçon" bustled up with his little bill, which was not really little, but rather big, and the "addition" was settled, and the Greyfriars juniors hurried after Bunter. All of them were feeling exasperated, even the placid Lord Mauleverer. It was extremely exasperating to the schoolboy earl, to realise that he had provided money for Bunter to join the shady crew of punters round the green baize tables in the casino. And there was little doubt that that was the fatuous Owl's intention, or, rather, no doubt whatever.

At the casino steps a good many people were coming out. It was close on the time when the game closed down for the dinner interval. But a few were going in, to tempt the fickle goddess Fortune in the last half-hour or so that remained.

At the top of the steps, where the pillared entrance opened into the gaudily-decorated vestibule, Wharton caught sight of a fat figure. Billy Bunter was rolling in.

"There he is!" ejaculated Wharton.

He raced up the broad, shallow stone steps, anxious to catch the Owl of the Remove before he was fairly within the building. He did not want to have a scene with Bunter inside; but he was

quite resolved that the fat junior should not enter the gaming-room.

He brushed against two or three people who were coming down, and muttered a hurried apology as he ran past.

He reached the big doorway, and ran after Bunter. A man had just come swinging out from the direction of the gaming-room, whence the dull, monotonous tones of the croupier could be heard chanting "Faites vos jeux, messieurs!" The man's face was white, his features set, his eyes glinting with a hard and desperate light. Anyone at a glance would have seen that he was a gamester who had wooed the fickle goddess not wisely but too well, and had left his money on the green table, money that he could not afford to lose, which, perhaps, was not his to lose! In blind, angry desperation, the man strode right on, without seeing anything before him, and collided with Wharton as he ran past.

A savage curse—in English—was spat out as he did so.

Wharton jumped.

"Mr. Poynings!" he exclaimed.

It was the mate of the Silver Scud. For a second they stared at one another, a flush of crimson coming over Poynings' white, set face. Shame, or some other emotion, brought the blood

**Remember
This Date!**

**THE FIRST OF
SEPTEMBER**

See Page 2.

to his face as he met the astonished and shocked glance of the Greyfriars junior.

Then, muttering indistinctly, Poynings turned away, and hurried down the stone steps.

Wharton stared after him blankly. Poynings—the mate of the Silver Scud—who had told the juniors he was going to visit an old comrade outside the town—Poynings, coming out of the Casino with the white, desperate face of a ruined gambler! It was a shock for Wharton.

But a voice in the richly-carpeted corridor close at hand recalled him to his business there.

"Ou est le jeu?" Bunter was asking an official in a gilt-braided uniform. "The game, you know—the jolly old green table. What? Where is it?"

"La salle de jeu, monsieur? Mais oui, monsieur! Suivez moi!"

Wharton raced forward.

"Bunter!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Come out, you fat rascal!"

"Leggo!" roared Bunter, as Harry Wharton grasped his collar.

But the captain of the Remove did not let go. With an iron grip on Bunter's collar, he ran the fat junior out of the building, the gold-braided official holding up fat hands in amazement as he looked on. Down the steps went Bunter, his fat little legs going like clockwork, what time his voice was raised in infuriated protest.

But his protests were not heeded. Wharton did not pause till he had rushed the fat Owl into the midst of the Greyfriars party.

"Here he is!" he gasped. "Got him!"

"Leggo!"

"Kim on!" said Bob Cherry, linking an arm in Bunter's. "Broken the bank yet, you blithering owl?"

"I haven't had time to start!" wailed Bunter. "I expected to win thousands of pounds! Leggo! I'm not going away yet!"

"I think you are!" grinned Bob.

"I'll help you with my boot, if you fellows pull him along," said Johnny Bull.

"Yaroooh!"

And Bunter went.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Strange Suspicions!

HARRY WHARTON sat very silent in the boat, under the westering sunshine on the bay of Le Bosquet.

He was thinking—deeply.

Poynings, sitting with the lines, did not look at him—seemed unconscious of his existence. But it was certain that he had not forgotten the unexpected meeting in the Casino vestibule, any more than Harry Wharton had forgotten it. Of that, Wharton had not, so far, spoken a word to his chums. He was not sure yet that he would speak of it. It was no business of his.

But it was a shock. Certainly, Edgar Poynings had a right to do as he liked on leave ashore. Most certainly it was not for a schoolboy to set up in judgment upon him. But—

If his personal tastes led him in black-guardly directions, it was his own affair. But—there was a but—

It was fairly certain that Captain Hawke expected more judicious conduct on the part of his first officer; quite certain that Sir Reginald Brooke could not be aware that the mate of the Silver Scud was a desperate gamester. It was not merely that Poynings had drifted into the Casino for a little "flutter," in the reckless style of "Jack ashore," with his money burning a hole in his pocket.

Wharton knew that it was not that.

He had not forgotten—he could not forget—the white, desperate face, the glinting eyes, the drawn lips. He knew, as well as if he had watched the man, that he had spent all his time ashore at the green table, desperately tempting fortune, and losing his money—losing all that he had to the last franc, before he quitted the place—quitted it because without more money he could play no more. He knew, he felt, that if the man's money had lasted, he would have been playing still at the casino, forgetful of the waiting boat, forgetful of the schoolboys who were supposed to be in his charge, forgetful of everything but the maddening vice that had a hold upon the very marrow of his bones. Wharton had seen all that in the drawn, desperate face—a dozen careless onlookers for that matter had seen as much. Such sights were not uncommon in the purlieus of the Continental gaming casinos.

In that brief meeting Wharton had seen the man's history in his face—his real character, or want of character.

The junior was feeling deeply uneasy. Such pursuits were not for a man holding Poyning's position. Such a character was the last that the old baronet would

**NEXT
MONDAY!**

"THE TERROR TRACKED DOWN!"

**A SPLENDID TALE OF HARRY WHARTON & CO'S
HOLIDAY ADVENTURES. :: By FRANK RICHARDS.
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 758.**

have allowed on board his nephew's yacht—if he had known.

It was not Wharton's business to tell him. Contempt, mingled with compassion, he might feel for the man who could not run straight, but no honourable fellow could play the part of an informer.

So far as Wharton personally was concerned, he realised that he had better shut the whole incident out of his mind.

If there had been no other considerations, the captain of the Remove would have done so. But there were other considerations—vague, strange, half-formed, but startling.

The discovery of Poynings' real character was like a clue—a vague, indefinable clue. It gave an opening to strange, terrible suspicions, like black shadows at the back of the junior's mind.

He sat silent, plunged in dark thought, as the oars rhythmically beat the sunlit water.

The boat drew up to the riding yacht. Wharton cast a glance at Poynings as the latter stood up.

Poynings' face was still pale, and marked with deep lines; but otherwise he was quite himself again—the quiet, self-possessed officer.

Sir Reginald Brooke met the juniors as they came up the side with a kind and benevolent smile.

"You've enjoyed your little run ashore?" he asked, though the question was needless as he looked at the bright faces of the juniors.

"Yaas, no end," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Tiptop!" said Bob.

"The tiptopfulness is terrific, honoured sahib!"

"Bunter! How comes Bunter here?" exclaimed the old baronet, as the Owl of the Remove rolled off the gangway. "I was not aware that you had been ashore, Bunter. You did not go with Mauleverer?"

"Just took a trip in a fishing boat, sir," answered Bunter, and he rolled away hastily.

He was rather afraid that his attempted exploits at the casino might be referred to; but the chums of the Remove were not likely to give him away. It was about an hour later, when Wharton was leaning on the deck-rail, watching the lights coming out in the town ashore, that Poynings joined him. Wharton had left his chums, in order to think quietly—to think over the strange disturbing ideas that had come into his mind. He started a little as he felt a light touch on his shoulder, and turned his head to see the young officer.

Poynings was smiling genially. But behind the smile in the eyes, it seemed to Wharton that he could see the hard glint.

"Looking at the casino?" asked Poynings.

"Yes," said Harry shortly.

"It's a pretty sight from here."

"Yes; very!"

The dusk was falling over Le Bosquet—lights were twinkling in the narrow old streets and along the "plage," and fairy lamps were being lighted in the gardens

of the casino. Like some fairy palace the white building looked, embosomed in greenery, with twinkling lights like fireflies among the trees. Like a whited sepulchre, Wharton thought, a fair and shining exterior covering the rottenness within.

"I think I saw you there," said Poynings.

"Yes."

"I'm afraid I neglected my duty a little. But I took it for granted that you would keep clear of the place."

Wharton turned his head at that, and looked the young man steadily in the face.

"I had a reason for running into the place," he said. "I stayed there about a minute. I did not dream of entering the gaming-room—I wouldn't be found dead in such a den of fools and blackguards. And you know it, Mr. Poynings."

His tone was not pleasant; but he could not help it. But the young man did not seem to notice it.

He nodded.

"Quite so!" he said. "I am glad to hear it, Master Wharton. I dropped in myself for a few minutes to watch the people, but, of course, I had no idea that you boys would enter such a place."

Wharton made no reply to that. He knew that the statement was a lie, but there was no object in calling the man a liar. So he said nothing. He was conscious that Poynings was regarding him with a keenly scrutinising gaze.

"I take it for granted that you ran in, as you say, for a minute, and meant no harm," said Poynings. "Otherwise I should be bound to mention the circumstance to Sir Reginald."

"I have no objection at all to your mentioning it," said Wharton, his cheeks flushing.

"Least said, soonest mended," said Poynings pleasantly. "It might be misunderstood—just as my own visit might be misunderstood if it were talked of about the yacht."

Wharton understood then what Poynings wanted. He wanted secrecy. The Greyfriars junior made no answer.

Poynings seemed to expect him to speak; but as he did not, the mate of the Silver Scud resumed:

"You see that such a thing might be misunderstood, my boy?"

"Or understood!" said Harry curtly.

"What do you mean by that?"

"I think you know, Mr. Poynings," said Harry quietly. "It's no business of mine what you do, and I'm not going to chatter about you up and down the Silver Scud, if that's what you're driving at."

Poynings drew a deep breath.

"You will not refer to our accidental meeting?" he asked directly.

No reply.

"I should like you to answer me, Master Wharton," said Poynings, after a long pause, and he was not smiling now. There was a hard glint in his eyes, that were fixed on the Greyfriars junior.

"I can't promise that," said Wharton, at last. "I don't intend to chatter about things that do not concern me."

"Then why not promise?" asked Poynings.

"Because at some time or other I might have to mention it, and then I shouldn't want to be bound by a promise."

Poyning's eyes seemed to glitter.



For a second there was silence in the cabin. The juniors were still as statues, and the man, taken utterly by surprise, stood rooted to the planks. Wharton was the first to recover. The enemy was within reach at last. The captain of the Remove made a desperate spring at the black-cloaked figure. "Come on, Bob!" (See Chapter 9.)

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"THE TERROR TRACKED DOWN!"

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"But what possible circumstances could arise to make you want to talk about matters that are no concern of yours at all?" he inquired.

"I don't know! It's not likely! But a promise is a promise, and can't be broken—and you've no right to ask me to promise anything. If you didn't want to be seen there, you shouldn't have gone there. It's your own look-out."

There was a long silence. Then Poynings spoke again in a pleasant tone, smiling as he spoke.

"We're making a mountain out of a molehill, my young friend. Your own view is quite right—secrecy is a bad thing; even being misunderstood is better than keeping secrets. Quite right, Master Wharton."

He turned away. Captain Hawke had come out of the chart-house, and Poynings approached him, and spoke to him in Wharton's hearing. Some of his words the junior did not catch—but some were spoken in a louder tone, obviously intended for his ears as well as the skipper's.

"I looked in at the casino for a few minutes—can't imagine the attraction—"

That was all that came to Wharton's ears. But he understood; Mr. Poynings was leaving nothing to chance, and leaving himself nothing to fear from the chatter of a schoolboy.

But he had not told the skipper the truth—he had only told him enough to disarm Wharton, if the latter chose to speak of what he had seen. He was very far from understanding what was in the junior's mind. Edgar Poynings was thinking of a tattling schoolboy—which was very far from being Wharton's character. The thoughts, the vague unrestful suspicions that were working in Wharton's brain, would have startled the mate of the Silver Scud, if he could have known of them.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Problem!

"PENNY for 'em, old bean!" Harry Wharton started. Bob Cherry clapped him on the shoulder as he spoke, starting him out of a brown study.

It was evening—a still and almost breathless August evening. The moon came out in a sky of dark blue, sailing over the Silver Scud through light and fleecy clouds. The yacht still lay at anchor in the bay, the lights of Le Bosquet twinkling in the distance across the dim moonlit waters.

It was a scene of beautiful stillness and peace. Through the clear air, moving figures could be seen in the distance upon the white steps and terrace of the casino.

Captain Hawke had gone ashore, the chief engineer and several of the crew had gone. Mr. Poynings remained in charge of the yacht. He was not to be seen, however—Wharton had observed only a watchman on deck, when he came up to lean on the rail and stare away at the lights of Le Bosquet, and the brilliant casino. There were troubled thoughts in Wharton's mind—thoughts and suspicions that tormented him.

"Wherefore that giddy pensive brow?" inquired Bob Cherry. "Not bagged an attack of the merry old mal-de-mer, while we're at anchor, what?" Wharton shook his head.

"Then why this giddy lonely pining!" demanded Bob. "Making up poetry?"



Muttering indistinctly, Poynings turned away and hurried down the steps of the casino. Wharton stared after him blankly. The mate of the Silver Scud—who had told the juniors he was going to visit an old comrade outside the town—coming out of the casino with the white, desperate face of a ruined gambler! (See Chapter 7.)

Wharton laughed.

"Not likely!" he answered.

"Mauly's been talking!" resumed Bob. "We're getting out to sea again to-morrow, and our next stop is at a show up the Picardy coast, where Mauly knows some people. We're going to get some cricket with French chaps. That's rather good."

"Ripping!" agreed the captain of the Remove.

"But you haven't told me yet whether you'll take a penny for your thoughts," urged Bob. "Are you worrying over that message from Gideon Gaunt, and trying to work out how he gets his billet-doux on board the Silver Scud? No good trying to think it out, old top; it's a giddy mystery. Beats me to a frazzle, as old Fishy would say in his lingo."

Harry Wharton reflected. The strange suspicions in his mind seemed so vague, so wild, that he had long-hesitated to confide them to anyone. But he felt that he must take counsel on the subject.

"I've been thinking, Bob," he said in a low voice.

"Giver you a pain?" asked Bob.

"It's serious, old chap."

"Right!" said Bob cheerily. "I'll be as sober as a judge. Thinking about that brute who is after Mauly?"

"Yes."

"Not worked out a giddy theory to account for the jolly old mystery, I suppose?"

"Not quite," said Harry. "But I'm suspicious. I can't help it. I—I'm afraid I'm going to make you open your eyes

wide, Bob." He glanced round him; the deck was clear, and there was no possibility of anyone being within hearing of a low voice. "Bob, old man, that villain who calls himself Gideon Gaunt is on board the Silver Scud. He must be. He showed up while the yacht was at sea; his message was dropped down below, this morning, before we touched land. He's on board."

"Hidden!" said Bob.

"He can't be hidden, when every nook and cranny of the yacht has been searched, and searched again."

"That's so. Then he can't be on board."

"But he is, Bob—he must be."

"Sounds like a giddy riddle without an answer," said Bob, with a wry grimace. "What have you got on to?"

"If he's on board—and he must be—he's not hidden, because there's nowhere for him to hide," said Harry. "To cut it short, he must be a member of the ship's company, got up so that we can't recognise him."

"We thought of that at the very first," said Bob.

"I know we did, and it seemed impossible."

"It is impossible," said Bob. "That fellow Gaunt, when we saw him at Grey-frairs, had a black beard—"

"Beards can be shaved off."

"But when he was seen on the yacht he still had it, old chap."

"That's true. But it may have been false."

"I—I suppose it may," said Bob, rubbing his nose thoughtfully. "Put it on for his Gaunt stunts, what, and then

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takes it off again? But his nose, Harry—his jolly old boko? Man can't take his nose off and on like a false beard." Bob grinned. "You see, I'd know that nose a mile off; it's so jolly big, and such a queer shape. If that nose came on board the Silver Scud, we'd all know it, if the man was got up as a Hottentot or a giddy Eskimo."

"I know—I know," said Wharton. "It beats me there! It beats me hollow! I don't see how a disfigurement like that could be hidden."

"It couldn't be."
Harry Wharton was silent for a minute or two, while Bob Cherry whistled softly to himself, and stared at the brilliant lights of the casino ashore. It was unanswerable—the misshapen nose of the Blackmailer could not have been concealed by the most cunning disguise. But all reasoning on the subject of Mauly's mysterious foe seemed to lead into a blind alley. A gap in Wharton's dimly-formed theory could not be helped—for there were gaps in every theory that could be formed of the baffling mystery.

He went on at last, still in a low voice for Bob's ears only:

"I can't get over that, Bob. But, leaving that out—suppose there's a man on board who turns out to be a desperate, hard-bitten gambler—the kind of man who would put life itself on the gambling-table, if he could—"

Bob's whistle broke off.
"What do you mean, Harry? The only giddy plunger in our merry party is Bunter."

"I mean Poynings."
"The mate? Harry?"
"Listen to me, Bob," said the captain of the Remove quietly.

And he went on to describe what he had seen at the casino.

Bob Cherry's rugged face grew more and more serious as he listened.

"I'd never have thought it of him," he said. "And you're sure, Harry, that you saw all that—in his looks?"

"I'm quite sure. He looked like a desperate, hunted man—or, rather, like a hunted animal. A man who would have robbed, or worse, to get more money to put on the gaming-table."

"Still—"

"Another point, Bob," said Harry. "You remember the written message that Mauly picked up this morning. It wasn't there a minute or two before he picked it up. It wasn't there when we came along to rag Bunter. But you remember how we butted into Poynings with Bunter—"

"Yes, rather," said Bob, with a faint grin.

"And Mauly picked it up where Poynings had been knocked over."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Bob.

"I thought nothing of that at the time," said Harry quietly. "But after seeing that man in his real character, I—I thought of a lot of things; that amongst them."

Bob Cherry leaned back on the deck-rail, and stared straight into Wharton's face blankly.

"Harry, you're dreaming! The mate of the Silver Scud, trusted by the skipper, trusted by old Brooke, a man who's been through the war! Harry, it's impossible!"

"It's impossible for Gideon Gaunt to be on board in hiding; and yet we know that he's on board—"

"But his nose!" said Bob. "You saw Gaunt—his big, misshapen nose. Poynings has as good-looking a nose as

I've ever seen—straight, a giddy Greek boko. Harry, there's nothing in it."

"No resemblance at all," said Harry. "I know—I know. They can't be the same. I know they can't! But there's a reckless man, in desperate need of money, Bob, and that written message was dropped just where Poynings was knocked over. If he can't be the blackmailer himself, Bob, he may be in league with him. That would account for a lot."

"It's too thick, Harry—too thick!"
"Is there any other way of accounting for what's happened on board the yacht?" asked Harry. "If Poynings is an accomplice, he may have arranged for the search to fail to show up a hidden man. It's barely possible. Or—or he may have some way of getting him on board somehow. I don't pretend to understand it all, Bob; but the mystery is as black as night, and that is the only gleam of light I can see. Somebody on board the Silver Scud is in league with the blackmailer, and unless it's Poynings—"

"Hush!" whispered Bob.
Edgar Poynings had come on deck; he passed quite close to the juniors. He did not look at them. He went into the chart-house, apparently not observing Harry and Bob in the shadows; but they caught a glimpse of his face in a light, and saw that it was pale and set. The two juniors remained silent, and moved away after a little.

"Not a word to the other fellows!" Wharton muttered, as they went down the companion. "No need to start them worrying and surmising; and—and likely as not there's nothing in it."

"Not a word!" agreed Bob.
But the two juniors were rather constrained for the remainder of the evening, both of them thinking. The gramophone ground away merrily in the saloon, sending a flood of melody—more or less—across the still waters of the bay of Le Bosquet. Faintly from the shore came strains of music that mingled with it. Billy Bunter entertained his comrades with a clog-dance—which Bunter prided himself upon doing particularly well—and undoubtedly it evoked roars of laughter, and added very much to the merriment of the schoolboy yachtsmen. But all the time Wharton was thinking—and Bob Cherry, too, now had food for thought.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Watchers of the Night!

"MAULY, old man!"
Wharton leaned idly over the schoolboy earl's chair, while the gramophone roared its loudest, and whispered.

"Yaas, dear boy."

"You're locking your door to-night?"

"Yaas. Nunky's told me to."

"Keep it unlocked till I come to-night, old fellow. Don't look round, don't jump—it's a bit of a secret. I'm coming to your cabin after bedtime—with Bob. But it's a dead secret—something's on. Not a word to anybody."

It was not easy to surprise the placid Mauly; but undoubtedly he was surprised now.

But he played up with his usual calmness; he did not even turn his head.

"Yaas, old bean," he answered tranquilly.

"You catch on?"

"Not at all. I mean, oh, quite."
Wharton smiled, and gave his attention to the gramophone. It was the last tune before shutting down.

It was getting towards ten o'clock, and time for bed. Sir Reginald Brooke said good-night to the juniors, and they went to their rooms. They said good-night to one another and separated.

Ten minutes later their lights were out; and five minutes after that, Billy Bunter's resonant snore was heard from behind a locked door. Locking the doors was now the custom of the juniors at night; a simple precaution against the unknown, unseen enemy, whose mysterious presence haunted the yacht.

But a quarter of an hour later, Harry Wharton slipped into Bob Cherry's room, and slid the door shut behind him. Bob had turned back the key again silently after noisily locking up.

"Awake, Bob?" whispered Harry.

"You bet, old nut," came Bob's answering whisper.

"Good!"
There was a glimmer of starlit water at the open port. Bob Cherry was faintly discernible, sitting on the edge of his bunk and swinging his long legs.

"Where's Poynings now?" whispered Bob.

"In the chart-house or on deck, I believe. But his cabin's at the end of the alley—he may come down to it any time. We've got to keep our eyes wide open."

Wharton moved the door an inch, and looked out. The electric light was burning, and showed a deserted passage, with closed doors, and polished bulkheads glimmering in the light.

"Come on!" he whispered.

The two juniors stepped out, and Wharton silently and carefully closed the door. A few more seconds, and they were in Lord Mauleverer's cabin. His lordship, fully dressed, was sitting in the darkness, awaiting the expected visit with the patient placidity that was a part of his nature.

He did not even start as two shadows glided in, and the door was silently closed again.

"That you, old beans?" he murmured.

"Yes. Quiet, old fellow."

"Oh, yaas."

Lord Mauleverer blinked in the gloom at the two Removites, with mild curiosity.

"Now, what's the jolly old game?" he asked.

"We rather think the blackmailer may show up to-night," said Harry. "If he comes, we want to be ready for him."

"But why—"

"No good talking now, Mauly; we've got to be silent. Will you turn into your bunk and keep awake?"

Lord Mauleverer chuckled softly.

"I'll turn in, but I can't promise to keep awake," he answered. "You see, I'm jolly sleepy. Can't you wake me up if he comes?"

"No, fathead!"

"All serene, then," yawned Lord Mauleverer. "No good three of us doin' the giddy vjgil stunt. I'll take a little nap."

He rolled into his bunk, and in about a minute was sleeping calmly. Certainly the possibility of danger did not seem to affect his lordship's noble nerves to any extent.

Wharton and Bob Cherry were not in the least inclined for sleep. They were

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feeling a thrill of excitement, as they waited and watched in the darkness.

Bob Cherry placed little faith in his chum's theory with regard to Poynings—Harry himself did not quite know whether he believed in it or not. His mind wavered hopelessly. It was, as he said, the only gleam of light in the blackness of a haunting mystery. For all that, it might be an utter delusion. Poynings, assuredly, was not the man his employers believed him to be, but it was probable enough that he was not the man Wharton suspected him of being. In such a puzzling problem, it was impossible to find any tangible thread to follow—there were difficulties, if not impossibilities, in the way of every theory that could be formed. But Wharton's suspicion, if it was ill-founded, could at least be proved to be ill-founded, and that would be something—where there was no clue, it was something to get clear of a false clue.

The juniors waited, sleepless, disinclined for sleep.

It seemed an age to them before there was a sound outside the cabin. Only the wash of the waves against the hull of the Silver Scud broke the silence of the night—and a faint, almost imperceptible echo of music from the shore. In the stillness, a faint click sounded more loudly than it would have sounded by day. Wharton pressed Bob's arm, his heart beating. He knew that the electric light had been turned off outside the state-rooms.

Why? It was a rule to keep that light burning through the night, since the presence of the blackmailer had first been made known on board the yacht. The steward would not have turned it off, or any of his assistants—besides, they were gone to their quarters for the night at that hour. The old baronet was gone to bed—the captain was still ashore.

The two juniors felt their hearts thumping almost audibly, as the door was tried from without.

True or false Wharton's startling suspicion might be—but there was no doubt now that the mysterious enemy was at hand. For by no other hand could Mauleverer's door have been tried at that hour, with such stealthy care.

The door opened. Probably the unseen intruder had come prepared to deal with a locked door. But it was unlocked, and it opened at his touch.

Someone—something—stood within the cabin, in the darkness, and the door slid shut behind him. The watching juniors strained their eyes in the darkness; a dim shadow was all they saw—within a few feet of them—silent, stealthy, indescribably horrible in the darkness and the silence.

For a second or two they were spell-bound with the horror of it; but Wharton's hand was on the switch of the electric light. He set his teeth and jerked it.

Like a sudden flood, the light blazed through the room.

And then the juniors saw—

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Hand to Hand!

FOR a second there was still silence in the cabin—a long, long second. It was like some strange tableau on the stage. Wharton and Bob Cherry—silent, tense; Lord Mauleverer, raised on one elbow, suddenly awakened, staring blankly; and the enemy. A man enveloped in a black

cloak, with black beard and moustache and hair, and a huge misshapen nose—the man they had seen at Greyfriars, at Mauleverer Towers—the man who called himself Gideon Gaunt. It was the mysterious foe, stealing in the darkness to his dastardly work—and caught in the act. For a long second the juniors were still as statues; and the man, taken utterly by surprise, stood rooted to the planks.

Wharton was the first to recover. The enemy—the dastard who had threatened Lord Mauleverer's life—was within reach at last. The captain of the Remove made a desperate spring.

"Come on, Bob!"

His grasp was on Gideon Gaunt.

"By gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer. He tumbled hurriedly out of the bunk.

Bob Cherry was after his chum in a flash.

Both of them grasped the black-bearded ruffian, and for a moment he rocked in their grip, and nearly went down.

Had he gone to the floor they would have piled on him, and his game would have been up. But he recovered himself in time. He rocked, but did not fall; and a spasm of fury came over the hideous black-bearded face. A crashing blow on the chest sent Bob Cherry spinning across the cabin, stumbling over Mauleverer, and the two rolled on the floor together. Harry Wharton, unheeding, clung to the deperado, panting for help.

"Help! Help!"

"Help!" roared Bob, as he rolled.

Two arms that seemed like iron grasped Harry Wharton—he was in the grip of a powerful man—a man powerful and utterly desperate. His own grasp was torn loose, as easily as a child's. He was raised from the floor, and dashed away.

He clutched at the ruffian; his grasp closed on the man's beard. But as he was dashed aside the beard parted—it was still in Wharton's grasp as he went crashing on the floor.

There was a shout from somewhere—the alarm was given already. But the ruffian had the door open now; he darted out and shut it behind him.

Bob Cherry staggered up. He was dazed and aching with the one fierce blow that had felled him; he leaned on the edge of the bunk, gasping. Lord Mauleverer sat up dizzily.

"After him!" panted Bob.

Wharton tried to rise, dizzily, and sank back again. He was half-stunned by the crash on the floor.

Bob Cherry staggered to the door and tore it open, and yelled. Outside was darkness.

"Help! Help!"

Light gleamed out. The old baronet's door was wide open; Sir Reginald Brooke appeared with a revolver in his hand.

"What, what—" he stuttered.

"He's here!" yelled Bob. "Gideon Gaunt! He's here—"

He groped along to the passage switch and turned on the light.

"Good heavens!"

The old baronet lifted the revolver; he would have fired without a second's hesitation or a thought of mercy; but there was nothing at which to fire. No one was in sight but himself and Bob Cherry. The next moment other doors were open—Johnny Bull and Nugent and Hurree Janset Ram Singh came tumbling out, while from Bunter's cabin came a howl of terror.

Harry Wharton came staggering out

of Lord Mauleverer's room. The black beard was still gripped in his hand.

"He's got away!" hissed Bob.

"He cannot have got to the deck!" panted the baronet. "Poynings is there—call to Poynings—"

"See if Poynings is on deck, Bob!" breathed Wharton.

Bob ran up the companion. Two or three alarmed seamen were running down, and he stopped.

"Is Mr. Poynings there?" he gasped. "He's below, sir."

Wharton heard the answer, and he dashed along to the mate's cabin.

Now or never his suspicions were to be put to the test.

"Mr. Poynings!" he shouted.

He would have thrown open the door, but it was secured within. The mate's voice answered.

"Hallo there!"

Poynings was in his cabin. Why was he there? Why was his door secured? He could not have gone to bed, with the skipper still absent. Wharton almost raged outside the locked door. The alarm was ringing through the ship—why was Poynings still behind a locked door? The Greyfriars junior's black suspicion was almost a black certainty now. Was the ruffian with whom he had struggled hidden in the mate's cabin at that very moment?

"Come out!" shouted Wharton.

"What is the matter?"

"Gideon Gaunt has been here."

"Come, come! Is it a nightmare?" called back the mate, and his tone was bantering.

"Why do you not come out?" shouted Wharton.

"I am coming."

But the door remained fast. Suddenly there sounded a heavy splash in the sea. There was a yell on deck.

"Overboard! He's gone overboard!"

The yell was followed by a rush on deck. Wharton's brain seemed to swim. Was that splash the proof that the mysterious enemy had gained the deck, and sprung overboard to escape by swimming? Yet why did Edgar Poynings' door remain locked?

Three or four seamen were pointing excitedly to the water on the shore side.

"It was there—"

"Did you see him?" panted Wharton.

"No, sir; we heard him—"

"Nobody saw him?"

"No."

Wharton stared at the water. The moonlight turned it to a glistening sheet of dusky silver; there was no sign of a swimmer. In the uncertain light a dark head might have escaped notice. But no one had seen the fugitive jump—only the splash had warned them that he had gone overboard. Harry Wharton set his teeth.

"Has he gone?"

It was Edgar Poynings' voice. The mate of the Silver Scud was there—cool, collected, handsome in his trim uniform. Harry Wharton looked at him like a fellow in a dream. Was this handsome, cool, sailor-like fellow the accomplice of the dastardly blackmailer and assassin who had stolen aboard like a thief in the night? It seemed incredible; if it was so, then Poynings had a nerve of iron. His manner was calm, cool, normal.

"I heard a splash," he said.

"He jumped overboard, sir!" said one of the seamen.

Poynings rapped out sharp orders for a boat to be lowered. He went in the boat himself. For the next hour the boat was pulling to and fro, searching for the supposed swimmer—not to find him. The old baronet watched eagerly from the

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deck-rail, with puckered brows. But Harry Wharton did not watch. He did not need the boat to return to apprise him that the search would be unsuccessful.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Is it a Clue?

"I SAY, you fellows—" "Br-r-r-r!" "If that's what you call polite, Bob Cherry—" "Oh, dry up, Bunter!" said Bob irritably.

For once the cheery and good-humoured Bob was irritable.

It was not Bunter's way to dry up, however. The Owl of the Remove was looking very cheery that morning.

Le Bosquet was behind the yacht now; the prow of the Silver Scud cleaved the blue waters of a summer sea. And almost everyone on board had been glad to leave the French coast behind.

Sir Reginald Brooke had looked more at ease that morning at breakfast than for a long time past. The intruder of the night had escaped—but he was gone. Whether he had succeeded in swimming ashore, or whether he had found a grave in the waters of the bay, could not be known; but, at all events, he was gone from the Silver Scud. Whether he had been hidden on board, or whether he had somehow contrived to obtain access to the yacht while she rode at anchor, was immaterial. He was gone; and the knowledge of that seemed to lift a cloud from the spirits of all—or nearly all—on board. The splash in the sea had told its own tale. Whatever was the truth of the strange mystery, the Silver Scud was free now of the haunting, threatening presence.

Even Lord Mauleverer's placid face was a little more serenely placid. Billy Bunter was quite reassured. During the alarm of the night he had howled for help in his locked cabin, and no one had taken heed—a great grievance with the Owl of the Remove. But now that he understood that all danger was at an end, Bunter was quite himself again. He was prepared to enjoy the yachting trip to the full; and he was kind enough to note the clouded brows of Wharton and Bob Cherry, and to administer comfort in his own way.

"Don't worry, you chaps," he said. "You look quite nervous, Wharton—"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"So do you, Cherry—"

"Cheese it!"

"Who was it howling like a hyena last night while we were looking for the villain?" asked Johnny Bull, with sarcasm.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"The howlfulness of the esteemed Bunter was terrific!"

Bunter turned a deaf ear to that remark.

"Keep your courage up, you chaps!" he said. "The man's gone! That's a cert! He jumped overboard. Let's hope he's drowned! Anyhow, we know he didn't get on board again! He's either at the bottom of the sea, or ashore in

France, and we're quit of him. Isn't that so, Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"And he's left nothing but a giddy black beard behind him," said Frank Nugent.

"What did he look like without it, Wharton?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I only had a glimpse for a second. But his chin was quite clean-shaven—as clean-shaven as Mr. Poynings'," said Harry, with a glance up at the bridge, where the mate was standing. Bob Cherry, with a start, followed his glance.

"Well, we're shut of him now," yawned Lord Mauleverer. "Thank goodness for that! I can't say I should be sorry if he'd gone to Davy Jones' locker, you know. Dashed bad character—what?"

"The thankfulness is terrific that he has departfully cleared," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "The esteemed rotter was beginning to get upon my ridiculous nerves."

"He's still on Wharton's nerves," grinned Billy Bunter. "I say, Wharton, old man, buck up! Be a man, you know. Like me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" growled Bunter. "I say, Mauly, when are we going to get the cricket you were talking about?"

"To-morrow, dear boy."

"Good!" said Bunter. "I'll show the French chaps what bowling's like. Make 'em open their eyes—what?"

"By gad! Yaas! Your bowlin' would make anybody open his eyes, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

Harry Wharton strolled away from the cheery group on deck. Bob Cherry joined him at a distance from the other fellows. Bob eyed his chum curiously and a little uneasily.

"You don't share the general opinion, old chap?" he asked in a low voice.

"No!" said Harry.

"You don't think we've seen the last of him?"

"No."

"But there's no doubt he went overboard—" urged Bob.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"He never went overboard, Bob."

"Nobody went overboard."

"But we all heard the splash—"

"A splash can be made by something being chucked out of a porthole," said the captain of the Remove quietly.

Bob Cherry started.

"Harry! You don't think—"

"I don't think—I'm sure," answered Harry Wharton in the same quiet tone.

"Look at it, Bob! How did the man get on board—if he came on board? He couldn't have swum out—he was dry when we saw him in Mauly's cabin. No boat could have come and hung on to the Silver Scud without being seen by the watch on deck. He was on board, Bob."

"Hidden?" said Bob. "But we've already proved—there's no place—"

"Except one."

"What's that, then?"

"Poynings' cabin," said Harry.

"But—but—" "Why was Poynings locked up in his cabin last night when he was supposed to be taking his watch on deck? Why didn't he come out when the whole ship was alarmed?" said Harry. "I've asked two or three of the crew exactly where they heard the splash. Nobody saw anyone jump in, but two or three have told me exactly where the splash was, and it was almost under the porthole in Poynings' cabin. It was a cunning way of throwing us off the scent. Bob; but that was all it was. A bundle of something—perhaps a black cloak—"

Bob Cherry whistled softly. "But in that case the villain is still on board the Silver Scud, Harry, and Poynings is hiding him."

"Yes, unless—"

"Unless what?"

"He left a false beard in my hand after our struggle," said Harry Wharton. "That was a disguise—part of a disguise. But what good was a false beard as a disguise to a man who would be known by his disfigured nose anywhere—beard or no beard? It was a disguise, Bob, but it was only part of one—"

"The moustaches and the hair," said Bob—"all false, I dare say. In fact, pretty certain."

"That's not all."

"What else, then?"

Harry Wharton paused before he answered. He glanced round. Bob watched him with growing curiosity. It was evident that a startling thought was in Wharton's mind—a thought so strange, so startling, that he hesitated to give it utterance. But he spoke at last.

"That was only part of the disguise, Bob! There was more than that. I never thought of it before, and even now it seems so startling; but I believe it. The nose—that disfigured nose—it was a false nose, Bob—a trick, a cunning trick! I'm certain of it!"

Bob Cherry gasped.

"But, Harry—"

"That's why the door was locked," said Harry quietly. "That's why he was below when he was supposed to be on deck; that's why he did not come out at the alarm; that's why Gideon Gaunt vanished in the twinkling of an eye. He vanished because he had only to whip along in the dark to the mate's cabin. And he went in as Gideon Gaunt, and came out as—"

"Poynings!" breathed Bob.

"Yes!"

"Good heavens!"

"Not a word," whispered Wharton. "It sounds incredible, I know that. There's no proof—nothing—only that I'm sure of it! But we're not done with Mauly's enemy yet. And the next time we shall know! But not a whisper that could put the villain on his guard!"

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter's voice chimed in. But Bob Cherry did not even hear him. Thunderstruck, he was wondering dazedly whether it was possible, whether Harry Wharton was dreaming dreams, or whether he had indeed struck on the clue to the mystery of the Silver Scud.

THE END.

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