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No. 782. Vol. XXIII.

Week ending February 3rd, 1923.

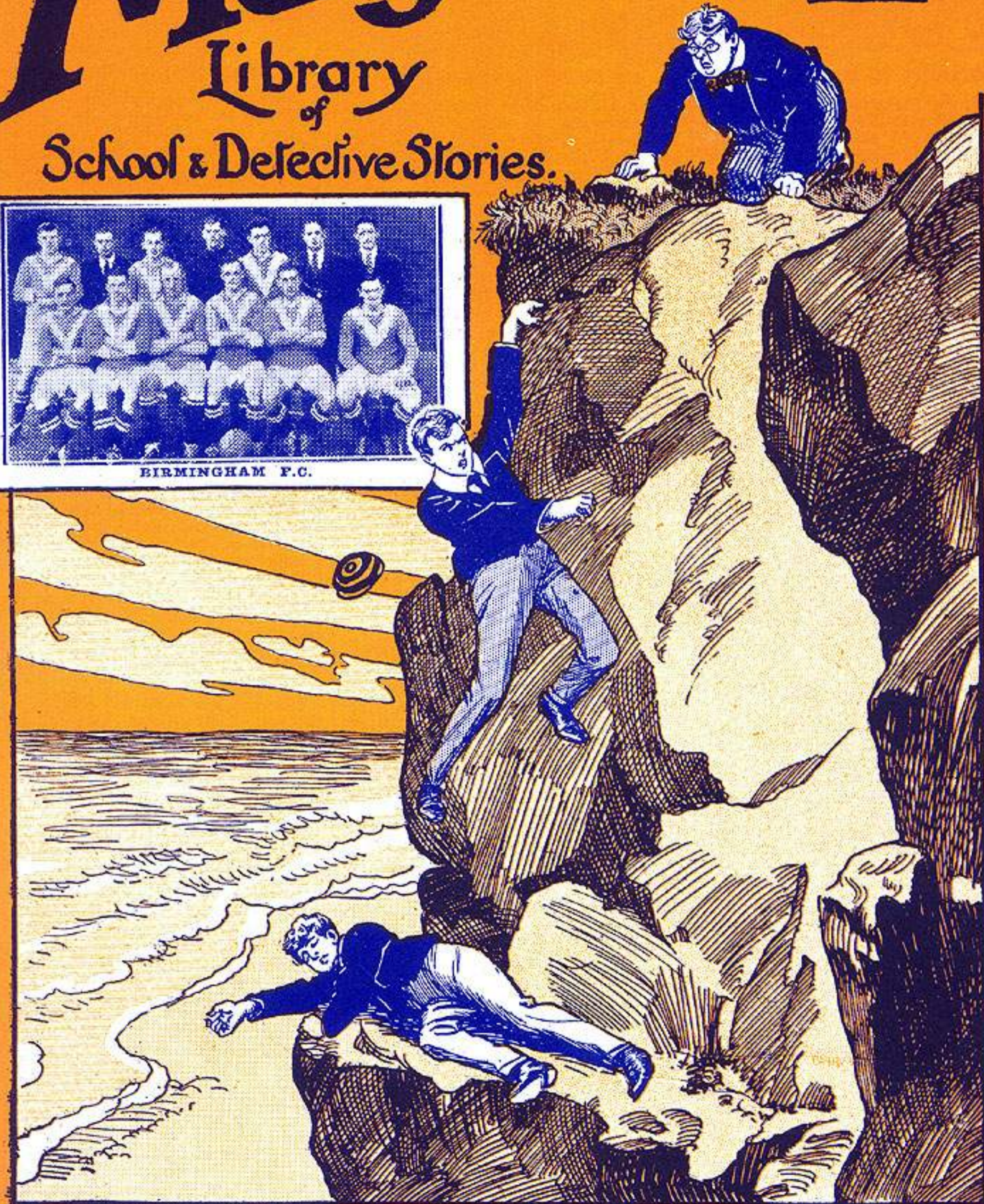
The Magnet 2^d

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School & Detective Stories.



BIRMINGHAM F.C.



RISKING LIFE AND LIMB FOR HIS SCHOOLFELLOW!

(A dramatic scene in this week's powerful story of Greyfriars.)



STRAIGHT TO THE POINT!

Mr. Frank Richards does not call his next week's yarn as per above. His title is "Straight as a Die!" and the name fits the splendid story like a glove. In this new tale we see once again fine evidence of the versatility of Mr. Richards' art. He has developed his theme in grand style, and we find Bunter at his best. I am not at all sure that the porpoise is not always at his best. Anyway, in "Straight as a Die!" it is a perfect treat to notice the way in which the Owl of Greyfriars wears the hero's cloak. Bunter as a man of prodigious valour is nothing new.

SAVING BOB CHERRY!

Well, on this occasion somebody saved Bob Cherry, who came precious near to losing his life. Somebody saved Cherry. Why not Bunter? That's the Bunterian line of reasoning. Bob was rescued from his perilous position on the Seagull ledge, and there is no rush to get the honour of the deed. It was a brave act. It is really the most natural thing in the world—I say this with a fairly good knowledge of Bunter's capabilities—for Bunter to step forward. "Alone I did it," is what he says, or words to that effect.

BUNTER GETS THE CREDIT!

The kudos was his for the asking. William George took the honour. He argued that it was a pity to miss a good thing. But there is always a sinister shadow hovering over a false claim to distinction. In the end the impostor gets shown up. He may win, as it were, over the swings, but he comes a cropper with the roundabouts. You see, the learned Peter Todd takes up the case. Todd has not stewed over the law and its amazing intricacies for nothing. Peter does not believe that Bunter is any sort of a giddy hero. Maybe Todd is in a position to know something, for he shares Bunter's study, and Bunter has a share in Todd's cricket-stump. So matters are even.

UNMASKED!

From the strange, psychological moment that Peter Todd starts investigating, a change comes o'er the spirit of the scene. A book is found on the cliffs where the accident happened. A copy of Virgil may be a poor clue, but it is a clue. Todd has far too clear an insight into the vagaries of Bunter's character to permit a belief that the porpoise was browsing on the classics by the dangerous Seagull Cliff. After reading this yarn you will be ready to hold up Peter Todd as a champion detective. He puts two and two together; they make four.

AN INGENIOUS NETWORK!

And at this stage interest increases, and attention is centred on Jim Lee. There is a mystery about Jim. The boy has a guardian, as most readers are aware, a man named Ulick Driver, who is bent on carrying through a nefarious purpose. Ulick stops at nothing. He means Jim to pave the crooked way for him, so to speak, and works for this goal in true Machiavellian fashion.

THE UPSHOT!

As events turned out, Bunter has to take his proper place. He is not a hero. He can hide his diminished head or boil same, but, anyhow, he has to step down from his pedestal as a plucky rescuer. The part Jim Lee played in the mystery is considerable. Make sure of next week's brilliant yarn, and you will say it is one of the best-worked-out plots standing to the name of Frank Richards.

ALL AT SEA!

Next week's detective story of Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake is crammed full of sensational surprises. It is called:

"THE CASE OF THE CATTLE-BOAT!"

This is an astounding story—astonishing, I mean—by reason of the vivid manner in which the very important question of cattle importation—which means cheap meat—is dealt with. There has been tampering with a valuable cargo of cattle coming from America to this country. Some of the beasts die, and into the reason of this vile attack on the cargo of cattle Ferrers Locke and his young assistant make it their business to inquire. What they discover you will see next Monday. It is a gripping tale, with a lot of hard, firm thought in it. It "gets" you at once because of its reality and vim, and you will enter into the actuality of the wild stampede of the cattle on the steamer's decks, a simply tragic business at any time, but far at sea something terrific. Ferrers Locke shows up as usual, as a calm, close-thinking fellow, who is never rushed or stampeded himself. Drake follows him like a shadow in all this. The way in which the miscreants are tracked down is masterly, a real tour de force, just what you might expect when Locke gets going.

SPEAKER WHARTON.

The chairman of the Greyfriars Parliament has an extra busy session ahead of him. Many readers have sent in some sound speeches about various engaging little hobbies and these contributions will soon have their turn.

THE "HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

We are still in the middle of the winter season so it will be just as well to make sure of a copy of the "Annual," if you have not already done so. The evenings are well suited to a comfortable read in front of the fire. Though, so far as that goes, the "Holiday Annual" appeals to a fellow all the year round. But a word in your ear. There are only a few copies left. Don't be disappointed by leaving your order too late.

A BEAUTIFUL GLOSSY PHOTO.

Next Monday's photograph, given FREE with the MAGNET, is a very fine picture of the Crystal Palace team. The "C. P.'s" have a great name. I am referring to the Crystal Palace champions. In this they have followed the other "C. P.'s"—i.e., the Companion Papers.

ANOTHER ONE-WEEK COMPETITION.

This feature of the MAGNET will loom as large as ever next week. The bright and taking competitions get more and more popular, and small wonder at that!

HOW TO MAKE, MEND, AND DO EVERYTHING FOR THE HOME.

"Harmsworth's Household Encyclopedia," Part 1 of which will be published on Thursday, February 8th, price 1s. 3d., will tell you in the simplest possible manner how to make at home thousands of practical and useful things from a bookshelf or chair to a "wireless" set or a model aeroplane.

It will also show you by means of easy diagrams how to mend everything round and about the home. It is the ideal book for the handyman, and being alphabetically arranged for easy reference, you can turn to just what you want at the moment you want it.

The complete work will contain 10,000 pictures, 10,000 articles, diagrams, plans, and COLOURED PLATES, and the parts will be issued fortnightly every other Thursday. Order your copy of Part 1 now.

SOLDIER JONES.

A very pleasant and cheery experience fell to my lot the other day. The rain was coming down in buckets, one of those times just after the turn of the year with a south-west wind blowing and a quaint whiff of coming spring in the air. But it wasn't the rain that was so specially cheery. Don't think it. I took shelter, and gave my bike a chance of recovering itself, in a far-away bit of a village in Bucks; and while there I found I was close to the headquarters of Soldier Jones, the place where he was training. The famous champion was looking in the very pink of condition, and he certainly had a nailing hard handshake. We chatted of many things—of his future engagements and all the big affairs due this year. Soldier Jones is a magnificent fellow, the real ideal of a man, fit as a fiddle, and full of that inspiring easy sort of confidence which comes from the sound knowledge of the business he has so well in hand.

Your Editor.

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums!



With two such vastly different characters as Billy Bunter and Jim Lee working in opposition the atmosphere immediately becomes charged with exciting interest. This splendid story will hold you spellbound. Start it right away.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Rough on Bob Cherry!

"WHAT sickening luck!" Bob Cherry gave a groan. It was not like the cheery, healthy Bob to grouse. But, for once in a way, he was grouching, with emphasis.

The "grousefulness," as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh expressed it, was "terrific."

All the Famous Five agreed that it was "hard cheese."

Harry Wharton & Co. were preparing to start for Redclyffe to play Redclyffe Juniors. And Bob Cherry, instead of girding himself for the fray, was only seeing them off.

It was indeed hard.

Only the day before, at footer practice, Bob's knee had come into violent collision with Bolsover major's boot. Bolsover major took a large size in boots, and a kick from Bolsover somewhat resembled a kick from a mule. Bob was crooked—hopelessly crooked. He had hoped against hope that he would pull round in time for the Redclyffe match; but, really, there was no chance. He had to limp as he went down to the gates with the footballers.

"It's rotten, old fellow!" said Harry Wharton sympathetically. "We shall miss you at half, too."

"Bless that ass Bolsover!" groaned Bob. "He was bound to shove his silly hoof at a fellow just before a match!"

"You couldn't bike over and watch?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Not with this dashed knee!"

"Beastly luck!" said Johnny Bull. "I'll kick Bolsover before we start, if you like!"

Bob grinned faintly.

"That wouldn't mend my knee! Well, it's no good grouching! Off you go! Mind you lick Redclyffe!"

And the footballers mounted their bikes and started down the lane—a cheery ride in the crisp winter air.

Bob Cherry stood at the gates and watched them off.

A score of fellows were riding over to Redclyffe with the eleven to see the game. All Bob Cherry's friends were gone

He felt quite dismal as they disappeared from sight.

He turned back into the quadrangle, with a cloud on his usually sunny face.

"Left out—what?" grinned Billy Bunter, coming along to the gates.

Grunt from Bob Cherry.

"How's your knee?" asked Bunter.

"Rotten!"

"You should be more careful!" admonished the Owl of the Remove.

"You're a bit clumsy, Cherry!"

"What?" roared Bob.

Bob generally succeeded in keeping good-tempered even in dealing with William George Bunter. But he was feeling morose now, and down on his luck, and in no humour for Bunter.

The fat junior backed away a little, blinking at Bob through his large spectacles.

"Clumsy!" he repeated. "You're not much of a footballer! You really play a good bit like a performing elephant!"

"Why, I—I—" gasped Bob.

"You're not worth your salt in the team, in my opinion!" continued Bunter, backing away farther as Bob limped towards him.

"If Wharton took my advice, he would leave you out for good!"

"Are you begging for a thick ear, you fat frump?" roared Bob.

"Pooh! You couldn't give me one!"

"I—I—I—"

"None of your cheek!" said Bunter.

"Cheek!" stuttered Bob.

"Yes! Don't make me box your ears!"

"Bub-bub-box my ears!" murmured Bob Cherry, wondering whether he was dreaming.

"I'd do it for two pins!" said Bunter truculently. "It wouldn't take me more than two minutes to lick a silly ass like you, Bob Cherry!"

Bob made a jump at the fat junior. This was too much. A sudden twinge in his damaged knee stopped him, and his leg almost gave way. He stopped, gasping.

"Come on, if you like!" said Bunter cheerily, backing away, however, as he hurled his defiance. "I'll lick you fast enough!"

"You—you—you horrid fat worm!"

breathed Bob. "Come near enough for me to punch you, and I'll burst you!"

"Yah! Shut up!"

"I—I—I—"

"Go and eat coke! You're no good, you know! Clumsy ass, I call you!"

You can't play footer for toffee, and as for licking a chap, you couldn't lick one side of me!" said Bunter brightly.

Bob Cherry suppressed his feelings. With his "gammy" leg he could not chase Bunter, who kept carefully out of his reach.

Evidently the Owl of the Remove was seizing this opportunity to tell Bob exactly what he thought of him—an unaccustomed pleasure for Bunter.

Bob turned away and tramped towards the School House.

"Yah!" roared Bunter. "Don't run away! I'm not going to hurt you!"

Bob spun round in towering wrath, but a fresh twinge from his knee warned him.

He tramped away towards the House with feelings that could not have been expressed in words.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter.

The fat junior rolled away out of gates, feeling very pleased with himself.

He had scored for once.

Bob Cherry went indoors and up to the Remove passage. He found the passage quiet and deserted.

On that fine afternoon every fellow, apparently, had gone out, most of the Remove having cycled over to Redclyffe with the team.

Even Skinner and Snoop and Stott had been tempted out of gates instead of slacking about the studies and passages, as usual.

Bob hated solitude, and he did not love quiet. After ten minutes he was feeling as if he had been wrecked on a desert island and had lived there for years.

"Dash it all, there must be somebody indoors!" he murmured. "That fellow Lee, he's bound to be in his study. I'll give him a look in."

And Bob thumped on the door of Study No. 3 and hurled it open. Study No. 3 belonged to Ogilvy and Russell and the new junior, Jim Lee.

It was quite vacant now. Even Lee, the school-boy "hermit" as the fellows called him, was not there.

But Bob remembered that Lee had been turned out of the

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study by Russell and Ogilvy, so it was possible that he was in the Form-room. Down the stairs again Bob went limping, and he looked into the Remove room for Lee. But Lee was not there.

Bob gave an angry grunt.

Even Lee, a fellow whose company nobody wanted, was not available that afternoon.

Bob felt that he simply could not stand it indoors, and he limped out into the quadrangle. The idea came into his head of going over to Redclyffe by train. He might get there in time for the second half, and watch the finish of the match.

That was better than nothing. He walked out of gates, and made slow progress down to Friardale.

He called in at the station, and found that a train had left for Redclyffe five minutes before, and that there was another in thirty minutes. With a grunt of disgust, Bob walked out of the station again. His luck was quite out that afternoon.

But the fresh wind from the sea

"You ought to get a crutch, really, you know," he called out. "Or why don't you hire a pram? You could get a kid to wheel you out in a pram!" Billy Bunter evidently was still in a humorous mood.

"You fat rotter!" roared Bob.

"Asking for a thick ear?" inquired Bunter.

Bob Cherry quickened his pace. He felt it would be a solace to kick Bunter with his sound leg. The fat junior rose rather hurriedly, grabbed up his big bag of tarts, and retreated along the path.

"Mind how you go, with that gammy leg of yours!" he chortled. "This path isn't really safe for an active fellow like me. It really ain't the place for clumsy cripples, you know."

"I'll give you clumsy cripples!" gasped Bob.

Heedless of the "gammy" leg, he started at a run towards Bunter. What happened next passed like a flash. Bob stumbled on a loose stone, and as he tried to save himself from falling—easy enough but for the bad knee he had

But his handsome face was dark with trouble.

There was a letter in his hand, and he glanced at it, reading it for the tenth, or perhaps twentieth time.

It was a letter from his cousin and guardian, Ulick Driver; the man who had sent him to school; the man who was known at Greyfriars as an "Old Boy," and reputed a gentleman of wealth; known to the unhappy Lee as a "crook," an enemy of society, who worked in the dark by crooked ways.

The letter was brief. It ran:

"Dear Jim—I want to know—once and for all—what you intend to do. More than enough time has been wasted. If you refuse obedience, you know what to expect.—U. D."

With a sudden passionate movement, Jim Lee tore the letter into shreds and scattered them to the wind.

What he intended to do? That question had to be answered. Jim Lee had

THE STORY OF THE BIRMINGHAM CLUB

IT is probably true to say that, to a certain extent, the doings of the Birmingham club in the world of football have been eclipsed by the attention paid to the more famous clubs in the same district—Aston Villa and West Bromwich Albion. All the same, though, this Birmingham club, once again members of the First Division, has done many things worthy of note in the course of its history, and has brought out some of the finest players the game has ever known. In the first place, the Birmingham club really has the right to be numbered among the oldest in the country, for as Small Heath Alliance it was formed as far back as 1875.

It is certain that the few lads connected with the Trinity Cricket Club, who were responsible for the starting of Small Heath Alliance, never dreamt of the heights to which the club would eventually soar. Steadily, though, the club grew in playing strength and influence, and in the season of 1893-94 a long-cherished ambition was realised with the elevation of the club to a place in the First Division of the Football League. Since then the career of the club has been one of many ups and downs, for three times have they lost their place in the top class. Now, however, they are back in the First Division, and it may be said

that to-day they have practically as good a team, in the all-round sense, as the club has ever possessed.

In the year 1906 the Small Heath club decided upon an important move—to change their headquarters to the more up-to-date ground at St. Andrews, and, being ambitious in other directions as well, they also changed their name from Small Heath, which may have sounded insignificant, to Birmingham, which does suggest something really big. And to-day there are few grounds in the country better equipped than the St. Andrews enclosure, which is capable of holding something like 75,000 spectators, and all of this number would be able to witness a match in comfort. As yet the holding capacity of the ground has never been fully testified, but there have been some wonderful scenes on those "Derby Day" occasions when they have met their neighbours, the Villa.

Some people suggested that the old story about bad luck following the change of name for a club was illustrated in Birmingham's case. Anyway, for the 1907-8 season the club was back in the Second Division, and it took them until the end of the 1920-21 season to work their way back again to the top class. Several of the players now helping to keep the side in a respectable place in

the League table have been honoured by selection for representative matches. Womack, the full-back and captain, is one of these, and Percy Barton, the left half-back, has played for England in International matches proper.

For the most part the players of the Birmingham club of to-day have been gathered together when young, and trained in the right way on the spot. But here and there are expensive players. John Crosbie, the forward who played for Scotland last season, cost something like three thousand pounds when he was secured from Ayr United. But he is a most skilful forward. And there are people who say that in Bradford the Birmingham club possesses a man who has a right to be included high up among the list of the best centre-forwards now to be found in English football.

For many weeks at the start of the present season he was the only player of the side who had found the way to his opponents' net. In the Cup, as in the League, Birmingham have played a comparatively quiet part, and they are still waiting to get to the Final Tie for the first time. Last season they took no part in the competition because their entry was unfortunately forgotten until it was too late.

cheered him, and he started for the cliff-path, going slow to save his damaged knee. As a matter of fact, he ought not to have been walking at all; but loafing about and doing nothing would have got on his nerves too much. He limped along the high cliff-path, with the great blue bay spread out on his left, dotted with the sails of fishing-craft.

It was a cheering sight, and Bob was glad that he had come there. He progressed along the path, with a high cliff on his right, and a sheer drop to the beach on his left. He was debating in his mind whether he might venture to call at Cliff House and see Marjorie & Co. Tea with Marjorie & Co. would be very cheering in the circumstances.

"Hallo, Dot-and-carry-one!" called out a fat voice.

Bob stared along the path.

Billy Bunter was seated on a rock at a little distance away, a bag of tarts on one fat knee. The Owl of the Remove was enjoying his half-holiday in his own way. He grinned cheerily at Bob.

forgotten for the moment—his leg gave way. He slipped and fell; and the next moment he was over the edge of the cliff.

Bunter stared, his fat face growing white.

As if turned to stone Bunter stood gazing in horror at the spot where Bob Cherry had disappeared.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

At the Risk of his Life!

"WHAT am I going to do?" muttered Jim Lee.

The new junior at Greyfriars bit his lip restlessly.

He was alone—Jim Lee generally was alone. On half-holidays, if he was not "swotting" in the Form-room, he usually went for a long ramble by himself. He was seated now on a high point above the cliff-path, looking out across the bay, cheered a little by the bright expanse of sea and sky, and the fresh breeze from the ocean.

answered it, in his way. He felt himself helpless in the hands of the gentleman-crook; but with a kind of hopeless determination, he had steadily avoided carrying out a single instruction he had received.

He knew, only too well, why he had been placed at Greyfriars. To make friends there—to become intimate with the wealthier fellows in his Form—to be asked home by them, and to serve the purposes of the crook in their homes—that was the treachery required of him. And it would have been easy enough for Jim Lee.

He could have made friends easily enough, as he longed to do. Even Lord Mauleverer, generally a rather reserved fellow, had taken a liking to him, and would willingly have been his friend. Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, would gladly have met him half-way—especially since the occasion when Lee had chipped in to help him in a "rag" of the High-life fellows. Lee was a fellow whom one liked at first sight. At

Billy Bunter's sudden claim to bravery is short-lived—

his preparatory school he had had a host of friends—it could have been the same at Greyfriars, if he had chosen. Ulick Driver had calculated well on that point, at least.

But now that the boy's eyes were opened, he would not. He had deliberately set out to make himself unpopular. He had had a fight with Wharton. He had quarrelled with his study-mates. He had rejected any advances made from any quarter. The result was that he was a kind of outcast, leading a hermit's life in the midst of a crowd, and was generally disliked in his Form.

That was bitter enough for a fellow like Lee, whose frank nature was formed for friendship. But it placed it out of his power to do as Ulick Driver had ordered him; if the time came when he should weakly yield to threats and menaces, he could not do what the crook demanded—in that lay his safety.

But the life was hard, and he felt it could not go on like this indefinitely.

Even if he could have endured it, term after term, Ulick Driver had to be reckoned with.

The crook was growing impatient.

The boy, instead of being like wax in his hands, had developed a will of his own; he was determined never to be a thief, or the confederate of a thief.

The crook still hoped to bend him to his will. But when he discovered that failure was certain, he was likely to make the boy suffer for his resistance. Jim knew that he had no mercy to expect. And he was in the power of the crook.

When the final struggle came, he wondered miserably whether he would find the strength to resist and face the consequences.

He was glad that it was out of his power to obey Ulick Driver; that it was too late to conciliate fellows whom he had deliberately snubbed and antagonised.

And yet, there were so many fellows with whom he would have been friends; his study-mates, Ogilvy and Russell, and every member of the Famous Five, and other fellows. How happy he might have been at Greyfriars—if he had come there like the others—without that black secret weighing on his heart and his mind!

From his seat high up on the rugged cliff, he caught sight of a moving figure on the path below. He recognised Bob Cherry, and he smiled faintly. He knew that Bob was in the dumps that afternoon because he had missed a football match. He wondered how Bob would have felt in his own position.

Suddenly the outcast of the Remove started up. Under his very eyes, Bob Cherry had started to run, slipped, and—and— Lee gave a hoarse cry as the junior vanished over the verge of the cliff.

He stood staring down at the path blankly. His Virgil—which he had brought out with him as usual on his walks, intending to study if he could—dropped at his feet unheeded. For a moment or two Lee gazed in horror, and then he went scrambling hurriedly down the rugged cliff to the path. He reached it in less than a minute, and caught sight of Bunter standing there, helpless with fright.

Bunter blinked at him dazedly.

"He—he—he's gone over!" stammered the Owl through his chattering teeth. "It—it wasn't my fault! Oh dear!"

Lee did not heed him.

He dropped on his hands and knees, and crawled to the edge of the cliff-path. Below, he knew, the cliff sloped away for at least two hundred feet, and at the bottom was rough shingle. If Bob had



"None of your cheek, Cherry!" said Bunter truculently. "Don't make me box your ears!" "Bub-bub-box my ears!" stammered Bob, wondering whether he was dreaming. "Yes, I'd do it for two pils!" Bob made a jump at the fat junior, but a sudden twinge in his damaged knee stopped him. (See Chapter I.)

fallen to the beach, he was crushed out of all recognition. Lee's own troubles had vanished from his mind now; all his thoughts were fixed on the hapless junior below. With a steady head, the "hermit" leaned over the verge of the rocky path, and looked down, hoping to see Bob yet alive.

He gave a gasp of relief.

Lee had explored the cliff-path many times in his solitary rambles since he had been at Greyfriars. He knew that there was a rocky ledge below the cliff edge; it was barely possible that Bob's descent had been stopped by it.

His faint hope was realised. On a narrow ledge of rock, not more than three feet at the widest point, Bob Cherry lay insensible.

The ledge was six feet down, and the fall had apparently stunned the junior.

He lay within a few inches of the edge of it. The slightest movement would have plunged him over, with nothing to stop his fall till he struck the shingle two hundred feet below.

It was fortunate, perhaps, that he was unconscious. Lee dreaded to see him stir, in his terribly perilous position.

Jim Lee drew his head back, and rose, looking wildly up and down the path. There was no help. Pegg village was a mile away—in another direction; Friardale was two miles. Only Billy Bunter was at hand, utterly useless in such an emergency.

Lee had himself to depend upon only, and what could he do without even a

But there was no instant to be lost. "Lee!" gasped Bunter, as the new junior approached the edge again.

"You're mad! Keep back!"

Lee glanced at him.

"He's on the ledge, Bunter. I'm going to try to save him. Lie down and crawl as near as you can, so as to give me a hand."

Bunter quaked.

"I—I can't!"

"His life's at stake!" shouted Lee fiercely. "For Heaven's sake pull yourself together and help!"

"I—I can't!" mumbled Bunter. "I—I should fall! I—I daren't!"

And the fat junior crouched back against the cliff, his nerves in a twitter at the bare idea of approaching the deadly verge.

Lee wasted no more words on him. There was no help to be had from Bunter, and seconds were precious.

He crawled to the edge again, Bunter watching him with round eyes dilated behind his big spectacles. The sight of Lee's fearful peril made Bunter's heart almost fail him.

Bunter certainly could have been of no use. It needed a strong, steady head even to look over the precipice.

But Lee did not falter.

He knew his risk, and he faced it with iron calmness. He knew that the chances were heavily against the rescue of the insensible junior, against his ever getting back to the rock path alive himself. But he did not hesitate. Perhaps, at that moment, there flashed into his mind a bitter thought that, if he found death

—and the genuine rescuer of Bob Cherry is established—next week!

on the shingle, it would solve the terrible problem that beset him. He would be saved from the power of the crook.

Lee grasped the rough edge of the rock and swung himself over.

Bunter watched him with dizzy brain, almost fainting with terror.

Lee overhung the ledge, and, with iron nerve, he felt for a hold on the rough, weather-broken rock, and lowered himself down. His hand slipped on a smooth surface, and for a second he hung by one hand, every nerve in his body thrilling. But he caught on again, and lowered himself to the ledge, and stood by the insensible junior.

He bent over Bob Cherry.

Bob lay motionless, his eyes closed. If he had come to his senses now, with Lee holding him back from the verge, it would have helped the rescuer in his task.

But Bob showed no sign of coming to.

Lee did not dare to look beyond the verge. The vast empty space would have made his senses swim, and he needed to keep steady now.

Steadily, keeping himself in check, he grasped the junior and raised him against the cliff.

Lee was strong and sturdy and in perfect condition, which was fortunate for him now, for Bob Cherry was not a light-weight. How he succeeded in lifting the unconscious junior without reeling off the ledge Lee never knew.

He was working with a grim, desperate determination, and he seemed, at that fearful moment, to have the strength of three or four fellows.

Bob Cherry was raised in his strong grasp higher and higher up the slightly-sloping cliff, and Lee found foothold on a rugged projection and raised himself higher with his burden, till Bob topped the cliff-path, and Lee, with a final desperate effort, pushed him into safety.

The terrible effort exhausted him, and he slipped back to the ledge, utterly spent.

For several minutes he crouched there, his brain throbbing, his heart beating in great thumps.

A helping hand would have been invaluable to him there, but Bunter was still crouching back in terror, not dreaming of helping. Bob Cherry lay where Lee had landed him, only a few inches from the edge, while the exhausted rescuer panted on the ledge below.

But Lee recovered quickly.

He grasped the rock again, and climbed up, and got his knee over the top. Then he plunged forward across Bob into safety.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Secret To Keep!

BILLY BUNTER gasped. He had never expected to see Jim Lee reappear over the edge of the cliff-path, and he could only stare at him in wonder.

Lee lay for a minute or two, resting, and then he staggered up. Without a look at Bunter he seized Bob, and dragged him away from the edge.

Both of them were safe at last. Bob still unconscious, knowing nothing of the peril he had passed through or of the rescue; Lee, panting and perspiring and exhausted.

Bunter approached at last.

"I—I say, Lee—"

"We must get him away somehow," panted Lee. "A doctor must see him. He's stunned, I think."

"I—I say, it was jolly plucky," said Bunter. "I—I—I couldn't have done it, you know."

"I know you couldn't."

"No good my trying if I couldn't do it, was it?" argued Bunter.

"No."

"Of course, if you hadn't butted in I should have tried," went on Bunter, becoming Bunter again, as it were. "In fact, I was just going down to fetch him up."

Lee smiled faintly.

"Nothing to grin at," said Bunter tartly. "I suppose I've got as much pluck as you have, anyhow."

"I hope so."

"I should have managed it all right," said Bunter. "In fact, you might as well have left it to me. Bob's a friend of mine, and, of course, I should have saved him. He's no friend of yours."

Lee did not answer that.

"In fact, you've got no friends," continued the amiable Bunter. "There

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isn't a fellow in the Remove who speaks to you."

Lee was silent.

"I wish you'd left it to me," said Bunter. "Bit of cheek, I call it, butting in like that between a fellow and his pal. I suppose you think you're going to get a lot of credit for this—fellows standing round and admiring you—what?"

Lee started.

He was very far from desiring to capture any glory for what he had done. But he knew what it was. He knew that he had performed a feat beyond the powers of most fellows, beyond the courage of very many. Bunter's chatter did not affect him in any way. But he knew what Bob Cherry would think when he learned what had happened. He knew what Bob's chums would think.

He knew that now, if he wanted it, there was a chance to set himself right with the Remove, with the fellows he had estranged. But he did not want that.

It seemed as if the very fates were working for Ulick Driver. If there was one thing the Remove fellows admired it was pluck. A fellow who had risked a fearful death to save another fellow with whom he was hardly on speaking

terms could scarcely continue unpopular.

Little did Billy Bunter dream what thoughts were passing in the harassed mind of the new junior. In such circumstances Bunter would have trumpeted his glorious conduct far and wide. He would have extracted from it the last ounce of "kudos." The fat junior naturally judged Lee by himself.

He did not understand Lee's silence, and he went on argumentatively.

"If you think I'm going to sing your praises, Lee, you're jolly well mistaken. It was nothing, after all. I was just going to do it when you butted in. You know that. Anyhow, I helped."

"Did you?"

"Well, I was just going to, only you were in such a hurry. Might have mucked up the whole thing by rushing it like that!" said Bunter.

Lee did not heed him.

Bob Cherry had stirred a little, and a faint moan came from his lips. He was returning to consciousness.

Lee started to his feet.

"Bunter!" He spoke hurriedly. "Bunter, he's coming to; you can look after him now—no need for me to stay."

"No need at all," agreed Bunter. "Leave him to me. He's my pal—not yours. You've got no pals."

"I—I want you not to tell him that I got him up over the cliff, Bunter."

"What?"

"Don't mention my name!"

Bunter fairly blinked.

"Why not?" he stuttered.

"I—I'd rather you didn't! I—I'd rather—"

Lee hesitated. "Look here, if he asks you who got him up, say a fellow did—don't mention my name. No need to tell him it was I. I—I don't want his thanks."

"Pooh! I don't suppose he would thank you for a little thing like that," said Bunter disdainfully. "What was it, after all?"

"Well, don't tell him—"

"Blessed if I catch on," said Bunter. "I won't tell him—I don't want to blow your trumpet for you. But why—"

"That's all right, then! I'd rather he didn't know," panted Lee. "Don't tell anybody I was here."

Bunter blinked at him very curiously.

"Mean to say you want to keep it dark?" he asked.

"Yes, yes."

"You're not going to mention it?"

"No."

"You want to keep clear of the whole bizney, and not let any fellows know that you were on the spot at all?" asked Bunter.

"That's it."

"Leave it to me," said Bunter with a peculiar gleam behind his big spectacles. "Cut off before he sees you. He's coming to."

"You promise?"

"Honour bright!" said Bunter with dignity.

"If he asks you—"

"I'll stuff him up!" said Bunter with a grin.

"Oh! I—I don't want you to tell him any lies!" said Lee quickly.

"Look here, Lee—"

"Just keep it dark that—that—"

"Leave it to me," said Bunter impatiently. "He'll see you in a minute! Cut off while there's time, you ass."

There was a faint sigh from Bob. Lee hesitated no longer. He was too occupied by his own thoughts to think of any motive Bunter might have had for being so eager to fall in with his plan.

How did Jim Lee's Virgil come to be on the cliff?—

He hurried away along the path, and disappeared round a bend of the cliffs. Billy Bunter, with a fat grin, sat on the rock, waiting for Bob Cherry to return to consciousness.

Jim Leo hurried away as fast as he could. Now that Bob was recovering consciousness, he did not need aid—any more aid than Bunter could give him. And Leo was almost feverishly anxious that his own part in the rescue should be kept secret.

He quitted the cliffs, and went at a trot along Friardale Lane. He was anxious to get back to the school now as soon as he could. But it was a good distance, and he dropped into a walk before he reached Greyfriars.

He was near the school gates, when there was a buzz of bicycles behind him on the road, and he glanced back. The football party was returning from Redclyffe in great spirits.

Any other Remove fellow would have called out to ask the result of the match; but Leo did not. He resumed his way, his eyes on the ground, and the merry crowd of cyclists swept by him.

Only Harry Wharton gave him a wave of the hand in passing. Wharton had not forgotten how Leo had stood up for him in the fight with the Highcliffians. But Leo did not answer the salute. He kept his eyes doggedly on the ground, and Wharton flushed a little as he rode on with his friends.

"Sulky as ever, that chap!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Queer fish!" said Harry.

"The queerfulness of the fishy Leo is terrific!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"He doesn't even want to know how the game has gone!" said Ogilvy with a sniff. "Doesn't care, of course."

"Not a rap!" said Russell, sniffing also. "I'm jolly glad we turned him out of the study."

"Yes, rather!"

"He's not a bad chap, I think, in his way," said Wharton.

"In his way!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Can't say I like his way!"

"Sulky beast!" said Vernon-Smith.

"He does seem a bit sulky," agreed Wharton. "But he stood up like a Trojan the other day when Pon & Co. tried to rag me."

"That was decent of him, anyhow," said Nugent. "Hardly what one would have expected of a chap like that."

"He seems to want to be left alone," said Harry. "Well, we can leave him alone."

"I know I jolly well mean to!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Yes, rather!"

The cyclists rode on merrily, dismissing Leo from their minds. Jim Leo followed on with a clouded brow. He entered the school, and went up to the dormitory to brush down his clothes, which were rumpled and stained by his adventure on the cliffs. Skinner met him on the stairs.

"Hallo! Been in a fight?" asked Skinner with a grin.

"No."

"Been ragged by the Highcliffe chaps?"

"No."

"You look pretty used-up," said Skinner, eyeing him curiously. "Haven't been under a motor-car?"

"No."

Leo walked on, without listening to any further inquiry from the inquisitive Skinner.

"Sulky rotter!" commented Skinner.

Jim Leo brushed himself, and made himself as neat and clean as usual, and went down to Hall to tea. Tea in the study was not for the outcast of the Remove. Harry Wharton called to him on his way down.

"Do you know whether Bob Cherry's gone out, Lee?"

"Eh, what?" said Leo, to gain time.

"Seen anything of Bob Cherry? He doesn't seem to be about."

"Oh, hang Bob Cherry!" answered Leo rudely.

And he tramped down the stairs, leaving Wharton staring after him blankly. Only some such answer saved Leo from telling a falsehood—for, of course, he did not intend to mention that he knew anything of Bob's movements that afternoon. His answer stopped further inquiry effectively.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Wharton. "Of all the rude Huns!" The captain of the Remove made a step after Leo, his eyes gleaming. But he checked himself—he could not quite forget that Leo had helped him in a tight corner not so very long ago. That recollection checked him, and he went into his study, leaving Jim Leo to go his way.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Gallant Rescuer!

BOB CHERRY opened his eyes. He stared about him dazedly. His head was aching—aching with a terrible ache. For some moments, as he stared, his brain was

hazy he could not think. He knew that something had happened, but knew no more than that.

"Feel better?"

It was Bunter's voice.

Bob saw Bunter's fat face and glimmering spectacles, like a blurred vision. But his sight cleared, his mind grew clearer. Recollection returned, and he raised himself on his elbow and peered about him dizzily.

"I—I went over the edge!" he whispered huskily.

Bunter nodded.

"Right over!" he assented.

"But—but—" stammered Bob.

He remembered going over the edge of the cliff-path—the horrible rush downward into space, stopped with crushing suddenness by his fall on the rocky ledge. After that all was blank.

He had been knocked senseless; he knew that that must have happened. He remembered the ledge below the cliff; he must have struck the ledge, he knew, and lain senseless there. But in the name of wonder, how was it that he was now lying in safety, against the cliff, on the path, yards from the dangerous precipice over which he had fallen? Had a miracle happened?

"Sit up, old fellow!" said Bunter. "I'll help you! Pull yourself together, you know. Only a crack on the head! What's that? Nothing!"

The crack on Bob's head did not worry Bunter; he could bear cracks on other people's heads with great fortitude.

It worried Bob a good deal. He sat



Heedless of his "gammy" leg, Bob Cherry started at a run towards Bunter. What happened next passed in a flash. Bob stumbled on a loose stone, and as he tried to save himself from falling his injured leg gave way. He slipped and fell, and the next moment he was over the edge of the cliff. (See Chapter 1.)

Peter Todd, the schoolboy lawyer, investigates!

up, and leaned back against the cliff, breathing hard.

"I fell over!" he repeated.

"You did—rather! You dropped on the ledge just under—I'd forgotten it, but I remember a fellow telling me—"

"I must have been stunned," said Bob.

"Like a doornail!" said Bunter.

Bob looked round dazedly.

"Who got me up, then? There's nobody here."

"Oh, really, Cherry?"

"Somebody must have got me up over the cliff," said Bob. "Somebody with a rope, I suppose. Who was it?"

"I hadn't any rope here," said Bunter.

Bob Cherry gazed at him.

"You!"

"Who do you think did it?" demanded Bunter warmly. "You can see for yourself that there's nobody here."

"You!" repeated Bob blankly.

Billy Bunter felt a slight inward twinge. But it was very slight. Jim Lee was keeping his part in the affair dark—he had begged Bunter to keep it dark. There was absolutely no reason why Bunter should not claim the credit of that daring rescue—no reason at all, excepting a regard for the facts! And Bunter's regard for facts was very slight—so slight as to be scarcely discernible.

Facts and Bunter were hardly on speaking terms, as it were.

There had been a gallant rescue—a fellow had risked his life to save Bob Cherry! Glory was to be had for the asking! If Lee kept his secret, as evidently he intended to do, that glory would go begging, as it were—wasted for want of a claimant. Bunter did not see why it should be wasted.

He felt that he could do with a little glory.

Bob Cherry was staring up at him dumbfounded. He stared up and down the path, and up at the high cliff; but there was no one in sight—no sign of life, save the wheeling seagulls. He was alone upon the lonely path with Billy Bunter.

Bunter had rescued him.

Bob had no choice about believing that, amazing as it was. He was so astounded at the bare idea that he blinked and blinked, and even wondered whether he was dreaming.

But there it was!

"Dash it all!" said Bunter. "I couldn't see you smashed to pieces, could I, old chap?"

"You—you!" murmured Bob. He pressed his hand to his aching, throbbing head. "I—I can't understand it!"

"Why not?" asked Bunter hotly. "You know I've got heaps of pluck! Why, I've told you so lots of times!"

Bob grinned faintly.

"At first," said Bunter, "when I saw you go over the edge, I was struck with horror. Then I rushed forward at top speed—"

"At top speed!" gasped Bob.

"Well, fairly quickly," said Bunter. "Throwing myself on my face, I crawled to the edge, and looked over. There you were, lying on the ledge, with your eyes upturned to the unseeing skies—"

"Wha-a-at!"

"I—I mean—" Bunter stammered. Feeling that it was a dramatic subject, Bunter was growing eloquent—a little too eloquent, perhaps. "I—I mean, you were lying there with your eyes shut. Springing down to the ledge beside you, I—"

"You jumped down to it!" gasped Bob.

"Yes, rather!"

"I should have thought you'd have climbed down jolly carefully!" said Bob, eyeing him in amazement.

"No fear—not my style!" said Bunter. "There wasn't a second to lose! I jumped down!"

"My hat!"

"Seizing you in my arms, I raised you up!"

"You raised me up!" ejaculated Bob.

"You! You couldn't do it!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Keep to the facts, kid!" said Bob gently. "You seem to have saved me somehow! But how did you do it?"

Billy Bunter was puzzled himself for a moment. That he could not have raised Bob Cherry from the ledge, as Lee had done, was obvious. How Lee had done it was a mystery to Bunter. But he had to explain, and he did his best.

"You see, at that moment I seemed to have a giant's strength," said

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Bunter. "At ordinary times I couldn't lift you. But seeing you in such fearful danger, I made a great effort."

"You must have!" said the amazed Bob.

"How I did it I hardly know," said Bunter. "But I did—you can see that for yourself."

"Ye-es; I—I suppose so."

"I jammed you up the cliff," said Bunter. "Pushed you up, you know, a bit at a time, till I pushed you right up on the path."

"I—I suppose it's possible!" murmured Bob.

"Possible! I did it!"

"Yes; I suppose you must have."

"Well, I like that! I'm accustomed to ingratitude!" said Bunter bitterly. "But when I've risked my life for you, I think that's a bit thick."

"I'm not ungrateful, kid!" said Bob; "only I—I'm astonished! I'd never have imagined you could do such a thing!"

"Well, at ordinary times I couldn't," said Bunter. "How I did it I hardly know, as I've told you. But I did it. I was determined to do it—to—to save your life, you know. I shoved you up on to the path somehow, and crawled up after you. Then I think I fainted!" added Bunter, feeling that there was an opening here for a dramatic climax.

"No wonder!" said Bob.

"Only for a minute, though," said Bunter. "Then I sat up and watched you. I've been watching you ever since, like a—a brother—"

"Thanks, old fellow!" said Bob, passing his hand dazedly across his brow. "I—I can't understand how you ever did it, but I'm no end obliged to you. You must have more pluck than I ever thought."

"Oh, it was nothing!" said Bunter airily. "Any fellow would have done it—any fellow with my boundless courage, I mean, of course!"

Bob Cherry staggered to his feet, with a helping hand from Bunter. Billy Bunter was taking quite a kindly interest in him now—having saved his life at terrible risk. Bunter, with his wonderful imaginative powers, was already beginning to believe that he had saved Bob Cherry's life.

"Have a tart, old chap!" he said. "I've got three left."

"Thanks, no!" said Bob.

"They're nice!" said Bunter. "You can have one."

Bob shook his head. He was in no mood for tarts, even fat and juicy ones like Bunter's.

"I—I'd better be getting back to the school," he said. "Ow! How my head aches!"

"I'll help you!" said Bunter. "Wait a minute till I've finished the tarts. Sha'n't be a tick!"

Bob leaned against the cliff, and waited till the three jam-tarts were disposed of. They did not take Bunter long. Then the fat junior jumped up briskly.

"Ready!" he said. "I say, Bob, old chap, you can't walk to the school—you're done in! We'll get along to Pegg, and hire the trap at the Anchor. I'll pay for it!"

"I think we'd better have the trap," assented Bob. "I'll pay, though!"

"Not at all; I won't let you!" said Bunter. "After saving your life, I'm going to look after you. I insist!"

"All right!" said Bob with a grin.

He was quite well aware of the identity of the individual who would have to pay for the trap, in spite of Bunter's generous insistence.

The trial in the dormitory and the verdict of the court—

The two juniors started along the cliff-path, Bunter kindly lending Bob an arm to lean on occasionally. Bob, usually so sturdy and strong, was feeling weak and flabby, and utterly "rotten." His damaged knee pained; he was badly shaken all over, and he had an ache in his bruised head that was inexpressible.

He really needed assistance as he walked unsteadily away, and was glad of such help as Bunter could give him.

The two juniors reached Pegg at last, after a rough tramp that was a long-drawn-out horror to Bob. The trap was obtained at the Anchor, and Bob sank into it in an almost fainting state.

Bunter sat beside him.

"Cheer up!" he said. "Pull yourself together! You're not hurt, you know. I should stand a knock like that without much fuss."

Bob Cherry made no reply to that. Bunter had saved his life, to all intents and purposes—running fearful risks to do so. Bob wanted to feel kind and grateful. He was quite ashamed of wanting to kick Bunter just then.

But he did want to kick him. Bunter's bright and entertaining conversation often had that effect upon fellows.

He did not kick him, however. He sat silent during the drive to Greyfriars, enduring the bright conversation of his gallant rescuer with all the fortitude he could muster.

The trap stopped at the school gates.

"Let the man drive on to the House," said Bob.

Bunter shook his head.

Bunter had planned a little scene in his fat mind—of the suffering youth staggering into the quad, leaning on the shoulder of his gallant rescuer. Bunter was not to be deprived of his little scene.

Consideration for the sufferer was quite a secondary matter.

"Oh, let's get down here!" said Bunter. "Don't be soft!"

Bob suppressed his feelings. Bunter jumped down, and helped him from the trap.

"I'll pay the man here!" said Bunter, feeling in his pockets. "It's five bob. My hat! I've got no money with me. Lend me five bob, Cherry."

"Right-ho!"

"Better give the man a tip," said Bunter. "Make it six."

"All right."

Six shillings passed into Bunter's fat hand, and he paid and tipped the driver with a flourish. As a rule, Bunter did not bestow tips. But circumstances alter cases; Bunter was always ready to be free-handed with other people's resources.

"Now, take my arm, old chap!" said Bunter, as the trap drove away from the gates.

"I can walk all right," said Bob.

"Lean on my shoulder!" urged Bunter.

"I'm all right, I tell you!" Bob Cherry did not share Bunter's taste for little scenes in the slightest degree.

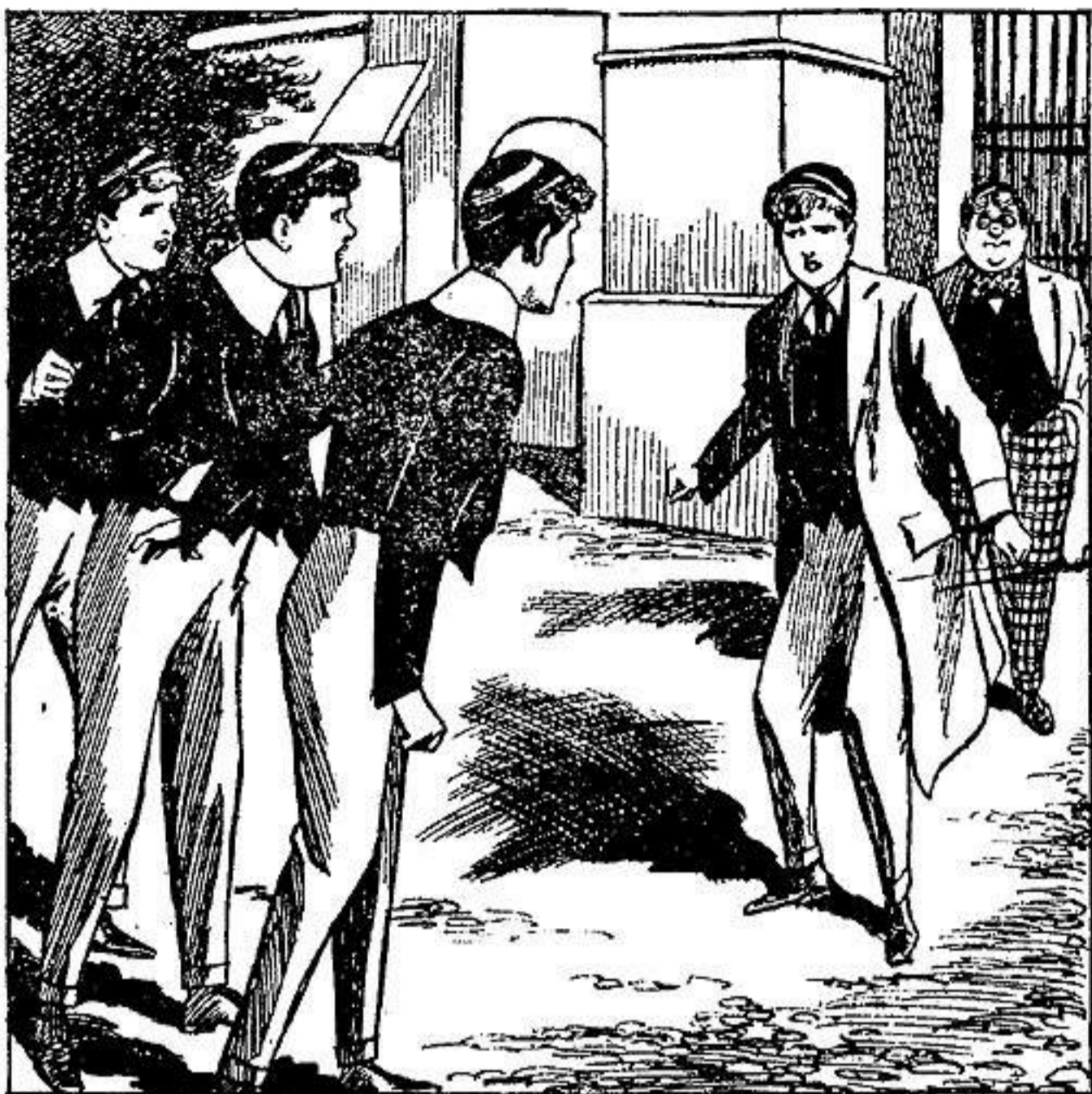
"Look here," said Bunter warmly, "I've saved your life! I owe you six bob for the trap I've brought you home in. You're in my hands. I don't expect gratitude, but there's such a thing as being decent. Lean on my shoulder, and I'll help you in."

Bob went in unsteadily at the gates, heedless of Bunter. The fat junior tottered after him.

"Look here, Cherry——"

"Hallo, Bob!" Harry Wharton came across the quad at a run. "Bob, old chap, what's the trouble?"

And he caught his chum's arm.



"Look here," said Bunter warmly. "I've saved your life. Lean on my shoulder and I'll help you in!" Bob Cherry limped in at the gates, heedless of Bunter. "Look here, Cherry——" "Hallo, Bob!" Harry Wharton & Co. came across the quad at a run. "Bob, old chap, what's the trouble?" (Chapter 4.)

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Doubting Thomases!

HARRY WHARTON looked at Bob in amazement and alarm. Bob's ruddy face was white, and lined with pain. He looked like anything but his usual cheery, sunny self.

"It's all right!" said Bob thickly. "I've had a knock. Nothing to make a song about. Let's get in."

"Tea's ready in the study," said Harry. "But——"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Come on, Bunter!" said Bob with an effort. "I—I say, Harry, do you mind if Bunter comes to tea?"

"Not at all, if you want him!"

"Come on, then, Bunter!"

"Hold on a minute!" said Bunter coolly. He assumed an air of reflection. "Let's see—I've been asked to tea by a chap in the Fifth——"

"Oh! Another time, then," said Bob.

"But I can put him off," said Bunter calmly. "Then there's Temple of the Fourth—he's rather expecting me——"

"All right——"

"But I'll give Temple a miss," said Bunter. "Dash it all, I'll come to tea with you, as I've saved your life!"

And Bunter came.

His last words made Harry Wharton look from one to the other in amazement.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Let's get in," said Bob. "I'll tell you later."

"Right-ho!"

Wharton piloted Bob Cherry to the

School House. What had happened was a mystery to him; but he could see that Bob had had a terrible shock of some kind.

"I've got a thundering hump on my head," said Bob. "I think I'll drop in and see the House-dame. I'll come up to the study in a few minutes. Take Bunter."

"All serene!"

Bob Cherry went to Mrs. Keble's quarters to seek that good dame's skilled advice and help, and Harry Wharton proceeded to the Remove passage, with Bunter at his heels. Bob had not even asked the result of the Redclyffe match; a sure proof that he was not quite himself.

Tea was ready in Study No. 1, and Harry Wharton & Co. had turned up after the visit to Redclyffe with keen appetites. But they had waited tea for Bob.

"Hasn't he come in yet?" asked Frank Nugent, looking up with a ruddy face from the fire, where he was making stacks of toast.

"Yes, he's come in," said Harry. "He'll be along in a few minutes. Something seems to have happened."

"Roll that fat frog out!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"The bootfulness is the proper caper, in my esteemed and ridiculous opinion," remarked Hurree Singh.

"Look here——" roared Bunter.

"Hold on; Bunter's a giddy guest!" said Wharton hastily. "Something seems to have happened to Bob, with Bunter mixed up in it. Blessed if I know

—is a specially dramatic scene from "Straight as a Die!"—next Monday!

what; but poor old Bob looked awfully sick!"

"I should think so!" said Bunter. "So would you be if you'd fallen over the Seagull Cliff, and stunned yourself!"

"What?" gasped Wharton.

"Draw it mild!" said Nugent. "Fellow who fell over the Seagull Cliff would be as dead as a doornail!"

"Not if a fellow was by to save his life," said Bunter loftily. "Not that I'm going to brag about it. That's not my style. I never was a fellow to brag, as you all know!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"But facts are facts!" said Bunter, apparently forgetful of the facts. "Facts speak for themselves. A fellow who goes over the Seagull Cliff for a pal——"

"You did?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Little me!" said Bunter with a fat smirk.

"You fat ass!"

"Look here, Bull——"

"Try to stick to the truth, or within a few yards of it, Bunter!" urged Nugent. "Has Bob taken a tumble?"

"He fell on the ledge over the cliff!" roared Bunter. "I jumped after him——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"At the risk of my life——"

"Go it!" chortled Nugent.

"The danger was fearful——"

"Must have been awful!" grinned Nugent. "I've had nightmares like that myself, after a heavy supper."

"Nightmares!" yelled Bunter.

"Yes; you mean that you dreamed it, don't you?"

"No, I don't!" shrieked the Owl of the Remove in great indignation. "It actually happened. Regardless of the fearful peril, I leaped into the yawning chasm——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Enough to make a chasm, or anything else, yawn, a yarn like that!" said Johnny Bull. "Pile it on!"

"Seizing Bob Cherry, I lifted him——"

"Lifted him!"

"High in the air——"

"Oh crumbs!"

"And hurled him to safety above——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Remove fairly roared. The idea of Billy Bunter hurling Bob Cherry anywhere was too much for them. They shrieked.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Go it!" sobbed Nugent. "Stack it on!"

"Having saved his life——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you, that having saved his life——"

"Oh, don't!" gasped Johnny Bull, wiping his eyes.

"I tell you," shrieked Bunter, "having shaved his wife—I mean, having saved his life, I——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The study door was pushed open, and Bob Cherry came in. He was still pale. He seemed surprised by the merriment in Study No. 1.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, what's the jolly old joke?" he inquired.

"Bunter!" gasped Wharton. "He's been telling us——"

"How he saved your life——"

"At fearful risk——"

"In terrific dangerousness——"

"Tell Bob himself, Bunter!" urged Nugent. "It will cheer him up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on!" said Bob Cherry quietly. "It's true!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Plucky Bunter!

"TRUE!"

Harry Wharton & Co. repeated the word blankly. They stared at Bob Cherry, as he dropped into a chair.

Billy Bunter gave a fat chuckle.

"I told you so!" he remarked.

"True!" said Wharton dazedly.

"What did I tell you?" demanded Bunter. "I say, Bob, old chap, these rotters don't believe me. Fancy ragging a chap after he's saved your life at fearful risk!"

"You haven't!" roared Johnny Bull.

Bunter pointed a fat forefinger at Bob.

"Ask him!" he said triumphantly.

"Bob, old man——"

"It's true," said Bob. "I slipped on the path along the Seagull Cliff and went over the edge."

"Good heavens!" said Wharton, his face paling.

"I dropped on the ledge—you know that ledge," said Bob. "It's near where Redwing climbed once. I knocked my head, and never knew anything more till I came to——"

"On the ledge?" said Nugent, with a shudder.

"No; on the path. Bunter was with me—nobody else. And he told me——"

Bob hesitated. "I know it sounds thick, you fellows. Nobody would have imagined it, of Bunter——"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"But he did it," said Bob. "It must have been jolly near a miracle, his getting me up over the path from the ledge. I could have done it with a fellow, I think; but how Bunter managed it beats me. But he did—and that's all there is about it. He saved my life."

"Impossible!" gasped Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"He did," said Bob. "There was nobody in sight—only us two there when I came to. It was Bunter."

"But—but—but he couldn't!" said Wharton in bewilderment. "He wouldn't have the nerve to go near the edge at all."

"Looks as if I had!" sneered Bunter.

"Speak for yourself, Wharton. You wouldn't have had the nerve, I dare say. It was practically nothing to me. With my dauntless courage——"

"Your whatter?" stuttered Johnny Bull.

"My dauntless courage!" hooted Bunter. "With my dauntless courage, it was practically nothing to me!"

"Oh, my sainted aunt!"

"Bob can tell you what happened," said Bunter with dignity. "I'm not going to say a word about it myself. I disdain to do so. It's not for me to boast. I leave the facts to speak for me. If you can make out that I didn't show wonderful courage——"

"You did," said Bob Cherry. He glanced round at his chums. "It beats me, you chaps. But, as Bunter says, facts are facts. Bunter must have run frightful risks in getting over the cliff after me."

"He didn't do it!" growled Johnny Bull.

"He did, old chap!"

"Sure there was nobody else there?" asked Frank.

"Quite!"

"Perhaps some chap came along, and pulled you up, and cleared off?" said Johnny Bull.

"Is that likely?"

"Well, no, it's not likely," admitted Johnny. "But it's more dashed likely

than that Bunter showed any pluck. He's got about as much pluck as a bunny-rabbit."

Billy Bunter walked to the door. He turned there, and blinked at the Famous Five through his big spectacles with lofty dignity, and an expression more of sorrow than of anger.

"That's done it!" he said. "I've saved Bob Cherry's life, at the risk of my own! I'm insulted in this study by Bob Cherry's friends. I'm going!"

He laid a fat paw on the door-knob.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Bob.

Billy Bunter, as a matter of fact, had not the remotest intention of abandoning the appetising spread that was on the table. But he shook his head loftily.

"I'm not staying here to be insulted!" he said. "If these fellows care to apologise for their low suspicions——"

"Come back, fatty!" said Wharton with an effort. "If Bob says so, I suppose it's true. Couldn't help being surprised, you know!"

"The surprisingness was terrific!" purred the Nabob of Bhanipur. "But now that the esteemed factfulness is clear, the admirableness of the ridiculous Bunter is a boot on the other leg."

"Sorry, old fat bean!" said Frank Nugent. "You shouldn't spring these sudden surprises on a fellow, you know."

Johnny Bull did not speak. It seemed impossible to doubt, in the circumstances, but Johnny was not convinced. However, he remained silent.

Bunter came back to the tea-table graciously.

"Well, if you fellows put it like that——" he said.

"We do!" said Wharton solemnly.

"The putfulness is exactly like that, my esteemed ludicrous Bunter!"

"Your apologies are accepted!" said Bunter with dignity. "A fellow doesn't like having his word doubted. It wouldn't hurt you fellows so much, of course; but you know how particular I am in such matters."

"Oh dear!"

"Try those eggs, and the ham, Bunter," said Nugent.

"Thanks; I will!"

For once, William George Bunter was a guest of honour in Study No. 1. The chums of the Remove were amazed—they couldn't help that. But if Bunter had shown pluck—if he had saved the life of their chum—they were prepared to honour Bunter without limit. And surely Bob Cherry should have known the facts! Billy Bunter enjoyed that spread.

The very best morsels were passed to Bunter—plenty of them—and he dealt with them all in the most efficient way.

His fat face became bright and shiny, and gradually his breathing grew a little laboured; but he kept on gallantly till there was not a crumb left.

Bob Cherry spoke little. He was not feeling quite himself yet. But Billy Bunter talked enough for three or four—although his fat jaws were very active otherwise. And the burden of Bunter's song was the amazing courage of Bunter, and the generous devotion that was his distinguishing trait.

Bunter rose at last, apparently with some little difficulty.

"Thanks for the feed, you fellows!" he said. "I'll stand you one when my postal-order comes. By the way, I owe Bob Cherry six shillings that I paid for the trap to bring him home."

"Never mind that!" said Bob.

"But I do mind!" said Bunter firmly. "I'm rather particular in money matters. After saving Cherry's life, I can't remain

Billy Bunter's understudying of Ananias excels anything he has ever done!

in his debt. I suppose you could lend me the six shillings to settle, Wharton?"

"Blest if I can see that it matters whether you owe it to Bob or to me," said Harry.

"It does matter. There's such a thing as delicacy," said Bunter with a fine touch of scorn. "Of course, if you don't care to lend me the six bob—"

"Here it is!" said Harry.

He handed over six shillings, and the Owl of the Remove turned to Bob Cherry.

"I'm ready to settle, Bob, old chap. You mentioned that you preferred to pay for the trap, of course—"

"I'm paying for it."

"Well, I don't want to argue with you after saving your life," said Bunter. "If you really prefer to pay for it—"

"Yes," grunted Bob.

"Very well, I'll let you have your way." Bunter slipped the six shillings into his pocket. "I don't owe you anything, then?"

"Nothing!"

"That's settled. I suppose it will be all right if I let you have this six bob back out of my next postal-order, Wharton?"

"What?"

"I'm expecting a postal-order shortly—from a titled relation. I'll square the six bob then. Ta-ta!"

And William George Bunter rolled out of Study No. 1, leaving the Famous Five blinking.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Prep Under Difficulties!

JIM LEE knitted his brows in sheer worry. It was time for prep, and that evening the Remove had to "prepare" a section of the second book of the *Aeneid*. And it came back into Jim's mind that he had left his Virgil lying on the cliff above the path, two or three miles away from Greyfriars.

In the excitement of the rescue of Bob Cherry, and in his hurried departure afterwards, Jim had forgotten all about the volume he had dropped there. It was, of course, useless to think of recovering it till the following day. The school gates were locked at dark, and going out again meant breaking bounds, even if there had been any chance of picking up the lost volume on the cliff, which there was not.

To any other fellow at Greyfriars the loss of P. Virgilius Maro would have presented no difficulties at all. Any other junior would have borrowed another fellow's Virgil, or worked at it along with him.

But it was different with the self-made outcast.

There was not a single fellow in the Remove, or out of it, with whom Jim Lee was even on speaking terms. He answered when he was spoken to, and that was all. He never volunteered a remark of his own. Fellows who would have been kind enough to the new fellow had been severely repulsed for their pains, and they repaid that cavalier treatment with deep dislike, which was natural enough.

There was no fellow whom Lee cared to ask for the loan of the book. But without a copy of the great Mantuan he could not get on with his Latin prep. Apparently he would have to "chance it with Quelch" in the morning,

as slackers like Skinner & Co. often did.

Lee was a conscientious fellow, and he liked to do the work he was supposed to do, and to do it well. He sat in the Form-room, knitting his brows, in a state of worry. He was not enlivened by the sound of rain pattering on the window-panes. It reminded him of his Virgil lying on the cliff, and he wondered what state the book would be in by the morrow. He thought of going up to his study and making an effort to ask Russell or Ogilvy to lend him a book. They did not like him, and had turned him out of the study, but either of them would have done him that small favour quite cheerfully. But he felt that he could not ask. He could not in that way bridge the gulf he had deliberately set between himself and the other fellows in the Remove.

He turned out the light in the Form-room, and left it at last. There was nothing to do there, as he could not do his prep, and it was cold. He moved along towards the Common-room, where there was a fire, and his name was called in the corridor.

"Lee!"

It was the Remove master's voice. Jim turned round.

"Yes, sir?"

Mr. Quelch eyed him rather keenly. He was not so unaware as Jim supposed of the boy's strange isolation in his Form, though he was very far from guessing the reason of it.

Probably Mr. Quelch attributed the

boy's solitary ways to some unaccountable shyness, which had prevented him from shaking down in his place like any other new fellow who had been a few weeks at the school.

"You should be at your preparation now, Lee," said Mr. Quelch in quite a kindly tone.

"Ycs, sir," said Lee.

"I have observed that you sometimes do your preparation in the Form-room, Lee. What is your reason?"

"I—I'd rather, sir."

"I hope you have no serious disagreement with your study-mates, Lee?"

"Oh, no, sir! They're both good fellows," said Lee. "I—I don't exactly get on with them, but it's all right."

"I believe Ogilvy and Russell are sometimes a little noisy," said Mr. Quelch with a smile. "Perhaps you find it quieter in the Form-room?"

"Oh, yes, sir; that is so!"

"I am glad to see that you are a studious boy, Lee. I have been very pleased with your work," said Mr. Quelch. "But you must not overdo this. I am sorry you do not join in the games with the other boys."

Lee was silent.

"But why are you not at preparation now, Lee?"

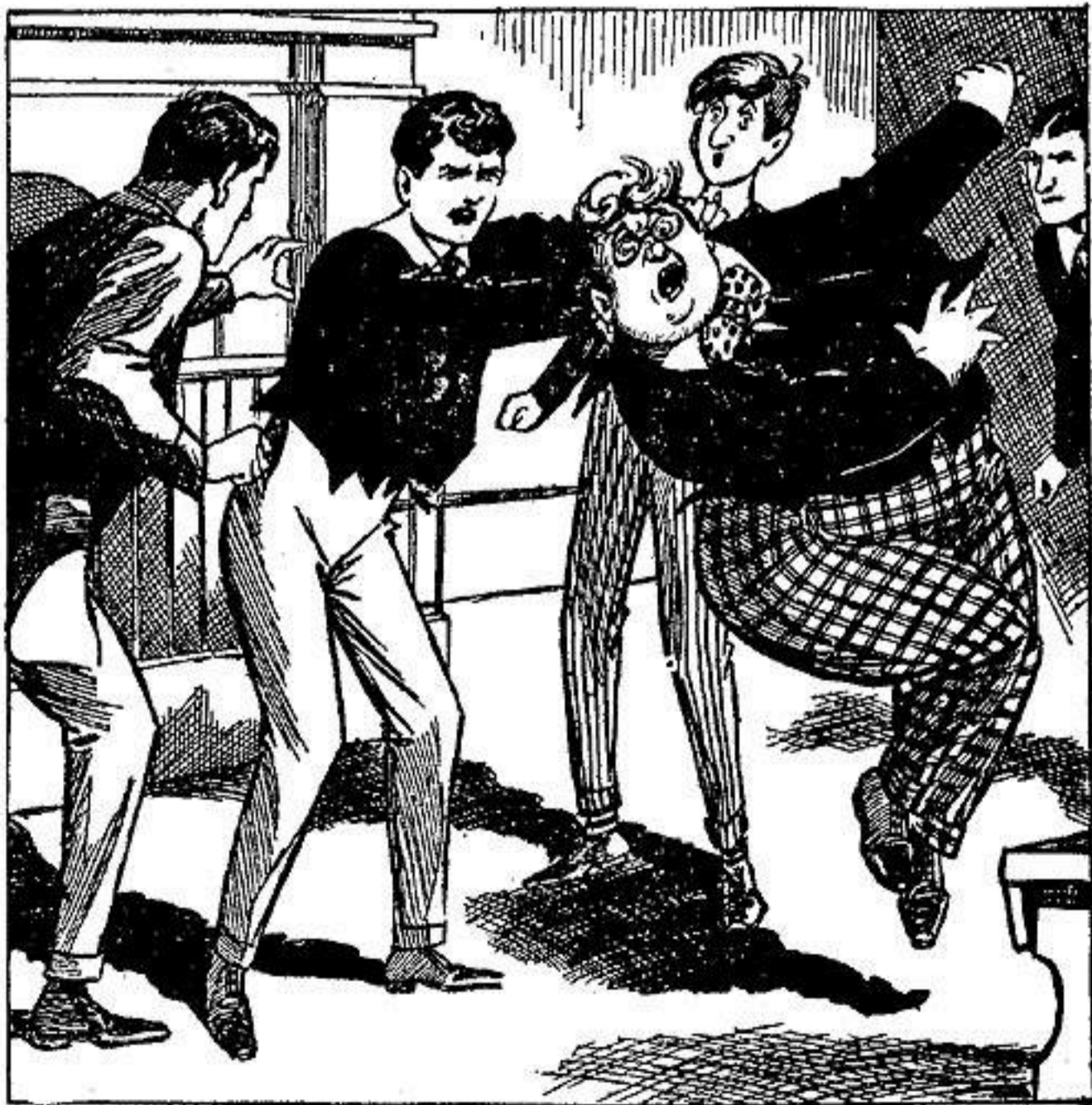
"I—I've lost my Virgil, sir," stammered Lee.

Mr. Quelch raised his eyebrows.

"Surely another lad would let you see his book?"

"I—I suppose so, sir, if—if I asked him."

"Come, come," said Mr. Quelch



"Yah! You can ask Bob!" howled Bunter. "He will tell you how I saved his life at the risk of my own—Oh! Yooop!" The Owl broke off with a terrific roar as Jim Lee, his face blazing with anger and scorn, came striding through the crowd of juniors and seized him by the collar. (See Chapter 8.)

Will Ulick Driver prevail, or will Lee beat him at his own game?

good-humouredly, "this is absurd, Lee! You have had some little dispute with your study-mates, and you do not care to ask them so slight a favour. Pride is all very well, my boy. One should be chary of asking favours. But pride should not be carried to the length of sullenness. Come with me!"

Mr. Quelch turned towards the staircase.

Jim Lee's heart sank; but he followed his Form master. He had no choice about that.

Mr. Quelch ascended to the Remove passage, with the troubled junior at his heels.

He tapped on the door of Study No. 3. Mr. Quelch had tact. He realised the great truth that an Englishman's house is his castle, and that a school-boy's study is his castle likewise. Always Mr. Quelch tapped at a study door before entering, even in the Lower Fourth.

"Come in, fathead!" called out Russell's voice.

Mr. Quelch coughed slightly as he pushed open the door. Russell and Ogilvy jumped up in alarm as they saw who their visitor was.

"Oh, sir!" gasped Russell. "I—I didn't know—I didn't mean— Oh, my only hat!"

Mr. Quelch apparently did not hear.

"Come in, Lee!" he said.

Jim Lee followed him into the study. Russell and Ogilvy exchanged a quick look. Their natural supposition was that Lee had complained to the Form-master about being turned out of his study, and that Mr. Quelch had come to reinstate him with the high hand of authority. Resistance on the part of the chums of Study No. 3 was impossible. They could only resolve to make Lee "sit up" for it afterwards.

But Mr. Quelch's next words undeceived them. It became clear that the Remove master knew nothing of Lee having been evicted.

"Lee has lost his Virgil," said Mr. Quelch with a benignant smile at the two juniors. "No doubt one of you will allow him to see your book."

"Oh—oh, yes, sir!" gasped Russell. "Certainly!"

"Lee seems to have been diffident about asking," said Mr. Quelch. "Lee is new among us, and I am sure that boys who have been longer here will take a little trouble to make a new boy feel more at home."

"We—we—" stammered Ogilvy.

Mr. Quelch, with a gracious nod, quitted the study, leaving the three juniors standing and looking at one another, awkwardly enough. Mr. Quelch's impression was that he had broken the ice, so to speak, and given the trio a chance to make up any slight difference that had arisen, probably founded on the new boy's shyness. It was a kind thought and a kind action, though it was useless in the circumstances. Poor Lee was in deeper waters than his Form master dreamed.

"So you've lost your giddy old Virgil?" said Russell, breaking the rather grim silence.

"Yes," muttered Lee.

"Well, you could have asked for a squint at mine, couldn't you?"

"I—I suppose so."

"Wouldn't ask—eh?" said Ogilvy.

No answer.

"Look here, you're a funny animal!" said Russell. "But if you've lost a book,

we'll help you to look for it. Where did you lose it?"

"Out of doors," said Lee briefly.

"Oh! Can't be looked for, then! Mean to say that you take Virgil out on walks?" demanded Russell.

"Yes."

"Don't you have enough of the mouldy rot in the Form-room?"

Lee smiled faintly, but did not speak.

"Well, here's mine!" said Russell. "I'm working at it. Squat down. Mind, this doesn't mean that we let you back into the study!"

"No fear!" said Ogilvy.

"I understand that," said Lee patiently. "I shouldn't have come, if Mr. Quelch hadn't brought me here."

"I thought at first you'd sneaked to Quelch about us turning you out. If you had, we'd have scalped you!" said Russell.

"Bald-headed!" said Ogilvy.

"Well, I haven't!" said Lee, avoiding discussion of the terrible happenings that would have followed such an action. "I—I—I'm sorry to bother you, but if you'll let me see the page—"

"Here you are!" said Russell. "You can sit down, bless you! In fact, you can help me a bit; you know this rot better than I do. Begin here at *conticuero omnes*—might tell a fellow what it means!"

"*Conticuero omnes*," said Ogilvy. "Doesn't that mean that they all shut up?"

"I dare say it does. But, if Lee's going to be here, he can construe, and we'll take it down," said Russell. "No need for us all to work, that I can see. Lee likes it, don't you, Lee?"

"I don't dislike it," said Lee.

"Then go ahead!"

Jim Lee went ahead. Two cheery youths listened to him in great spirits, and Lee did most of the prep for three; a very satisfactory arrangement to Russell and Ogilvy, though perhaps not the best method of acquiring knowledge.

When the required section had been "prepared" in this way, Lee rose to his feet to go. Russell gave Ogilvy a look.

"Look here," he murmured, "we might—"

"We might—" said Ogilvy, who also was feeling a little conscience-smitten about turning the new junior out of his quarters.

"Dash it all, if the fellow tries to behave a little less like a sulky bear—" went on Russell.

"If he does," agreed Ogilvy.

"Try it on, Lee, and you can stay in the study!" said Dick Russell. "There!"

"I'm agreeable!" said Ogilvy. "Let's try it!"

The two juniors never knew how gladly, how eagerly, Jim Lee would have accepted that olive-branch; how cheerily he would have jumped at the chance, but for the black shadow of Ulick Driver that hung over him, and darkened his young life. It was what he longed for; but it was not for him. Lonely and unhappy, he had to go on the way he had marked out for himself—the lonely path of duty.

He shook his head.

"You don't want to stay?" exclaimed Russell in amazement.

"I'm going, anyhow!" muttered Lee.

"Look here, I tell you you can stay if you like!"

"And I tell you I'm going!"

And Jim Lee went, with an erect head, a calm face; but a heart that was heavy as lead. Russell breathed hard as the door closed behind him.

"Jevver see such a Hun?" he said.

"Jevver see such—such a real, live, bristling pig?"

"Never!" said Ogilvy. "Let's go after him and bump him!"

"Oh, let the rotter go!" said Russell. "But if he puts his cheeky nose in this study again, I'll jolly well twist it for him, I know that!"

"Same here!" said Ogilvy heartily.

In all the Remove studies there was dislike for the schoolboy hermit; but it was probably in Study No. 3 that that dislike reached its culminating point.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Story!

"SILLY rot!"

That was Bolsover major's opinion.

"It's true!" yelled Bunter.

"Rubbish!"

"Ask Bob Cherry!" exclaimed Bunter with great indignation.

"Sha'n't take the trouble! What's the good of asking a chap whether you're telling the truth, when we know you're not?"

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

"You should pitch your yarn in a rather lower key, old fat tulip," said Skinner, shaking his head. "Now, do you seriously think any fellow is going to believe that you've got as much pluck as a white rabbit? Be serious!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jim Lee heard the talk and the laughter of the Remove fellows, as he came into the Common-room. Nobody glanced at Lee as he came in; and he went quietly to a seat by the fire with a book in his hand. There was no one for him to chat with; he was as solitary in the crowded Common-room as in the deserted Form-room. He found a resource in reading, and he had obtained the "Holiday Annual" from the school library, and brought it with him to read by the fire. He gave no heed to the talk and laughter of the group surrounding Billy Bunter, though he could not help hearing it.

Billy Bunter had been "telling the tale" in the Common-room on the look-out for a little more glory. Bunter was not in the least disposed to understudy the gentleman who hid his light under a bushel. Bunter was more disposed to proclaim his uncommon qualities from the house-tops. A deed of great courage had been done, and Bunter had, as it were, found it going begging, and bagged it. Naturally he wanted to get all the limelight that it could afford him.

Unfortunately, he found no believers. If Bunter had told the Remove fellows that he had run away from a danger, they would have believed him, in spite of his reputation as an Ananias. But this was altogether too "thick"; Bunter as a hero—Bunter risking his fat carcass for the sake of another fellow, wanted some swallowing.

So, instead of exclamations of surprise and admiration, there were only unbelieving cackles from the Removites.

It was in vain that Bunter asseverated: the juniors only laughed the louder, while Bunter blinked at them with wrathful indignation.

Skinner, the humorist, held up his hand for silence.

"Let's have this clear!" he said. "You were on the cliff-path this afternoon eating tarts—"

"Yes," growled Bunter.

"We believe that much!" said Skinner.

(Continued on page 17.)

Why don't you have a shot at the Greyfriars Parliament?



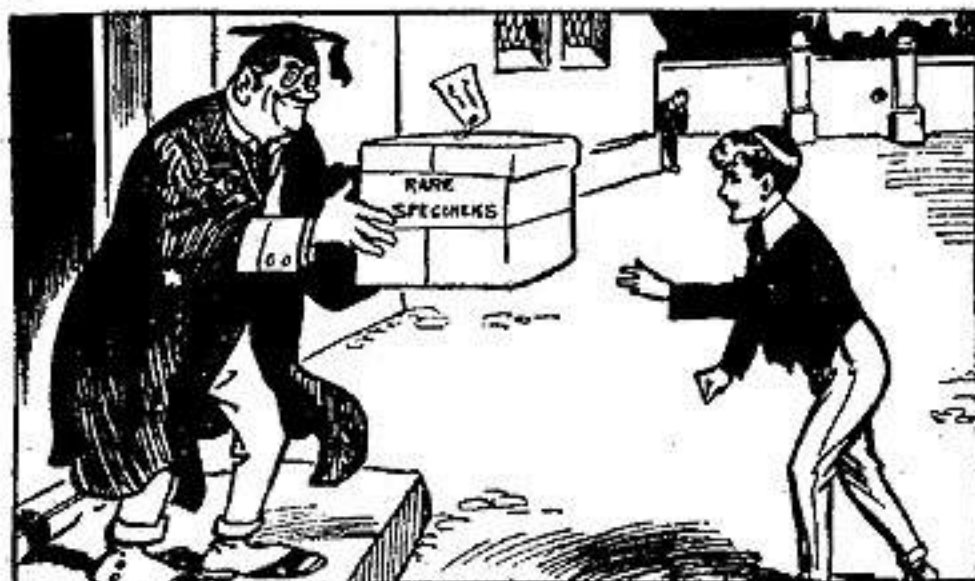
The GREYFRIARS HERALD

Harry Wharton
Editor

Supplement No. 110. Week Ending February 3rd, 1923.

A SHOCKING AFFAIR!

Sketches by Mr. C. H. Chapman.
Libretti by Tom Brown.



1. "Ha, come hither, sweet lad!" quoth Mr. Miggles, the naturalist of St. Bingo's. "Get thee hence with these specimens to the shop, where they will be bottled for the sake of posterity!" "Right, sir!" said Johnny Joggs.



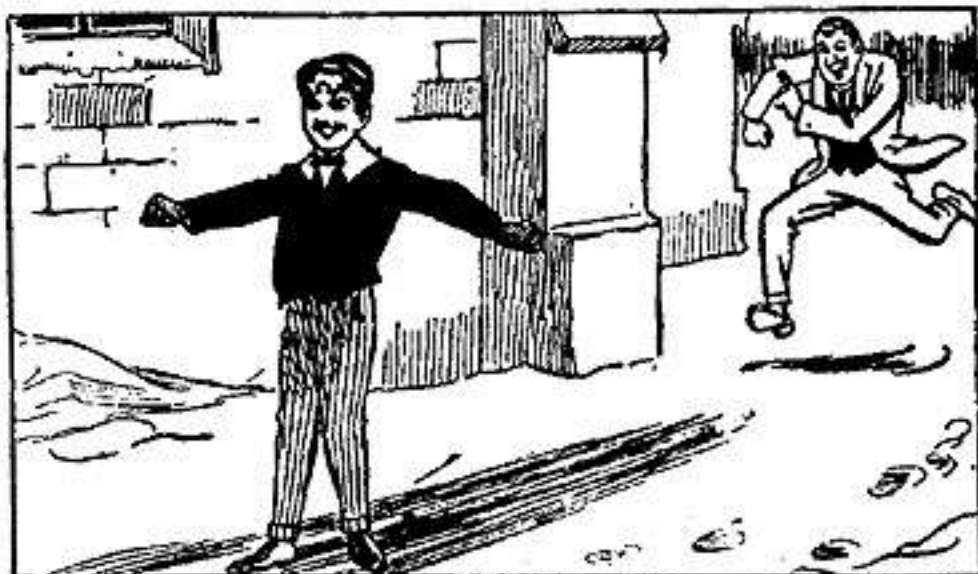
2. But Johnny Joggs had not proceeded so very far before the burly Billy Bullin crept up. "How dare you have a box of tuck, when I haven't any?" he snapped. "Take this!" And he punched out, catching poor Johnny one on the cheek.



3. Johnny hustled to one side, and watched for the shock which was coming to Billy Bullin. It came all right! For when Billy opened the box, out jumped about ninety-nine animated earwigs. "Whoooch!" howled Billy Bullin. "Turn out the fire brigade!"

TIMOTHY TICKLE WAS TICKLED!

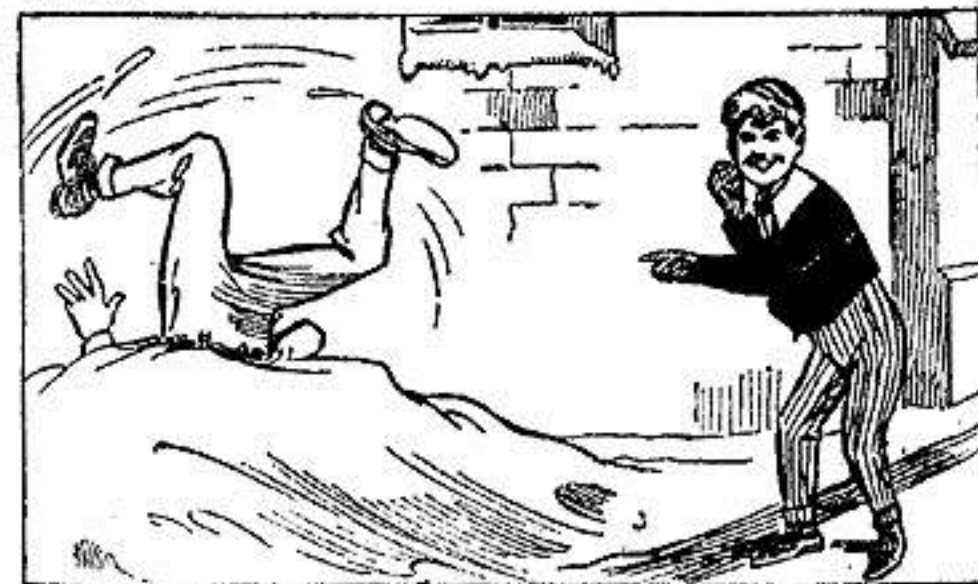
Sketches by Mr. C. H. Chapman.
Libretti by Tom Brown.



1. Timothy Tickle was enjoying himself no end upon his slide when Freddy Faysake came hopping along. "Ha, ha!" wuffed Freddy. "Just watch me tickle up Timothy Tickle! Full speed ahead!" But Tickle had seen Freddy coming along.



2. "This is where I duck my little napper!" muttered Timothy, winking at the end of his nose. "Freddy Faysake will be pleased!" So Timothy suddenly ducked down—and, of course, Freddy went whirling!



3. "Ow! Wow! Yarooooooo!" wheezed the unfortunate Freddy. The next moment he had disappeared head first into the piled-up snow. "Somebody said that heap was snow use!" chuckled Tickle. "Here goes for another slide!"

Look out for our special "Form-room" supplement—next week!

OUR COMIC COLUMN!

By **BOB CHERRY.**

Have you heard the latest Limericks?
There was a young fellow named Stott
Who put a bent coin in the slot.
No chocolates were seen,
So he smashed the machine,
And promptly devoured all the lot!
After which—Master Stott caught it hot,
did he not?

There was a young fellow of Norwich
Who sampled at brekker some porwich.
The stuff was red-hot,
And he relished it not,
So he bundled it back in cold storwich!

Here are a few conundrums for you:
Why is Lord Mauleverer a lazy old
"top"?
Because he toils not, neither does he
"spin."

Why is Harold Skinner always rolling
on the floor?
Because we can't "stand him."

Why was Harry Wharton alarmed?
Because the head of the Form saw the
form of the Head!

What would Tom Brown do if he were
imprisoned in the dark coal-cellar?
"Make light" of it!

Why is Temple of the Fourth im-
properly dressed?
Because he simply puts on an air.

Why is Billy Bunter a gifted musician?
Because he always buys his chocolate in
"bars"!

When will Gosling, the porter, go to
prison?
As soon as "locking-up time" comes!

What is the difference between Mrs.
Mimble and Billy Bunter?
One deals at the stores and the other
steal at the doors!

Who is the champion singer in the
Greyfriars Remove? This is rather a diffi-
cult question to answer. Johnny Bull can
bellow; Archie Howell can howl; and a
certain Chinese junior is handicapped by
having only Wun Lung. But you should
come and hear Hurree Singh!

How can it be truthfully stated that
Lord Mauleverer has emigrated?
Because Mauly is now in the land of
Nod!

A few "howlers" from Billy Bunter's
exercise book:

"The Spanish Armarder was sunk by
Admirable Nelson at the Battle of Jut-
land."

"Henry the Eighth had nine lives, and
he caused them all to be executed."

"William Rufus had red hare and a
red beard, and he was therefore known
as a King Beaver."

"Richard Cur de Lion was a great foot-
baller. He played for the Croosaders."

"It was King Alfred, and not Nero,
who fiddled about while the cakes were
burning."

EDITORIAL!



THIS week we are making quite a new departure.

I have long thought that a Special Comic Number, with two pages of funny pictures, would make a big hit. It would give our comic artists a chance to shine. They have been rather a long time in the background, but this week they give us a taste of their quality, and provide us with plenty of fun and merriment.

In addition to the comic pictures, we have some novel attractions.

Billy Bunter, as you probably know, is the founder and controller of a weird and wonderful concert-party, known as "Billy Bunter's Burlesques!"

They gave a performance last Saturday, and I have been able to publish a selection of items from their repertoire.

Bunter rather fancies himself in the role of actor-manager. On one never-to-be-forgotten occasion, he went "on the boards." I say never-to-be-forgotten, because Billy never lets us forget it!

"Billy Bunter's Burlesques,"

however, have not proved quite the super-attraction that their organiser hoped they would. There has been trouble in the family; and last Saturday's performance was brought to an untimely end by Bolsover major, one of the performers, running amok.

After singing his famous "fighting song," Bolsover felt so hungry for a scrap that he promptly pitched into the members of the company, and sent them howling from the stage!

Bob Cherry, always bubbling over with wit and humour, has given us a column of jokes; and Mark Linley's article, "The Comic Side of Football," will be read with expansive smiles.

Billy Bunter has just bounced into my study. He threatens me with all sorts of pains and penalties if I dare to publish an account of the performance of his Burlesques.

"That's my own affair, Wharton!" he exclaims. "And if it's going to be reported at all, it will be reported in the pages of my 'Weekly.' To which I retort: "Rats!"

Billy Bunter is getting so furious and violent that I fear I shall have to eject him. This is really the Fighting Editor's job, but the F. E. is at this moment engaged in writing a hundred lines for Quelchy, so I shall have to do his dirty work for him.

Excuse me a moment, dear readers—
Bump! Crash!
"Yarooooooh!"
Exit Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON.

THE COMIC SIDE OF FOOTBALL!

By **MARK LINLEY.**

FOOTBALL has its comic side. Dear me, yes! In fact, you can extract whole chunks of comedy from a football match, provided you've a sense of humour.

I think the funniest match I ever played in was when the Remove met the Upper Fourth in a "friendly."

Mr. Prout, finding himself at a loose end for the afternoon, offered to referee. Harry Wharton grew quite alarmed, and he hastily declined Prout's generous offer.

But the master of the Fifth insisted, so we lined up under his command.

Temple & Co. started off with a mighty rush, and in the excitement of the moment I handled the ball in the penalty area. The referee ignored the offence.

"Hands, there!" shouted Temple.
"Why all this commotion, Temple?" demanded Mr. Prout.

"Brown handled the ball, sir!"

"And quite right, too!" snapped Mr. Prout. "What do you suppose his hands are for, if not to handle the ball?"

Temple gave a gasp.
"The laws of football, sir," he began, "clearly lay it down—"

"I do not care a fig for the laws of football!" thundered Mr. Prout. "I shall control this game according to my own judgment!"

"My hat!"
We went on with the game, and presently Harry Wharton dashed through on his own and scored a grand goal. The ball struck the side of the upright, and cannoned into the net.

"Goal!" we shouted joyfully.
But Mr. Prout put a damper on our enthusiasm.

"Nonsense!" he said. "That was off-side!"

"What!" gasped Wharton in astonishment.

"The ball came off the side of the post," said Mr. Prout, "so it is clearly a case of 'off-side'!"

"Oh, my giddy aunt!"
Wharton nearly collapsed. And the spectators were in a state bordering on hysterics.

Shortly afterwards, the Upper Fourth attacked hotly, and Temple sent the ball crashing into the net.

"Perhaps you will say that wasn't a goal, sir?" he said bitterly.

"Indeed, it was not!" said Mr. Prout. "At any rate, I was not looking at the time, so if you really did score, I am sorry to say it does not count. Where are you going, Temple?"

"I'm fed-up!" snorted Temple, striding off the field. "We can't possibly play footer under these conditions!"

Mr. Prout fairly danced with wrath.

"Come back, boy!" he hooted.

"I think, sir," suggested Wharton meekly, "that we shall get on quite well without a referee. It's a shame to waste your valuable time, sir. Would you be good enough to retire, sir? I—I'm putting it as nicely as I can!"

Fortunately for both teams, Mr. Paul Pontifex Prout, snorting with indignation, turned and stalked away, leaving us to our own devices.

Have you won a prize in the Football Competition? Quite easy!



Billy Bunter's Burlesques!

Selections from their public performance, given in the Junior Common-room at Greyfriars, on Saturday evening last.

MEMBERS OF TROUPE:

- BILLY BUNTER *Player-Manager.*
- DICKY NUGENT *Light Comedian.*
- PERCY BOLSOVER *Heavy Comedian.*
- TROTTER (THE PAGE) *Recitations.*
- WUN LUNG *Pianist and Jazz Band Expert.*
- SAMMY BUNTER *Comic Songs.*

OPENING CHORUS: Ha, ha, ha! He, he, he!
Six jolly jaspers, boys, are we.
In mirth and merriment
We'll experiment,
Making you hold your sides with glee.
Ha, ha, ha! He, he, he!
Six silly songsters, boys, are we!

BILLY BUNTER: Not much of an audience this evening, you fellows! The free seats are all occupied, I notice, but the stalls and the dress circle and the pit are deserted. Our takings won't amount to more than fourpence.

SAMMY BUNTER:

Never mind, Billy! On with the merry concert! We work for Art's sake, we do, not for greed of gold!

BILLY:

Right you are, Sammy, boy! Sing up!

SAMMY (singing):

I'm thin as a rake, and no mistake,
I can't get fat at all;
Although on duff I sit and stuff
In the Greyfriars dining-hall.
I'm thin as a lath—no, thinner than that.
(Can anyone tell me the way to get fat?)

My playmates say I'm wasting away,
Yes, under their very eyes!
"You're as thin, you ass, as a blade of grass."
My major wildly cries.
I haven't the strength of a starving rat.
Can anyone tell me the way to get fat?

I'm a walking ghost, among a host
Of schoolboys strong and stout;
When the wild winds play, I am carried away
If I dare to venture out.
I shall soon expire, I tell you flat,
If nobody shows me the way to get fat!

BOLSOVER: You thin? Why, you're as fat as Henry the Eighth and Falstaff joined together!

SAMMY: Oh, really, Bolsover—

BILLY: Let's get on with the washing! Our next item will be a recitation by Trotter, the page.

TROTTER (recites): When first I come to Greyfriars School,
Says I to meself, says I,
You'll 'ave no work, you'll 'ave no fuss,
You'll lead a lazy existence, thus,
Like those wot stands at a terminus
Watchin' the trains go by!

But it's "Page! Page! Page!"
I've got it on the brain.
"Page! Page! Page!"
It's drivin' me insane.
I 'ave to work with all my might
For barely a livin' wage,
And I 'ear this cry from morn till night—
"Page! Page! Page!"

BILLY:

TROTTER:

DICKY NUGENT:

TROTTER:

DICKY:

BILLY:

BOLSOVER (singing):

I cleans three 'undred pairs o' boots
Before the mornin's dawn.
I never, never slacks nor shirks,
I never 'as time for smiles or snirks,
But like a nigger I always works
My fingers to the bone!

Oh, it's "Page! Page! Page!"
It dins into my ears.
"Page! Page! Page!"
It's drivin' me to tears.
My 'air is turnin' grey, although
I'm fourteen years of age;
An' still the voices come an' go—
"Page! Page! Page!"

Anybody would think you had a hard time of it, Trotter!

Well, so I do, Master Bunter! I'm 'ustled and 'arried until I 'ardly know whether I'm on me 'ead or me 'eels!

I say, Trotter, you've dropped something. Eh? Wot 'avo I dropped, Master Noogent?

Your nitches! (Laughter.)

Bolsover major will now sing his famous fighting song. Bring your jazz band into action, Wun Lung!

My name is Punching Percy,
And I punish without mercy.
Right and left my fists shoot out,
I simply love to clump and clout,
And all the fellows stand and shout,
"Three cheers for Punching Percy!"

Biff! Biff! Biff!
Thud! Thud! Thud!
In every lively tiff
I have my victim's blood.
If anyone wants to fight,
I'll take him on to-night!
I'll black his eyes, and punch his nose;
One to the jaw, then down he goes!
He'll never survive my hurricane blow—
Does anyone want to fight?

My name is Big Bolsover,
And really I'm in clover.
Opponents tumble on their backs
Before my resolute attacks,
And this is the cry that crowns my whacks:

"Three cheers for Big Bolsover!"
Whack! Whack! Whack!
Thump! Thump! Thump!
My victim, taken aback,
(Goes down with a mighty bump.
If anyone wants to scrap
I'll knock him off the map!
I'll punch him here, I'll punch him there,
I'll punch and pommel him everywhere,
And his fists will beat the empty air—

Does anyone want to scrap?

Not me, thanks!
Nor me, either! When Bolsover's on the warpath it's time to scoot!
Me no likee Bolsover. Me tinkee Bolsover big, hullying beast.

Matter of fact, I haven't had a fight for a long time, and I'm simply spoiling for a scrap! I think I'll pitch into this concert-party, and break it up!
Spare us, Bolsover! Think of our youth and innocence!

I'm not going to stand on ceremony. I don't approve of BILLY BUNTER'S BURLESQUES, although I happen to be a member of the company.

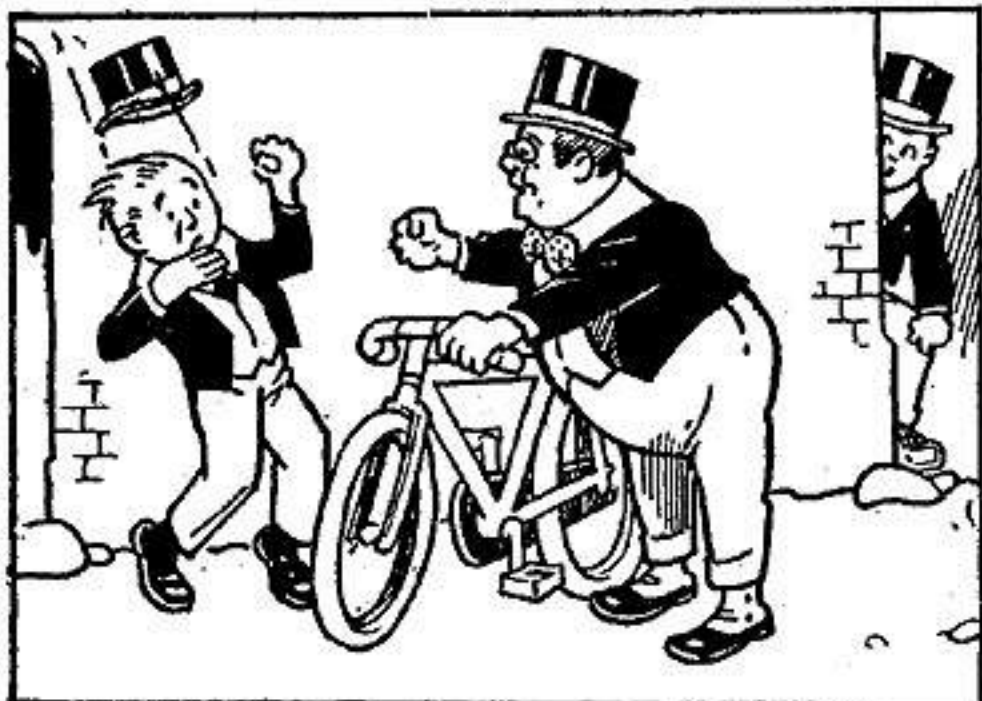
(BOLSOVER rushes upon the members of the concert-party, and they scatter in wild disorder. The bully of the Remove chases them off the stage, hitting out right and left. Wild shrieks of anguish. Great commotion.)

CURTAIN.

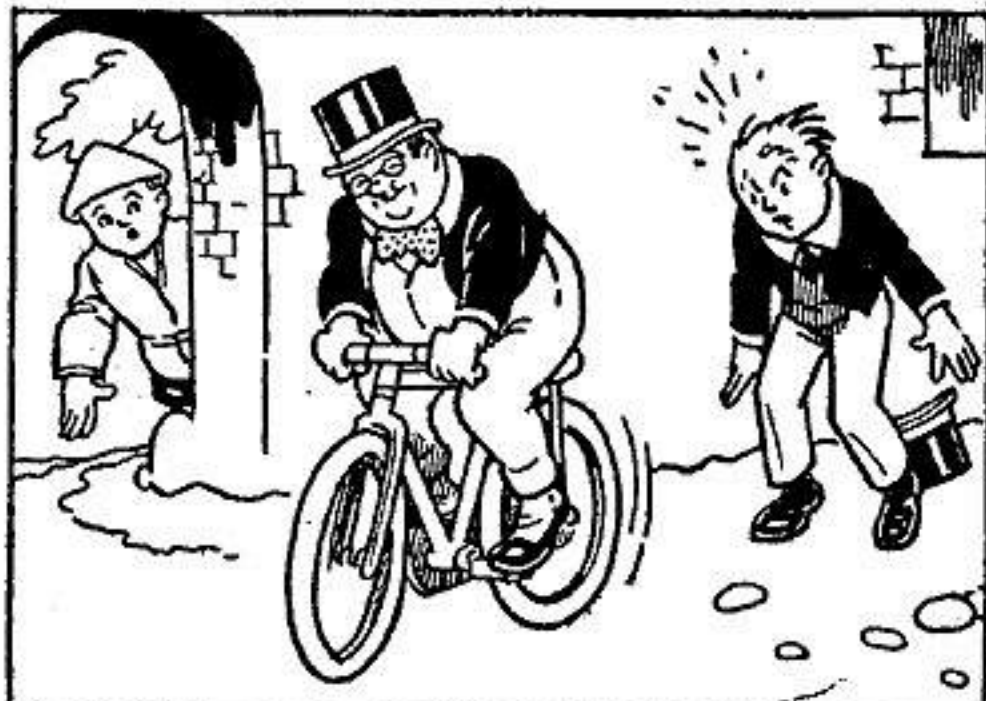
Plenty of surprises in store! Look out for them!

THEN EVEN BILLY WAS "TIRED"!

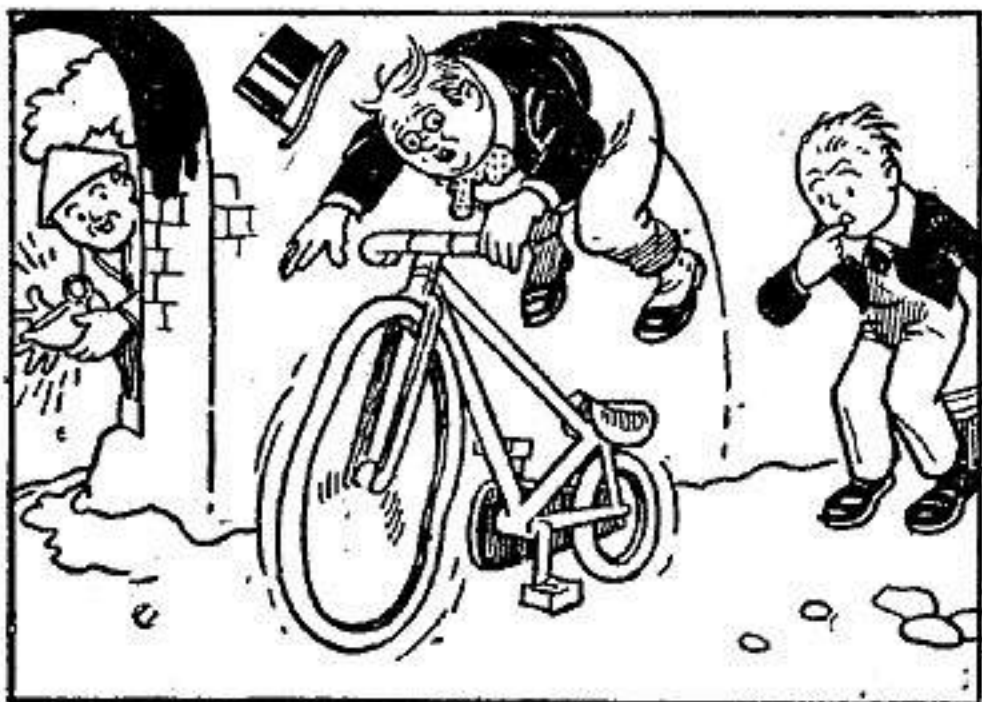
Sketches by Frank Nugent. Libretti by Tom Brown.



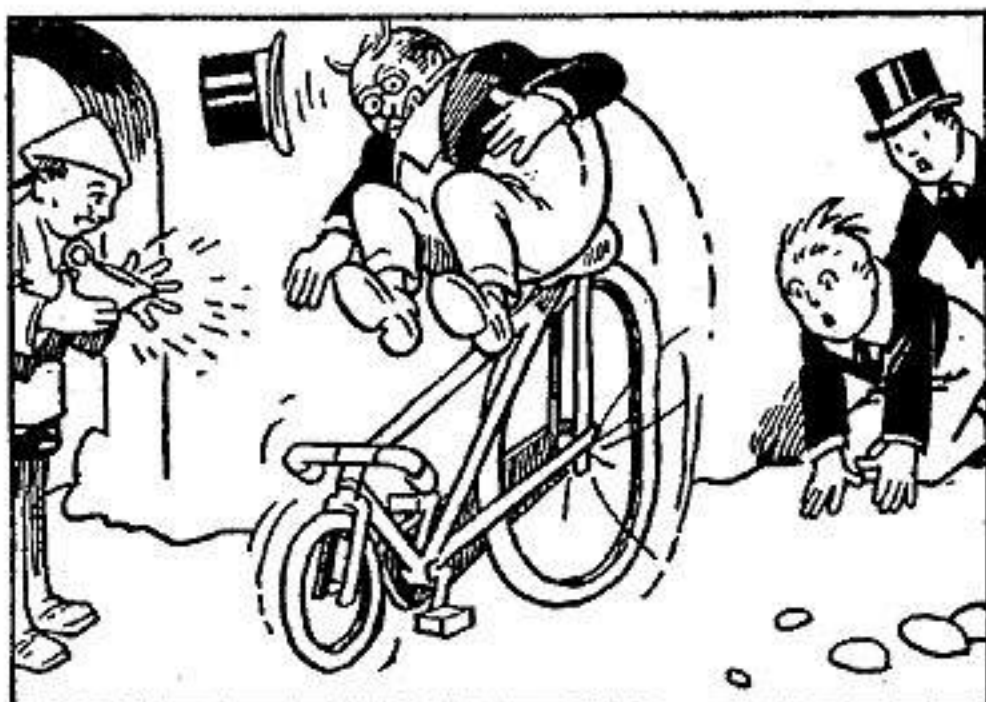
1. "Smith minor!" gurgled Billy Bunter. "Aha! Get off that giddy bike, my young tulip! I'm going to tea with Uncle Jimmy this afternoon, and I was wondering how I was going to get there!" With that, bad, bold Billy Bunter snatched the bicycle.



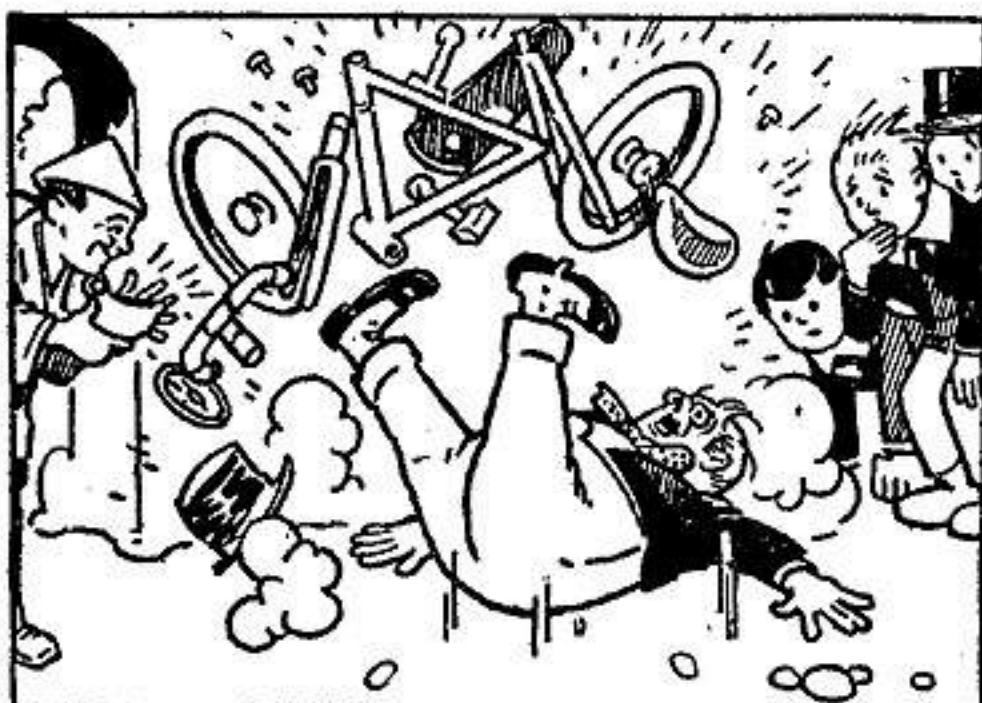
2. Billy was no light-weight, and Smith minor looked on in alarm when the fat junior mounted. "That's not meant to 'saddle' you!" he yelled. "It 'wheel' burst! Why can't you go by 'tube'? You'll be under 'cover'!" Then Loo Lummee put a "spoke" in!



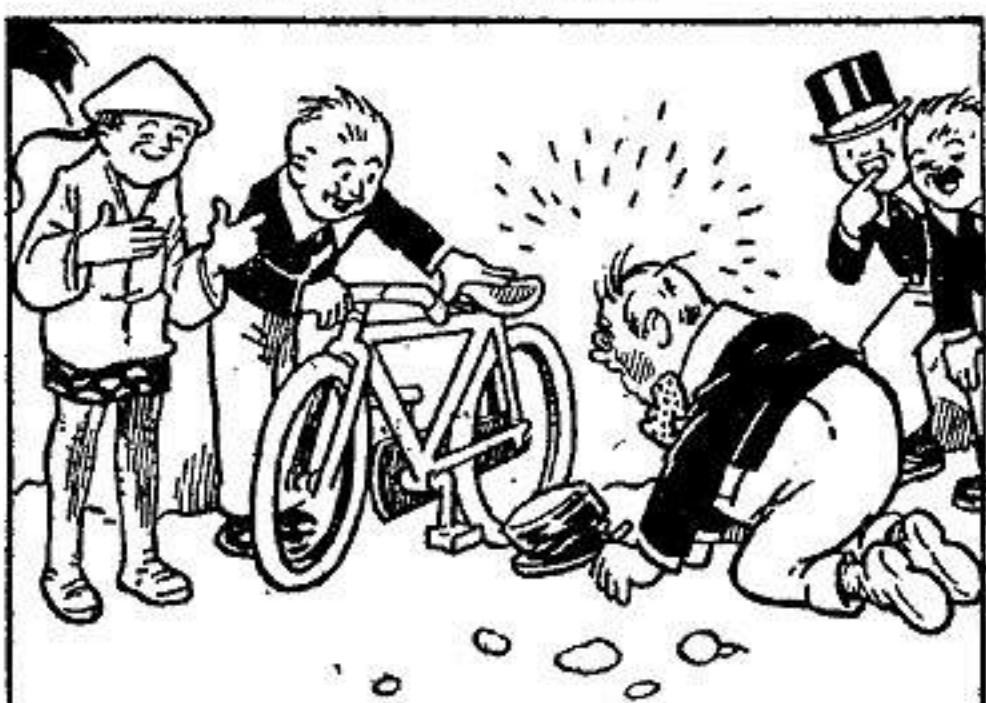
3. All of a sudden the front wheel of Billy's bike grew to three times its size. "Wow!" wailed Billy. "It must be the pork we had for lunch—I thought it was rather high!" He didn't see the magic lamp getting an extra polish!



4. Then, just as suddenly, the front wheel went down, and the back wheel went up. "Jemima!" gurgled Billy. "The blessed thing's haunted! Wow! Spooks! Turn out Ferrers Locke!" The youngers could only stare in surprise.



5. "Plenty much gleeve lamp gip!" wheedled Loo Lummee, rubbing extra vigorously. "Machnee go pop—whatec?" It was Billy who nearly went pop, for he bumped on the ground so hard that there was an earthquake registered at Greenwich.



6. By the time Billy Bunter had recovered himself, Smith minor had seen his machine suddenly jump together again. "Whatec matter?" asked Loo Lummee innocently. "Oh!" groaned Bunter. "I think I'll walk now!" He didn't—he crawled!

A ripping supplement, chums, next Monday!

JUST LIKE BUNTER!

(Continued from page 12.)

"I think every fellow present is willing to believe that Bunter was eating tarts—especially if they weren't his own tarts."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Whose tarts were they, Bunter?"

"Mine!" howled Bunter.

"Now his fancy is wandering again," said Skinner. "Queer how that chap can never stick to the truth for more than a minute at a time. Did anybody miss any tarts this afternoon?"

"I'm not talking about tarts, am I?" howled Bunter. "I'm telling you how I saved Bob Cherry's life!"

Jim Lee looked up from his book at that, startled. But nobody was regarding Lee.

"But we're talking about tarts!" persisted Skinner. "That's the only part of the yarn that's true, you know."

"Look here, Skinner—"

"Bunter was eating tarts," resumed Skinner, amid a general chortle. "That appears to be established. Bunter was eating tarts. He wasn't offering any to anybody else. We shouldn't believe that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bob Cherry came along the path!" hooted Bunter.

"Don't say you offered him a tart!" urged Skinner. "Keep to the bare probabilities."

"He fell over the cliff—"

"Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen!" sighed Skinner. "Fancy poor old Cherry being killed this afternoon, you know, and coming to life again in time for tea!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He fell on the ledge just under the cliff top—"

"There's a ledge in that place," said Snoop with a nod. "Redwing climbed there once, I've heard."

"That's so!" remarked Vernon-Smith. "But Bunter wouldn't go near it, not if there was a stack of jam-tarts there!"

"He was stunned!" went on Bunter. "He fell on his head, you know—"

"How lucky for Bob Cherry to fall on a soft spot!" said Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He lay senseless—" continued Bunter.

"That wasn't much of a change for Bob Cherry!" said the humorous Skinner. "He generally is rather senseless!"

"He was lying there—"

"Hold on!" said Skinner. "You mean you were lying!"

"No; I was standing up—"

"But you're lying now?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly chump!" roared the exasperated Bunter. "Listen to me! Bob Cherry lay senseless on the cruel rocks—"

"Oh, my hat! He's been reading a shipwreck story!" said Peter Todd. "Were the wild waves dashing over him in mountains of foam, Bunter?"

"No!" shrieked Bunter. "You know that ledge is two hundred feet up, you silly owl! He lay senseless on the rocky ledge. Rushing to the brink of the gulf, I sprang—"

"You sprang!" yelled Bolsover major.

"I sprang!" persisted Bunter.

"You sprang back out of danger?" asked Skinner. "I think we can believe that!"

"I sprang down to the ledge—"

"Great Scott!"

"Let's have it clear!" said Skinner. "You sprang down to the cruel rocky ledge, and seized Bob Cherry, and bore him from the roaring flames of the burning house—what?"

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

"No!" raved Bunter. "There wasn't a fire, you silly ass! I'm not telling you anything about a fire."

"Why not?" asked Skinner. "Why not put in as much as it will hold? Sure there wasn't a burning house?"

"Of course, you ass!"

"Then this is how it was, I suppose? Seizing Bob Cherry in your teeth, you drew your trusty cutlass, and kept the pirates at bay!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter almost foamed with wrath as the crowd of Removites roared. The humorous Skinner was giving a dramatic recital—a most ridiculous turn—just as if Billy Bunter was a comic merchant instead of a glorious hero.

"You—you—you chump!" gasped Bunter. "Who's talking about pirates?"

"No pirates?" asked Skinner in surprise. "Well, let's hear exactly what happened. Seizing Bob Cherry by his hair, you bore him ashore through the raging waves! Is that right?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I seized him—" gasped Bunter. "Seizing him in my arms, I raised him to the path above, and with a herculean effort shoved him into safety. Thus I saved his life. Then I climbed off the ledge, you know, and sank down beside him exhausted."

"Did a little thing like that exhaust you?" asked Skinner, raising his eyebrows. "I shouldn't have thought it. Did you land Bob Cherry entire on the path?"

"Eh? Of course!"

"You didn't leave his boots on the ledge?"

"His boots! No!"

"Then I'm afraid we can't swallow it," said Skinner. "Nobody short of a giddy Hercules could lift Bob Cherry if he had both his boots on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I did it!" shrieked Bunter. "It was a bit of an effort—"

"Must have been, considering the size of his feet, and his number seventeen

boots," agreed Skinner. "What happened next?"

"Then he woke up!" suggested Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bob Cherry came to his senses at last," said Bunter.

"Glad to hear it!" said Skinner.

"Wasn't aware that he had any to come to. Bob will be a changed character after this!"

"He took me by the hand," pursued the Owl of the Remove, with a touch of pathos. "Taking me by the hand, he said: 'Brave, brave, Bunter—'"

"Good!" chuckled Skinner. "I can see Bob Cherry talking like that, I don't think! Are you sure he didn't say 'Fat, fat Bunter!'"

"Beast! He said: 'Brave, brave Bunter!'" yelled the Owl of the Remove. "He was weeping tears of gratitude—"

"How do you know they were tears of gratitude?" asked Skinner. "Might have been simply the shock of seeing your features when he came to."

"Yah! You can ask Bob!" howled Bunter. "Bob will tell you how I saved his life at the risk of my own! How I rushed into fearful peril— Oh! Ow! Yow! Yooooooop!"

Bunter broke off with a terrific roar as Jim Lee, his face blazing with anger and scorn, came striding through the crowd of juniors, and seized him by the collar.

Shake, shake, shake, shake!

Jim was shaking the Owl of the Remove as if for a wager, and the fat junior's teeth almost rattled in his head.

"Grooogh! Hooogh—woop! Mmmm!" spluttered Bunter wildly.

Shake, shake, shake!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Triumph!

"WHAT the thump—"

"What—"

"My hat! Lee—"

The crowd of juniors stared at the scene in utter astonishment. Jim Lee, forgetful of everything but his anger at hearing the wholesale falsehoods of the unhappy Owl, shook and shook and shook.

The Remove outcast had forgotten, for the moment, that his own part in the affair was to be kept a secret; that he was desirous, above all, of the real facts remaining unknown. He had listened at first to Bunter's egregious yarn in blank astonishment. Then a sudden spasm of anger and disgust had fairly carried him away. In asking Bunter to keep silent as to what had occurred, he had not, of course, dreamed of anything like this.

"You lying rascal!" panted Lee.

"Grooogh!"

"Let him alone!" shouted Bolsover major.

"Hands off, Lee!"

It was the first time that the school-boy hermit had, of his own accord, taken a hand in any proceedings of the Remove. His sudden outbreak astounded the juniors. That Bunter was lying, they all believed; but they could see no reason whatever for Lee's outburst. Bunter's untruths were taken as a screaming joke by the fellows. There was nothing to get angry about that they could see—above all, for the outcast junior to get angry about. It was no business of Lee's, anyway.

"Yow-ow-woooooh! Help! Dragim-off!" panted Bunter, squirming helplessly in Lee's angry grasp.

Three or four fellows started forward.

**HOW TO MAKE!
HOW TO MEND!**

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The fateful message from Ulick Driver! What is its portent?

"Hands off!" snapped Vernon-Smith. But Lee was too angry to heed. The Boulder promptly collared him, and Todd and Hazeldene lent a hand. The outcast junior was fairly hurled away from Bunter.

He staggered against the table, panting, his face crimson. Bunter stood and gasped and spluttered.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-grooogh!"

"You lying rascal!" repeated Lee in gasping tones. "You sneaking, lying rascal!"

"Wow! I say, you fellows——"

"What business is it of yours, Lee?" demanded Bolsover major truculently. "Bunter can spin a yarn if he likes, I suppose, without you butting in!"

Lee panted for breath. He began to realise that the outburst must be a puzzle to the juniors, as he had no intention of telling what actually had occurred. Already he was regretting that angry outbreak. Yet how could he have sat silent, while the egregious Owl was attempting so astounding a piece of deceit?

All the juniors were staring at him in wonder mingled with anger. If they could take Bunter's yarn good-humouredly, there certainly was no reason why Lee—a mere nobody—should not do so.

"You can keep your paws to yourself, Lee!" said Bolsover major. "If you touch Bunter again, I'll touch you, sharp!"

"He's lying!" panted Lee.

"We know he's lying. He's always lying!" said Skinner. "Have you come to Greyfriars to teach Bunter to be a Georgie Washington! What bizney is it of yours?"

"I—I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "Keep him off!"

The Owl of the Remove had not noticed Lee in the Common-room. Possibly he would have reserved his yarn for another occasion had he seen the school-boy hermit there. But, as a matter of fact, Bunter had almost forgotten Lee's part in the transaction on the Seagull Cliff.

"Hallo! Here's Bob Cherry!" exclaimed Penfold. "He can tell us whether Bunter saved his giddy life."

The Famous Five came into the Common-room together. Bob Cherry was looking more like his old self now, though he was still rather pale, and limping a little.

"What's that?" asked Bob, looking round.

"We've had a topping yarn from Bunter—in his best style!" said Skinner. "This afternoon he saved your life——"

"That's true!"

"What!"

It was a yell of astonishment from the Removites.

Billy Bunter grinned. With a witness like this in his favour, he felt that he was fairly secure, even if Lee told the whole story. Having bagged the glory of the rescue, Bunter was not disposed to part with it, even to the real claimant.

"I know it's a corker," said Bob. "But credit where credit is due. I fell over the Seagull Cliff, and Bunter got me up. He must have run a fearful risk in doing it."

"If he did it!" grinned Skinner.

"Well, he did do it!"

"It seems that he did!" said Harry Wharton. "It beats me hollow; but there it is. Bunter did it."

"Gammon!" said Skinner.

Bob gave him a look.

"I suppose you can take my word,

Skinner, if you can't take Bunter's?" he said quietly.

"Oh, yes!" said Skinner hastily. "But—but dash it all, you're asking us to believe that Bunter did heroic stunts! It wants some getting used to."

"Well, Bob Cherry ought to know whether Bunter saved his life or not!" said Bolsover major, in wonder.

"I do know, and I know that he did it!" said Bob Cherry. "I've altered my opinion of Bunter a good bit. We've always thought him a funk——"

"He is a funk!" said Skinner.

"Well, what he did to-day wanted some pluck!" said Bob. "I suppose he's funky at times, and not at other times. I know it must have been touch and go for the fellow who got me off that ledge."

"I should jolly well say so!" said Bunter with a defiant blink at the silent Lee. "I jolly nearly went over the edge myself. It was really miraculous that I wasn't killed."

"Well, my hat!" said Peter Todd.

Bolsover major turned to Jim Lee. He was astonished by what he heard; but Bob Cherry's word had to be taken. And the bully of the Remove was all the

Next Monday's

Grand Free

Photo :

CRYSTAL PALACE

F.C.

Don't Miss It!

more inclined to take Bunter's part, because Lee had assailed him. If the surprising yarn was true, it was more than ever a "cheek" of the Remove outcast to intervene as he had done.

"Well, what have you got to say now, Lee?" demanded Bolsover aggressively. Leo breathed hard.

He had had time to think now, and he realised very clearly that he could not expose the fat Owl's deception without giving away his own part in the affair. That he was determined not to do, unless Bunter gave him no choice in the matter. But it was clear that he had nothing to fear from Bunter; so far from tolling the facts, it was fairly clear that Bunter intended to deny them if stated. Having bagged a little glory, Bunter was prepared to fight tooth and nail to retain it. The revelation was not to be feared in that quarter. Lee had only to keep silent.

It went deeply against the grain to keep silent and allow Bunter's reckless falsehoods to pass uncontradicted. But his own secret had to be kept. Indeed, it dawned upon Lee that, if he told the truth now, it was not likely to be believed.

Bunter had been first in the field, as it were. The unpopular outcast was not

likely to be believed without proof. And there was no proof to be given.

Lee had placed it out of his own power to disprove Bunter's yarn. He was doubly bound to silence now.

"What's Leo got to do with it?" asked Bob.

"He's been pitching into Bunter for spinning that yarn," said Bolsover major. "Of course, we all thought Bunter was lying. No reason why Lee should pitch into him, though."

"He was lying!" said Lee at last.

"Bob Cherry says it is the truth! Are you calling Bob a liar?" demanded Bolsover major.

"No! You know I'm not! I'm saying that Bunter was lying. That's all."

"Bunter was telling the truth, Lee!" said Bob Cherry, fixing his eyes on the new fellow. "You can take my word for that."

"I've no more to say!" said Lee.

And with a crimson face he moved away. Billy Bunter gave a fat chuckle of triumph. He had fully expected Lee to blurt out the facts; and he was already collecting his forces, as it were, in the Ananias line, to rebut Lee's story. He was surprised and relieved to see the schoolboy outcast let the matter drop in this tame way.

"I say, Bob——"

"Yes, Bunter?" said Bob with unusual kindness.

"I've been pitched into!" said Bunter indignantly. "I've been shaken! Look at my collar! Lee's called me a liar—me, you know! You fellows know how truthful I am."

"Oh, my hat!" said Skinner.

"Well, after I saved your life, I think you ought to lick Lee for pitching into me," said Bunter, blinking at Bob. "I must say that!"

"Oh, rot!" said Bob. "It's all right, Bunter! A shaking won't hurt you."

Bunter curled a fat lip.

"That's gratitude, I suppose!" he said. "I saved your life at the risk of my own, and you won't wallop a chap who calls me a liar and shakes me! I'd thrash him myself, only——"

"Only you couldn't!" suggested Squiff.

"Only I'm feeling so worn out after my terrible exertions," said Bunter. "But for that, I'd give him the licking of his life. I think Bob Cherry ought to do it. It's up to him to make Lee apologise, at least."

"Oh, let it drop, kid!" said Bob. "What's the good of rowing? All the fellows know you've told the truth now."

"The knowfulness is terrific, my esteemed Bunter!" urged the Nabob of Bhanipur pacifically.

Bunter sneered more emphatically.

"Oh, don't mind me!" he said sarcastically. "I'm worn out with my exertions in saving your life, and you let a fellow pitch into me! All right!"

"Well?" muttered Bob uneasily.

"He still says I'm lying," said Bunter. "I'm willing to let the matter drop if he apologises."

"That's fair!" said Bolsover major. "Who's Lee, to set up to say that Bunter's lying, when we all believe him?"

Bob turned a worried face towards Lee, who had returned to his chair and his book. Bob had no desire whatever to quarrel with the outcast—he was rather sorry for the lonely fellow than otherwise. But there was a certain amount of justice in Bunter's claim—so far as Bob could see.

"Lee!" called out Bob.

Jim Lee is invited to tea as the guest of honour—

Jim looked up.

“I think you ought to take back what you’ve said to Bunter,” said Bob Cherry quietly. “You know my word’s good enough, and I give you my word that Bunter saved me on the cliff this afternoon.”

Lee did not speak.

“Well?” said Bob.

“I’m sorry I interfered in the matter,” said Lee. “I—I acted without thinking. I’m sorry I shook Bunter.”

“That’s good enough!” said Bob.

“I don’t call that an apology!” snorted Bunter. “I consider—”

“The tuckshop’s not closed yet!” remarked Harry Wharton. “Like to come along and sample some tarts, Bunter?”

Billy Bunter’s wrongs and grievances disappeared from his mind at once on the introduction of a so much more important topic.

“Certainly, old chap!” he said.

And Bunter rolled away with the captain of the Remove; and the incident closed. But the Remove were left in a buzz of wonder. Billy Bunter had played the part of a hero—and that, as Harold Skinner had observed, wanted some getting used to!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Too Thick!

JIM LEE walked out of Greyfriars immediately after morning lessons the following day. He headed for the cliffs, to look for his missing volume of P. Vergilius Maro. There was little time to go and to return before dinner; but Lee did his best. He reached the Seagull Cliff, and climbed up from the path, looking for the spot where he had sat the previous afternoon, when Bob Cherry’s peril had called him down so suddenly. But the book was not to be seen. On the pathless cliff it was difficult to find the exact spot where he had been sitting—and it was possible, too, that Virgil had fallen into one of the numerous crevices. Lee hunted as long as he could, but he had to return to Greyfriars without the book; and then he was late for dinner.

He came into the dining-hall with a flushed face, rather breathless, and found the Remove half through dinner. Mr. Quelch, at the head of the table, gave him a very severe look.

The Remove master was a stickler for punctuality, and Lee was very late. Mr. Quelch frowned portentously.

“Lee!” he rapped out.

“Yes, sir!” answered Lee breathlessly.

“Why are you late for dinner?”

“I—I’ve been out of gates, sir—”

“That is no excuse, Lee.”

“I—I’m sorry, sir!” faltered Lee. “I—I—” He broke off.

“Really, Lee—” Mr. Quelch paused. “You told me last evening that you had lost your Virgil. Have you been searching for it?”

“Yes, sir.”

“You should have told me so, then!” said the Remove master crossly. “If you lost your Virgil out of gates, and have been searching for it, that is an excuse for your absence, and you should have told me so at once.”

Lee stood silent and confused. He had not wanted to mention the lost Virgil, considering where it had been lost; but Mr. Quelch, of course, did not know anything about that.

“Have you found the book?” added Mr. Quelch.

“No, sir.”



“We’ve had a topping yarn from Bunter—in his best style,” said Skinner. “This afternoon he saved your life—” “That’s true,” replied Bob Cherry. “WHAT!” It was a yell of astonishment from the Removites. “I know it’s a corker,” said Bob, “but credit where credit is due!” (See Chapter 9.)

“I will see that another is provided. You may sit down.”

Lee sat down with a crimson face. He had to make a hasty dinner, and finish at the same time as the other fellows. Billy Bunter gave him a blink of scorn across the table. Bunter was looking on Lee as a possible rival for his glory; and that roused the fat junior’s keenest dislike.

After dinner Lee went out with the crowd of fellows, separating from the rest, in his usual way, outside the door. He could not help noting that Billy Bunter was in great favour with some of the Remove. Harry Wharton & Co., who generally did not yearn for Bunter’s society, put up with him with great fortitude. Bunter attached himself specially to Bob Cherry—no doubt feeling a great friendly interest in the fellow whose life he had saved. The rest of the Co. found their way to Little Side; but Bunter clung to Bob, and Bob did not feel equal to shaking him off, with the memory of his great services still so fresh.

Lee strolling under the leafless elms, with his hands in his pockets, could not help observing them. Bunter’s friendship, apparently, was the price Bob had to pay for having his life saved by Bunter. It was rather a heavy price to pay; but Bob could scarcely be ungracious to his rescuer. But it was not only his worthy friendship; Bunter had a particular reason for wanting to speak to his new chum.

“About that affair yesterday—” Bunter murmured.

“Yes, old chap!” said Bob patiently.

“I rolled over when I dropped on the ledge to rescue you, old fellow.”

“Did you?”

“I did,” said Bunter. “Not that that matters, only my money must have dropped out of my pocket.”

“Your money?” ejaculated Bob with a start.

“Yes—a ten-shilling note!” said Bunter sorrowfully. “Mind, I’m not grumbling—it was worth the loss of the money to save your life. But ten shillings is ten shillings, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” said Bob shortly.

Bob was willing, at present, to give Bunter every possible credit. But it was scarcely possible to swallow the story of the ten-shilling note.

“Well,” said Bunter, as Bob did not rise to the bait, as it were—“well, as I’ve said, I don’t grudge the money in saving your life. If you felt, though, that you ought to make it up to me, I shouldn’t refuse. I should feel bound to take it.”

This was putting it plain.

Bob made a grimace. Bob was not over-blessed with that useful article, cash; but he had had a pound recently from a kind uncle. Six shillings of that pound had gone on the trap from the Anchor, and other shillings had gone various ways; there was a ten-shilling note left. Possibly Bunter knew that circumstance; his knowledge of other fellows’ financial conditions was marvellous.

Bob’s hand went slowly into his pocket. If Bunter wanted his ten shillings for saving his life, Bunter should have it. Bob was not inclined to make any fuss about that.

“There you are, Bunter!” said Bob Cherry quietly.

—and is forcibly dragged there by Harry Wharton & Co.!

Bunter's fat fingers closed on the ten-shilling note.

"Thanks, old chap! Sure you don't mind?"

"Not at all!"

"Right-ho, then!"

Billy Bunter tired at once of the rescued junior's company. He had lately devoured a large dinner; but he was ready for more. He started for the tuck-shop at a little fat trot, his face beaming. Bob Cherry turned away rather moodily.

Jim Lee had seen the whole incident; though he had not heard what was said, he could not fail to know what had occurred. He knew, with a bitter anger and contempt, that Bunter was screwing money out of Bob Cherry for his supposed service, that what had hitherto been silly swank was becoming something perilously like a swindle.

He started to intercept Bunter on his way to the school shop, his eyes gleaming.

Bunter halted suddenly, as Lee interposed. He gave the Remove outcast a lofty blink.

"Get out of my way, Lee!" he said disdainfully. "I don't want to speak to you. I bar you!"

"You fat rascal——"

"Cheese it!" said Bunter contemptuously. "Just leave me alone; I don't choose to know you. As for spinning any yarn about what happened yesterday, just you try it on. The fellows will know whom to believe."

Lee breathed hard.

"Never mind your silly lies," he said. "If you're rotter enough to lie, and the fellows are fools enough to believe you, never mind. But you've been getting money out of Cherry."

"What bizney is that of yours?" demanded Bunter fiercely. "Can't my pal make me a little loan if he likes?"

"I saw him give you a ten-shilling note," said Lee savagely. "You've got it in your paw now, you rascal!"

"Mind your own business."

"This is my business, I think," said Lee, his eyes gleaming. "I'm not going to allow you to swindle the fellow. He thinks you saved his life——"

"So I did!" howled Bunter.

"What?" ejaculated Lee.

"So I jolly well did. You tell the fellows anything else, and see what they'll say."

Lee compressed his lips.

"I suppose you're a bigger fool than rascal, Bunter," he said, "but you're not going to get money out of Cherry with your lies. Understand that. If I let you, I should be a party to a swindle."

Bunter's eyes glittered with rage behind his big spectacles. To do him justice, the Owl of the Remove was very far from realising the rascality of his proceedings.

"A—a swindle!" he gasped.

"What else do you call it?" snapped Lee.

"After saving his life——"

"You fat idiot, you didn't save his life; you were crouching away in a blue funk!"

"Well, he thinks I did; it's the same thing!" said Bunter. "Practically the same thing. I suppose there's such a thing as gratitude, isn't there? Bob's made me a small loan out of gratitude. It's simply a loan—he doesn't think I lost a ten-shilling note in helping him yesterday——"

"What?" exclaimed Lee.

"He may or may not think that I dropped a ten-bob note in helping him off the ledge," said Bunter with great caution. "That's neither here nor there. You mind your own business!"

"You—you spoofing rascal!" gasped Lee. "You've told him you dropped a ten-shilling note on the ledge, and you never were near the ledge at all!"

"Oh, really, Lee——"

"You're to give that money back to Bob Cherry!" said Lee, between his teeth.

"Give it back?" gasped Bunter in sheer astonishment. The idea of giving back money upon which his fat paw had once closed was a very new idea to William George Bunter.

"Yes—and at once!"

"Go and eat coke!" roared Bunter. "Mind your own business! Got out of my way! Yah!"

"Will you hand that ten-shilling note back?"

"No, I won't!"

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The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide the value of all, or any, of the prizes, but the full amount will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor must be accepted as final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with the "Gem," "Popular," and "Boys' Friend," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

I enter "The Wednesday" Competition, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

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M

"By Jove, if you don't I'll thrash you till you can't crawl!" exclaimed Lee, his temper blazing up. "You fat rascal!"

Billy Bunter dodged away, and the next moment Lee's grasp was on him. Bunter's voice rang across the quad in a terrified yell.

"Yow-ow-ow! Help! Rescue! Bob Cherry! Help! Fire! Yoop!"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Foes!

BOB CHERRY spun round in the distance.

He stared towards the scene near the tuckshop—Billy Bunter, his heroic rescuer, squirming and wriggling in Lee's powerful grasp, and yelling frantically for help.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob.

"Yow-ow-ow! Help!"

Bob Cherry, in the circumstances, was not likely to let that call pass unheeded. Regardless of his damaged knee, he came sprinting towards the spot.

"Let Bunter go at once!" he rapped out.

"Yow-ow! Rescue!" howled Bunter.

"You fat swindler—" panted Lee.

"Let him go!" roared Bob angrily.

And, as Lee did not heed, he grasped the new junior by the shoulder and swung him forcibly away from the Owl of the Remove.

Lee staggered away from the force of that powerful swing, and sat down with a bump on the ground.

There was a shout, and half a dozen fellows came speeding up. Lee sat dazed for a moment, and Bob, with blazing eyes and clenched fists, stood looking at him.

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" exclaimed Hazeldene.

"Lee pitching into Bunter again!" growled Bob. "He's got me to deal with this time, though!"

Lee staggered up.

"I—I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, keep the beast off, you know! Pitching into a chap—"

"What's the silly ass down on Bunter like this for?" said Peter Todd in wonder. "Bunter's done a decent thing

for once in his life! What's the matter with you, Lee?"

"Jealous of me!" gasped Bunter. "Just rotten jealousy, you know, because I've done a splendidly brave action—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" snorted Bunter. "I'd like to see you fellows do what I did—"

"You did nothing, you lying rascal!" panted Lee. "Bob Cherry, that fat rotter is getting money out of you under false pretences!"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Hallo! Bunter up to his old games again?" grinned Peter Todd. "You've been cashing a postal-order for him, Bob? You ass!"

"Nothing of the kind!" hooted Bunter. "It's a debt, really—isn't it, Bob, old chap?"

"Well, you can call it that," said Bob, with a grunt. "Anyhow, it's no business of Lee's, that I know of. What do you want to shove in your oar for, Lee?"

"I tell you it can't be allowed! It's a sneaking swindle!" gasped Lee. "Bunter never helped you on the cliff! It's all a yarn! And now he's getting money out of you, I—"

"You know nothing about it!" said Bob. "You weren't there, I suppose? It's like your cheek to butt into the matter, so far as I can see!"

"Thumping cheek!" said Skinner.

"You can keep your opinion to yourself, too!" said Bob angrily. "And you're going to let Bunter alone! Lay a finger on him again, and you'll have to deal with me!"

"I tell you—" panted Lee.

"Oh, that's enough! If you're looking for trouble, you can give Bunter a miss! He couldn't stand up to a bunny-rabbit—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"I'm here!" said Bob grimly. "I can give you all the trouble you want! Bunter saved my life yesterday—"

"He did not!"

"I say he did!" exclaimed Bob. "Why you're setting up to meddle in a thing that doesn't concern you, I don't know, and I don't care! But you're not going to slang Bunter in my presence!

If you can't take my word for what Bunter did, you can put up your hands!"

Lee stood hesitating. Every fellow there was looking at him curiously. Why the hermit had come out of his shell, as it were, in this manner was a puzzle, and nobody could see why he was interested in the matter at all.

"You hear that, Lee?" said Bob Cherry. "You're going to apologise to Bunter! You were let off last night, and now you're asking for trouble again! So go ahead!"

Lee smiled disdainfully.

"It's not likely!" he said.

"Very well!" said Bob between his teeth. "I'm standing up for Bunter! Put up your hands, you cad!"

Lee stepped back. His face was a little pale, but his eyes were gleaming now. It seemed the very irony of fate that he should have to fight with the fellow whose life he had saved; but if the conflict was to come, he did not shrink from it.

"I'll fight you, if you choose!" he said. "I say that Bunter is a lying rascal, and I stick to that!"

"Then put up your paws!" snapped Bob.

Lee shook his head.

"You're not fit enough," he said quietly. "You've got a gammy leg—"

"Never mind my gammy leg! I'm fit enough to give you a jolly good licking!" growled Bob.

"Hold on!" Harry Wharton had arrived on the scene now. "Hold on, Bob! Lee's quite right. You're not going in for scrapping to-day. You've not got over yesterday yet. Leave it till Saturday."

"Oh, rot!" grunted Bob.

"Saturday suit you, Lee?" asked the captain of the Remove, unheeding.

Lee nodded and walked away.

Billy Bunter, relieved by his departure, made a straight line for the tuckshop, where poor Bob's ten-shilling note went the way of all cash that came into Bunter's hands.

Lee tramped away moodily under the trees, his hands driven deep into his pockets. On Wednesday he had saved Bob Cherry's life at terrible risk; on Saturday he was to fight him—the fellow he liked best in all Greyfriars. But he was almost past caring now.

THE END.

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"SPEECHES" AND NEW MEMBERS WANTED AT ONCE!

The Greyfriars Parliament

Grand Money Prizes for "SPEECHES"



AT the weekly meeting of the Greyfriars Parliament last Monday, the Speaker (Mr. Harry Wharton) opened the proceedings by reading a speech from Reader G. DART, 6, Latchmere Street, Battersea, S.W. 11.

The Speaker: "I am sure there is no need for me to enlarge on the advantages of music. Everybody likes music."

Mr. Bunter: "Well, I don't, for one!"

The Speaker: "The Member for Pufftown finds himself alone in the wilderness. As the poet said: 'He who hath no music in his soul—'"

There were groans from various benches. A voice: "We don't want to hear any poetry!"

The Speaker: "Music has power to soothe the savage beast."

Mr. Bunter: "If I am to be called a savage beast, I'll—"

The Speaker: "No slight was intended on the hon. member. I am speaking of music in the abstract. Music appeals to us all, more or less. Mr. Coker gets musical in the springtime of the year. Mr. Bob Cherry is A 1 at the concertina. Even our sceptical friend Mr. Bunter does not disdain the gramophone. He is credited with having bought one of those fascinating instruments quite recently. Now, let me read what Reader Dart says: 'I should like to raise a point about music. The best music, to my knowledge, is the gramophone, which is a marvellous invention. Many people prefer a piano; but what is the use of a piano unless you have someone who can play it? Supposing you have a party—unless you play well-known songs they cannot join in, whereas in a gramophone you get the words as well as the music. You want to keep a gramophone in one room only. I am speaking from experience.'"

Mr. Coker: "Personally, I don't think much of gramophones. It is far, far better to listen to some good singer—me, for instance."

Mr. Peter Hazeldene: "You either like music or you do not."

Mr. Bunter: "I just now said I didn't. Of course, I can play—"

Mr. Peter Todd: "With a knife and fork."

Mr. Bunter: "Don't be rude!"

Mr. Peter Todd: "I appeal to the House: Was I rude? Can Bunter play?"

Mr. Dutton: "I heard that last part. You have hit it exactly. Bunter can bray! He is every kind of an ass! He is always braying!"

Mr. Bunter: "Bah!"

Mr. Peter Todd: "Keep a civil tongue in your head, porpoise!"

Lord Mauleverer: "Without wishing to intrude in this harmonious discussion, I should like to point out that Reader Dart generalises a bit too much. He speaks of the gramophone as if it were always the same. Now, there is more difference between one gramophone and another than anybody would suppose. I heard a gramophone the other day in Friardale—well, you never heard such a row! It sounded like a cow bellowing its lot for being down with a bad attack of the flu. Nobody could say that was music."

Mr. Alonso Todd: "After all, the gramophone is an artificial business. Give me

the nightingale as it trills softly some dulcet lay on a summer's eve!"

Mr. Bulstrode: "Come off it!"

Mr. S. Bunter: "Billy got into a rare mess over the gramophone he pretended to buy!"

Mr. Bunter: "If you say another word, Sammy—"

The Speaker: "We cannot have these old family troubles ventilated in the House. I do my best to be fair-minded, but the position of Speaker is a difficult one."

Mr. Bunter: "You needn't mind me, Wharton, old top! These insinuations run off my back like water off a duck! (Hear, hear.) I was just going to point out that, after reflection, I begin to think there is something in a gramophone, after all. If Captain Corkran had had the sense to take one into the howling wilds of the Congo—"

Mr. Coker: "The wilds would have howled a bit more!"

The Speaker: "I shall let it go at this: Gramophones are good when they are good. I think Reader Dart puts the matter very fairly. But you want to make sure that your discs are not chipped. If they are damaged, the neighbours may attack the house. I will now read what Reader F. D. JEWELL, 58, Leonard Street, Neath, Glamorganshire, has to say concerning home-lessons."

The Nabob of Bhanipur: "The honourable Speaker may needfully let the subject go dropfully. We all know!"

The Speaker: "There are differences of opinion. Let me read what Reader Jewell has set down: 'Should home-lessons be abolished? Most fellows would say "Yes," but the subject has many sides. If school work is done well, there should be no need for home-lessons. Boys like Billy Bunter, who idle away their time, should certainly have home-work to do; but chaps like Mark Linley, Vernon-Smith, Peter Todd, and Harry Wharton could easily be excused.'"

At this point the violent hubbub prevented the Speaker continuing. Mr. Bunter was on his feet, and declined to sit down, though the Speaker told him plainly that he could not remain standing while he—the Speaker—was speaking.

When the tumult abated the Speaker tried to proceed. It was, however, no use.

Mr. Bunter (shouting): "I call that a shabby action, singling me out! All Greyfriars knows that I am the hardest-working fellow in the school."

Mr. Teddy Myers: "Cheese it!"

Mr. Bunter: "I protest! I absolutely protest!"

Mr. Gatty: "Where did you get that word, porpoise?"

Mr. Bunter: "I will not be addressed by a mere fag!"

Mr. Gatty: "Ain't I a blinking member as well as you, old Tuckshop?"

Mr. Coker: "In my opinion, home-lessons are quite needless."

Mr. Walker: "No lessons are any good to you! Now, then, keep off, or the Speaker will have you kicked out again! The simple truth is that a chump like Coker is no good at head-work! Leave that sort of thing to his junior, Reggie of the Sixth."

Mr. Coker: "Mr. Speaker, I appeal to you. Am I to be insulted?"

The Speaker: "Seems to me the hon. member has asked for it!"

Mr. Coker: "All very well for you! You get good marks!"

The Speaker: "It was a mistake to read the names, I admit, but the harm is done now."

Mr. Mark Linley: "I consider that the question of home-lessons is not of urgency."

Mr. Vernon-Smith: "It's like this: When a chap has gone back home to have a good time—well, it stands to reason he doesn't want to be plagued with Horace. He gets enough of that dull old mope at the school."

The Speaker: "Mr. Vernon-Smith might show a little regard for the Latin author."

Mr. Vernon-Smith: "Apologies! I meant to say, of course, that brilliant, sparkling writer who tied his sentences into knots. But Reader Jewell is talking through his hat if he thinks that I know anything. Over and over again my mind is a perfect blank when Quelch asks me a question."

The Speaker: "I have advised members privately that it would be wiser to give Mr. Quelch his proper style. He is a co-opted member of the House. But, to continue with what Reader Jewell says: 'Lord Mauleverer, I believe, would rather have forty winks than do his preparation. The boys who idle away their time in class find their home-work very difficult. Still, I think home-work should be abolished except when you are preparing for an examination.' There you are, gentlemen! That's the considered opinion of one who seems to know what he is talking about."

Mr. Bunter: "He eats his words! He, he, he!"

The Speaker: "I take it that the question is pretty clear. I propose that the House decides one way or the other. Should home-lessons be abolished?"

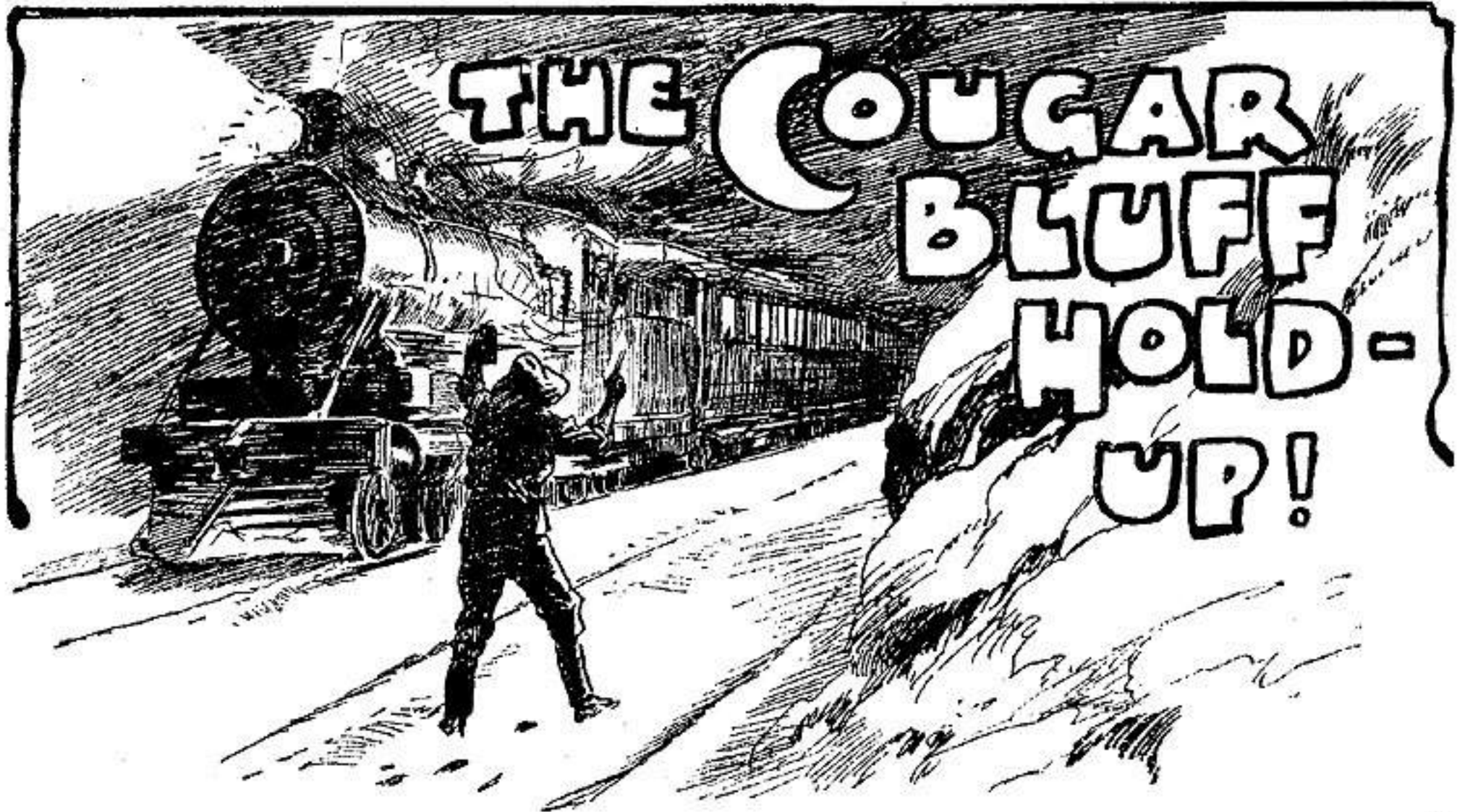
Mr. Peter Todd: "I beg to be allowed to move the following amendment: That this House, while conscious of the need in many cases of the continuance of the present system, realises that Greyfriars stands outside the controversy, inasmuch that it has always before its eyes the meritorious conduct of William George Bunter, the Member for Pufftown, the hard-working, studious, well-nigh bookwormish character which is an exemplar to us all. In saying that much, Mr. Speaker, I am conscious of the fact that I have had unrivalled opportunities of studying the temperament—may I say, the superlative temperament—of our distinguished friend? He need not wince at the Glamorgan slur on his character. He has nothing to his name which will cause the mantling blush to darken his countenance as did the African sun. Bunter is not idle. Idle suggests a comparative degree. How, then, can one who never works, never even dreamed of working, be deemed idle? The thing is absurd! Therefore, I beg to move—"

Mr. Bunter: "You howling chump, Todd! What did you go off the rails for? The first part was all right!"

A spirited debate was carried on into the small hours, long after Bunter and Lord Mauleverer were asleep.

It was eventually decided that home-work should be continued. This was in deference to the opinion of Mr. Quelch.

A good speech draws a prize! Open to all!



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By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Traitor at Headquarters!

MR. LOCKE! This is a great pleasure and relief to me! I hardly expected that you would come!"

Thus Mr. Carey Milbourn, the railway magnate, greeted Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake, as they were shown into his private office in the magnificent Railway Building, Fifty-Third Street, New York.

The detective smiled as he and his assistant seated themselves.

"Your message was handed me when I arrived back at my hotel last night, Mr. Milbourn," he said. "I came, hoping that the matter you wish to see me about so urgently was in connection with the hold-ups on your line."

"You are right, sir," said the magnate, pushing a box of cigars across the desk with a hand that trembled. "It came to my knowledge that you had made inquiries concerning the booking of a passage out to the Canadian West on our line. It struck me that you might care to combine business with pleasure."

As Ferrers Locke touched a match to his cigar his gaze wandered over the white-haired man at the other side of the wide desk.

Mr. Carey Milbourn was head of the New York and Southern Canadian Railway. He was a man of about sixty years, and obviously in a bad state of nerves.

"Perhaps you will explain your proposition, Mr. Milbourn," said the detective. "But let me say at once that I have no time to conduct any lengthy investigations. Drake and I must be back in England within three weeks. We have to give evidence in a case we conducted on the voyage over here."

"I know—I know, Mr. Locke," said the railway magnate; "but I shall give you absolute freedom to throw in your hand when you desire. If, however, you will undertake to make a few investigations on behalf of my company out West, I will furnish you and your assistant with free passages to British Columbia and back to New York. If you succeed in supplying any information that leads to the capture of the hold-up gang which has caused so much trouble on the Southern Canadian system, I shall be

prepared to write you a cheque for five thousand dollars."

"A generous offer, indeed, Mr. Milbourn!" was the comment of Ferrers Locke.

A free pass for himself and Drake to the West suited the detective down to the ground. Owing to some work performed by Locke and his young assistant in connection with a crime committed at the Manitou Roof-Garden, the American papers had been full of the exploits of the great British detective and his assistant. Reporters had interviewed them, and cases had been offered them by the score.

After two days of this sort of thing the couple had decided to leave the States temporarily. So they had called at the booking department of the N.Y. & S.C.R., which had a direct line from New York to Vancouver, crossing to the Canadian side just north of Buffalo. Their visit had reached the ears of Mr. Milbourn, who had sent a message for them to call and see him.

For his part, Mr. Carey Milbourn evinced the greatest satisfaction that Ferrers Locke was so favourably disposed in his manner.

"I will explain matters," said the magnate. "As you may know, a certain tract of our line to the west of the Rockies has been the scene of three or four train hold-ups. On the last occasion but one the east-bound mail was stopped by an armed gang near Hemlock Hollow. Then the passengers were robbed. Last time it was the west-bound Empire Limited, which was held up at Nine Springs, ten miles from the scene of the previous affair. On this occasion a consignment of money on the way to the Vancouver Island Bank and Trust, Limited, was stolen. Two armed guards were with the money. Both of these were shot."

"Yes, I read of those cases at the time," said Locke. "It was estimated that there were at least six men in the hold-up gang on each occasion."

Mr. Milbourn nodded. "That's so," he said. "Needless to say, the Canadian public have become alarmed. Western detectives, assisted by Indian guides, have tried to get on the trail of the hold-up men, but have failed. The train robbers have become known as the Phantom Gang. They pull off a hold-up and disappear as though the earth had swallowed them up."

"But this money which was taken on the last occasion," said Locke, "has it been put into circulation?"

"Yes, all over the country; but the stolen bills of large denomination have only reached the banks through obviously innocent people. The actual thieves have not been traced."

"Clearly, then," said the detective, "there is an extremely well-organised gang at work. Unfortunately, train hold-ups are far more easily brought off than the public are aware."

"You're right, Mr. Locke. And this gang work on the best approved principles. They never attempt too much. If they rob the passengers they never attempt to tamper with mails or bullion. The work is done swiftly and efficiently. Even the east-bound passenger train was not stopped for more than ten minutes, yet the gang made a clean sweep of everything worth while taking from the travellers."

The detective rose to his feet and looked at a large map of the N.Y. & S.C.R. system which hung on the wall.

"Kindly point out the places where these hold-ups occurred," he said to the railway magnate.

Mr. Milbourn did so. Each of them took place within a small area in the Kootenays district to the west of the Rocky Mountains. The only three towns in the neighbourhood were Pentasson, Telcamp, and Cougar Landing. The last named was on an arm of Kootenay Lake. Of the three, Pentasson was the only township actually on the line of the railway.

As Ferrers Locke resumed his seat, Mr. Milbourn drew a sheet of paper from among others on his desk. His hand trembled even more violently as he extended it towards the detective.

"Here is another matter which has arisen, Mr. Locke," he said. "When I arrived this morning I found this on my desk."

Locke took the paper and read the type-written message it conveyed:

"If Ferrers Locke goes out West, he is not likely to come back. If you put him on the trail of the Phantom Gang, your life will pay the forfeit, for sure. Take warning!"

Another thrilling story of adventure at sea—next Monday!

There was no signature to the note. "H'm! An anonymous warning!" murmured Locke. "Is this a sheet of any kind of paper used in your offices, do you know?"

"It is not." "The word 'forfeit' is misspelt I see," went on Locke thoughtfully, "probably with intention. It is hardly likely that one of your own typewriters was used for inditing this. However, we can soon test that point. Kindly ask one of your clerks to obtain specimens of work from each of the machines in use in these offices."

The specimens were obtained. With his powerful magnifying-glass Locke compared the lettering on the anonymous note with the work of the office machines.

"As I thought," he remarked, looking up. "This note was typed on some machine away from the office. Given time, I think I could find out the perpetrator of it. However, I think that perhaps by a bold shot I might discover the sender of the warning without any lengthy investigations. It seems fairly clear that the note was put on your desk by one of your own staff."

"That's what I thought, Mr. Locke." The voice of the railway magnate held a tremulous note. Naturally of a nervous and highly-strung disposition, it was clear that this grim warning had upset him exceedingly.

"How many members of your staff have access to your private room?" asked the detective.

"A round dozen," replied the railway magnate. "It is the custom, for any of my secretaries, or the clerks in the large office adjoining, to come and go as they like. Often, you see, they have documents to place on my desk for signature."

"I see. And are all the members of your personal staff Americans?"

Mr. Milbourn wrinkled his brow. "Let me see," he murmured. "My secretary is Canadian born. One of the under-secretaries is an American, and the other an Englishman. Among the clerks we have five Americans, three Canadians, and one Englishman."

"How long have the two Englishmen lived on this side of the Atlantic?" next demanded the detective.

"The clerk has been out here since he was a boy. Most of his life was spent in Vancouver, I believe. The assistant-secretary, Walter Smythe, came to us four months ago from Vancouver. He had only arrived from England three months before that."

"Please send for him!" said Ferrers Locke.

Mr. Milbourn touched a button. A smart American clerk entered.

"Ask Mr. Smythe to come and see me," said the magnate.

A few moments later the assistant-secretary entered.

"You sent for me, sir?"

Before the railway man had time to speak, Ferrers Locke thrust the anonymous letter beneath the newcomer's eyes.

"Now, Mr. Smythe!" he said curtly. "Why did you threaten your manager with this?"

The Englishman started as though shot. The colour faded from his cheeks, and then returned in a flood of crimson. He blurted out an emphatic denial.

But now Ferrers Locke knew he had made no mistake. It had not been ordinary surprise which the assistant-secretary had revealed, but guilt had been written in every line of his features.

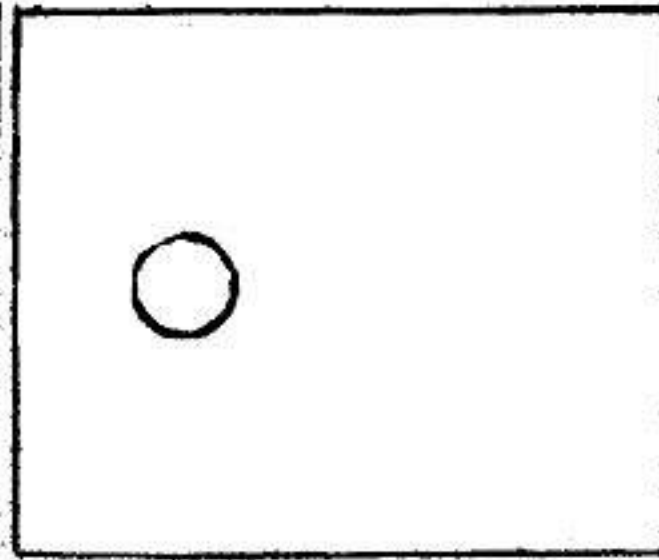
The detective rose and faced him, his keen eyes riveted on the man.

"You may or may not know, Mr. Smythe," he remarked calmly, "that I am Ferrers Locke. Perhaps you have heard of me?"

"I—I've heard of you all right!" snarled the Englishman. "But by what right do you accuse me of—"

"That's enough!" said Locke sharply. "Bluff won't help you, my man. You're a mere amateur in crime. You thought because this note was not typed on one of the office machines you could not be found out. Perhaps you would like me to inform you where it was written?"

The detective paused and curled his lip contemptuously. Although Smythe had not succeeded in his own bluff, he fell an immediate victim to the bluff of the detective, Ferrers Locke.



One of the twenty-six tissue-paper cipher slips found in the possession of Smythe.

"All right," the secretary growled, "I'll own up! I put the letter on Mr. Milbourn's desk this morning. How the blazes you found out, beats me hollow!"

"It was really very simple," said Ferrers Locke. "The most obvious theory to test was the probability that one of the office staff had written the letter and placed it on Mr. Milbourn's desk. That it had been written by an Englishman who had not lived in America long, was fairly clear. You gave yourself away, my friend, with that phrase: 'If Ferrers Locke goes West, he is not likely to come back.' No American or person who has lived long in the States would use the word 'likely' in a sentence of that sort; he would use the word 'liable.'"

The assistant-secretary gave a savage growl.

"This'll cost me my job, I suppose?"

"It will," said the railway magnate firmly. "You're fired! Get out of it!"

Locke raised his hand.

"Not so fast—not so fast!" he said. "There are a few questions I have to put to this agent of the Phantom Gang."

But his hopes of getting some information about the hold-up men of the West proved abortive. Smythe blankly refused to state who had appointed him a sort of agent in the very headquarters of the N.Y. & S.C.R. itself.

"Then," said Ferrers Locke, turning to Mr. Milbourn, "I must request you, sir, to give this man in charge for issuing a threat against you. Later, you can bring up what points you like in his favour. At present, though, it would be safer if he were under lock and key."

The police were summoned, and Smythe given in charge. Before he was taken from the office, the patrolmen, on Locke's suggestion, searched through his pockets.

There was nothing which seemed to interest the detective, however, save an envelope bearing the Cougar Landing postmark. This contained a number of small oblong slips of tissue-paper—twenty-six in all—each of which contained a single circular mark. A curious feature was the different positions of some of the noughts.

"Say, Mr. Locke," said one of the police-officers, "you can bet your life that's a cipher of some kind."

Locke smiled.

"I won't do that, in case it isn't," he

K	A	Q	R	S	L
Z	M	T	U	V	G
H	I	W	X	Y	D
E	F	C	B	K	A
Q	R	S	L	Z	M

The oblong cardboard cipher key which Jack Drake brought back from the apartment house.

said; "but it certainly looks like one, and unless I'm greatly mistaken it is one of that type of cipher which needs a keyboard. It will be necessary to search Smythe's desk, and possibly his private apartments."

But a search of the desk used by the assistant-secretary revealed no trace of a key to the cipher. Locke then asked the police if they would arrange for a warrant to search the private belongings of Smythe at the apartment house where he had his residence.

This the police agreed to do, and Locke nodded to Drake to accompany them and their prisoner. But before handing back the tissue slips to the police, the detective made an accurate copy of them on tracing-paper for his own use.

Presently, to the intense satisfaction of Ferrers Locke and the railway magnate, Jack Drake returned, bearing a copy of a key found by the police in Smythe's private possessions. The key was in the form of an oblong piece of card of the exact size of any one of the tissue slips. It was divided into partitions, in each of which was a letter.

By placing each of the slips of tracing-paper in turn directly over the cardboard key, the detective found that the following letters were indicated by the noughts: E five times, N four times, W, C, A, S, F, and T twice each, and the single letters H, X, P, I, and R.

Ferrers Locke, Drake, and Mr. Milbourn then made copies of these letters, and set to work to arrange them, in the hope of making a message from the curious jumble. It was like an interesting kind of parlour game.

Suddenly Drake gave a cry.

"Whoop-ee! I've got it—all but!"

"All but!" repeated Ferrers Locke. "Let me see your effort, my boy."

And Drake revealed the amazing message he had made of the jumble of letters. It was this:

"WE CAN EXPECT WHEN IN SAFE NREFT."

"I should think it is 'all but'!" exclaimed Ferrers Locke with a smile. "Still, it certainly looks as though you have hit about the right combination of letters, my boy. Let's all set to work and try to sort them out into better order."

For another half-hour they all worked on the problem. At the expiration of that period, Locke, with furrowed brow, drew attention to the pad on which he had been writing.

"It may be taken for granted," he said, "that the leader of the gang out West was seeking information from Smythe. Four of the words are quite intelligible if placed in this order: 'When can we expect?' It's up to us to sort out the remaining eleven letters."

The detective turned to Mr. Milbourn.

"Is there any important consignment of special value that is going to be sent over your road, so far as you're aware, sir?"

The railway magnate thought for a moment, then he slapped his knee.

"Geel!" he cried. "There's that jewellery which is to be sent to Vancouver for conveyance to a high Chinese dignitary in Peking."

"Who is sending it?" asked Locke.

"The famous New York firm of Raffsteins."

"Raffsteins!"

Locke eagerly glanced over the letters on the pad on the desk.

"Eureka!" he cried. "We've got the message all right! Here it is! 'When can we expect Raffsteins?' It's as clear as daylight! The hold-up gang want information as to which train will carry the valuable jewellery to be sent out West. With that knowledge in their possession, they would lay their plans to stop the train."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Milbourn, wiping a bead of perspiration from his brow.

"Listen to me, sir!" said Ferrers Locke quickly. "You must notify Raffsteins that you cannot undertake to convey the goods. Tell 'em to send the stuff round to Vancouver via Seattle by another line."

"I will, believe me!" muttered the railway man. "You and your excellent young assistant have prevented the fulfilment of a most dastardly plot. For the reputation of my company, I am grateful."

"But the gang is still at large, you know," Locke reminded him. "My next

Read about Jack Drake's narrow escape from being "savaged"—

investigation must be made on the other side of the Rockies. The Cougar Landing postmark on the envelope sent to Smythe is an important clue, and I think that this little township of Cougar Landing holds the key to the rest of the mystery. If you will arrange matters, sir, Drake and I will leave for New York on the west-bound mail to-night."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Gang at Work I

IT was four days after the visit to Mr. Carey Milbourn's office in New York City. Now Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake, warmly wrapped up, stood on the rear platform of the observation-car of the N.Y. & S.C.R. west-bound mail-train.

Neither the detective nor his assistant were travelling incognito. Locke had felt reasonably assured that Smythe had written to his chief in the Kootenays of Milbourn's intention to engage him. Moreover, as so few folk disembarked at any time at Pentasson—the little place to which he and Drake were bound—it was a certainty that any new arrivals would be noted by the hold-up gang. For that it was a fairly large and very well organized gang was evident.

Besides a couple of revolvers apiece, Locke and the boy had brought out West with them two thirty-three Winchester sporting-rifles and a goodly supply of ammunition; and as they both wore in their belts a keen-bladed hunting-knife, they can properly be described as being armed to the teeth.

All day the tortuous journey through the awe-inspiring grandeur of the Rocky Mountains had kept them alert with interest. Previously, the ride through the prairies had bored them almost to tears.

Now, however, the mighty peaks of the Rockies were behind them. They were passing through the foothills of the Kootenays country.

It was nearly ten o'clock at night. The countryside was wrapped in a white mantle of snow. Dark clouds drifted across a pale, full moon. Only Locke and Drake stood on the platform of the observation-car. Most of the other first-class passengers on the train were beginning to retire for the night. Of the rest, a few played cards or swapped yarns.

"There'll be a heavy fall of snow again soon, my boy," murmured the detective, glancing aloft.

But Drake's eyes were upon a narrow gulch from which tall pines, snow-dappled, reared their stately heads.

"My aunt!" he muttered, as though to himself. "I'll bet there's some big game about this part!"

Ferrers Locke chuckled. "Ten to one there is!" he agreed. "And we may have all the big game hunting we need, my boy, without going out of our way for grizzly bears and cougars."

"Let's hope so, sir!" said Drake enthusiastically.

The detective glanced at his watch. "The train is running three hours behind time," he murmured; "nothing on a journey of this magnitude in the winter. We ought to reach our destination, Pentasson, in an hour."

"And I sha'n't be sorry, sir," said Drake. "Four days on a train is quite enough at a stretch. Now that we've passed the mountains, I— Hallo! What's up?"

Both he and Locke were shot heavily against the iron rails of the observation-car platform. The train, to a hissing of the brakes, was pulling up hard.

"Egad!" ejaculated Locke. "I wonder what—"

He stopped short, and, leaning out, looked up the line.

They were passing round a low, snow-clad bluff which Locke decided was the Cougar Bluff he had seen on the maps with which Mr. Milbourn had supplied him. At the head of the semi-circular stretch of coaches he could discern the dark outline of the giant engine, with its gleaming headlight, and a little ahead again was the form of a man on the track—a man waving a small red lantern.

Drake gave an uneasy laugh.

"It's probably the foreman of the section gang who tends this part of the line, sir," he said. "A heavy slide of snow might have

descended from the bluff and blocked the line round the bend."

But hardly were the words out of his mouth, and the train at a standstill, when three other dark figures burst from behind a clump of pines.

"By gad!" muttered Locke. "It's a hold-up!"

He darted across the observation platform and looked forward. Three other men had burst from hiding on the opposite side of the track.

A revolver shot rang out, and there was a piercing human scream. Then other shouts and shrill cries echoed along the train as the passengers became aware of the hold-up.

"Quick, my boy!" cried Locke, grasping Drake by the arm. "Follow me!"

He leaped over the back of the observation-car platform, and waited momentarily till Drake joined him. Then he pointed to a crevice in the whitened side of Cougar Bluff.

"When I give the word, my boy, make a dash for that. Ready? Go!"

Together they left the cover afforded by the observation-car, and darted swiftly to

of Cougar Bluff, Locke succeeded in his object. Then he and Drake cautiously picked their way between the trees. As they went the detective explained the plan he had in mind.

"I gained a great deal of information about this part of the country from Mr. Milbourn," he whispered. "Beyond here lies a wide cattle-range country. The wind has been blowing strongly for some time. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the powdered snow has been blown away to a great extent from the ranges. Only in the shelter of such spots as this bluff is it at all thick."

"And what do you deduce from that, sir?" "That the gang arrived here on horses. If my deduction is correct the animals will be in charge of some member of the gang a short distance beyond this bluff. We must settle with this man first, and stampede the horses. Then we can have a reasonable chance of dealing with the other hold-up men. To have started a fracas down by the line would only have meant serious danger to the passengers of the train. These hold-up men are desperate villains, and hold life cheaply."



Jack Drake, with Locke close behind him, had almost reached the head of the animal when the cayuse bucked violently. The foot of the hold-up man came clear of the stirrup-iron; then, before Drake could grasp the reins of the horse, it dashed madly away, riderless. (See Chapter 2.)

the bluff. No shots greeted them, as they had half expected.

They paused behind a snow-covered rock to glance along the train.

The method of the hold-up gang, which consisted of seven men, was apparent. The man who had stopped the train had placed his lantern on the ground. The lower half of his face was covered with a piece of sacking. He was pointing two revolvers towards the cab of the giant locomotive. Two other armed members of the gang had the three postal sorters who travelled on the train lined up outside the mail-van. One of these hold-up men, however, was keeping a weather eye upon the rear cars, in case of any threatening movement from any of the passengers. The remaining members of the gang were inside the mail-van, rifling the mails.

"It's a bit of luck we weren't spotted," said Locke. "Keep in my tracks, and we'll try to gain that clump of pines and firs at the top of the bluff."

By stooping low, and taking advantage of a small gully in the side of the rocky slope

The area of trees proved of no great depth. From behind the trunk of a towering fir, Locke and Drake looked out upon the country on the opposite side of Cougar Bluff. The moon, peeping from a bank of cloud, gave a sharp, clear view for a few seconds, but no horses were tethered immediately to the south of the bluff.

"That's bad luck!" muttered Locke. "Maybe the steeds are to the west, round the bend of railway-line."

This proved to be a correct surmise. As the twain worked their way among the trees a neigh of a horse fell on their ears, proceeding from that direction. Then they heard the sound of voices from beyond the bluff.

"They've got the registered mail, and are making their get-away!" muttered Locke, gliding faster through the snow. "Probably they left one man as a rearguard while the main gang gets a start. That would account for the fact that there's no shooting as yet from the train."

Making their way along the southern edge of the clump of trees which surmounted

—in next week's magnificent mid-ocean story I

the bluff, the detective and his assistant saw a number of horsemen gallop into view, heading towards the south. They were out of shooting range, and Locke bit his lip with vexation.

In that moment the investigator almost wished he had made an attempt to obtain his sporting-rifle before leaving the train. But then he knew that he and Drake could not have reached the spot where they now were had they delayed in starting.

Now Locke and Drake rushed as fast as possible among the trees, in the hope of reaching the western end of the bluff. They had seen seven riders depart, but they hoped that of these one had been with the horses. If such was the case, there was still another man to make his get-away.

As the two detectives emerged from the trees they saw that the western end of the Cougar Bluff descended in a long, rocky slope, thickly plastered with snow, and their hearts thrilled with exultation as a rift in the clouds let the moon flood the scene with light. Two hundred yards away, at the farther end of the slope, a horse was tethered to a slim pine-trunk.

Then round a clump of big boulders came the last of the hold-up gang, who had been left as rearguard while the main body made their get-away. He was edging his way backwards, his guns turned towards the train; but directly he passed the boulders he spun on his heels and dashed to his horse. A couple of moments later two or three shots rang out from the direction of the train, the bullets pinging against the rocks.

Both Locke and Drake drew a revolver and dashed down the slope to get within range of the ruffian.

The hold-up man untethered his horse and leaped into the saddle. Then he became aware of the presence of the two on the slope leading from the crest of the bluff.

He tapped his heels against the sides of his cayuse, which immediately flew off like the wind. Twice Locke and Drake took pot-

shots at the fellow, who in reply sent a bullet whizzing between them.

The detective halted, and rested the barrel of his revolver on his left arm. Again his gun spoke, and, with a cry, the hold-up man fell backwards from his saddle.

"Catch that horse, Drake!" panted Locke, running forward again.

The boy fairly flew down the slope, from which much of the snow had been blown by the winds. He, like his chief, had noted what had happened. The hold-up man had not fallen clear; his left foot remained caught in a stirrup. The horse, meanwhile, plunged forward, dragging the man behind it.

Jack Drake, with Locke close behind him, had almost reached the head of the animal when the cayuse bucked violently. The foot of the hold-up man came clear of the stirrup-iron. Then, before Drake could grasp the reins of the horse, it dashed madly away, riderless, towards the south.

"We can't catch the brute now!" gasped out Locke. "But we've nobbled one of the gang, and that may mean a lot!"

A swift examination of the fallen rogue revealed the fact that Locke's bullet had pierced his heart. He was quite dead, and, after pocketing the fellow's two revolvers, Locke turned to make his way to the train.

But from round the pile of large boulders came one of the men who had been in charge of the mail-van. The fellow was armed, and, with a loud shout, he blazed off his pistol.

Ferrers Locke threw up his arms. "Hi! Go easy!" he roared. "I'm not a hold-up man!"

The train-man advanced cautiously. He was quickly joined by some of the others from the mail-train. When Locke explained matters to them their suspicions left them. Upon learning that one of the hold-up men had been killed, they became almost fiendishly jubilant.

Under Locke's directions, the dead ruffian was carried to the train, and placed in the rifed mail-van. Meanwhile, the news of the

feat of Locke and Jack Drake circulated amongst the passengers. Loud cheers greeted the detective and his assistant.

Locke informed the conductor of the train that he would like to make a further examination of the slain hold-up man. Accordingly, he and Drake entered the mail-van.

Near to the still form of the bandit was another body. It was that of the engineer of the train. For the first time Locke learned the full story of the engineer's heroism. Despite the fact that he had been covered with two pistols by the man who had stopped the train, he had tried to draw the revolver with which the railway company had supplied him. Immediately the bandit had shot him dead.

Now the fireman, assisted by one of the brakemen, restarted the train, and drove it to Pentasson. Here the bodies of the bandit and the heroic engineer were given into the charge of the local police.

Despite the lateness of the hour, the news of the hold-up spread like wildfire through the small township.

Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake put up their meagre luggage at the station cloak-room. Then, with their sporting rifles slung over their shoulders, they made themselves known to the chief-detective of the provincial police who was stationed at Pentasson.

In less than twenty minutes from the time that the train had arrived at Pentasson, a small posse of horsemen trotted rapidly from the township in the direction of Cougar Bluff.

Locke and Drake, who had been supplied with the two best mounts procurable from the local livery stable, were among the party. The others consisted of three members of the police force and two experienced Indian trackers.

But before they had ridden half a mile from the township the threatened snow began to fall. At first it drifted down slowly and unevenly, but soon it was as though a continuous white sheet was descending through the night.

"Ugh!" grunted one of the Indians. "No good! Too much plenty snow! No can find tracks!"

The detective of the provincial police turned in the saddle and regarded Locke ruefully.

"He's right!" he groaned. "Long before we get even to Cougar Bluff the snow will have blotted out the trail taken by the bandits! We might just as well turn and go to our beds!"

And, slowly and sorrowfully, the posse faced about and staggered blindly through the falling snow back to the township.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Seven Pines!

"KINDLY bring me another stack of those delicious buckwheat-cakes, and some more butter and maple-syrup!"

The negro waiter nodded, and, turning, left the room which Locke and Drake were sharing in the Pioneer Hotel, Pentasson.

Jack Drake—who had given the order—and Ferrers Locke were breakfasting alone. No sooner had the door closed behind the darkie than Locke gulped down the remainder of his coffee and rose from the little trestle table.

"Excuse me, my boy!" he said with a smile. "I'll leave you to it. I've had a walk this morning—which you haven't—and the air of Pentasson certainly gives one an appetite. But I can't pretend to outlast you in a contest with buckwheat-cakes and maple-syrup."

Going to his suit-case, the sleuth took out a blue-coloured scarf and spread it out on his knees.

"My hat, sir!" exclaimed Drake. "That's a pretty ragged-looking article!"

"You don't recognise it—eh?" said Locke.

"Can't say I do, sir."

"Well," said the detective, "last night this engircled the throat of the train bandit I shot."

He pushed the scarf out of sight as the negro entered with a fresh stack of buckwheats.

STAND



AND DELIVER!

By
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:: THE ::
GREATEST

The finest yarn David Goodwin ever wrote! That's what will be said of the grand new serial in the POPULAR. It is all that and more. The story takes you back into the grand old fighting-days when Dick Turpin was on the roads. It is a breathless, splendidly written tale. It conjures up the smartness and pluck and the chivalry and grit of the highwayman who had friends up and down the country, and who in his way was a king—king of the road, a loyal comrade, an implacable enemy, and such a fighter as England had not seen since the days of Robin Hood. You will be entranced by this story of dash and vim, sword-play and hairbreadth escape. Turpin stands out as a hero. He was the aristocrat of the highway. Small wonder young Dick Neville stood by him through thick and thin! But read the yarn. You will be amazed, and then carried away by the splendour and the colour of it, the glimpse of the ancient castles of Old England, and the brilliant scenes in palace and cottage. Dick Turpin was the friend of the poor, and we can welcome this magnificent yarn of his exploits, his escapes, his breakneck rides, and the courage which never failed him in the darkest hours of his life.

When the man had departed again, however, he began afresh to examine the souvenir of the dead ruffian.

"I saw Furby, the provincial detective, before you were up, Drake," said Ferrers Locke. "We viewed the body of the bandit together. On my expressing the wish, Furby gave this article into my charge. I noticed something peculiar about it in the mail-van last night."

Locke held up the scarf. It was a very large one, fully four feet square. But, as Drake had remarked, it was of a very ragged description. Altogether, there were about a couple of dozen holes in it.

"These holes," resumed the detective, with a gesture, "have not been made through wear. They bear the appearance of having been made deliberately. They are more or less of a uniform size. What they mean—if anything at all—I don't pretend to know. But the fact of them being there struck me as so peculiar that I am going to retain this scarf for the time being. Now, when you have finished your breakfast, my boy, we will join Furby. We are going for a ride over the country to the south of Cougar Bluff."

"Oh, good egg!"

Jack Drake washed the last mouthful of buckwheat-cake down with a draught of coffee, and announced himself ready for anything.

Within half an hour the same posse which had been so unlucky on the previous night set out for Cougar Bluff. No one was hopeful of picking up the trail taken by the train bandits. That was out of the question after the heavy fall of snow during the night. Locke, however, had expressed a wish to ride over the country to the south of Cougar Bluff, and the police, anyway, had to make a show of doing something.

After reaching the bluff they rode for ten miles through the snow towards the south. Beyond a few ranches and orchards and rocks and streams, the ranges held nothing of special interest. Inquiries of ranchers were productive of no information of any use.

At last Ferrers Locke drew rein at the crest of a long, sweeping cattle-range. Ahead lay a more rugged stretch of country—bluffs, gulches, and areas of rock, dotted with clumps of pine and fir. To the right front was a stretch of smooth snow and the houses of a township.

"That's Cougar Landing," volunteered Furby. "The smooth stretch of snow is above the ice of an arm of the Kootenay Lake."

"I think, Furby," said Locke, "that Drake and I will go on to Cougar Landing. If you will ride another couple of miles with us, we will walk the rest of the distance. Then you can take the horses back to Pentasson. I'll give you, too, the money to pay our bills at the Pioneer Hotel. We'll send for our luggage later."

"As you like, Mr. Locke," said the provincial man. "Sykes is our man at Cougar Landing. Make yourself known to him."

They rode on down towards the township until Locke again drew rein. He had stopped near a huge, smooth-sided boulder, on which a small advertisement was crudely painted. The words of the ad were:

"BATHURST'S UNIVERSAL STORES.
The best in Cougar Landing for dry goods
of all kinds.
High quality. Lowest prices."

"H'm!" murmured Locke. "It's strange to run across an advertisement like that out here in the Woolly West! Not many people pass this way, I suppose?"

"Oh, I don't know!" said Furby. "Quite a number of the ranchers and fruit-farmers do. Old Bathurst is an American. He believes in always reminding people of the existence of his stores. You'll find those ads. all over the place. A fellow called Hendrick, who is a real-estate agent, an advertising man, and the Mayor of Cougar Landing rolled into one, has 'em put up for him."

At this spot Locke and Drake dismounted, and handed over their horses to the others of the posse. Then, after taking farewell of their companions, they set off on foot to reach the township of Cougar Landing

As they trudged into the main street they saw a notice-board:

"BATHURST'S UNIVERSAL STORES.
Cut prices in all goods during this week."

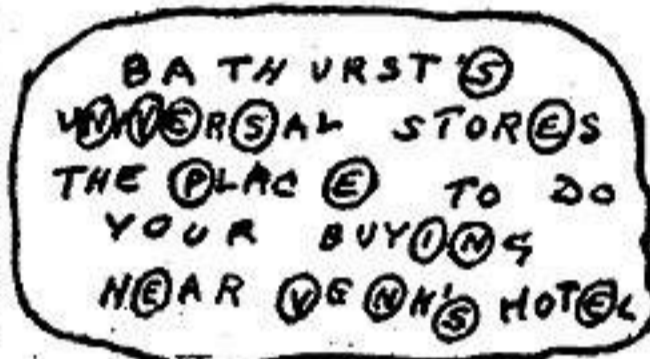
"Mr. Bathurst is sure a live wire, as they say out here!" chuckled Ferrers Locke. "He ought to get on in business! I think, Drake, we might as well pay our respects to the mayor whose painters stick these notices up. He will be able to recommend us to the best hotel—that is, if there's more than one in the place."

After making an inquiry at an eating-house, the twain set off for the mayor's residence—a white wooden house just off the main street. Hendrick, a fat, unpleasant-looking man, received them in what he was pleased to term his "library," an untidy apartment littered with books, papers, and pipes.

He recommended Venn's Hotel to the visitors, and then chatted with Locke about the hold-up on the previous night. As he was speaking, Locke felt his foot kick against something soft beneath his chair. Looking down, he saw it was a wolfskin.

But, quick as thought, Hendrick snatched the wolfskin up and tossed it behind a worn settee. In the brief space it took to perform the action, Locke glimpsed that the wolfskin was peppered with holes.

"Some fool of a ranch-hand brought that in," said Hendrick in explanation. "He thought he'd get the Government bounty of ten dollars for killing a wolf. He'd riddled the thing with bullets; but, of course, it ought to have been the head and ears he should have brought to have got his money."



The letters marked with a circle in the above diagram are those which Ferrers Locke saw through the holes in the bandit's scarf.

And even as he spoke, Ferrers Locke knew that the man was lying.

Leaving the mayor, Locke and Drake went direct to Venn's Hotel. Entering the lounge, they approached the clerk and booked rooms, paying a deposit.

As they turned from the desk they were greeted by a loudly-dressed Englishman, who raised his lengthy form from one of the chairs.

"Aw, excuse me! You're Mr. Locke—what? And this is Drake? I couldn't help overhearin' you talkin' to the clerk just now. I've heard of you before, don't you know. Beastly clever 'ecs—what? I'm an Englishman, too, bai Jove!"

"Really?" said Locke, with a trace of sarcasm.

"Yaas," drawled the fellow. "Saward's my name. The pater thinks I'm fruit-growing, y'know. Haven't started yet, though, bai Jove! Too beastly fatiguing—what?"

Ferrers Locke and Drake were grateful to the clerk, who touched their arms and indicated that he would show them the rooms they were to occupy.

"Who was that silly ass?" Locke asked the clerk, when they were upstairs. "A remittance man, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir. He's Gerald Saward—'Queenie' Saward the boys in these parts call him. His old man in England makes him a monthly allowance. Queenie, in return, writes home lies about the progress his fruit orchards are making. He's smarter than he looks, but most all-fired lazy."

Having viewed their rooms, the detective suggested to Drake that they should indulge in a walk. Drake was rather surprised when Locke set off briskly in the direction from which they had entered the township. Once Locke halted near the

"Stores" signboard at the head of Main Street, but as someone emerged from a pool saloon near by the detective strolled on again.

His next halt was at the advertisement painted on the large boulder where he and Drake had parted from the posse.

"I've come here to test a rather far-fetched theory, my boy," said the detective. "Cougar Landing, in my opinion, holds the key to the activities of the Phantom Gang, as it has been called; but it is unlikely that all the members of the gang are citizens of Cougar Landing."

"Whb knows?" said Drake. "Some of 'em might be, to outward appearances, respectable ranchers."

"Quite so, my boy. They must have some sort of method of conveying special information amongst the gang, if the gang is wide spread. Supposing Hendrick is mixed up with the gang, and arranges to keep them wise to the orders of their chief. There is just the possibility he might do it by a series of uniform signs over the countryside."

Then, to Drake's astonishment, Locke drew from his pocket the scarf taken from the dead bandit. This he placed over the lettering of the crudely painted advertisement. Gradually, by adjusting the scarf, he brought seventeen letters clearly into view through the holes in the scarf. Holding the scarf in position he turned to his assistant.

"Jot down those letters in your notebook, my boy," he said. "We'll try to arrange them in the hotel this evening."

Drake did as he was bidden. As it was getting dusk the two returned direct to the township.

Going into the detective's room, they locked the door, and Drake drew out his notebook. Then he copied the letters out again for Locke's benefit. The letters were these:

"T H E A S E H N G G O O S H G H I."

To their surprise the letters almost worked themselves into shape. They took the first three letters out to make the word "The." Then Drake noted the sequence of "G O O S," and added the other E to make "Goose." And in less than ten minutes they had formed the phrase, "The goose hangs high."

Drake looked at it and burst into a laugh. "Well, we've made something of it, sir," he said; "but what the dickens it means now, I'm blessed if I can see!"

"It's easy," returned Locke. "'Everything's lovely and the goose hangs high' is a popular phrase in some parts of America. So we can take it that 'The goose hangs high' is meant to convey that everything is O.K. By Jove, I believe we're hot on the scent at last! While you watch friend Hendrick as much as possible, I'll keep my eye on these ads. for which he is responsible."

That night, when no one was abroad, Locke slipped from the hotel, and applied his test to the advertisement board at the head of Main Street. Here he was doomed to disappointment. Apparently it contained no secret message to the members of the Phantom Gang.

Next morning, however, Locke hired a horse at the livery stables, and rode off across country. First he paid a visit to the boulder from which he had gained information on the previous day. Fresh white letters had been painted over the others. The paint was so fresh that it could not have been put on more than half an hour previously. The new advertisement read:

"BATHURST'S UNIVERSAL STORES.
The place to do your buying.
Near Venn's Hotel."

The lettering was even more ragged and uneven than that of the previous ad. The cause of this was speedily apparent when Locke adjusted his scarf over the words. The letters which showed through the holes were the following:

"S N V E S E P E I N E V N S E."

Fifteen in all. Instead of returning to Cougar Landing at once, Locke continued his ride. Similar ads had been painted up in several other spots—on a shed near a ranch, on a tree stump, and a special Bathurst's Stores hoarding just to the west of the township. Later in the hotel, from the letters which Locke had noted, the detective and Drake

THE COUGAR BLUFF HOLD-UP!

(Continued from page 27.)

formed three words. They were "Pines seven seven," which conveyed nothing to them.

"Let's twist 'em round, sir," suggested Drake, after they had stared at this combination for a few seconds; "but 'Seven pines seven' doesn't sound any better."

"By Jove, doesn't it!" exclaimed Locke. "I believe you've hit on it, my boy!"

He took a map of the Cougar Landing district from his pocket and scanned it searchingly.

"Here we are! Seven Pines—a small clump of tall pine-trees five miles due south of this township."

"But the other seven, sir?"

"Seven o'clock, maybe," replied Locke. "This clue is worth following up. This evening we will go out to Seven Pines by a circuitous route, and we shall be there to see if anything occurs at seven o'clock."

Five miles, as the crow flies, to the south of Cougar Landing towered the seven gaunt pine-trees to which Ferrers Locke had referred. The rugged hills and giant rocks in their vicinity brooded in eerie silence save for the cry of some night bird; but behind one of the rocks, not thirty yards from the Seven Pines, crouched England's greatest detective and his plucky young assistant, Jack Drake.

At fifteen minutes to seven—a quarter of

an hour after they had taken up their position—the vicinity of Seven Pines was still deserted, save for themselves. Then the dull thud-thud of hoofs sounded on their cars. A couple of horsemen arrived.

One by one other horsemen came on the scene, until eight had gathered under the Seven Pines.

Soon all the gang, with the exception of one man, came towards the rocks. The watchers shrank back as the men passed within a couple of yards of the huge boulder behind which they were hiding. To their amazement they saw the men grasp one of the rocks near them and begin to tug.

The amazement of Locke and Drake was even greater when this rock moved slowly and evenly outwards, to reveal an aperture in the jagged wall of rocks, of which this door of rock was a part.

One by one the gang entered the aperture to a cave beyond; but one man remained in charge of the horses and as a sentinel.

"Drake, my boy," whispered the detective. "I must leave you to attend to that fellow. By hook or crook you must get one of those horses, and ride like blazes back to Cougar Landing. See Sykes, and get him to come out here with a posse. I'll deal with these other bandits."

While Locke crept to the opening in the rocks, Drake moved cautiously towards the sentinel. He waited until the man turned his back, and then darted towards him. The fellow swung round, but the boy dealt him a smashing blow with the butt of his revolver. Then he leaped on to a horse, and dashed away towards Cougar Landing.

A member of the gang, who had heard

the sound of the horse leaving, came running to the exit of the cave. A cry of consternation left his lips as he found himself looking into Locke's revolver.

"Get your hands up!" ordered the detective brusquely. "Anyone who attempts to get out will receive an ounce of lead!"

For a full hour the detective mounted guard, and then Drake and the posse arrived. One by one the Phantom Gang were allowed to emerge from the aperture among the rocks. As each came out he was covered by the detective while a member of the provincial police handcuffed him, then the sacking was snatched from his face.

This procedure was adopted with each. It was no surprise to Locke and Drake when Hendrick was found to be one of the gang.

The leader was the last to emerge from the aperture. As the sacking was snatched from his face, even Locke gave a start of surprise; for the leader of the notorious Phantom Gang was none other than Queenie Seward, the apparently brainless and inoffensive remittance man!

Walter Smythe, the agent of the gang in New York, got off with a comparatively light sentence. Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake not only earned the gratitude of the whole Kootenays district and Mr. Carey Milbourn, the manager of the railway, but also the handsome sum of five thousand American dollars.

THE END.

(Be certain to read next week's ripping detective yarn entitled: "The Case of the Cattle-boat!")

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