

MAGNET READER WINS £5 THIS WEEK! See Competition Result Inside!

No. 892. Vol. XXVII.

Week Ending March 14th, 1925.

The Magnet 2^d

EVERY MONDAY.

Library of Complete School Stories.



BUNTER, THE PROPHET!

BILLY BUNTER CONSULTS THE ORACLE!

(An amusing incident from this week's screamingly funny school story of Harry Wharton & Co. - inside.)



THIS is a competition in which every one of you can join. You are all familiar with the Cross Words that fly between schoolboys, and you are all familiar with the time-honoured Limerick. For the benefit of those unacquainted with completing an unfinished Limerick I will give you a few hints that may be found helpful. Now, suppose you were required to complete the following verse:

Said Brown to Bully Silvester
In tones that courted disaster:
"Yah, go and eat coke
Hit some other bloke,"

You must make your last line scan with the first two. That's the most important thing to remember in completing a Limerick.

For instance, such a line as:

"Then Brown ran—but Silvester was the faster."

is obviously far too long. A more suitable last line would be:

"Now Brown's requiring some plaster."

I don't say that this is a clever line, but it fulfils the requirements of a Limerick and scans correctly with the first two lines.

Another point is, don't try to be too clever. A simple but forceful line is what is wanted—a line that rhymes and scans with the first two.

Now that you have got the hang of the thing, fill in the coupon below.

To the sender of the "last line," which in the Editor's opinion is the best, will be awarded the handsome money prize of FIVE POUNDS. To the 12 next best, Consolation Prizes of SPLENDID POCKET-KNIVES will be awarded.

DIRECTIONS.

When you have thought out a really good last line fill in the coupon below, taking care to write your name and address clearly IN INK, and post it to:—

"Cross Words" Limerick Competition, No. 8.
c/o MAGNET, Gough House,
Gough Square, London, E.C. 4,

so as to reach that address not later than March 17, 1925. You may send in as many attempts as you like, but all efforts must be written on the proper Entrance Form.

It is a distinct condition of entry that the Editor's decision must be regarded as final.

RESULT OF NO. 2 COMPETITION ON PAGE 26.

NEXT MONDAY'S PROGRAMME!

"THE GOLDEN PYRAMID!"

LOOK out on Monday next for the sensational opening of our new serial. This is the story to make history. Ever since the year dot men have been after gold, risking their lives for the precious metal; for gold is so much concentrated power. Possess it, and you have the mastery of the world: That's the popular idea. Of course, popular ideas and impressions, quickly come by, have a slight tendency towards exaggeration. But there is no spirit of extravagance when our new serial is described as the biggest and most important yarn of gold-questing and adventure yet given in the MAGNET. Look out for the start of it next Monday!

"COKER'S CROSS WORDS!"

By Frank Richards.

Doubtless you knew it would have to come. Of course, Horace Coker could not be expected to leave the great Cross Word craze alone. Angels rush in, you know. Most likely angels are too busy to deal with such things, but Coker has been managing to squeeze in the time for a shot at the fascinating puzzle business. Cross Word mania is as catching as the flu itself. It takes you unawares, just as it took the inimitable Coker. Naturally, as you would surmise—for you know Coker—the determined fellow brings his heavy artillery to bear on the problem. I doubt much if Mr. Frank Richards has ever written a funnier yarn than this. Don't miss it! Coker goes into battle with a vengeance. His enthusiasm is sweeping and terrific. He gets that wild, vastly preoccupied glint in his optic such as we know. It really does not matter a bean what subject Coker takes up; he goes all out. This is as it should be. And yet, if wiser counsels ever prevailed with the heavy, methodical, grimly earnest Coker, he might bring off more victories. Still, one has to take Coker as he is. Onward he plunges, armed to the teeth with a sharp bit of blacklead, and a battery of six or seven lettered words beginning with some plaguery letter of the alphabet, and ending up with some other. The welkin will ring next Monday. And the laughs! There will be one roar!

A DREAM SUPPLEMENT.

Such stuff as dreams are made of! To sleep, perchance to dream! Shakespeare will excuse this reference. The fact is, the next issue of the "Greyfriars Herald" deals profoundly and humorously with the majestic theme of dreams. It likewise touches on the side-department of the business—namely, visions. Three shops through, please, for those! The "G. H." staff is fitted for the job. Some of them are out-and-out dreamers. But there is stern, practical stuff as well. You know how a dream catches you—it is enormously thrilling, and you realise that what you are dreaming about is chunks more important than anything in the ordinary world. Then you wake! What a drop is there! You cannot remember a single item of the dream. The whole topic is investigated with thoroughness next Monday.

THE LIMERICK COMPETITION.

Once again £5 is offered next week for a liting Limerick, and you will also find the result of Competition No. 3. Here's another chance for a completed verset which shall set the Thames on fire.

CROSS WORD PUZZLE.

Next Monday you will have No. 7 of this topping series of puzzles. Coker has nothing to do with it, so don't let discouragement creep in.

Your Editor.

"CROSS WORDS" LIMERICK COMPETITION. No. 8.

Came a "Honk" and a crash—and a shriek!
"Silly fowl!" Coker roared (like his cheek)
On his bike he sped by,
Leaving one fowl to die—

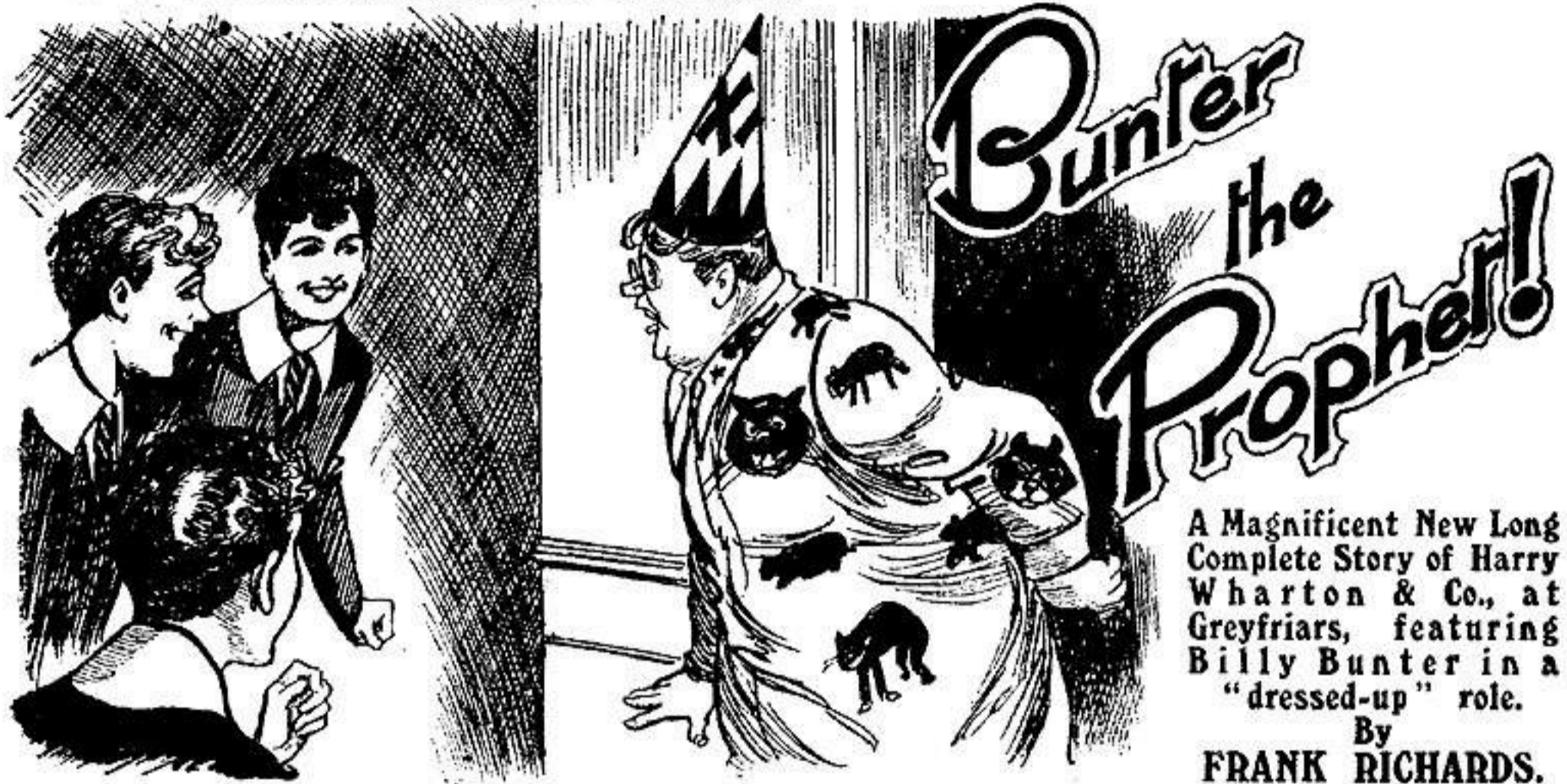
Name

Address

.....

Last Line..... Closing date, March 17th.

PROPHECYING FOR PROFIT! Billy Bunter has a happy knack of applying his auricular appendage to study key-holes in the hope of learning what the future holds. Now a prophet who can really foretell the future is capable of "filling his pockets," by playing upon the credulity of his fellow mortals. Bunter is always out to raise the "dust," but he raises more dust than he bargains for as—



A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars, featuring Billy Bunter in a "dressed-up" role.
By
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Hurree Singh's Black Magic!

THUD!
Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the Indian junior, sitting before the fire in Study No. 13 in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, looked up with a start as there came a knock at his door.

"Enter, worthy friend!"
The door opened and Harry Wharton, captain of the Remove Form, stepped briskly into the room. With a sigh, the Indian junior shut the volume he had been reading.

"Hallo!" said Wharton. "Why are you moping here alone? Where's Bob? And where's Mark Linley?"

"Cherry and Linley are leapfully playing Tuck-in-your-Tu'penny in the Common-room, my worthy chum."

"Oh!" said Wharton. "That's a bit strenuous for this time of night. I've just been swotting Cicero. A quiet parlour-game is what I need to soothe my fevered brain. What about a bout of Beggar-my-Neighbour, old man?"

"I begfully request to be excused, my esteemed friend," murmured Hurree Singh.

"Well, what about draughts?"
"Not to-night," said Inky. "But talking of draughts, will you condescend to kickfully shut the honourable door that you left open?"

The Remove captain turned to oblige, when a sudden shuffling of feet in the corridor caused him to pause.

"Hallo! Here comes the whole giddy tribe of Mohicans! Entrez, chaps!"

Into the study burst Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Johnny Bull, who, with Wharton and Hurree Singh, comprised the Famous Five at Greyfriars School. Close at their heels came Mark Linley, who shared Study No. 13 with Bob and the Indian junior.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here you are, then, Harry!" boomed Bob Cherry. "We've been searching for you, old top. Johnny's invented a ripping footer game, and—"

"No thanks!" said Wharton firmly.

"You don't rope me into any footer game to-night. I'm too fagged for violent physical exercise."

"No exertion's called for," explained Johnny Bull. "It's merely a simple little parlour game that any number can play."

He placed a sheet of white cardboard, neatly ruled and numbered, on the study table. Beside it he set a box containing coloured cardboard counters.

"So you invented this, Johnny?" said Wharton with fresh interest. "What's it called?"

"Dunno," said Johnny Bull. "I think perhaps 'Offside' would be as good a name as any. The great fun comes in getting your opponent's forwards off-side when they are in a scoring posish. However, I'll explain the rules as we go along. Draw your chairs up, you fellows. Three of you can sit on the edge of the table. Put that book down, Inky!"

"I begfully—"
Linley dexterously kicked the book out of Hurree Singh's hand, caught it, and placed it on the mantelpiece.

"Sit down, and don't argue!"
Heaving a regretful sigh, Hurree Singh perched himself on the corner of the table near Bob Cherry.

"Good!" exclaimed Johnny Bull; "there are six of us. That's three on each side. How shall we play?"

"Bob, Frank, and I will take on you three," suggested Wharton.

"I unanimately second the motion, my worthy chum," said Hurree Singh. "The pleasurefulness of playing with the esteemed inventor of the honourable and ludicrous game is entirely mine."

"An esteemed thick ear will be entirely yours if you don't cut the cackle," said Johnny Bull. "Now, listen to the rules. A member of each team throws the dice alternately. He can move any counter of his colours forwards or backwards, laterally or diagonally, or diagonally and laterally combined along squares to the total of his throw, or approximating—"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Have you swallowed a dictionary, old scout?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Co. Johnny Bull glared.

"Or approximating the total of the number of his throw where a counter would otherwise be moved off the board. That's clear, isn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"As clear as pea-soup, old son," said Wharton. "Is this a game or a giddy lecture in geometry?"

Johnny Bull grunted, gave the dice-box a rattle, and handed it to Hurree Singh.

"You'll find it as easy as falling off a log when we've played a couple of times," he remarked confidently. "You kick off, Inky."

For ten minutes the juniors played Johnny Bull's parlour football game.

At the end of that time they knew less about it, if possible, than they had done at the start.

A noticeable feature of it was the number of new rules its ingenious inventor trotted out to save the situation each time a goal was threatened against his side.

Violent arguments were frequent. Johnny Bull, red of face, explained a bright new rule governing corner kicks which had struck him a minute before.

Hurree Singh quietly slipped from the table and retrieved his book from the mantelpiece.

"Oh, get on with the washing!" yelled Nugent at last.

"That's what I say!" roared Johnny Bull. "Come on, Inky, it's your throw. Hallo, where is he?"

"Reading that blessed book of his," said Linley. "Wake up, Inky! We're waiting for you."

"Really, I begfully request to be—"
"Oh, let's pack the game up," said Wharton wearily. "What's that you're reading, Inky? You seem jolly engrossed in it."

He glanced over the Indian junior's shoulder. At the top of the page Inky was reading Wharton saw the title, "Foretelling the Future."

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"A fortune-telling book!" he exclaimed. "Oh, my hat!"

"Not exactly, my worthy chum," replied Hurree Singh. "This chapter narratefully explains how to foretell the future. But the esteemed book as a wholefulness instructfully imparts the secrets of black magic."

"Black magic!" exclaimed Nugent, in astonishment. "What the thump's that?"

"It is another name for Indian witchcraft, my worthy chum," said Inky. "Many wonders are worked in my country with black magic."

"Black grandmother!" scoffed Bob Cherry. "Fancy you believing any of that tommyrot, Inky. Here, let's have a squint at the book."

He took the book from Inky's fingers. Wharton and the others gathered about him as he turned to the flyleaf.

There the juniors read the title of the book in which their dark chum had been so interested. It was "The Psychology of Aestheticism by Babu Bandra Jowalla Jeejeebhoy, translated from the Mah-ratti by Professor Cornelius B. Boffe, B.A., B.Sc., F.R.I.I."

Bob Cherry gave a whistle.

"Phew! And you read that for pleasure, Inky?"

"I do, my worthy chum."

"Well, you must be potty," remarked Bob, handing the book back.

Hurree Singh accepted it with a shrug.

"Dry as dust, I should imagine," said Wharton.

"The dry-as-dustfulness is not apparent to me, my esteemed Wharton," said Hurree Singh. "I have thought to requestfully ask our esteemed and worthy headmaster, Dr. Locke, to instructfully read this book in school."

"My hat!"

"Great pip!"

"The fellows would slaughter you!"

"The truthfulness of the worthy Babu's book is terrific," averred Hurree Singh with more warmth. "Many true tales does he narratefully tell of the ascetics and yogis."

"I don't believe in bogeys," remarked Johnny Bull, pausing in the task of counting the coloured counters for his game.

"Yogis, I said, my worthy chum," repeated Hurree Singh. "A yogi is a holy man wisely versed in the mysteries of the esteemed black magic."

"Fiddlesticks!" said Bob Cherry. "There's no such thing as black magic, Magic, witchcraft, soothsayers, seers, hobgoblins, and spooks are things of the past, old top."

"True," agreed Mark Linley. "We're living in the twentieth century now, Inky, old man."

Hurree Singh stuck to his guns.

"One day, my worthy chums," he said, "you may visit my country. There you would surprisefully learn many wonders. Once in Benares an esteemed yogi foretold that I should be smitefully afflicted with an esteemed boil on the tip of my honourable nose. In three days the sizefulness of my honourable nose was terrific."

"You must have been stung by a gnat, old man," remarked Wharton. "That proves nothing."

"A mere coincidence," said Nugent.

"Must have been," said Bob Cherry. "I'd like the chance of putting one of these yogi johnnies to the test. There isn't a chap living who has the power to foresee the future. I've never met one yet in this country."

"Cause there isn't one," said Linley.

The Indian junior shook his head in dissent.

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"I can name one myself, esteemed chums."

"Who?"

"My humble self."

"You!"

The other five looked at Hurree Singh as though suspecting a leg-pull.

But the dusky face of their Indian schoolfellow was quite serious.

"Yes, I. 'Tis true, my worthy chums, that I am but a poor exponent of the mystic powerfulness of the esteemed yogis. But have I not perusefully read the honourable book of the learned Babu Jeejeebhoy?"

"My aunt!" exclaimed Wharton. "I didn't know we had a giddy prophet at Greyfriars!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, who's going to be the first to get it in the neck from Mr. Quelch in class to-morrow, Inky?" grinned Bob Cherry.

The Indian junior gave him a reproving look.

"You jokefully poke fun at something you do not understand, my worthy Cherry," he said, more in sorrow than in anger. "One day I hope clearfully to convince you of the truthfulness of what the worthy Babu says in this honourable book."

"Do it now," advised Wharton.

"Topping notion!" cried Frank Nugent. "Show us what you can do in the fortune-telling line yourself, Inky."

"That's the ticket!"

"Fire away, old man!"

"On the ball!"

Obviously, Hurree Singh had no wish to "fire away."

Like most natives of the great Indian Empire, Hurree Janset Ram Singh, though a prince in his own country, was superstitious. He held the yogis in great veneration.

It was natural, too, that he should defend the wisdom of the learned Indian writer, Babu Jeejeebhoy. Although he had read and re-read the book on black magic, he greatly doubted his own powers. Yet at heart he was partly deceived.

Babu Jeejeebhoy made it clear that by following certain instructions in the chapter on foretelling the future, any believer could attain the gift of prophecy in a degree.

Hurree Singh had never really put the theory of the learned Babu into practice. Could he do it? Why not? Babu Jeejeebhoy was exceedingly encouraging. So were his school-mates. Inky resolved to have a try.

"Very well, my worthy chums," he said, a trifle nervously. "I shall now sleepfully go into a trancefulness."

"Into a whatter?" roared Bob Cherry.

"A trancefulness," said Inky seriously.

"Oh, my hat!"

The Indian junior leaned comfortably back in the armchair.

"Into a t-t-trance!" stuttered Bob Cherry faintly.

"That is the honourable notion. When I am sleepfully in the trancefulness, one of you must requestfully ask me some esteemed questions. Good-bye, my worthy chums!"

"Oh!"

"Here, be careful what you're doing!" said Frank Nugent, in alarm. "I—I suppose you'll be able to come out of this trance again, old man?"

Inky raised his hands aloft with the air of a dying martyr.

"That I do not know, my esteemed Franky."

"Crumbs!"

"Don't you worry, Franky," said

Johnny Bull easily. "If he doesn't come to by himself, I'll bring him out of the trance."

He picked a cricket-stump up from the corner of the study.

"Now get on with the washing, Inky."

Hurree Singh folded his hands across his chest and closed his eyes.

Standing before him in a silent and rather ayed group, his school-mates watched him.

So engrossed were they that they did not hear the door of the study slowly open. Neither did they see a fat face, adorned with a pair of round spectacles, peer in.

It was William George Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, on his nightly prow. He had heard that Mark Linley had a cake in the cupboard of Study No. 13. It was surprising how many things Bunter heard.

Billy Bunter considered it his duty to investigate the truth of this statement. He considered it also his duty to remove and demolish a portion of that cake. Bunter was a conscientious fellow. It would teach Linley that he should share tuck with his hungry school-mates.

Little was Bunter prepared, however, for what he was to see and hear in Study No. 13.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Amazing Coincidences!

TO say that the Owl of the Remove was surprised by the sight that met him would be to put it mildly. His eyes grew as big as saucers behind his spectacles.

Hurree Singh was apparently asleep in the armchair. Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Mark Linley were ranged before him.

Bunter gazed from the Indian junior to the backs of the others in stupefied amazement. His inborn curiosity was aroused tremendously. What was the game?

He remained silent and watched.

By this time the juniors standing in the study were half-convinced that Hurree Singh was in a trance.

Johnny Bull nudged Wharton.

"Go on, Harry, old man," he said, "ask him something. He's gone off."

"Silly asses! I think they have all gone off!" muttered Billy Bunter to himself.

Harry Wharton racked his brains.

"Er—I say, Inky, old top," he said at length, "who's going to win the match against St. Jim's?"

For another ten seconds there was silence. Then Hurree Singh spoke, and his voice was slow and lifeless.

"The honourable team commanded by the illustrious Harry Wharton will beat the esteemed St. Jim's!"

"That's a bit of good news, anyway," said Bob Cherry brightly.

"By how many goals?" asked Wharton.

Another pause.

"The esteemed score will be one goalfulness to nothing."

"And who will score it?" inquired Frank Nugent eagerly.

"The illustrious Bob Cherry," intoned Hurree Singh.

"Oh, good!"

While Bob Cherry beamed his pleasure, Harry Wharton looked round at the others.

"What other question shall I ask him, you chaps?"

"Ask him something about what's going to happen in class to-morrow," said Johnny Bull.

"That's the ticket!" grinned Bob

Cherry. "Put the query I asked him before. Who will be the first to get it in the neck from Mr. Quelch?"

Rather loudly, Harry Wharton put the question.

"The esteemed and ludicrous Skinner will hurtfully get it in the neckfulness," answered Hurree Singh promptly.

"Go on! Tell us something else that's going to happen in the future, Inky," urged Mark Linley, who was the most credulous of the Co.

During another silence that followed Hurree Singh slowly moved his hands across his closed eyes.

"I see a fatful form," he moaned.

Billy Bunter, at the door, gave a start, and withdrew his fat head a fraction of an inch.

Another pause.

"Yes," resumed Hurree Singh in a monotone, "the fatfulness of the form I can see is terrific! Who is the debased owner? It's—yes—no—"

"Oh, cough it up, old man!" urged Linley.

"He must mean Bunter," whispered Wharton.

"Yes," said Hurree Singh, "it is indeed the fatful form of the ridiculous Bunter."

"Well, what about him?" asked Cherry.

"I see the debased Bunter squirmfully rolling on the honourable floorfulness," said Hurree Singh. "He is hurtfully smitten with illness."

It was a pity that the juniors could not have seen Bunter's face at that moment. It was worth seeing. His eyes were popping behind round spectacles, and his lower jaw was hanging like a broken trap-door.

Before any more questions could be put to him Hurree Singh sprang like a panther out of his chair. So swift and unexpected was the movement that Harry Wharton and the others were quite startled. But not half so startled as Billy Bunter. The Owl of the Remove gave one wild yell, and, taking to his heels, bolted along the passage.

Billy Bunter had been scared—badly. Expecting to find a cake in Study No. 13, he had come upon as eerie a scene as he had witnessed in Greyfriars. And the prophecy which Hurree Singh had made concerning him had given him further qualms.

Bunter had reached the end of the passage by the time that Harry Wharton and the others in the study had recovered themselves.

"That was Bunter who squealed," said Bob Cherry. "I'd know his yelp anywhere. He must have been listening."

Harry Wharton grinned.

"Well, like most listeners, he didn't hear any good of himself," he remarked. "Now, tell us, Inky, was this a jape?"

"I did my humble best to prophesy the esteemed truth in the trancefulness," replied Inky. "I am not an esteemed yogi, nor an honourable Babu Jeejeebhoy. The timefulness will show."

It was now close on bed-time. The party broke up. But in the dormitory that night there was much discussion about Hurree Singh's extraordinary claim to prophetic powers.

Rumours of Inky's prophecies floated round until almost everyone in the Remove Form became aware of the strange seance which had been held in Study No. 13.

This, in no small measure, was due to Billy Bunter. In strictest secrecy he confided to no less than a dozen fellows particulars of the queer scene he had witnessed. Needless to say, he exaggerated wildly.



Hurree Singh was apparently fast asleep in the armchair. Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Mark Linley were ranged before him. Bunter blinked into the study in stupefied amazement. "Go on, Harry!" said Bull, nudging Wharton. "Inky's gone off into a trance—ask him something."
(See Chapter 2.)

"Of course," he concluded after each narration. "It was all tommy-rot. But don't let it go any further, old man."

Next morning Harold Skinner, the cad of the Remove, arrived in class ten minutes late. Unluckily for him, Mr. Quelch had a touch of liver. Promptly he sent Skinner yelping to his place with a hearty cut over the back with the cane.

"My giddy aunt!" muttered Wharton to Bob Cherry. "That's one of Inky's prophecies come true!"

Some of the other Removites did not think of Skinner's punishment at all in this connection. But other things were to happen to make fellows sit up and take notice.

During prep that evening it was rumoured that Billy Bunter was ill and groaning on the floor of the Common-room. It was quite true.

The fact was, Billy Bunter had discovered that his brother Sammy had earned five shillings by being knocked down by a runaway bike on the hill leading into Friardale. By this means the life of the cyclist, who would otherwise have hit a brick wall, was saved. Under dire threats Billy Bunter had borrowed the five shillings from his younger brother, and had dissipated it in Mrs. Mumble's tuck shop. Bunter's agony on the Common-room floor was the direct result.

By this time there was not wanting fellows who saw a direct connection between this and the prophecies of Hurree Singh.

And then, most amazing thing of all, the Greyfriars junior eleven, captained by Harry Wharton, beat St. Jim's on the following day by one goal to nil.

The goal was scored by Bob Cherry. The fame of Hurree Singh as an oracle spread like wildfire through the school. Even lofty Sixth-Formers and Form masters heard whispers of it.

Harry Wharton & Co. were amazed. They actually began to think there might be something in their coloured chun's claims for Indian black magic.

Probably the most amazed person of all was Hurree Singh himself. He had done his best by following the instructions of the talented author, Babu Jeejeebhoy. But hitherto he had imagined that much of what he had told the chuns in Study No. 13 had been the result of guess-work. Now he felt that he must indeed be gifted with the wisdom of the seer.

The respect paid to Hurree Singh, even by seniors, was tremendous. Some fellows would have had their heads turned. Not so Hurree Singh.

The Indian junior pursued the even tenor of his way. When fellows consulted him as an oracle he did his best to help them. One or two other coincidences helped him to maintain his reputation.

Tuck galore and many decent presents were offered to the Indian junior. It did him credit that he proudly refused to accept anything for his services as an oracle.

One of the most impressed of the boys of Greyfriars School was Billy Bunter. It did not occur to him that Hurree Singh had merely made some very lucky guesses. For instance, it was a likely thing to happen that Harold Skinner would "get it in the neck" in class before anyone else, any day in the week. It was equally likely that with Bunter's

appetite he should suffer one of his periodical bouts of biliousness. The prophecy concerning the St. Jim's match had certainly been a bit more remarkable as a coincidence.

Hurree Singh's refusal of the tuck and presents staggered the Owl. He seized the first opportunity and interviewed Hurree Singh on the subject. He urged that it was his duty to accept these things, if not for his own sake, then for the sake of others. Alas, instead of tuck Billy Bunter merely got the toe of Hurree Singh's patent leather boot.

Following this rebuff Bunter avoided the Indian junior for a time.

Then a brain wave struck him. If Hurree Singh could earn tuck as an oracle, why could not William George Bunter?

Billy Bunter resolved to become a prophet. But how did one become a prophet? That was the question.

Rumours of the book which Hurree Singh studied reached Bunter's long ears. He professed to have conceived a great interest in Indian black magic, and asked Inky for the loan of the book.

Hurree Singh generously obliged. The Owl took the book away with him and started to read it. Of it he hardly understood half a dozen words, but he persevered. The vision of grateful schoolmates pressing jam puffs and ginger beer upon him in cartloads kept him to his purpose.

William George Bunter, by hook or by crook, was determined to be a prophet.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Drama in the Head's Study!

WHILE Hurree Singh was at the height of his popularity there was one fellow at Greyfriars School whose outlook was as black as any he had ever struck. This was Gerald Loder, the unpopular prefect of the Sixth Form, and a dog with a very bad name indeed.

As Loder himself would have expressed it, he was in the consomme. He stood near the school gate adjusting the back wheel of his bicycle, which was propped up against the wall, and his thoughts were the gloomiest.

It was a case, with Loder, of reaping the trouble he had so industriously sown. For long he had betted with a bookmaker known as Snub Pugsley.

For long Loder had owed the bookie money for betting debts. But by desperately scraping together all the money he could wheedle out of soft-hearted relatives he had settled the account.

In a period of moral exaltation he had decided to cut out the pernicious gambling stunt.

This Loder actually did, though not without difficulty. It did not, however, suit the book of Snub Pugsley.

Angry at Loder's temporary reformation, and striking hard times himself, the unscrupulous bookmaker had resorted to that contemptuous form of crime, blackmail.

Three weeks before Gerald Loder had received a threatening letter from Snub Pugsley, who claimed that the Sixth Former still owed him fifty pounds. He stated, moreover, that unless he received that sum by a certain date he would write to Dr. Locke.

In dread that the Head should learn of his transactions with the notorious bookie, Loder actually tried to raise the money for the blackmailer, but without success. Now three weeks had expired. Every time the postman came to the

school Gerald Loder dreaded that his mailbag might contain an envelope addressed to the Head, in the atrocious purple ink which Snub Pugsley sported for his correspondence.

This dread was present in his mind as, with spanner in hand, he strove to adjust the wheel of his bike.

He had just about completed his task when he saw the figure of the postman approaching the school. The man gave the prefect a cheery "Good-afternoon," and rang the bell of the porter's lodge.

Gosling, the school porter, emerged and took the letters which the postman handed to him.

With starting eyes Gerald Loder glimpsed the top one of the little packet. It was addressed in purple ink!

"My hat!" groaned Loder. "That rotter Pugsley has fulfilled his threat."

A mad desire to secure the letter flooded his mind. He dropped the spanner in his coat pocket and left his bike propped against the wall. Assuming an easy air, he walked through the school gates.

"Shall I take the mail to the school-house, Gosling?" he inquired. "I'm just going up there."

"Which as 'ow I'm just goin' up myself, Master Loder, thankin' 'ee kindly," replied Gosling.

He turned and strode stolidly away.

Pale and fearful, Loder followed in his steps. He watched Gosling go into the schoolhouse. He saw the porter leave the majority of the letters in the rack and a swarm of fellows gather round. Finally, he watched Gosling go to the Head's study.

Through a crack in the door he saw the porter amble to the desk and leave the letter on the blotting-pad. Then before Gosling emerged, Loder glided swiftly away.

Five minutes later Gerald Loder walked down the passage again. Suddenly, Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth Form, turned the corner and came towards him. Giving the prefect a nod, Mr. Prout, who was armed with a bundle of papers, entered the Head's study.

Frustrated in his final attempt to get the letter, Gerald Loder left the schoolhouse. He could not hang about in the vicinity of Dr. Locke's study without creating suspicion. He put his bicycle in the shed, resolving to have another shot later.

With relief, he remembered that Dr. Locke had gone to pay a visit to a very old friend in London, and would not be back until the following morning. Thus there were still a few hours in which the prefect might accomplish his purpose.

But luck was against Gerald Loder. He was interrupted in two other attempts to secure the fatal letter.

Time slipped by. Bed-time arrived, and still he had not removed the thing which he believed would assuredly bring about his expulsion from the school.

There was no sleep for Loder that night. When all was dark and his companions in the Sixth Form dormitory were soundly asleep, he arose and quietly dressed. Like a black shadow, he slipped out of the room and glided down the stairs in his stockinged feet.

He reached the Head's study without difficulty. Cautiously he tried the door.

The door was unlocked.

Thanking his stars, Gerald Loder opened it and glided into the sanctum of the headmaster of Greyfriars.

The study was not so dark as the passage leading to it.

A wintry moon shone pale through the window. The faint illumination fell full on the Head's desk.

Against the whiteness of the blotting-pad he could not at first discern the letter. His fingers roamed swiftly over the pad on which Gosling had put the missive. He felt his fingers touch the envelope. The prefect picked it up and was about to look at it when a faint sound fell on his ear.

With a cold thrill Loder imagined he heard footsteps.

Quickly he crammed the letter into his pocket and darted towards the door. Then, overwhelmed with dismay, he realized that his retreat was cut off.

Along the passage leading to the Head's study came the shuffling of slippered feet. Panic stricken, the prefect turned back into the study. His fear suggested to him that the window was his only means of escape.

Had Loder fled in the first place for the dormitory, he might have effected his escape without trouble. His turning back was his undoing.

He fumbled with the window-latch and half raised the sash. Before he could even lift his leg over the sill, Monsieur Charpentier entered the room.

Immediately a loud cry left the lips of the French master.

"Thief! Stop heem!"

Loder spun round.

Despair gripped at his heart, for he thought the game was up. Another couple of seconds and he could have got through the window. But it was only placing himself at a disadvantage to attempt the feat with the plucky French master charging at him.

His head was lowered and away from the light. His only hope now was to evade the French master and slip through the open door.

At once Monsieur Charpentier closed with him.

Keeping his head averted, Loder tried to rush past him.

"Tiens!" cried monsieur. "Stop thief!"

His hands fiercely gripped Loder's coat. There was the rip of cloth as the prefect's jacket pocket was half torn off. His bicycle spanner, which he had dropped in that pocket when he had seen the postman arrive, fell unheeded to the carpet.

The Frenchman fought like a wild cat. Against his will Loder was forced to defend himself.

His eyes glimpsed the spanner as in the course of their struggle it was kicked just under the corner of the carpet.

Almost simultaneously, monsieur struck his foot against the leg of a small table. Backwards he went, taking Loder with him. There was a dull thud as the master's head struck against the tiled curb before the fireplace. And Monsieur Charpentier lay very still.

"Good heavens!"

Gerald Loder rose to his feet and gazed helplessly at the Frenchman's face. Then, seized with uncontrollable panic, he dashed blindly out of the study.

The school was wrapped in silence.

Evidently the cries of Monsieur Charpentier had not been heard. Loder sought sanctuary in his study where the embers of a fire glowed in the grate.

"He's killed! He's killed!"

That was the awful refrain that ran unceasing through the Sixth Former's harassed brain.

At first Loder could think of nothing else as he stood shivering before the glowing embers of the fire.

His hand wandered to his pocket, and his fingers closed about the letter. He tossed it from him as though it had been a poisonous reptile. It fell into the fire,

burst into flames, and dissolved into ashes.

He could not remain in the study. That much Loder decided. Quietly he crept back to the dormitory. There he undressed, got between the blankets, and lay shivering as though smitten with malaria.

Numerous plans chased one another through his mind.

He might rouse the dormitory saying he had heard a noise. A search would be instituted and Monsieur Charpentier found.

But Loder could not summon up another iota of courage to put any one of his plans into action.

Sleeplessly he waited inert in bed—waited for the dawn and what the dawn should reveal.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's Tidings!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

William George Bunter, the porpoise of the Remove, rolled rapidly after several members of the Lower Fourth who were on their way to chapel next morning.

Among the number were Harry Wharton & Co., who had been rather later than usual to respond to the rising-bell.

"Crumbs! What's the matter with Bunter?" said Johnny Bull. "It's a long time since I've seen him so spry at this time of the morning!"

"The spryfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh.

"I expect he wants to borrow something, as usual," said Harry Wharton. "There's nothing else I can think of that would induce Bunter to exert himself, unless it were a free feed."

Meantime, Billy Bunter redoubled his efforts to reach the Famous Five.

"Stop! I say, Wharton, old fellow! Phew! Oh dear! Bob, old man! Listen, I say!"

"We can hear you," said Harry Wharton, turning with a grin. "You sound like a cross between a damaged pair of bellows and an asthmatical cod-fish."

With a final effort Billy Bunter overtook the Famous Five.

"Phew! Whooh!" he puffed. "Why didn't you wait? I—phew!—I've a good mind not to tell you the news!"

Harold Skinner and Sidney Snoop, who were close at hand, swung round and regarded the Owl curiously.

"What news?" demanded Skinner.

"Really, Skinner," panted Bunter. "Give a chap time to get his breath."

"Well, out with it!" said the Cad of the Remove. "Has Mrs. Mumble lowered the price of tuck, or has your celebrated postal-order turned up?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Skinner!" said Bunter. "This is not a time for joking, you know—"

"Uh?"

"Not when old Mossoo is lying unconscious," continued the Owl of the Remove impressively.

"Lying unconscious—" said Skinner faintly.

Billy Bunter blinked through his big spectacles.

"Yes. They found him in the Head's study—flat on the carpet. Someone had hit him over the head with something."

"What are you burbling about?" said Skinner. "Who found him flat on the carpet?"

"Old Queleby," said Bunter.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, full of concern. "Is that true, Bunter?"

"Really, Wharton," said Bunter indignantly. "I am not in the habit of telling whoppers! Anyway, you can find out for yourselves now. I'm not going to tell you that Mossoo's been unconscious for hours—"

"For hours!"

"And that the whole affair is a mystery," went on Bunter. "If you can't take a fellow's word, Wharton, you beast!"

The Co. exchanged glances. Well as they knew their Bunter and his propensities for drawing the "long bow," they understood now that there must be some element of truth in what he had said.

"Well, I'm blessed!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Poor old Mossoo—"

"He, he, he!"

The juniors looked up sharply as that fat cackination proceeded from the Owl of the Remove.

"What are you cackling about?" demanded Wharton.

"Mossoo!" grinned Bunter.

"Mossoo?" echoed Wharton grimly. "You think there's something funny in a master having been knocked out—"

"Really, Wharton—" began Bunter peevishly.

None noticed that Gerald Loder, the unpopular prefect of the Sixth, had drawn near, and had overheard every word the fat junior had uttered.

"Is this true about Monsieur Charpentier, Bunter?" he asked, his voice strangely subdued.

"Of course it's true," said Bunter.

"He, he, he!"

"Is—is he dead?" asked Loder, moistening his parched lips.

"Dead!" said Bunter scornfully. "No such luck—I mean, of course, he isn't dead; but he won't be able to take us in rotten French for a long time to come. He, he, he!"

Bunter seemed to find something cheerful in the prospect. He cackled on, regardless of the growing looks of disgust and anger in the faces of Harry Wharton & Co.

"You fat worm!" exclaimed Bob Cherry at length.

"You unsympathetic barrel!" growled Johnny Bull. "For two pins I'd burst you!"

"Oh, really, Bull!" said Bunter.

Loder, with a set face, detached himself from the group of juniors, and walked off towards the chapel. Snoop looked after him wonderingly.

"Old Loder seems to have taken it to heart," he muttered. "Never knew Loder was so fond of Mossoo as all that!"

"Oh, shut up, Snoop!" growled Wharton.

"I don't see what you are all so concerned about," said Bunter, with a fat smile. "One would think that it was bad news—"

"Roll away, you barrel!" grunted Johnny Bull, who was never very patient with the Owl of the Remove.

"Really, Bull! You'll be jolly pleased to dodge French lessons, anyway. Yah! I never could stand French. Wish it had been Queleby, though, instead of Mossoo."



Loder fumbled with the window latch and half raised the sash, but before he could lift his leg over the sill, Monsieur Charpentier entered the room. Mossoo started back with a loud cry. "Thief!" Loder spun round and endeavoured to keep his features away from the light. (See Chapter 3.)

"Wh-a-at?"
 "Quelchy's a beast!" said Bunter warmly. "If it had been Quelchy, we should have to have a prefect in the Form-room, and— Yaroooooh! Ow! Wharrer you doing, Bull?"

Johnny Bull made a grab at Bunter's fat ear and tweaked it. Simultaneously the rest of the Famous Five grabbed any portion of Bunter's ample figure that came to hand.

"Bump the fat rotter!" said Wharton. "Wharton, you beast— Ow! Oh! Yaroooooop!"

Bump!
 The Owl of the Remove smote the cold, hard, unsympathetic ground. "Yarooooooh!"

Bump!
 The Famous Five walked on, leaving Billy Bunter of the Remove roaring.

"Ow! Wow! Unsympathetic beasts! Groooooogh!"

Slowly and painfully the fat junior picked himself up and rubbed his injured anatomy. Then he picked up his spectacles which, luckily for him, had not been broken, and set them on his fat nose. Through them he perceived his Form-mates hurrying into chapel.

Billy Bunter ambled after them.

"The beasts! The rotters!" he mumbled. "They can jolly well find out for themselves next time there's any good news!"

During breakfast that morning the whole school seethed with the news. Monsieur Charpentier had been found by Mr. Quelch lying unconscious on the carpet in the Head's study. The study window had been found open. The unfortunate French master had been moved on an ambulance during chapel to the Courtfield Hospital. In some quarters it was rumoured that he would live. The pessimists said he would die. Billy Bunter, assuming the role of prophet, foretold that he would die before the evening. And he wondered why Gerald Loder, who overheard him, kicked him half-way round the quadrangle.

Little work was done in classes that morning. Every fellow, from the dignified Sixth-Formers to the fags of the Second Form, had a theory concerning what had occurred. The most popular one was that the French master had been the victim of his own heroism. It was thought that he had overheard a noise in the night. He had gone to the study and found a burglar or burglars.

One of the housebreakers had struck him on the head with a jemmy. Few of the fellows knew what a "jemmy" was, but it sounded a nice, adventurous sort of instrument.

Meantime, the unfortunate French master lay unconscious in the Courtfield Hospital.

It was shortly after morning school had been dismissed when Billy Bunter had a brain-wave. It occurred to him to go and ask Dr. Locke for the loan of a book on the Crusades which the headmaster had mentioned while taking the Form a few days before.

It must not be supposed that the Crusades interested the Owl. They did not. But the Head's study did.

As a matter of fact, the scene of the midnight affray held a great fascination for Billy Bunter. He wanted to see the place where Mossoo had been hit on the head. It attracted him in the same way as the sight of a street accident will cause some folk to linger and gaze agape.

As he approached the Head's sanctum the sound of voices reached Bunter's ears. The study door was ajar. Bunter halted and listened.

Inside the room were Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch, the master of the Fourth Form. Their conversation reached Bunter distinctly.

"It will be difficult," the Head was saying. "I don't know another French master available. I therefore do not propose getting another master temporarily in the place of poor Charpentier. In all likelihood Monsieur Charpentier will be back within the month. It was fortunate, apparently, that his skull was not fractured."

"But what do you propose doing in the meanwhile, sir?" inquired Mr. Quelch. "You do not propose dropping the French lessons?"

"No," answered Dr. Locke. "Until Monsieur Charpentier returns, I myself will carry on with the subject."

Hearing so much, Billy Bunter drew back sharply. Then he dropped on one knee and began fumbling with his shoelace as Gerald Loder came nervously down the passage to the sanctum of the Head.

The prefect glared at the fat junior, rapped on the Head's door, and entered the study. Loder closed the door after him, but Billy Bunter, with surprising agility, applied his ear to the keyhole.

"Yes, Loder?" Bunter heard the Head say. "What do you want?"

"I—I've just received bad news, sir," answered Loder haltingly.

"Indeed!"
 "Yes, sir. My cousin, Guy Alford, who recently came home from the Argentine, is lying dangerously ill at Eastbourne. My uncle, who is staying in Scotland, has wired asking me to go to Guy at once."

"I'm sorry, my boy! Most unfortunate!" said Dr. Locke kindly. "By all means go to your cousin by the first available train, Loder."

"Thank you, sir!"
 "I trust the illness may not be so serious as Mr. Alford senior imagines."

"I—I expect it's a return of malaria, sir," muttered Loder. "My—my cousin contracted malaria very badly in South America. Thank you again, sir!"

While he had been speaking, Loder had edged slowly back towards the door. As he finished speaking, he opened it. There was a startled grunt and the fat form of Billy Bunter hurtled into the room.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Dr. Locke. "Bunter! Boy! What is the meaning of this?"

Billy Bunter sat up and groped for his spectacles, which had fallen off his snub nose.

"Yow! Ow!" he groaned.

"Cease that ridiculous noise, Bunter," said the Head grimly. "What were you doing outside the door of my study?"

"I wasn't, sir!" said Bunter.

"What—what—"

"I mean I was, sir," said Bunter. "I hope I'm a truthful fellow, sir. M-mum-my—"

"Your what?" rasped Dr. Locke, his brows knitting.

"Mum-my bootlace happened to come untied, sir," said Bunter desperately. "And I stooped to tie it up, sir. I hope you don't think I was listening, sir—"

"Bless my soul!"

"I didn't hear anything about that rotter's—I mean Loder's—cousin, sir. I never heard a word, sir—"

Loder's dark face fixed on Bunter's fat countenance in a terrifying scowl.

"Bunter!" rapped Dr. Locke, selecting a flexible cane from his desk. "You must learn that it is not the act of a gentleman to listen at keyholes."

"Certainly, sir!" said Bunter brightly, with one uneasy eye on the cane, however. "I think it is a despicable thing to do, sir."

"I am glad you regard your offence in that light," said the Head sternly. "It is a very despicable thing, Bunter. I am now going to impress that upon your mind."

"Thank you, sir," began Bunter doubtfully.

"Bend down!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Bend down!" Dr. Locke's voice was thunderous.

Reluctantly, very reluctantly the Owl of the Remove touched his toes.

Swish!

The cane came down, and Bunter leaped three feet across the room, roaring:

"Yaroooooh! Ow-wow!"

"There, Bunter," said Dr. Locke calmly. "Be thankful that your punishment was no more severe. Any further flagrant eavesdropping on your part will be visited by a punishment in proportion to your offence. You may go!"

And Bunter went.

Once outside in the passage he gave free rein to his woes. Groaning pathetically, he rolled away to Study

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No. 7, where he remained until dinner-time. But interest in roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, baked potatoes and sprouts, followed by apple dumplings and custard, helped him to forget his woes.

Bunter, after three helpings of each, was himself again.

Entering the Common-room before afternoon school, he found Hurree Singh surrounded by juniors anxious to test the Indian lad's powers of prophecy. It was a favourable opportunity. Billy Bunter subsided into a chair.

"O-oh! I feel so funny!" he moaned.

"Over-eating again?" snapped Snoop.

"N-no," mumbled Bunter. "I—I'm going into a trance. Oh, yes! I am beginning to see things."

"You'll feel things as well in a minute, you fat oyster!" said Harold Skinner. "Wake up!"

Billy Bunter waved two podgy hands slowly before his closed eyes. He had seen Hurree Singh do something of the sort during the first strange seance in Study No. 13.

"Listen!" he droned. "I can see a fellow hurrying from school."

"Where, you fathead?" inquired Snoop.

"In my mind's eye, you chump!" replied the fat oracle. "Yes, he is hurrying from the school to the railway station. Yes—no—yes, it's Gerald Loder. He is going away."

"Well, that's a bit of luck!" said Harold Skinner. "How did you find that out, Bunter? Been sticking your fat ear against someone's keyhole?"

The prophet Bunter opened his eyes and shot an indignant glance at the cad.

"You're a suspicious beast, Skinny," he said. "And I've a jolly good mind not to tell you my marvellous prophecy."

"Trot it out, Bunter!" cried Mark Linley encouragingly.

Bunter closed his eyes again and waved his fat hands.

"I can see the road leading to Greyfriars," he said. "It is deserted. No new master is coming to take the place of Froggy."

He paused, and Hurree Singh rather sarcastically inquired who was going to take the French lessons then.

"I see a tall, majestic figure standing before the Form," resumed Billy Bunter theatrically. "It's—it's the terrible figure of Dr. Locke."

"Rot!" said Skinner. "Old Locke wouldn't take French himself."

Therefore, it came as a big surprise to the juniors when not only was it announced that Dr. Locke was going to assume the duties of the injured French master, but that Gerald Loder had taken a sudden departure from the school early in the afternoon.

Billy Bunter went about openly bragging of his powers as a prophet. But his schoolmates were sceptical. They were aware that the new prophet which had arisen in Greyfriars had long ears.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Loder's Desperate Plan!

WHILE the school was still seething with talk about Monsieur Charpentier's midnight adventure, Gerald Loder quietly slipped away. The strain and anxiety of the night had been too much for his nerves. Needless to say, the telegram which he had held in his hand when he had interviewed the Head, was a fake. The wire had been composed by Gerald Loder himself and slipped into an old telegram envelope.

If anyone had offered him a hundred pound, Gerald Loder could not have



Mr. Quelch strode into the study with set face and eyes that shone like steel. "Bunter! Boy!" he thundered. "What is the meaning of this—this foolery?" Bunter looked a fat and ridiculous figure as he stood there shivering in his wizard's robe and hat. "Er—er, it was only a bit of fun, sir!" he stammered. (See Chapter 7.)

remained at Greyfriars School. During the railway journey to Eastbourne, he remained in the slough of despond.

The desire to confide in someone was overwhelming. He felt glad he had thought of his cousin, Guy Alford, who recently had returned from the Argentine.

Taking a cab from Eastbourne Station to the Chine Hotel, Loder inquired of the clerk for his cousin. Alford himself, a bronzed, healthy-looking young man, about ten years older than the Greyfriars fellow, speedily came to greet him. Loder booked a room, and the two repaired to it.

"Now, old man," said Guy Alford, "let's hear how you managed to get down to the seaside in term-time."

Loder sank on to the edge of the bed and gripped the coverlet on either side of him with nervous fingers.

"I'm in a mess, Guy—up to the neck in it," he said miserably.

His cousin nodded and lighted a cigarette.

"I guessed as much. Well, how much do you owe?"

"Nothing!" said Loder. "That's the irony of it, old man. I used to owe a bookie called Snub Pugsley fifty pounds. That I paid off. But the beast started to blackmail me."

"Oh, he did! And what did you do? Tell the police?"

"Great Scott, no! If I'd have gone whining to the police, the fat would have been in the fire with a vengeance. Old Locke, the headmaster, would have heard of my betting transactions with Pugsley, and I should have got the bullet."

"I thought when I first saw you that you had been expelled," said Guy

Alford. "You've always asked for the sack, you know."

"Well, I haven't been expelled," said Loder. "The fact is, Guy, I took a wire to the Head announcing you were lying on your deathbed."

"That was a fatheaded thing to do," said Alford.

"It was the only thing I could think of to get away hurriedly." And Loder told his cousin how he had tried to get Pugsley's letter to the Head, and how that, during the struggle, the French master had fallen and struck his head on the fire curb.

"The whole position's frightfully complicated," moaned Loder. "I'm not sure whether old Frenchie really recognised me or not. I don't think he did, but I can't be quite sure. Whether he did or not, doesn't matter. When they find my spanner in the Head's study, the giddy cat will be out of the bag for a cert."

Alford shot a swift glance at the pale face of the Greyfriars prefect.

"Your spanner? What the dickens were you doing with a spanner in the Head's study?"

"I didn't take it there to use at all. It just happened to be in my pocket."

"That sounds a trifle weak, old fellow."

"Oh, I know it does!" answered Loder almost fiercely. "When that spanner's found, everyone will reckon that Frenchie was laid out with it. If Mossoo lives, as he is likely to do, I shall be arrested for assault. If he dies —" Loder shuddered. "I shall be charged with manslaughter, or possibly murder!"

Guy Alford gave him a thump that nearly knocked him off the bed.

"Come, cheer up!" he said. "Pon my word, you're looking on the black side of things! Perhaps the spanner won't be recognised. You haven't got your initials on it, have you?"

Resuming his seat on the edge of the bed, Loder made an impatient gesture.

"No, I haven't got my initials on it," he said. "But half the fellows in the school could recognise my bicycle spanner, just as they could recognise that of any other chap's. It was a bit of bad luck that I happened to have the thing in my pocket. My pocket was torn during the struggle with Frenchie and the spanner fell out. It got kicked under the carpet. But it is only a matter of time before it's found. I'm hanged if I know what to do. The suspense will kill me."

Cousin Alford smoked in silence.

"Look here," he said, "why not return to the school and make a clean breast of things, and—"

"Oh, shurrup!" growled Loder rudely. "You don't think I'm going to put my head into the giddy lion's mouth, do you?"

Loder's cousin tossed his cigarette impatiently through the half-open window of the room.

"Well, I'm blessed if I know what you can do, old fellow," he said; "unless you give yourself up to the police."

Gerald Loder rose and stamped savagely up and down the room.

"You're a jolly sort of relative to come to for advice!" he said. "I wish I'd gone home instead."

"I wish you had, too!" said Alford frankly. "It was just like your cheek to bring me into it. However, I don't want to kick a chap when he's down. You had better stay in this hotel for a day or two until you come to reason."

This portion of Alford's advice Loder decided to follow. It was more palatable to him than the rest.

That evening the two dined and played billiards together. But for the weight on his mind and conscience, Gerald Loder would have enjoyed himself. Before retiring he wrote a letter to his friend, Arthur Carne, at Greyfriars. His chief object was to induce Carne to convey to him any fresh news concerning the injured French master. He also stated that his unfortunate cousin was slightly worse, but slight hopes of recovery were entertained.

A couple of mornings later, Loder received the welcome letter from Carne. Carne informed him of the Head's decision about taking the French class himself owing to the difficulty of getting another Frenchman temporarily. Carne also stated that, thanks to the efforts of the Head, the midnight affair had been kept out of the papers. Publicity in such matters did the school no good. The police, however, had been informed. Monsieur Charpentier had returned to consciousness, but had no idea how, or by whom, he had been struck. Carne concluded his letter by hoping that Loder's cousin was better.

On the whole, the letter tended to cheer Loder up somewhat. Monsieur had not recognised him. Evidently, the bicycle spanner had not yet been found.

It was whilst smoking a cigarette in the hotel lounge after breakfast that an idea dawned upon Loder. So terrifying was the plan that occurred to him that at first he tried to put it out of his mind, but the notion returned with renewed force.

This was nothing less than that he should disguise himself and return to Greyfriars School. He knew an actor

in London who was a master in the art of make-up. By means of a dark wig, moustache, and pointed beard, Loder imagined that he might easily pass for a Frenchman. His Sixth Form knowledge of French was sufficiently good to enable him to pass any ordinary language test, he reckoned.

By returning to Greyfriars School, he might be able to recover that incriminating spanner.

The more Loder thought upon his plan, the more restless did he become.

Finally, he told his cousin, Guy Alford, that he had decided to go up to town. Alford showed no regrets. Before noon Gerald Loder was in the train bound for London.

At about teatime Loder called at the flat of his actor friend in Maida Vale. He informed this worthy that he was very anxious to assume the role of a Frenchman, and darkly hinted at a practical joke.

The actor "touched" Loder for a quid, and, in high good humour, agreed to help the Greyfriars fellow.

He loaned Loder a wig, moustache, beard, and a Norfolk suit. The prefect left his own togs in the actor's wardrobe.

That same evening, Loder purchased a knapsack and took train to Courtfield. There he spent the night.

The next day, in his disguise, and wearing his Norfolk suit and knapsack, he hung about in the vicinity of Greyfriars School. At last, such an opportunity as he sought came his way. Mr. Paul Pontifex Prout, the master of the Fifth Form, came along the road leading to Friardale.

Not without trepidation, Gerald Loder approached him.

"Bonjour, monsieur!" he said. "Will you condescend to inform me whether I may see ze famous monastery of Greyfriars?"

Mr. Prout was most polite and helpful. He quoted liberally from Mr. Quelch's "History of Greyfriars." He informed his questioner that the monastery was restored in 1551 by Edward VI, who opened it as a school for poor boys. He told of the origin of Greyfriars School as it stood there before them, and of the wonderful old Priory, vaults, and crypt.

Growing bolder as he found that Mr. Prout did not recognise him, Loder began to "spin a yarn." He told Mr. Prout he was Monsieur Pierre Vevy, and that he was a master in a French school near Paris. The school, so Loder said, was shut owing to an epidemic of mumps. He himself had seized the opportunity of coming for a holiday to England. It was hardly the time of year for a holiday, but he had been engaged as a private tutor during the summer vacation. Funds were getting low with him, and he wished he could get another private tutor's job temporarily.

Gradually an idea seemed to dawn on Mr. Prout.

"Dear me!" said the Fifth Form master. "Perhaps, my dear fellow, you would like me to introduce you to our worthy headmaster, Dr. Locke. We have just lost our French master owing to a—ahem—regrettable accident. Possibly Dr. Locke might care to engage you temporarily in his place. Would you care for me to ask him?"

"Ten thousand thanks, m'sieu!" said Loder. "I shall be most happy to 'ave ze chance to earn ze money for a leetle time."

Mr. Prout led the disguised Loder through the quadrangle, and escorted him to Dr. Locke's study. Almost Loder's nerve gave way when he entered that dread apartment. But he made a

firm effort, and kept control of himself.

Dr. Locke, who found the task of taking French in the school exceedingly arduous in addition to his other manifold duties, welcomed the self-styled Monsieur Vevy, and within a quarter of an hour of his entering Greyfriars School again, Gerald Loder was installed in the room of the unfortunate former French master.

The news of the engagement of another French master temporarily spread through the school like wildfire. And many were the groans from people like Billy Bunter at the tidings. It was Harold Skinner who took the trouble to point out that neither Hurree Singh nor the prophet Bunter had foretold this fresh important event.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Rising of a New Prophet!

ON the evening of "Monsieur Vevy's" advent in the school, a group of juniors were assembled in the Common-room. There was a general discussion about the new master who had taken the Remove in French that afternoon.

"He strikes me as a lazy beggar," said Snoop.

"And he's only half educated," added Skinner. "It must be a pretty rotten sort of school that he is master of in Paris."

"Did you note the way he passed Bunter's translation?" said Mark Linley. "Didn't correct half his mistakes."

"Really, Linley," said Bunter indignantly. "My translation was a jolly sight better than yours, anyway!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter's statement sent the juniors into fits of laughter. What the fat Owl of the Remove didn't know about French would fill volumes, whereas Mark Linley, the scholarship junior, could "parley vous" better than any of his Form-fellows.

"There's nothing to cackle about!" roared Bunter. "Here, Skinner, old chap, give me that chair."

"Certainly!" grinned the cad of the Remove, picking up the chair like he would a cricket-stump.

Swipe!

"Yarooooop!" howled Bunter as Skinner swung the chair about his fat person. "I mean give it to me, you rotter—"

"Isn't that what I'm doing?" asked Skinner blandly. "Do you want it again—"

Swipe!

"Ow-wow!" roared Bunter. "You beast! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter made a rush at Skinner and grabbed the chair from his too-obliging hands. Then he raised his huge bulk upon it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed Bob Cherry. "What's this game, old lard barrel?"

"Bunter's trying an acrobatic stunt," said Nugent with a grin. "He reckons that that chair will stand his weight for half an hour. I say it will give up the ghost in five minutes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah, you rotters, it's nothing of the kind!" howled Bunter. "I'm going to make a speech—"

"A whatter?"

"A s-speech!" roared the Owl.

"Oh, my hat!" said Wharton faintly. A torrent of derisive cheers broke out.

"Order!" roared Bunter, balancing himself precariously on the creaking



In the far corner of the Head's room a man was stooping down, his hand on the corner of the carpet. "Ahem!" coughed Bunter, as he entered the apartment. As though stung by a wasp, the man in the study sprang upright and swung round. It was the new French master! (See Chapter 8.)

chair. "Beasts! I want to speak to you! Yah, rotters! I've got some news—"

"What, has your postal-order arrived at last?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"On the ball, fatty!"

"Gentlemen of the Remove—"

roared Bunter.

"Hurrah!"

"I shall be holding a sayance—"

"A whatter?"

"A sayance," repeated Bunter, by this time red in the face.

"You mean a seance!" howled Nugent.

"I shall be holding a sayance," continued Bunter wrathfully, "in Study No. 7, between eight and eight forty-five to-night—"

"Hurrah!"

"Any chaps who want their heads

"Bumped!" suggested Skinner humorously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Read," howled Bunter, "or their hands read, or their futures foretold, can roll along. I shall charge a modest fee, payable either in coin of the realm or—"

"What?"

"Coin of the realm," said Bunter impressively, "or tuck!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loud and derisive was the laughter. "Yaroooooh!"

Harold Skinner pushed Bunter headlong from the chair and mounted in his stead.

"Any chaps who want their hands read, bumps felt, or corns cut, can blow along to Study No. 11 this evening," he said. "There'll be nothing to pay; only you can leave a plum cake and a couple of bottles of ginger-pop as you go out."

"I suppose you think that's funny, Skinner?" said Bunter, glaring. "My announcement was in earnest. I've proved that I'm a prophet."

"Yes," retorted Skinner; "and this new potty plan of yours for extracting tuck will prove more loss than profit, old son."

"Yah!" roared Bunter.

And with that inelegant rejoinder Billy Bunter stalked in a dignified manner from the room.

No one took the Owl very seriously. But at eight o'clock that evening it became known that Billy Bunter's seance had started.

Harry Wharton broke the news to the fellows after prep.

"The fat fraud has tacked up a notice on his study door," he said. "He's set himself up in the prophecy business with a vengeance. Calls himself a giddy mystic, prophet, and oracle."

"The dickens he has!" said Peter Todd, who was one of Bunter's study-mates. "I like his thumping cheek, using our study for his silly seance!"

A throng of juniors trooped along to Study No. 7, scenting fun.

Sure enough, on the door was tacked up a placard. It read as follows:

SEANCE NOW ON!
THE GRATE, MISTICK,
PROFIT AND ORAKEL
PROFESSOR BABU BUN-TA
THE FEWCHURE FORTOLD
FEAS TO SOOT EVERY PURCE
UPPER SKOOL ————— THRU PENCE
LOWER SKOOL ————— TUPPENCE
FAGS ————— 2 SARRNES!

Harry Wharton rapped on the door and turned the handle. It was locked. He rapped again.

"Hallo, Billy! Is the seance on yet? I want to consult the oracle."

The key was turned in the lock. The door was opened a few inches, and the fat face of Bunter, surmounted by a high wizard's hat, appeared.

"My giddy aunt!" cried Wharton, starting back.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where did you get the chapeau, Billy?"

Everyone thronged forward. Billy Bunter inside threw his ponderous bulk against the door to keep it closed.

"Go easy, you fellows!" he said.

"One at a time! Have you got your tuppence ready, Harry, old chap?"

"No," grinned Harry Wharton. "But I'll give you something that'll do you more good."

"What?" inquired Bunter suspiciously.

"Two thick ears, old man."

"Really, Wharton, this is no time for idle jests!" said Bunter severely. "Time's money with me, you chaps. Now, then! Who wants to consult the oracle first? Who wants to find out what the dickens is going to happen to him in the giddy future?"

"I know what's going to happen to you in the giddy future if you don't stand away from that door!" howled Peter Todd. "You're going to get pushed on to your silly fat head!"

Peter Todd proved a true prophet. The juniors in the passage surged forward. The door flew open. With a loud yell Billy Bunter went headlong over on to the broad of his back.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Harry Wharton. "Look what he's got on, you chaps! A giddy pink nightgown with black guineapigs pasted over it!"

Certainly Billy Bunter's costume was weird and wonderful. As he rose and adjusted the long garment he wore over his ordinary attire and set his hat on again, a roar of laughter greeted his appearance.

His headgear was made of cardboard, high and pointed, like a dunce's hat. Pieces of coloured paper were pasted in strips about it, and it was decorated with stars and other emblems. His wizard's gown consisted of an old pink nightshirt, which a dotting aunt had once sent him as a Christmas present, much to his disgust. He had cut out some pictures and pasted them at intervals over the garment, giving it a weird and wonderful effect.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Mark Linley. "Look at the fat wizard, you chaps! What a picture! Those giddy guineapigs!"

"They aren't guinea pigs!" snapped Bunter. "They're cats!"

"But what's the idea of cats on a pink nightshirt?" inquired Bob Cherry, smiling broadly.

"The black cat is the symbol of luck," retorted Bunter. "But I've no time to answer a lot of fat-headed questions. Who's going to be the first to have his fortune told?"

"You can tell mine," said Skinner.

"Right-ho, old chap!" said Bunter cheerfully. "Give us your tuppence!"

"You get on with the washing," advised Skinner. "How the dickens do I know whether you can foretell the future? If you can prophesy what's going to happen to me I'll give you the tuppence—not unless."

"Right-ho!" agreed Bunter.

He seated himself in the armchair.

"Keep quiet, all you chaps. I may not be able to see the visions if you kick up a thumping row."

From the table he took a glass bowl, turned it upside down, and held it on his podgy knees. As he did so, Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, gave a yell.

"That's my bowl!" he howled.

"Silence!" requested Bunter. "Didn't I ask you not to kick up such a giddy row? How the thump do you expect me to see visions in the crystal?"

"Crystal!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish. "Gee! That's my giddy goldfish bowl you've got there, you fat galoot! Say, let me get at him!"

"Keep him off!" yelled Bunter, in alarm.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry grasped the excited American junior by the arms and held him back.

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"I'll slaughter the galoot!" cried Fish excitedly. "And, say, you fat elephant, what did you do with the goldfish out of that bowl?"

"Don't get so excited, Fishy, old chap," said Bunter soothingly. "The giddy goldfish are quite O.K. I slipped 'em into that big bottle standing on the shelf in your study."

"Gee whiz!" said Fish, dancing with rage. "That bottle contained ammonia! I'll flay you alive, you slabsided galoot!"

It took the efforts of half a dozen juniors to postpone this interesting event. When at last they managed to eject Fisher T. Fish from the study, Bunter, somewhat unnerved, resumed his seance.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Prophecy for Profit!

"N-O-W, then, Skinny," stammered Bunter, "I'll read your future in the crystal."

He sat like a fat sphinx, gazing into the inverted goldfish bowl. Then he began to speak.

"I see money—money—and yet more money!" wailed Bunter.

"Good!" said Skinner. "That means I'm going to be wealthy, eh, Billy?"

"I see a hand hovering over that money. The money has gone. Ah! What's this I see? I see bars. There's a face behind the bars. A warder approaches, and the face is lost to view. Ah! Now I see it again. As I thought, it is the face of Skinny."

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

But Harold Skinner hooted with rage.

"What the dickens do you mean by it, you fat idiot? What do you mean by saying that you can see my face behind bars?"

"All right! Keep your wool on, Skinny!" said Bunter, looking round.

"I had to say what I saw in the crystal, didn't I? Pay up your tuppence and get out."

"I'll knock your silly fat head off for you!" snapped Skinner, as he went off in a huff.

"Well, I dare say you weren't so far wrong, Bunter," remarked Frank Nugent, laughing. "How about reading my future?"

"Certainly, Frank, old chap!"

Again Bunter gazed into the crystal.

"I see rags, bones, and bottles," he moaned. "I see a hovel and—"

"Oh, cut it out!" exclaimed Nugent. "Can't you see anything cheerful, old lard tub?"

"I can only see what's in the crystal," retorted Bunter. "A prophet doesn't see what he wants to see. He sees things as they are—or—I mean as they are going to be."

So dismal was his prophecy concerning Frank Nugent that in addition to the twopence charged, Nugent gave him a hearty kick.

"Beast!" said Bunter. "Some of you chaps don't want to hear the truth. And it's against my principles to tell anything but the truth. Let me read your future for you, Snoop, old chap."

"Fire away!" said Snoop cheerfully. "But if it isn't a bit brighter than your usual drivel you'll get no twopence from me."

Gazing into the inverted goldfish bowl, Bunter did his best.

"I can see you at your present age, Snoop," said Bunter slowly and distinctly. "You are standing before a bald-headed old buffer with a stick in his hand."

"Mr. Prout, probably," grinned Bob Cherry.

"It is not Prouty," retorted the prophet crossly. "I cannot recognise the bald old buffer, Snoop. The stick he carries in his hand is of ebony with a curved handle."

"Who the deuce is that?" said Snoop.

"He appears to be an editor of a newspaper," resumed Bunter, the prophet. "Yes, yes; he is the editor of a newspaper."

Snoop started. A wild, excited look sprang to his eyes for the moment.

"He is holding a cheque in his hands for twenty thousand pounds," continued Bunter in a listless voice.

"A ch-cheque?" stammered Snoop.

"For twenty thousand pounds!" droned Bunter the prophet. "And the cheque is made out to Sidney James Snoop!"

"Oh, good!" breathed Snoop. "I say—"

Bunter did not add that he knew two days ago that Snoop intended entering a big charity sweepstake, run by a well-known newspaper, neither did he inform Snoop that he had seen him post his effort. Prophets are not expected to be so frank and truthful.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Skinner.

If there was any truth in Bunter's prophetic statement Skinner was prepared to advance Snoop the sum of five shillings he had refused to loan him only a short while back.

Snoop, naturally, was wildly excited at the prospect of the wealth that was coming his way. His belief in Bunter's prophetic powers was pardonable in the circumstances, as he hadn't breathed a word about the sweepstake to anyone but Skinner and Stott.

"That is all," said Bunter wearily. "The vision fades, Snoop."

Snoop thought it high time for him to "fade." Despite the fact that the news was pleasant, Snoop, who was of a suspicious turn of mind, already began to be assailed by uneasy doubts as to the veracity of Bunter's forecast.

"Dub up!" said Bunter, as Snoop moved away from the crowd. "Hand over your tuppence."

"Nothing doing, Bunter," said Snoop. "I'll pay you the tuppence when I get the cheque for twenty thousand pounds."

"Pay up, you rotter!" howled Bunter. But Snoop, and his tuppence, were gone.

"Swindling cad!" roared Bunter after his retreating figure. "Mean beast!"

Suddenly the unlucky prophet noticed that his minor, Samuel Tuckless Bunter, had elbowed his way through the throng in Study No. 7.

"Hallo! What do you want?" he growled. "Vamoose! I've no time for you now, Sammy."

"I want my fortune told," said Sammy Bunter. "That is, if you can tell fortunes at all?"

"Cheeky kid!" snapped Billy Bunter. "You don't think I should be dressed up like this if I couldn't? Hand over a couple of sardines, or a jam puff, and I'll tell you about your sticky finish."

"What!" cried Sammy Bunter. "Hand you tuck for your silly prophecies! You must think I'm potty!"

The greedy eyes of the Owl caught a glimpse of a pegtop protruding from his minor's jacket-pocket.

"This will do, Sammy," he said, snatching at it. "Now you needn't pay me two sardines."

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

"Give me my top back!" wailed Sammy Bunter. "I'll tell old Twigg about you."

Sammy Bunter's threat to "sneak" to his worthy Form master, Mr. Twigg, left Billy unmoved.

"Exchange is no robbery, Sammy," he remarked blandly. "I've got your peg-top, and I'm going to give you something in return—a warning."

He peered into the crystal. A sudden silence fell over the room. Billy Bunter thought it was out of respect for his prophetic powers. He did not know that the other fellows had just become aware that Mr. Horace Henry Samuel Quelch, M.A., master of the Fourth Form, was standing, a grim figure, in the doorway.

"Fog clouds the crystal," droned Bunter, his eyes fixed on the inverted goldfish bowl. "Ah, now the awful vision grows clearer. I can see your face, Sammy. It is horrible!"

"You beast!" howled Sammy Bunter. He, too, was unaware of the presence of the Remove Form master.

"Horrible!" repeated the Owl. "Your face is pale as a half-boiled haddock, Sammy. There are pink spots on your silly fat nose and forehead. You are going to suffer grief and pain, Sammy."

He looked up from the crystal. His eyes, gleaming through his round spectacles, caught sight of the grim figure of the master at the door.

"Yow!" gulped Bunter in alarm. Mr. Quelch strode into the study. His face was set. His eyes shone hard as steel.

"What is the meaning of this foolery, Bunter?" he demanded.

The Owl rose from his seat and affected a sickly grin. He looked a fat and ridiculous figure as he stood there before the Form master in his wizard's robe and hat.

"Er—er—it was only a bit of fun, sir," he stammered. "You see, a number of the chaps, like my minor, for instance, begged me to tell 'em their fortunes. Jolly good fun for them, sir. The chaps were enjoying it. Hee, hee!"

"Stop that idiotic tittering, boy!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "It appears to me that you were purporting to prophesy with the aid of that—ahem—bowl. A ridiculous and fraudulent claim."

"Oh, n-no, sir! I—I make a jolly good prophet. Ask any of the fellows, sir."

"That's right, sir," blubbed Sammy Bunter. "He made a jolly good profit out of me. He took my peg-top."

"So I witnessed," said Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, how dare you inveigle your schoolfellows into parting with their treasured possessions upon the unsubstantiated claim that you can reveal the future?"

"Please, sir, he stole my peg-top!" whined Bunter minor again.

"Sneak!" hissed Billy Bunter. "Enough of this!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Bunter, remove those ridiculous vestments. You will write five hundred lines of Livy. Bring them to me on Wednesday evening. If I catch you again professing the possession of occult powers, and fraudulently extracting payment from your schoolmates, I shall send you to Dr. Locke."

The indignant Form master stumped out of the study. Sammy Bunter followed like a plump puppy-dog at his heels.

At the door Bunter minor stopped and turned. He paused until Mr. Quelch had taken a few steps down the passage.

"Yab, Billy!" said Sammy Bunter. "Who's the one to suffer grief and pain? A fine fat prophet you are. Pity you



When Loder pulled out the pad from the cupboard the bottle of ink descended on top of him, its contents spurting over his head, collar, and coat. "Yarooooh!" spluttered the disguised prefect. "Ow-gug-grough!" The door opened and a burst of laughter rang out as Todd and Tom Dutton came into the study. (See Chapter 9.)

couldn't foresee old Quelch was coming to the study."

He rolled swiftly out of the room as Billy Bunter snatched up the goldfish bowl. His gurgling laughter grew fainter as he ambled in the wake of Mr. Quelch along the Remove passage.

Meantime, as he suffered the chaff of his Form-mates, the Owl of the Remove doffed his prophet's robe. His first attempt to turn his alleged gift of prophecy into a profit-making business had not been a success.

William George Bunter was discouraged.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Reward of Disobedience!

IF there was one thing Billy Bunter liked even less than sharing tuck with a schoolmate, it was Livy.

The five hundred lines of Livy which Mr. Quelch had given him caused him to writhe in mental anguish.

On the day following his seance in Study No. 7, Bunter wrote fifteen lines of his task. Then feeling the need of recreation, he offered to tell Peter Todd his fortune for fourpence.

Half a minute later, with a severe pain where Peter Todd's boot had struck him, the Owl of the Remove rolled along to the common-room. A number of fellows were there finishing their prep.

Bunter beamed at them through his spectacles and gave a cough.

"Ahem!" There was no response.

"Ahem! I say, you fellows!" Several fellows of the Lower School looked up in annoyance. Most were anxious to finish their prep, and have the rest of the evening clear. The sight of Bunter's fat face was not welcome at that juncture.

"Oh, seat!" "Beat it!" "Vamoose!"

The fact that Snoop picked up a heavy dictionary warned Bunter that it was not wise to tarry.

Like a lost soul he wandered to Harry Wharton's study. His reception was no more cordial.

After three or four further rebuffs, Bunter rolled back to the common-room again.

By this time prep was over. Fellows were prepared to tolerate, if not welcome, the fat self-styled prophet.

"I say, you chaps," said Bunter, "if any of you happen to have any pocket-money—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" cried Skinner. "You've as much chance of borrowing money here as you have of foretelling the winner of the Derby."

"Really, Skinner, I don't want to borrow money," said Bunter. "That is—er—I don't mind accepting the loan of a bob until I get my postal-order from home."

His remarks were ignored. Just then Harry Wharton & Co strolled into the common-room.

(Continued on page 16.)
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Supplement No. 215.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON

Week Ending March 14th, 1925.



EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

MY dictionary tells me that a singer is "one who utters melodious sounds." Bob Cherry, on the other hand, says that a Singer is "a type of sewing-machine"!

Of course, Bob will have his little joke. As for the dictionary—well, you know what these dictionaries are. We've got lots of singers in the Greyfriars Remove, but I have yet to hear them utter "melodious sounds"! The noise they make is both painful and alarming, and they generally commence their vocal capers at prep-time, or when I am working on my Editorial.

Tom Brown is one of the worst offenders. Browney is always bursting into song. He starts singing at rising-bell—I'll call it singing for want of a suitable adjective to describe the awful din he makes. He sings all day long, except during lessons; and once he so far forgot himself as to burst into song in the form-room! Mr. Quelch came down like a wolf on the fold, and addressed the warbler with his cane; and then there was more music—a song and dance, in fact!

It wouldn't be so bad if the songs that Browney sang were fresh. One gets tired of hearing the same old things over and over again. I've had it drummed into my unwilling ears hundreds of times that "It ain't a-goin' to rain no mo'!" As for "What'll I do?" One of the first things I feel like doing is slaughtering Tom Brown! And I'm "weary unto death," as they say in one of the Indian Love Lyrics, of being informed, in a shrill crescendo, that "When it's night-time in Italy, it's Wednesday over here"!

Whenever I remonstrate with Browney he snaps my head off, and tells me that there's no law against a fellow singing if he wants to. All I can say is, the sooner they frame such a law, the better for my peace of mind. I think the Rules of the School ought to include the following.

"No boy shall sing, warble, screech, wail, or make any vocal sounds that may constitute a disturbance and cause a breach of the peace. Any boy disregarding this Rule will be gagged for the first offence, and throttled for every subsequent offence."

Some may accuse me of showing a lack of sympathy towards singers just because I don't happen to be a singer myself. Let my accusers sit in Study No. 1, and try to do literary work whilst an unearthly din comes from No. 2 and No. 3, and they will quickly agree with Gosling, the porter, that "all singers oughter be drowned at birth"!

My chums can look forward to a really good number next week. My merry band of contributors have burnt the midnight oil over a "Dream" Supplement. Lord Mauleverer, our born slacker, rises to the occasion with a poem, and "Professor" Tom Brown quotes a few extracts from a Dream book he has recently compiled. But there's one thing, boys, you won't go to sleep over this coming number, even though it happens to be a "Dream" Supplement. Look out for it!

Supplement 1.

UNLIKE our worthy Editor, I like human songsters. Give me the fellow who sings in his bath, who sings on the footer-field, who sings any time, anyhow, anywhere! I don't mind if a fellow has got a voice like a ship's siren, so long as he sings his way through life. Shakespeare says somewhere that the chap who has no music in his soul is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils, and is not to be trusted. So beware of the fellow who never bursts into song!

MOST of our big schools have their own special songs. At Eton they sing the famous boating song, commencing, "Down he plunges, king of waters." At Winchester they chant the "Dulce Domum." At Harrow they have no end of glorious songs to choose from; but the greatest favourite is "Forty Years On." Then there is the famous footer song, "Play Up!"

"Bother the ball! It goes so dead—
(Play up, you fellows, play up!)
Rolling about like a lump of lead.
(Play up, you fellows, play up!)
Who can play, I'd like to know,
With half a ton at the end of his toe?
(Play up, you fellows, play up!)
Play up!"

GREYFRIARS has its special song, but it is seldom sung. It was written hundreds of years ago by a very scholarly headmaster, and he wrote it in Latin! What we really need to exercise our lung-power at Greyfriars, is not a "high-brow" song, written in a dead language, but a real, good, rousing school refrain. Now then, Dick Penfold, what about it?

FISHER T. FISH, who is always on the look-out for ways and means of fattening his exchequer, has offered to give singing lessons at half-a-crown a time. One or two "mugs" have gone to Fishy, and parted with their half-
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crowns; but they haven't made much headway in the noble art of warbling. Fish is no songster himself, and he cannot impart to others a gift which he doesn't personally possess. However, he has taught his pupils the words of all the best-known "American" songs, such as "Yankee-doodle," "The Star-spangled Banner," "Poor Old Joe," and "Doodah-doodah-day." So the aforesaid "mugs" have had something for their money, after all.

MICKY DESMOND declares that there are no songs to compare with the Irish melodies. Whenever there is a concert in the Rag, Micky insists upon mounting the platform and singing "The Minstrel Boy," or "A Little Bit of Heaven," or "When Irish Eyes are Smiling." Ogilvy, however, is contemptuous of Irish songs. "No songs in all the world," says he, "can hold a candle to 'Annie Laurie,' and 'Jock o' Hazeldean.'" David Morgan is at loggerheads with both Desmond and Ogilvy. He is so keen on the "Men of Harlech" that he sings it in his sleep! "No songs can touch the Welsh songs, look you!" says Morgan. But where, oh, where, does poor old England come in?

At the commencement of this article I believe I mentioned the fact that I could "put up with" any fellow who sang, whether his voice was like unto a ship's siren or the rumblings of distant thunder. In my defence of the songsters at Greyfriars I quite forgot the existence of one Horace Coker, strange as it may seem. Now, really, if there's one fellow at Greyfriars capable of driving his Form fellows crazy it is the great and fatheaded Coker. Singing! Well, give me half a dozen cats "meowing" together, and I'll manage to grin and bear it. But give me ten seconds of Coker's vocal efforts, and I'm quite limp and thoroughly knocked out by the time the tenth second has ticked out. You chaps have never heard Coker roar—I mean sing—and you can thank your lucky stars that you are not likely to.



My First Song In Public!

The Vocalists of Greyfriars describe their experiences—pleasant & otherwise!

DICK RUSSELL:

My first song in public was also my last. You don't catch me singing in public again! It was Breaking-up Night at Greyfriars, and there was an impromptu concert in the concert-hall. I was persuaded, by certain well-meaning pals, to go on to the platform and sing that pathetic song, "Three Blind Mice." When I got as far as "See how they run!" I was obliged to follow suit! The audience, who had brought plenty of ammunition into the hall, bombarded me without mercy. A fusillade of ancient eggs crashed and splashed all over my person, and I was avoided for days afterwards, because of the objectionable odour which clung to me! I have sung the same song since, many a time and oft, but never in a crowded concert-hall! My motto is, "Safety First; and if you must sing, sing to yourself!"

BILLY BUNTER.

It may not be generally known that my fool name is W. G. C. Bunter. The "C" stands for Caruso, the world's greatest singer, in whose footsteps I proudly follow! I have been singing, on and off, ever since I was born. I can sing base, tenor, treble, alto, and Barry Tone. Critics have said that my voice is like the sound of running water. Weather that is a compliment or not I must leave you to decide. I gave my first song in public when I was about eight years old, playing in a pantomime. Of course, I fairly brought the house down.—(But there was no one hurt, the audience having cleared off when Bunter started his song!—ED.)

ALONZO TODD:

The first song I ever sang in public was that soul-stirring coon song, "Im-

pooverished old Joseph"—which, being interpreted, means "Poor Old Joe." My voice cracked with emotion as I warbled: "Gone are the days when my heart was young and gay, Gone are my friends to the cotton-fields away."

And when I came to the chorus, "I'm coming!" I broke down completely, and burst into an impassioned torrent of weeping. The audience—it was a Greyfriars audience—was very kind. I remember Skinner of the Remove fetching a bucket, while crowds of fellows pressed silk handkerchiefs upon me. I was too overcome to proceed with the harrowing misfortunes of Poor Old Joe!

LORD MAULEVERER:

My first song in public was "Asleep in the Deep." Trust me to select a song with a title like that! There's something so soothing and restful about it, begad! Anyway, when I was half-way through the first verse, I went to sleep standing up, like a horse. The fellows sitting in the front row rushed on to the platform, and prodded me with cricket-stumps, and I was compelled to finish my song. I'm afraid I yawned it rather than sang it.

HURREE SINGH:

The first songful song that I sangfully warbled in public was "More Less-fully Less Than the Esteemed and Ludicrous Dustfulness." You may not recognise it, but it is one of the Indian Love Lyrics. It is a serious song, but the audience went into hysterics, and shedfully burst their buttons when I sang:

"Less than the dustfulness beneath thy chariot wheelfulness,



A False Alarm!

By Tom Brown.

"I SAY, you fellows!" Billy Bunter was pale and breathless as he rushed into Study No. 1. "There's something terrible going on!"

The Famous Five of the Remove were on their feet in an instant. They could see that Bunter was genuinely scared.

"Where?" rapped out Wharton. "Gosling's lodge! I happened to be passing just now, and I heard a most dreadful noise coming from Gossy's parlour. A sort of roaring, bellowing noise, as if Gosling was being murdered!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Seems as if somebody's setting about our worthy and respected porter. Why didn't you pop inside, Bunter, and find out exactly what was happening?"

"Bunter's too big a funk!" said Nugent scornfully. "Come along, you fellows!"

"If Gossy was really being murdered, I'm thinking we shall be too late to save him!" panted Johnny Bull, as the juniors sprinted down into the Close.

They raced across the flagstones like hares, and halted at the door of the porter's lodge.

Weird, unearthly sounds floated out through the parlour window, and the Co. exchanged grim glances.

It really seemed as if William Gosling was being shockingly maltreated, for he was bellowing like a mad bull.

"Come on!" muttered Wharton.

And he flung the door open, and rushed into the lodge, with his chums hard at heel.

"Where—where—"

Supplement ii.]

The juniors had visions of a fierce and deadly fight with Gosling's assailants, whoever they might be. On dashing into the little parlour, however, they saw no sign of any would-be assassins. Gosling was alone. He suddenly ceased to bellow, and stared at the intruders in amazement.

"Young rips!" growled Gosling. "Wot larks are you up to now?"

The juniors stared around them in wonder and bewilderment.

"Where are the rascals who were attacking you, Gossy?" asked Wharton.

"Eh? There ain't been no rascals 'ere—until you young rips come in!"

"But—but why were you making that awful row?" demanded Bob Cherry.

Gosling bristled up at this.

"Hawful row, indeed!" he said wrathfully.

"I wasn't makin' no awful row! I was a-singin', as ever was!"

"Singing?" gasped the juniors in chorus.

Gosling nodded.

"I was a-singin' 'Up from Zummerzet,'" he said. "I'd nearly finished when you come rushin' in. There's jest one more verse. I dessay you'd like to 'ear it."

"Help!" panted Nugent.

"'Ere goes!" said Gosling, clearing his throat. "Why, wot the thump—"

There was a sudden scuttling of feet, and the next instant Gosling was alone in his parlour. The Famous Five were fleeing for their lives. They had no intention of enduring the lingering torture of hearing William Gosling render the penultimate verse of "Up from Zummerzet"!

TO MY KETTLE!

By DICK PENFOLD

COME, sing to me! 'Tis weary waiting here.
Come, sing to me! You'll never boil, I fear.
Long, long ago I placed you on the hob.
Wherefore so slow? You fairly make me sob!

Come, sing to me!
My thirst is great.
Buck up and boil—
Confound this wait!
No sound I hear;
No steam I see.
Can you not hear my voice:
"Come, sing to me?"
Come, sing to me!

Come, sing to me! My throat is dry and parched.
Come, sing to me! For weary miles I've marched.
Long country walks have made me pine for tea.
Why won't you boil? You'll be the death of me!

Come, sing to me!
The table's spread.
Boil, bust you, boil!
I feel half-dead!
No bubbling sound;
No steam I see.
Oh, hear my pleading voice:
"Come, sing to me!"
Come, sing to me!

Come, slug to me!
'Tis time you trilled.
What's this I see?
Why, you're unfilled!
That explains why
No steam I see.
I'll fill you to the brim—
Come, slug to me!
Come, slug to me!

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(Continued from page 13.)

"Ah, here come some sensible chaps at last!" said the Owl, in a relieved tone. "I say, you fellows, if you've got any pocket-money, I'll show you a brand new way of telling fortunes."

"Oh, forget it, you fat chump!" advised Harry Wharton. "Haven't you got into hot water enough already?"

"That was just my bad luck," said Bunter. "Inky managed to keep well out of it."

Hurree Singh drew himself up with dignity.

"I do not chargefully sell my humble services," he said. "Our esteemed and worthy Form master was rightfully angry because you cheatfully took the payfulness."

"And, what's more," put in Harry Wharton, "you don't know anything about prophesying, either."

"Rot!" remarked Bunter. "I know as much as Inky, anyway. We both learnt how to tell the future out of the same book. The only thing is, I'm a jolly sight better prophet than he is."

"At least Hurree Singh honestly believes in that sort of thing to an extent," said Bob Cherry. "You jolly well know there's nothing in it, you fat fraud!"

"True!" said Nugent. "And if you're wise you'll cut it out. If Mr. Quelch catches you again, you'll find yourself on the carpet in the Head's study."

Deliberately Bunter closed the Common-room door.

"Old Quelch won't come along here to-night," he said. "He's got all those e-ssays on wireless that we had to do in class to-day to correct."

He ambled to the table and took up a large bottle of ink. This he carefully set down in the centre of the Common-room floor.

The fellows looked at him in astonishment.

Billy Bunter, conscious of their gaze, proceeded to astonish them further.

From his jacket pocket he took out a bulky bag. With this held in his hand he seated himself cross-legged, on the floor, near the ink-bottle.

"Hallo! What's the matter with you, you silly fat idiot?" inquired Harold Skinner.

Bunter held his peace.

Holding the brown paper bag out in his hand, the Owl slowly emptied its contents on the Common-room floor.

This proved to be sand, and when Bunter had emptied the bag, he spread the sand in a low circular heap before him.

"What's the giddy game this time?" asked Peter Todd.

Out of curiosity the juniors gathered round the Owl in a circle. Now that he was sure of an audience, Bunter explained the stunt.

"I am about to read fortunes in the sand, you fellows," he said. "It's a new way I invented myself. I pour the ink on to the sand and the ink forms strange signs and symbols. By interpreting the signs I shall be able to tell any chap with a bit of pocket-money

what's going to happen to him this day week."

"A new stuntfulness!" exclaimed Hurree Singh. "Readfully telling the future by means of the sandfulness is as old as the esteemed hills. In my country and in the celestial China, the worthy seers have wisely foretold the honourable future for the last two thousand years."

"Then it must be a jolly good stunt," said Bunter. "They say there is no giddy original thing under the sun. It shows that if I've hit upon something that the wise guys of China and India have proved to be a good stunt for the last two thousand years, it's all the more to my credit. Now, who'll be the first to have his fortune told?"

"You can tell mine if you like, Bunt," said Ogilvy.

"Right-ho!" said Bunter. "Hand it over!"

"Hand it over! What are you talking about?"

"Why, hand over the fee, of course!"

"Oh, go and play hopscotch!" snapped Ogilvy.

At first it looked as though Bunter was not going to get any custom. Finally, Wun Lung, the Chinese junior, who, like the others, was rather curious about Bunter's new little game, agreed to give him a trial.

"Me, allee same, givee you nicee apple, Bunter, if you tellee my future. Me likee velly nicee old Chinese sand tick."

Wun Lung omitted to mention that he had purchased two apples three days before. Both were hard and green. One he had eaten, and he had suffered. The other he now generously offered to William George Bunter.

The big round eyes of the prophet Bunter gleamed greedily as he regarded that offer.

"Hand it over," he said, "and the Oracle will get to bizney."

Having safely stowed the apple in his pocket, Bunter set about "getting to business" with a will. Taking up the bottle of ink, he held it over the sand. Slowly he poured the ink out of the bottle. It splashed into the sand, trickled through it, and spread in various directions, forming a design almost like a giant spider.

Billy Bunter set the emptied ink bottle on the floor. He regarded the ink design in the sand fixedly.

"There are storms ahead for you, Wun Lung, old chap," he said mournfully. "The ink has formed the shape of an umbrella—a very bad omen."

"Me no can see umbrella," said Wun Lung, staring hard.

"That's 'cause you're not a giddy seer," explained Bunter. "To my mind, the ink in the sand is exactly in the shape of the open ribs of a broken gamp. That means that you'll have no shelter from the storms ahead. My advice to you as a friend and prophet, is to put a bit away for a rainy day."

"Me tinky you allee same no good prophet," averred Wun Lung. "Me solly me givee you nicee apple now. Hopee you allee same get stomachy ache."

Next minute the party in the Common-room were electrified by a deep, stern voice.

"Bunter, how dare you!"

Giving a terrified gulp, the Owl came forward on his knees. The one person of all others whom he had dreaded seeing him with that incriminating sand, had quietly entered the room. It was Mr. Quelch!

Hastily Billy Bunter tried to shovel the ink-soaked sand into the brown

paper bag. All he succeeded in doing, was to reveal the fact that the ink had trickled through the thin layer of sand and stained the floor boards.

Mr. Quelch gazed down at the stain, his whole being seething with righteous indignation.

"You abandoned boy, Bunter! How dare you deliberately disobey me! What did I say that I should do if I caught you again flaunting your ridiculous pretensions to being a prophet!"

"B-b-but it wasn't, sir!" stammered Bunter, ambling to his feet. "It—it was only a little game I was showing the chaps, sir."

"Do not think to save yourself by a cowardly resort to untruthfulness, Bunter. As I opened the door I distinctly saw you accept an apple from Wun Lung. Then I saw you pour ink upon some sand which you had spilled on the floor. Do not think that you can deceive me, Bunter. I am well aware of that ancient Eastern method of foretelling the future."

"B-but, please, sir—"

"Do not seek refuge in excuses, wretched boy!" thundered Mr. Quelch, thoroughly angry. "You have deliberately disobeyed me, spilled a perfectly good bottle of ink, and badly stained the Common-room floor. You will proceed at once to the headmaster's study. There you will wait until I fetch Dr. Locke to deal with you summarily."

"B-b-but, sir!" pleaded Bunter.

"Go, boy!"

Shaking at the knees, William George Bunter followed the direction indicated by the Form master's inexorable finger.

With lagging footsteps he made his way to the dread sanctum of the headmaster. Already, in his vivid imagination, he heard the swish of the cane, and felt the burning strokes upon his quivering flesh.

And Billy Bunter shuddered ponderously.

When he reached the Head's study Bunter hesitated. He knew that if he turned back, and tried to evade his punishment, his thrashing would be all the worse when he did get it. There was some comfort in the thought that Dr. Locke was not there in his study waiting for him. Slowly, very slowly, Bunter turned the handle of the Head's door and pushed it open. Immediately his eyes grew bigger.

Someone was in the room. In the far corner a man was stooping down, his hand on the corner of the carpet.

"Ahem!" said Bunter.

As though stung by a wasp the man in the study sprang upright and swung round. It was the new French master!

"Beg pardon, Mossoo," said Bunter politely. "But—but I was told to come here."

Monsieur Pierre Vevy ejaculated a remark which sounded suspiciously like "Hang the fat fool!" But Bunter could not be quite sure.

Aloud the French master said:

"Ah, eet ees you, Bunter. I was just waiting here for the headmaster, and dropped my cuff-link on ze carpet."

Instinctively Bunter's beady eyes roamed to the other's cuffs, which protruded from his black coat. Both links were there. Although by no means a bright and brainy youth, Bunter thought it was curious.

There was little time to think of anything, however. Dr. Locke, followed by Mr. Quelch, strode into the study.

The new French master excused himself, saying that he had called at the study to retrieve an examination paper he had left there earlier in the day. The Head nodded, and monsieur departed. Billy Bunter trembled.

Perhaps it's best that a veil should be drawn over the harassing scene that followed. During the next minute or so the study resounded to the steady swishing of the cane and the agonised hoots of the Owl.

Truly Billy Bunter was learning the lesson that the path of a prophet is not strewn with primroses.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Mystery of the Spanner!

WHEN the new French master left Dr. Locke's study he closed the door and quietly walked about three steps along the passage. Then he halted and listened.

As Bunter's cries mingled with the steady swishing of the cane the face of "Monsieur Pierre Vevy" became contorted with delight. He rubbed his hands together, and once or twice chuckled audibly.

"Serve the fat beast right!" he muttered. "I hope the Head slays him alive!"

Before Bunter emerged, writhing from the Head's sanctum, the new French master made his way to the room in Greyfriars School which had been put at his disposal. This was the room formerly occupied by Monsieur Charpentier.

The room was comfortably furnished, and a cosy fire crackled in the grate. All the books and knick-knacks, which Monsieur Charpentier had collected during his sojourn at Greyfriars, gave the room a very homely appearance.

The new master, Monsieur Pierre Vevy, alias Gerald Assheton Loder, locked the door and threw himself dejectedly into the armchair.

Mentally he began to review the events leading up to his present precarious position.

He had returned to Greyfriars School

to retrieve from the headmaster's study the spanner that he had dropped from his pocket on the night of the struggle with the French master.

Two fears had been prominent in Loder's mind. In the first place he had been fearful lest when the spanner was found, as it surely would be sooner or later, it would be recognised as his. In the second place, he was afraid that it would be assumed that he had used that self-same spanner for striking Monsieur Charpentier.

In some ways things had gone exceedingly well. He had carried off his role of a touring French teacher from Paris in a manner to surprise even himself. So far as he was aware, no one suspected him of being anything but what he himself claimed to be. Probably this was due in no small measure to the very audacity of Loder's scheme. Naturally, it would have occurred to no one to imagine that a Sixth-Former of Greyfriars School would return to take up duties as a French master.

But in another way things had not gone so well for Loder. Already he had made two or three efforts to get into the headmaster's study when no one was present.

That very evening he had succeeded. At once he had made for the far corner of the room. It was there, under the carpet, that the spanner had been kicked. It seemed quite reasonable to suppose that no one had trodden on that portion of the carpet, which was not in a direct line with the headmaster's desk. But as Loder reached that corner of the room he distinctly felt the shape of the bicycle spanner under the carpet border.

No sooner had Loder taken hold of the corner of the carpet to raise it than Billy Bunter had appeared. Startled, Loder had risen sharply. His opportunity had gone.

He kept to his room until the school was asleep. Changing his boots for slippers, he crept downstairs. Another

disappointment was in store for him. The door of the headmaster's study was locked.

By this time Gerald Loder was a bundle of nerves. He slept but fitfully that night.

And the following morning he took the Fifth Form in French. His thoughts were wandering. Several times he made "howlers" that convulsed the Form. After he had made one particularly atrocious blunder in a French translation Loder came to himself with a start. If he continued in this way he would draw suspicion on himself.

The situation was a very trying one. Twice he paid visits to Dr. Locke's study in the morning. Once he went immediately after the dinner-hour. This third time he was lucky. No one was in the room.

Quietly Loder pushed the door to. He crept to the corner of the study, and, stooping down, raised the carpet. A little gasp of dismay left his lips. The spanner was gone!

Frantically Loder raised more of the carpet. Nothing could he see of the spanner. He replaced the carpet, and stood looking dejectedly about him.

Who could have taken the spanner? He had distinctly felt it beneath the carpet with his feet on the occasion when he had been interrupted by the entry of Billy Bunter into the study.

Fearfully Gerald Loder glanced over the Head's desk. There was not a sign of the spanner. Absolutely baffled, he finally returned to his room.

"Who the dickens could have taken it?" he muttered savagely.

In the first place there was the faint chance that the Head himself might have found the spanner. This did not appeal to Loder as likely. He somehow felt that if Dr. Locke had come across it inquiries would have been made in the school to trace the owner.

CAN YOU SOLVE THIS ONE?

Everywhere you go "Cross Word" puzzles seem to stare out at you. Nowadays the MAGNET would not be complete without one. Here is Puzzle No. 6.

All you will need is a pencil, rubber, and a little patience. I want it to be clearly understood that these puzzles are published merely for your AMUSEMENT. There is no competition attached to the scheme. Readers are, therefore, requested not to send in their solutions.

Next week's MAGNET will contain the solution of this week's cross word puzzle, together with a new puzzle. Now for a few tips on solving cross word puzzles.

In the diagram alongside you will see a number of white and black squares, in some of which appear numbers. Each number in the puzzle indicates the position of the first letter of the word whose definition you will find in the clue column alongside the same number in the square. From this clue you are to decide what the word is, and to place each of its letters in one square until the number of white squares allotted to this word has been filled.

Each word reads from left to right (across) or top to bottom (down) according to the positions indicated in the clue column.

Remember that each black square separates one word from another.

When you have completed the puzzle you will find that all the words that cross interlock.

It is advisable to pencil the letters in lightly at first, so that should they be wrong you will be able to erase them with a rubber, without mutilating the diagram. Now get busy, chums!

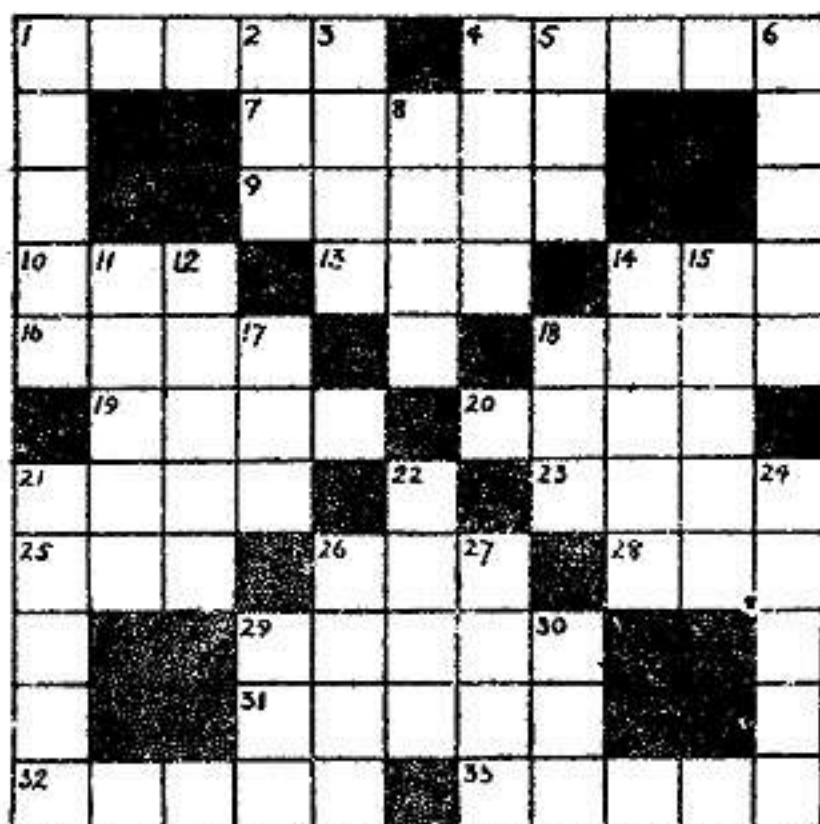
CLUES DOWN.

- 1. Famous goalkeeper.
- 2. Used in cricket.
- 3. To kill.
- 4. Organs of hearing.
- 5. Condition of America.
- 6. Useful.
- 8. A large plant.
- 11. Covered with soot.
- 12. Command.
- 14. A picnic.
- 16. Very weird.
- 17. Where the Botanical Gardens are.
- 18. Magog's twin.
- 21. Billy Bunter's minor.
- 22. A mistress.
- 24. Article of furniture.
- 26. Connected with pens.
- 27. A form of "Elizabeth."
- 29. A low fellow.
- 30. Military rank (abbreviated).

CLUES ACROSS.

- 1. Famous cricketer.
- 4. Girl's name.
- 7. Seen in a church.
- 9. To stay.
- 10. Military decoration.
- 13. Affirmative.
- 14. Form of "Edward."
- 16. A town in Yorkshire.
- 18. A colour.
- 19. Poems.
- 20. A Dutch settler.
- 21. A tasty dish.
- 23. Manner of walking.
- 25. A town in Scotland.
- 26. To seize suddenly.
- 28. A beverage.
- 29. Another beverage.
- 31. A yawning chasm.
- 32. Measurements.
- 33. On Bob Cherry's face.

CROSS WORD PUZZLE No. 6.



The only other person whom Loder could connect with the find was William George Bunter.

There seemed to be no way of finding out anything. It was impossible to question Bunter about the matter. The despairing idea occurred to him that he might just as well depart from Greyfriars again.

"Well, I might just as well have a glance through Bunter's study before I go," he ruminated. "If the fat beast did take the spanner from under the carpet he's probably stuck it away in a desk or a cupboard. After all, he hasn't got the sense of a mouse. As likely as not, if he did find it he hasn't even recognised it as mine."

It was difficult enough for Loder to make the opportunity of searching the Head's study. It was more difficult to gain access to Study No. 7, which Bunter shared with Tom Dutton, and Peter, and Alonzo Todd.

Loder realised it would look suspicious if a master were seen in the studies' passage frequently. And so, after finding Bunter's study occupied on two visits, he gave up the attempt until the evening.

Still no luck attended him. During tea he called there, only to find Tom Dutton industriously frying a bloater over the fire. Dutton was surprised to find the new French master in the room. He had not heard the door open nor the visitor address him. Tom Dutton was very deaf. The disguised prefect knew this perfectly well.

"Where is ze boy called Todd?" inquired Loder, using the voice he used in class.

"Cod? It's a bloater!"

"I said Todd!" yelled Loder. "Ze boy Alonzo Todd. I would speak to him about ze French exercise he performed to-day."

"Oh, Todd!" said Tom Dutton. "I beg your pardon, sir. I didn't quite catch what you said. My study mate, Alonzo Todd, is having tea in the Hall."

"Be so good as to fetch ze boy, Todd," requested Loder. "Tell heem I won't keep him more than ze minute. Depechez vous!"

Placing the sizzling bloater on a plate to keep warm before the fire, Dutton left the room to obey. Gerald Loder listened until his footsteps had receded out of the Remove passage; then he quietly closed the door.

There is little doubt that Tom Dutton would have been thoroughly surprised could he have seen the agility with which the new French master moved himself after that. In quick succession Loder opened the desks of all the four occupants of the room. Swiftly he rummaged through the contents of each. No spanner was to be seen.

He darted to the big cupboard. Starting at the bottom, he ran his hands over the shelf. There was still no sign of the article he both wished and dreaded to find.

The top shelf Loder could only reach by standing on tip-toe. He got his fingers to an old blotting-pad, and pulled it out.

Then came the unkindest cut of all. Careless Bunter had left a large bottle of blue-black ink, minus the cork, on that old blotting-pad. When Loder pulled out the pad the bottle of ink descended on top of him, its contents spurting over his head, collar, and coat.

"Wow! Yaroo!" spluttered Loder. "Gug-gug-grough!"

The door opened and a burst of laughter rang out as Tom Dutton and Alonzo Todd entered the room.

In that poignant moment Loder almost

forgot that he was supposed to be Monsieur Vevey. Fortunately, his pungent remarks were made under his breath.

After their first outburst of surprised and delighted laughter Dutton and Todd strove to be helpful.

"Here's a duster, sir," said Alonzo Todd politely. "Perhaps you would like to swab yourself down?"

By this time Loder had gained control of himself. He stood before the juniors a ridiculous spectacle, his face streaked with the blue-black ink, his pointed moustache wilting visibly.

"Eet ees deesgraceful!" he gurgled. "How dare you have on zat shelf ze bottle wizout ze cork?"

"Pork?" said Tom Dutton. "We can't run to it, sir! Bloaters are the best we can do."

The hands of Loder clenched and unclenched, the only evidence of his seething inward emotions.

"You see, my dear sir," said Alonzo Todd quietly, "we didn't know you were going to that cupboard."

Loder started.

"Er—er—I was trying to find ze pencil to write wis, boy," he said. "I have your French exercise here, and there was another lecture alteration I wanted to make."

"Wasn't the French translation good, sir?" said Todd mildly.

"Eet was very good. I called here to commend you in front of ze other boys. When I found you were not here I sent zis lad to find you. But I can't talk more now. Eet ees necessary for me to wash ze blackness from my face, ees eet not?"

"Yes, sir," said Alonzo Todd respectfully.

And Gerald Loder hurried from the room en route for the bath-room.

The mystery of the missing spanner was as much a mystery as ever. Loder's outlook was as black as his face.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

An Amazing Revelation!

PEACE brooded over Study No. 7. Seated in a chair at the table was Alonzo Todd. He was engaged in prep. Only the faint scratching of his pen and the crackling of the fire in the grate broke the silence.

Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were doing their prep in the Common-room. Billy Bunter was undergoing more corporal punishment, this time at the hands of Mr. Quelch.

The Livy had been the cause of the trouble. At the appointed time for handing in his "lines" Bunter had handed in exactly thirty-five out of the five hundred he had been told to do. His excuse was that someone must have taken the others from his desk. Needless to say, the stony heart of Mr. Quelch was not softened by his paltry invention. If anything, he wielded the cane with a little more intensity than he might have done.

When Alonzo Todd was half-way through his prep Billy Bunter returned to Study No. 7.

His entrance was heralded with many groans. His fat body performed a series of contortions which seemed to suggest that William George Bunter was constructed somewhat along the lines of a fat, boneless snake.

Alonzo Todd looked up mildly from his prep.

"You are suffering, my dear Bunter?" he remarked.

"M-m-my g-g-giddy aunt!" gulped Bunter. "S-s-suffering! I'm dying! Whooh! Yaroo! Garoo!"

He flopped heavily on to a seat at the end of the table.

"Yow-wow!"

With that agonised remark Bunter leaped up again.

Ambling to the armchair, he piled some cushions on it and lowered himself gingerly to a sitting posture.

"Ooh!" he moaned. "What a beast! What a bully! If I die, Alonzo, old chap, I want you, as a pal, to write to the papers about him."

"About whom?" inquired Alonzo Todd.

"Old Quelch. The unfeeling beast has been nearly slaughtering me. Whooh! How faint I feel! You don't happen to have any of that birthday cake left, old fellow?"

"No, my dear Bunter, I regret to say," answered Todd. "You ate it all in my absence yesterday."

"D-did I? I—I mean I didn't. It must have been ices—er—I mean mouses. Ooh! That cane! It oughtn't to be allowed for a rotter of a master to lam a fellow with a stick like Quelch uses."

"I think, Bunter, my dear fellow," remarked Alonzo Todd reprovingly, "it would have been as well if you had done your Livy. Then the wrath of our kind Form master would not have been visited upon you."

"Ow!" groaned Bunter.

Alonzo resumed his prep.

Billy Bunter, lolling back in the armchair and feebly fanning his face with his fat hands, mumbled and groaned alternatively. When it was nearly time for recreation the Owl had recovered somewhat.

The excessive smarting of his fat body had become a dull aching. His mind was now able to revert to other matters than his own supposed wrongs at the hands of Mr. Quelch.

Suddenly he remembered something, and the thought further distracted his mind from his recent severe caning.

Rising from the armchair, he went to the study door and peered right and left along the passage. Then he quietly shut the study door, and turned the key.

Alonzo Todd, in the act of closing his exercise-book, regarded his study mate in astonishment.

"Why so mysterious, my dear Bunter?" he asked.

"Sh—sh!" said Bunter.

From his pocket he drew out a bicycle spanner.

With the air of a plotter, Bunter took the object under a light.

"Alonzo Todd," he said darkly, "promise me you won't let on to anyone about this!"

"No, no, of course not, my dear fellow," said Alonzo mystified. "What's wrong?"

"Hist!" said Bunter. "Do you know what this is?"

Alonzo Todd peered down at the spanner and nodded.

"Certainly, my dear fellow. It's a spanner."

"But whose spanner?" persisted Bunter.

The duffer of the Remove took the article in his hand and examined it thoroughly.

"That I should not be prepared to swear, my dear Bunter. It doesn't look unlike the spanner owned by Gerald Loder. Once when Peter and I were returning from Friardale, Loder got us to help him to make some adjustments on his bike."

Bunter nodded approval.

"You're right," he said. "This is Loder's spanner, as sure as eggs is eggs. Many a time I've pinched it—er—I

mean borrowed it for my own bike. I know this little bit out of the side, where Loder once chucked it at my head."

"Really?" said Alonzo Todd, wide-eyed. "I was not aware, my dear Bunter, that your head was quite so hard, but—"

"I don't mean he hit my head, fat-head!" snapped Billy Bunter. "He threw it at my head, but it missed me and hit the brick wall."

"Dear, dear!" muttered Todd. "But do you know where I found this spanner?" inquired Bunter, rolling his eyes behind his round spectacles.

"I've not the foggiest idea, Bunter." The Owl paused to give his next utterance its full weight.

"In old Locke's study," he said. This time Alonzo Todd really was amazed. If Bunter was speaking the truth, this might be an important discovery.

He pulled the chair towards the Owl. "Sit down, my dear Bunter, and tell me about it," he said.

Bunter seated himself. Next instant he shot aloft again.

"Ooch! Oh dear!" "What is it now?" asked Todd. "Shooting pains!" said Bunter.

He placed a cushion on the chair and reseated himself slowly and cautiously.

"Listen, Toddy old man," said Bunter. "Yesterday I was asked to go and see old Locke about a—er—a little matter. The Head wasn't in the study. Instead, the new French fellow was there. He was quizzing down at the corner of the carpet, and seemed about to raise it. He jumped up, absolutely scared stiff, when I coughed. Well, a little later I had to take a message from Quelchy to the Head's room. Old Locke wasn't there, and out of curiosity, I had a quizz under the carpet myself. I found this."

He rapped the spanner lightly on the table.

"Well, what do you think of it, Toddy old chap?" asked Bunter after a pause. "Of course, I've got my theory as to how it got there. I'm jolly good at detective work, you know."

"H-mm! Quite so, my dear Bunter," muttered Todd. "I suppose you think that, in some way, this spanner may be connected with the outrage on poor Monsieur Charpentier?"

"That's the ticket, Toddy! As I say, I've got the whole thing worked out in my whole mind. I can see as clear as daylight how the crime was committed. But I should like to hear your opinion on it. The best detective can sometimes gather—well, a hint from a lesser brain."

Alonzo Todd took the spanner and laid it thoughtfully in his hand.

"There is no sign of hair or—or blood on it," he said, as though talking to himself. "Yet it seems as though this spanner must have been used for striking poor Charpentier."

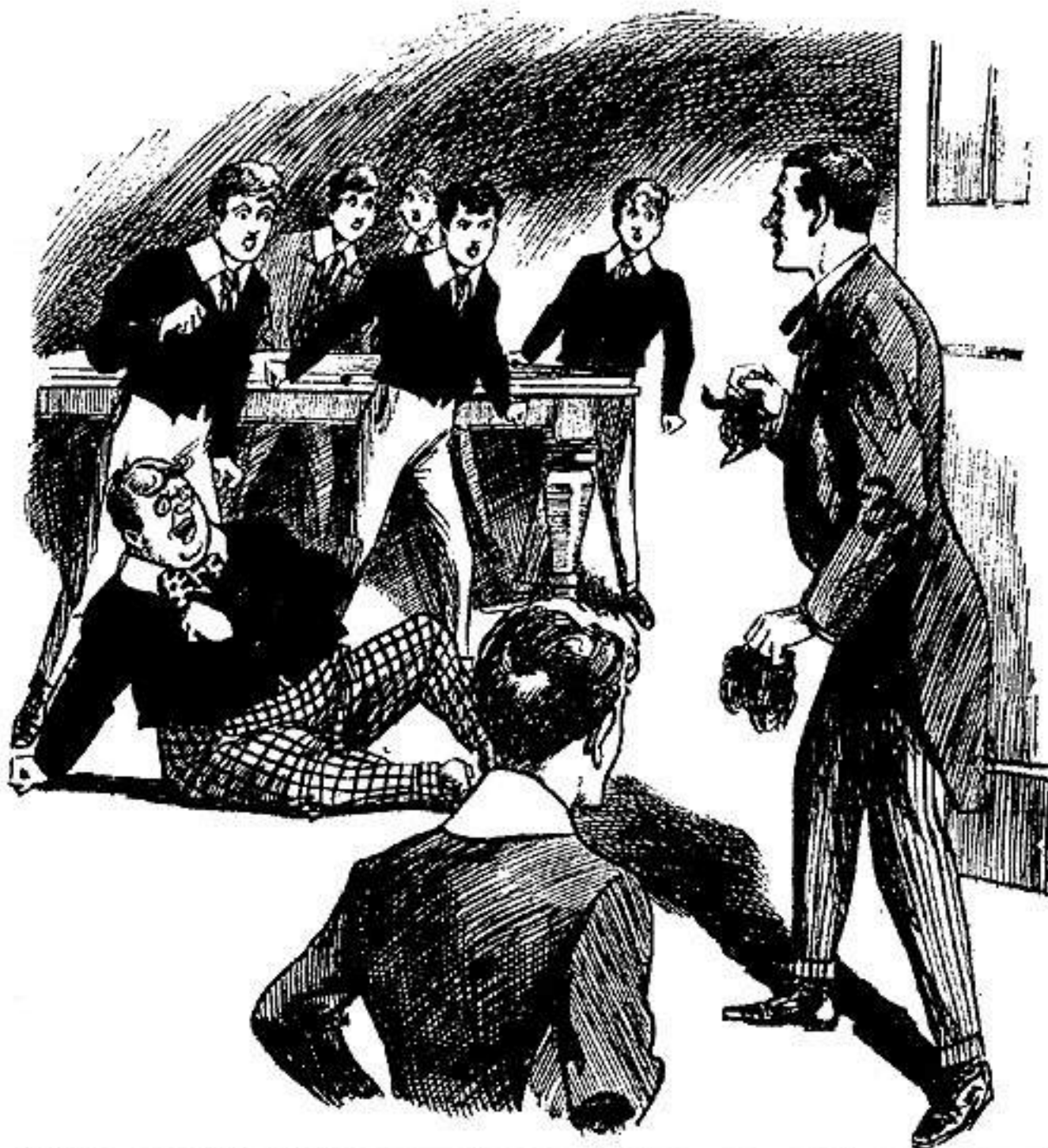
"Just my theory," said Bunter, nodding approval.

"Weighing up one thing with another," resumed Todd, "it looks as though Loder must have been in the Head's study that night."

"Just my theory, Toddy," repeated Bunter.

"It's very suspicious that Loder should have been called so suddenly from the school after that midnight outrage. The police never found any signs of footsteps outside the Head's window. Therefore, it seems likely that the fellow who struck Charpentier left the study by the door."

"Just my theory, Toddy," said Bunter, beaming.



Violent hands were laid upon the protesting Owl of the Remove. And then came a sharp voice from the doorway. "Leave the fat beast alone!" There, framed in the doorway, was Monsieur Vevy. To the amazement of the juniors, "Mossoo" calmly proceeded to remove his moustache, short pointed beard and black wig. Immediately a shout of amazement went up. "Loder!" (See Chapter 10.)

The brow of Alonzo Todd now became furrowed.

"Extraordinary," he muttered, "that the new French master should have been seeking that spanner."

"Just what I thought, Toddy."

"Most extraordinary! If it were not too fantastic for words, I should suggest that Gerald Loder has come back to Greyfriars disguised as a Frenchman to seek the spanner he knew to be hidden in Dr. Locke's study."

"Exactly my theory!"

Bunter bounded on his seat blissfully. But a return of his former "shooting pains" caused him to desist from his manifestations of glee.

"But what could be the motive of it all?" said Alonzo Todd hopelessly.

"Ah, what?" muttered Bunter darkly.

"What's your theory about the motive, my dear Bunter?" inquired Alonzo Todd. "Perhaps, from that, we may be able to solve the whole mystery."

"Look here, Toddy," said Bunter, "I hardly think it wise to tell anyone my theory of the motive at present. There's just the faintest possibility that I may be mistaken, though I don't think so. On the whole, I think it wiser if, for the time being, we keep the matter absolutely dark. Mum's the word—oh, old chap?"

Alonzo Todd was in a dilemma. The production of Loder's spanner by Bunter and the account of how the Owl had found it, had taken his breath away, so to speak. He felt he needed a breathing space. It struck him as being a wise thing to wait for a little time before

interviewing the headmaster, or anyone else in authority.

So Alonzo Todd readily agreed to Billy Bunter's suggestion to keep the matter mum.

"We'll both turn the whole matter over in our minds again, my dear Bunter," he said. "Possibly something fresh will occur to us."

"Right, old man!" said Bunter. "And I'll keep the spanner for the time being."

He dropped the spanner in his pocket and, unlocking the door, ambled out of the room.

No sooner did he get outside Study No. 7 and away from Alonzo Todd than Billy Bunter rolled as fast as his short, fat legs would carry him to the Common-room.

A football-match with a rag ball was in violent progress as the porpoise floundered in.

Bunter was bumped and hustled as he entered the place, but he staggered manfully towards a chair.

Throwing himself into the chair, Bunter let out a long-drawn howl. Partly this was a howl of real pain, for Bunter was still tender as the result of the walloping he had received. However, he manfully remained in the chair. His fat hands waved above his head and deep groans escaped his lips.

"Keep that fat idiot out of it!" shouted Harold Skinner. "What's the matter with him, anyway?"

"Oo-oh, oh, oh!" groaned Bunter.

With a mischievous grin, Snoop grabbed a leg of the chair, gave a heave, and shot the Owl on the floor. Bunter howled louder than ever, but did not rise.

By this time the football was neglected.

Although well knowing the Owl and his wiles, Harry Wharton and some of the others began to get really alarmed.

"What's the matter, Billy?" asked Harry Wharton sympathetically. "Appendicitis?"

"No, no!" moaned Bunter. "It's a trance."

"Oh, hang the silly chump's head!" said Stott disgustedly. "Does he think he's going to do some more of that silly prophesying business?"

Hurree Singh, the Indian junior, turned away. He felt himself responsible for Bunter's essay in the realms of the occult.

By this time Hurree Singh was not so certain about the truth of Babu Jeejeebhoy's book as he had been a little while before. For one thing, his own prophecies had been going astray.

And, like other fellows, he had the sense to recognize that foretelling the future correctly was too often dependent on coincidences.

But Billy Bunter went on to flog a worn horse to death.

"I can see visions," he babbled. "I can see a horrible crime being committed. The scene is the Head's study."

"Great pip!"

"Don't be an idiot, you fat worm!"

"Absolutely potty!"

These and many other similar remarks did not deter Billy Bunter.

"I can see a tall figure creeping up behind Mossoo Charpentier," went on Bunter. "He strikes him with a spanner! Ah, now I can see the miscreant's horrible face. It is the face of Gerald Loder!"

Although almost every fellow present believed that Bunter was only shamming in the trance, yet all were amazed by this wild statement.

"Here, get up, you silly fat fraud!" commanded Harry Wharton sternly.

Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Johnny Bull hoisted the Owl up and bumped him severely.

"Yow-wow! Yarough!" shouted Bunter. "Stop it! Oh, you beasts!"

The violent bumping had reminded him in no uncertain fashion of his recent interview with the avenging Mr. Quelch.

When they had given the self-styled prophet a thorough bumping, Harry Wharton & Co. stood him on his feet.

"Oh, you beasts! You rotters!" moaned Bunter. "I wish I'd not told you the news—er—I mean the prophecy!"

"Call that a prophecy, you fat freak!" said Bob Cherry. "What had that got to do with the future? Besides, you ought to have your silly head punched. What do you mean by hinting that Loder biffed Monsieur Charpentier on the head? What's the giddy object? You must be potty!"

"I'm not," averred Bunter. "It's true, I tell you! Alonzo—er—I mean, I myself figured it all out. That is to say—I saw it in a trance. The mystery of the Head's study is a mystery no longer. Loder did the dirty deed. I think that news is worth a free feed in the tuck-shop, you chaps."

"Where did you get all this from, Bunter?" demanded Harry Wharton sternly. "Here, in the Common-room, before a lot of fellows, you have made a most serious accusation against a prefect of this school."

"I tell you I saw it in a trance," whined Bunter.

"What?"

"It's a fact, you fellows. Alonzo—er—that is I—I saw it in a vision as plain as Skinny's face."

He closed his eyes and waved his podgy hands slowly before them.

"I see—I see—"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Cut it out!"

"Scat, you fathead!"

"Shurrup," howled Bunter, "when I'm prophesying! I see in the vision that the new Mossoo is not who he is—er—that it, he is not who he wants to be mistaken for."

"You've got bats in the belfry, Billy!"

"The new French master isn't a French master at all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The master is a prefect—"

"Oh, you burbling chump!" cried Bob Cherry, rocking with mirth. "You ought to be in a home!"

"I tell you," yelled Bunter, "that I saw it in a vision that the new French master is a prefect. He's Loder—Gerald Loder, you chumps!"

A sudden hush fell over the Common-room. The faces of Harry Wharton & Co., and many others had become serious again.

"Billy," said Wharton, "you've gone a bit too far this time. Do I understand you to make a serious accusation that the new master who has come to Greyfriars to take the place of Monsieur Charpentier is none other than Gerald Loder?"

Billy Bunter nodded.

"That's right, Harry, old man. I saw it in a vision. And I prophesy before to-morrow's out, Loder will stand before the whole school as the snake in sheep's clothing that he is. That's my prophecy. That's worth a bite of tuck, isn't it?"

"Tuck, you fat freak," shouted Wharton. "I've a jolly good mind to take you to Dr. Locke and make you repeat what you've just told us. Knowing what a chump you are, though, perhaps another bumping would meet the case just as well."

Violent hands were laid on the protesting Owl. He was raised, hooting dismally, in the air.

And then a sharp voice rang out from the doorway of the Common-room.

"Put the fat beast down!"

Billy Bunter was dropped in a sitting position on the floor, while all eyes turned in the direction of the voice. There, framed in the doorway, was the lean form of Monsieur Pierre Vevy!

Then, to the amazement of the juniors, the new French master calmly proceeded to remove his moustache, short-pointed beard, and black wig from his head.

Immediately a shout of amazement left a score of throats.

"Loder!"

Slowly the Sixth-Former advanced into the Common-room. His voice was unutterably weary as he spoke again.

"Yes, it's I," he said. "I returned to Greyfriars in disguise. Bunter was quite right."

"There you are, I told you so, you chaps!" cried Billy Bunter, beaming around him.

Somebody's boot connected heavily with the stern portion of his anatomy, and the Owl's pleasure was once more turned to excruciating pain.

"Throw the fat idiot outside!" suggested Harry Wharton.

"Stop!" said Loder. "I want Bunter to come with me to Dr. Locke."

The face of the Owl blanched.

"Ooh! I—I say, Loder, I'd rather not go there, you know. I—I haven't quite finished my prep, and—"

The prefect took Bunter firmly by the ear.

"You'll come to Dr. Locke's study with me, you fat beast," he said. "I'm going to make a clean breast of everything to the Head, and you shall have the opportunity of telling him all you know."

"I—I say, you know just as much as I do, Loder, old man," pointed out Bunter.

"Come!" said Loder.

And, leaving the amazed crowd of juniors in the Common-room staring after him, Gerald Loder took Bunter in tow and headed for the dread sanctum of the headmaster of Greyfriars School.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Justice of the Head!

ON the evening of the first accurate "prophecy" emitted by Billy Bunter, Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch were in consultation in the study of the former.

The discussion was upon matters relating to school routine. It was early interrupted by the appearance of Gosling, the school porter.

"Which as 'ow, sir, Mossoo Charpentier has returned from hospital."

A smile of pleasure crossed the kind face of Dr. Locke.

"Splendid, Gosling!" said he. "Evidently he persuaded the hospital authorities to let him come away rather earlier than they wished. It is a sign that he is himself again. I trust, however, he'll take a thorough holiday before resuming work."

Gosling, standing by the door, cleared his throat noisily.

"Which as 'ow Mossoo says he's going to look you up, sir, as soon as he's put his bag in his room," he said.

"Thank you, Gosling, you may go."

"Dear me," said Dr. Locke, turning to Mr. Quelch. "The unexpected return of Monsieur Charpentier has somewhat upset arrangements. I must find another bed for Monsieur Vevy to-night."

Hardly had the Head resumed the business discussion with Mr. Quelch when another knock sounded on the door—a faint, nervous knock this time.

"Come in!" called out Dr. Locke a trifle impatiently.

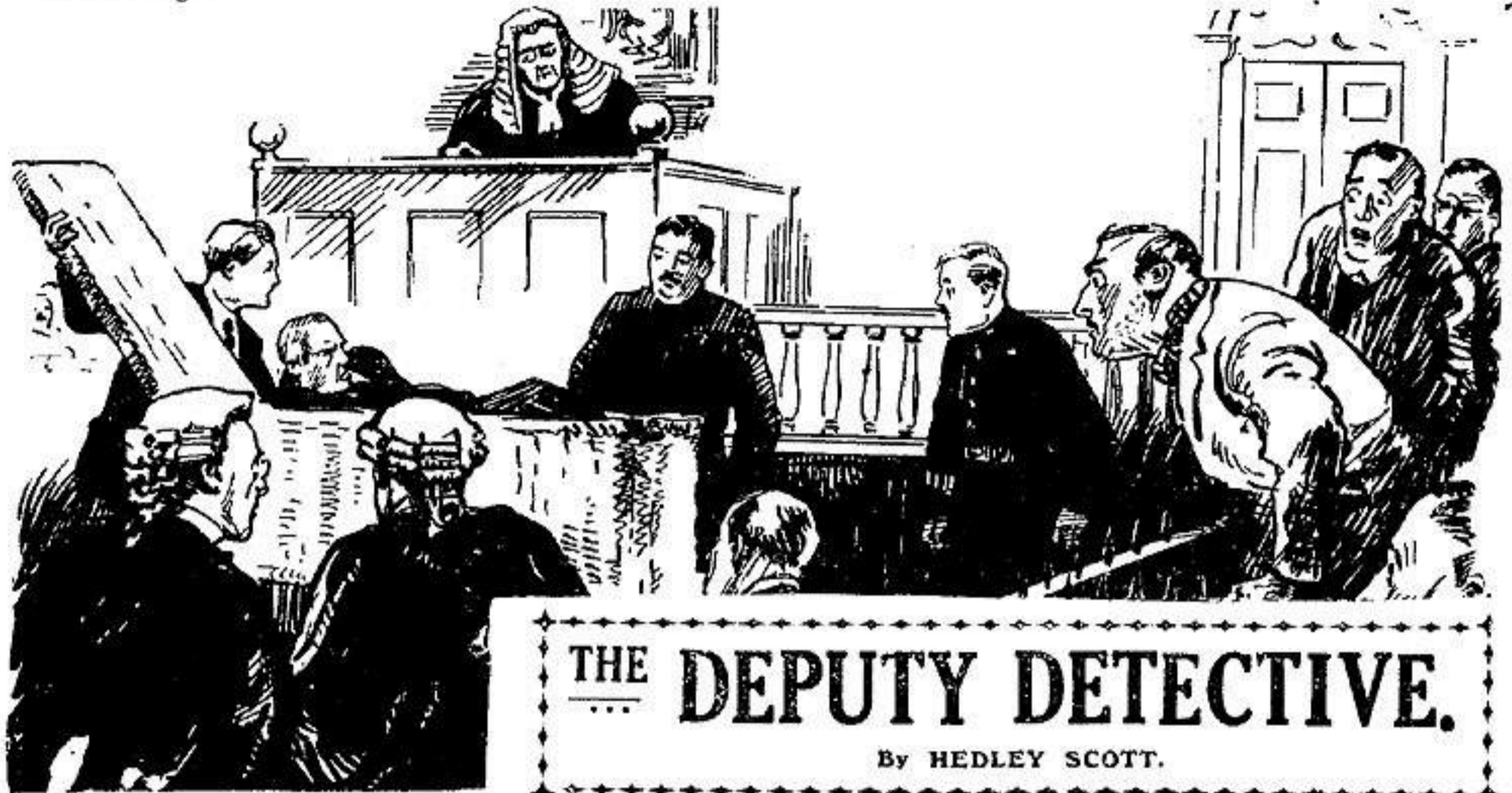
The door opened. The Headmaster and Mr. Quelch leaped to their feet in astonishment as into the room came Gerald Loder leading Billy Bunter by the ear.

(Continued on page 27.)

SOLUTION OF CROSS WORD PUZZLE No. 5.

D	R	A	K	E		B	R	E	A	D
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V	I		N	E	V	E	R		U	N
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DELIVERING THE GOODS! Dr. Fourstanton, the chief of the motor bandits, hides himself in a laundry basket in the vain hope of escaping the police net. But the "laundry" at which the basket is delivered turns out to be the Old Bailey!



THE DEPUTY DETECTIVE.

By HEDLEY SCOTT.

In Time!

WITH a feeling of exultation he could hardly suppress, Jack Drake stepped out briskly for Westminster, with the intention of awaiting Inspector Pycroft's return at Scotland Yard.

By this time he reckoned the C.I.D. man would be putting the finishing touches to the trap into which Dr. Fourstanton was expected to walk, for it wanted but fifteen minutes to half-past seven, and at half-past seven the bandit chief was due to meet William Sharpling, the owner of the river tug, Tin Lizzie.

Humming a gay tune to himself, the boy sleuth swung round the corner of Whitehall on to the Embankment approach. As he passed Big Ben he looked up at the great dial of the famous clock and checked its record of the passage of time against his own time-piece.

He found he was two minutes fast.

Drake was not the only person studying the dial of the world-renowned clock at that moment, for no more than a yard from him stood a stumpy, thick-set little individual clad in a reef jacket. His weather-beaten features, together with his apparel, at once advertised him as a follower of the sea.

There was an anxious expression on his face as he stood for a moment gazing at Big Ben. Then he grunted surlily, expressively:

"Confound it!"

Mildly amused by the note of exasperation in the man's tone, Drake glanced idly at him. Then he started. Next moment he was hurrying forward with outstretched hand.

"Bill Sharpling, as I live!" he exclaimed. "What in thunder are you doing at this part of the world?"

Bill Sharpling it was. The anxious expression in his grizzled features gave place to a wrinkled smile as he found his horny hand being wrenched up and down by the excited boy sleuth.

"Drake!" he rumbled in his deep voice. "Shiver me timbers! Never thought I'd clap eyes on you again, young sir!"

"But why aren't you at Wapping?" demanded Drake suddenly, remembering

the time and the appointment at half-past seven.

"Because—" began the skipper. "But how in the name of Heaven did you know that I was due at Wapping?"

"By your letter to Dr. Fourstanton," said Drake, hoping against hope that there could be no mistake.

"Dang me! Is he a friend of yours?"

"Not exactly," returned the boy sleuth quickly. "You remember, skipper, the first occasion that you and I met?"

"That I do!" averred the old salt. "Ain't I got a gold watch here to commemorate the occasion?"

"Then you recollect what business I

CHARACTERS YOU WILL MEET.

JACK DRAKE, a boy of fifteen with a gift for detective work, the assistant of Ferrers Locke, the world-famous scientific investigator.

INSPECTOR PYCROFT, of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard, a friend of Locke and Drake's.

THE CHIEF, a mysterious person who directs the coups of the notorious motor bandits.

While Locke is away on the Continent Drake is given the opportunity of handling his first case, his instructions being to lay the rascally motor bandits by the heels.

He soon discovers that the chief of the motor bandits is in some way connected with a school.

After a whole heap of exciting adventures, in which Drake has many narrow escapes from death, the boy sleuth traces his man to Hurstleigh College.

In Dr. Fourstanton, the Head of the school, Drake identifies the chief of the motor bandits. The rascally Head, however, makes good his escape and flees Londonwards. Hot on his trail follows the boy sleuth.

On his way up to town Drake witnesses a motor accident, the victim of which is Dr. Fourstanton, although Drake is oblivious of this latter important fact.

Meantime, Pycroft and two C.I.D. men, in response to Drake's information, lay a trap for the bandit chief to walk into. Alas! Pycroft & Co. have the misfortune to fall into the hands of three of the gang. The C.I.D. men are imprisoned in a cellar; a sluice-gate is opened, through which a steady volume of water rushes. Like rats in a trap Pycroft & Co. are left to die.

(Now read on.)

was engaged upon?" said Drake, talking in a lowered voice.

"Sure!"

"Then don't be surprised when I tell you that your latest client is the man I want—the bandit chief."

"Wha-a-at! But—but my latest client is Dr. Fourstanton, the head of Hurstleigh College."

"Exactly! And he's the head of the motor bandits, too!" exclaimed Drake.

"Well, I'm—"

Thereupon the boy sleuth explained in brief the events that had led up to his suspecting Dr. Fourstanton of being the "wanted man." Bill Sharpling listened like one in a dream.

"Swop me bob!" he exclaimed, when the lad had finished. "You do surprise me! And your police chums are waiting for him at Jepson's Wharf, eh? Smart work—durned smart work!"

"But you won't be at Wapping by half-past seven," said Drake. "What—"

"No, confound it!" grunted the skipper. And the anxious look crept back into his grizzled features. "Old Bill, my mate—you met him, too—has been silly enough to contract the flu. He was taken bad half an hour ago. I put in at the pier here and got him taken off to the hospital."

"That's what has delayed you, then?"

"Sure! I was hoping that I'd pick up a hand to take me as far as Wapping, but there's nothing doing."

"Won't I do?" suddenly asked Drake.

The skipper slapped his thigh heartily.

"Well, I never!" he exclaimed.

"Sure, if you want to take a turn on board my ole packet of trouble you're durned welcome, sonny. Course, I was forgetting you'd like to be down at Jepson's Wharf to see the fun. Here, come on!"

He started off at a brisk pace for the Westminster Pier. Drake followed him, a wild thrill of excitement running through his veins.

At the pier head the skipper put a telephone call to the wharf to say that he had been delayed and would be at Wapping ten minutes after scheduled time. That done he clambered aboard, followed by the boy sleuth.

"Better slip into Bill's jacket and

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cap," he advised, as the boy sleuth began to stoke up. "You'll soon get those togs of yours messed up."

Drake was only too ready to do so. The disguise, as he reckoned it, might prove useful to him at the end of the journey. In less than two minutes he was garbed in Bill's reefer jacket and peaked cap. Then, with a shrill shriek, the Tin Lizzie moved out from the pier and headed down stream.

"We're in luck's way, really," grunted the skipper as he handled the wheel. "The tide's running out."

"Jolly glad to hear it!" chuckled Drake. "I say, this is prime. We're at London Bridge already!"

A few moments later and London Bridge was left a quarter of a mile away, the Tin Lizzie responding nobly to the call. Great volumes of belching black smoke sagged in an unceasing stream from her slanted funnel. The pressure gauge in the dirty, small engine-room registered a consistent two hundred pounds.

"Keep the gauge on that level!" roared the skipper from the bridge, as Drake notified him of the pressure. "We shall be at Jepson's place well on time."

The minutes flew past as Drake perspiringly stoked the furnace of the tug. He cursed the dead burden behind the old craft in the shape of two large empty barges, for he had an idea that Dr. Fourstanton wouldn't wait more than fifteen minutes past the time of the appointment.

In truth he could have saved himself the anxiety, for Dr. Fourstanton was miles away. But of that, unfortunately, he knew nothing. Between the intervals of feeding the furnace Drake exchanged conversation with the skipper. He learnt that Dr. Fourstanton had arranged for his own men to load the cases at Jepson's Wharf, and Drake held more than a mere idea that the men would prove to be some of the bandits.

The twinkling river lights of Wapping came in sight at last, and the boy sleuth heaved a sigh of relief. The Tin Lizzie was well on time.

The skipper's voice roared out instructions which Drake did his utmost to follow out as the clumsy vessel and its more clumsy burden in tow drew into a dirty-looking wharf, behind which reared the gloomy shapes of several corrugated iron sheds and a black brick building.

As the Tin Lizzie was manoeuvred into position for making fast, Drake saw four men on the landing-stage, each carrying a lantern, come hurrying out from a long shed a few yards away. They hailed the tug.

"Tin Lizzie ahoy!"

"Ahoy!" rumbled the skipper. "Stir yourselves!"

He threw out dexterously a coil of rope as he spoke, which one of the men made a grab at. A few seconds later and the tug was "anchored" to the giant capstans dotted at intervals on the landing-stage.

With a meaning glance at Drake, the skipper clambered on shore. The boy sleuth, pulling his peak cap well down over his face, followed him, his right hand curled in his jacket pocket in close proximity to a loaded revolver.

With the characteristic slouch of the sailor or the waterman, Drake clattered noisily down the cobbled pavement approach and entered the big shed at the heels of his skipper. The fourth member of the crew on shore—the watchman—slunk off to his billet.

"Where's Dr. Fourstanton?" demanded the skipper in his booming voice. "Thought he'd be here at seven."

"Thought so, too, guv'nor," said one

of the men, whom Drake easily recognised as one of the bandits he had spotted at the Haven in Hambledon a few months back.

"Well, has he left any instructions?" was the skipper's next question.

"Only that we are to shift the cargo on to the barges," said the bandit, eyeing Sharpling distrustfully. "Spose we can get busy on the job until he turns up?"

He indicated the packing-cases at his back with a gesture of the hand.

Drake was puzzled. He wondered where Pycroft and his men were; he wondered, too, where Dr. Fourstanton had got to; and he little liked the peculiar expression on the faces of the three men whose job it was, apparently, to load the cargo. Why did they continually glance at the floor of the shed and then eye each other so peculiarly?

Something was "on," Drake was positive on that score. And the face of the watchman who entered the shed and as swiftly withdrew—the more the boy sleuth looked at this individual the more convinced was he that the man was afraid of something. His whole attitude was that of a criminal who feared detection of something he had done.

While Drake was summing things up the skipper was engaging the men in conversation.

Suddenly to Drake's keen ears came an oft-repeated knocking on the floor beneath him. More sensitive than ever now, his ears heard a peculiar sound as of flowing water that also proceeded from beneath him.

He eyed the three men appraisingly, saw them glance in an uneasy manner at the flooring, and saw them lick their lips. Then Drake acted. With a sharp jerk of the hand his revolver flashed from his jacket-pocket.

"Hands up, the lot of you!" he rapped.

The men started violently, and made as if to show some resistance. But there was not a quiver of the youthful hand that held the revolver pointed at them. Sharpling, too, sensing the situation, brought an ancient looking weapon from his hip-pocket, and brandished it threateningly.

"What's going on down below?" demanded Drake. And there was sufficient menace in his voice to shake the pluck of the bandits.

"N-nothing!" growled one of the men, and his companions nodded assent vigorously.

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But the reluctant and unconvincing answer made Drake keener than ever.

"Listen, skipper," he exclaimed. "Bend down and put your ear to these floor boards while I keep our friends covered."

Bill Sharpling did so. For over a minute he knelt down, his ear taking in every sound. Then he jumped to his feet with an exclamation of horror.

"Someone's imprisoned down there!" he roared, wheeling sharply and facing the bandits with a terrifying expression. "And the water's pouring in. I know these sheds, Drake," he added. "Beneath this floor is a cellar, and most of these cellars have sluice gates. This one has, anyway. The overflow of the tide is pouring in below. There's no mistaking the sound."

His words had gone home. The bandits looked at each other guiltily, and then turned their attention to the youthful figure who covered them with that deadly-looking revolver. But Drake had not taken his eyes off the scoundrels. He had an idea, now, that he could explain Pycroft & Co.'s absence.

"Quick, Bill!" he exclaimed. "Keep these rogues covered while I—"

"Don't get excited," said the skipper. "Just you haul on that lever. Reckon that'll open up the floor," he added, indicating a bar of steel protruding from a metal socket a few feet behind Drake. "I'll keep these scoundrels under observation. Guess I'll move off that part of the floor which caves in, though."

Drake darted to the lever and pulled on it. At first nothing happened. He pulled harder. Then, suddenly, the major portion of the floor of the shed seemed to collapse. In reality a portion of it, separate from the rest, hinged downwards and inwards at an angle of forty-five degrees.

But it wasn't that extraordinary occurrence that amazed Drake, for he saw that the edges of the flooring rested on a surface of water. And between the gap in the flooring, that part which revealed the presence of water, three touselled heads came into view.

A gasp of horror left Drake's lips as he recognised one of the faces, for the beseeching eyes of Inspector Pycroft of the C.I.D. peered out at him from a countenance pale as death.

"Good heavens!" For the moment Drake was robbed of all power of action, so dumbfounded and horror stricken was he at the sight. Little did he need telling what a narrow escape from a fearful, lingering death Pycroft and his two colleagues had experienced.

"Quick!" gasped the C.I.D. man. "Allcroft and Dooley are nearly done!"

It was typical of Pycroft that his first thought was for his subordinates. With a cry of encouragement Drake leaped across the flooring and dragged at Dooley's outstretched hand. He hauled him to safety. To rescue his companion was but the work of another moment, and then it was Pycroft's turn.

In a gasping, semi-conscious heap the trio of police officers sprawled on the flooring, drinking in great gulps of air.

Meantime, the skipper was "slanging" the trio of ruffians before him, and the skipper's vocabulary was an extensive and expressive one, if a trifle vulgar.

Sheepishly the trio of bandits submitted themselves to the indignity of handcuffs, what time Pycroft regaled Drake with an account of his experiences.

"Jove, that was a near thing," panted Pycroft, looking up gratefully into Drake's blue eyes. "Another five minutes and our numbers would have been up, my lad. Good job you heard



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me knocking the floorboards with the butt of my revolver."

"The scoundrels!" growled the boy sleuth savagely. "For two pins I'd give them a taste of their own medicine."

Suddenly Pycroft raised himself upon his elbow.

"The chief!" he gasped. "W-where is he, Jack?"

Drake made an expressive gesture with his hands.

"The chief alone knows," he said ruefully. "Haven't seen a sign of him round here."

Pycroft muttered something under his breath and scrambled to his feet. He glowered at the trio of ruffians before him, and then wheeled sharply on his heel.

"Where's the watchman?" he demanded fiercely.

"He went outside when we came along," said Drake. "Why, is he one of the gang?"

"He walked us into this little trap, gangster or no gangster," grunted the C.I.D. man. "And he's going to pay for his temerity."

But Pycroft was to be disappointed, for upon exploring the outer sheds of the wharf everything pointed to a hurried flight of the watchman.

"Never mind, we can wait for him," said the C.I.D. man. "What I am concerned about chiefly is—"

"The chief," said Drake humorously. "Beats me where on earth he could have got to."

The skipper, who was mounting guard over the prisoners, took a turn in the conversation.

"Strikes me as bein' likely that Fourstanton is on board his yacht, lying off Gravesend—" he began.

Pycroft slapped his thigh.

"Great Scott, I forgot to ask you, Sharpling, where the cargo was bound for."

"The Water Lily's the name of the yacht," said the skipper slowly. "That's where I was to unload. Can't you—"

But Pycroft was already pushing his way over to a telephone instrument on the side of the wall. In less than two seconds he was phoning through to Gravesend. The name of the yacht was given over the wires, that it was owned by a Dr. Fourstanton was also corroborated by the official at the other end.

"Good!" grunted Pycroft into the transmitter. "Get busy with a squad of men, superintendent, and board that yacht. Arrest everyone on board, d'you hear?"

There was a startled gasp from the other end of the wire, but the superintendent was well acquainted with Inspector Pycroft of the C.I.D. He gave a reassuring answer to Pycroft, and rang off.

"That's that!" said the C.I.D. man, passing a weary hand over his forehead. "We spread the net once again. This time we shall catch Mr. Fourstanton, or I'm a Dutchman."

But the C.I.D. man was far too optimistic. While the police net was being cast, whilst every port was being closely watched for anyone answering to the description of the wanted man, a certain individual, whose head was covered in bandages, in the Richmond Infirmary stirred from the deep sleep he had fallen into and opened his eyes.

Had either Pycroft or Drake been present to see the sinister expression in those eyes they would have sustained the greatest shock of their lives. For the man was Dr. Fourstanton, the man whose identity was being broadcast to every police-station in the kingdom, the man who was known to be the chief of the notorious motor bandits.

The wheels of fate grind slowly. Fourstanton was a free man. And yet, the wheels of fate grind surely. His hour was at hand!

The Man in the Basket!

FOR a fortnight afterwards an unsuccessful chase went on to round up the leader of the motor bandits. His accomplices had all been identified and taken prisoner; for the raid on the yacht, Water Lily, had delivered seven of the wanted men into the hands of the police. The seven, together with the three Jack Drake had been instrumental in capturing in the shed at Wapping, brought the number of bandits up to ten; there remained now to catch the master mind, the leader of the organisation.

"Beats me entirely where on earth he could have got to," said Pycroft to Jack Drake as he sat puffing away at a pipe in the cosy comfort of Drake's sitting-room at Baker Street.

"The earth must have opened and swallowed him up," said Drake whimsically. "Anyway, if it's a game of patience, I think we can stay the course as long as Fourstanton," he added.

"Well, we—or, rather, you've—got the rest of the gang safely under lock and key," replied Pycroft, with a glance of admiration at the boy sleuth. "And most of the swag has been recovered. Those packing-cases were chock full of loot, my lad."

"I don't doubt it," answered Drake. "By the way, we shall have a lot of chinwagging to do to-morrow," he added with a smile. "They're hurrying forward the trial of the bandits, I hear."

"They are," grunted the C.I.D. man. "The Chief Commissioner wants to make an example of them in case any other misguided folk should take it into their heads to become bandits. He's hurried forward the trial purposely. Anyway, it's only a matter of form, for without exception all the scoundrels have pleaded guilty."

"Splendid!" smiled Drake. "I wish— There! It's no good wishing! We shall have to possess our souls
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in patience. The chief is bound to come out into the open sooner or later. He can't hide for ever, you know, old man."

"Don't think he's committed suicide, do you?" suddenly asked the C. I. D. man.

"Why, no—"

"Don't look so incredulous, my lad!" admonished Pycroft, exhaling a deep pull of smoke. "He wouldn't be the first cornered crook to cheat the ends of justice that way."

"I suppose he wouldn't," agreed Drake. "Look here, old scout, I don't want to appear inhospitable," he added, with a laugh, "but I'm thundering tired after to-day's running backwards and forwards. I want to turn in."

"So you shall," said Pycroft, laughing. "I'm a selfish brute, really. Because I can make do with six hours' rest a night, I take it for granted that youngsters can make it do also. I'll go quietly," he added, with a whine. "It's a fair cop!"

Drake good-naturedly pushed his visitor out of the room. He heard his heavy footsteps descending the stairs, and then the boy sleuth sought his own room.

He was up with the lark on the morrow fully alive to the fact that a grim-visaged judge would ply him with incessant questions when the bandits came up for trial. He made out his case in writing in case memory should play tricks with him, and then he settled down to a healthy breakfast. The court opened at ten o'clock, which meant that he had still two hours of leisure left to him.

He was about to don his coat and cap and take a sharp stroll towards Westminster when the telephone bell whirred out its imperious note.

"Hallo, hallo! Drake—yes, my name is Drake," said the boy sleuth, in answer to the queries from the speaker at the other end of the wire. "Richmond Infirmary? What on earth for? Oh, I see—the patient thinks he knows me, eh? Right-ho! I'll come along now!"

With a puzzled expression on his boyish features Drake replaced the receiver and walked over to the mantel-piece.

"That's rummy," he mused. "Fellow in Richmond Infirmary has been unconscious for days. Heard to babble in his delirium the gov'nor's name and mine. Thumping strange. Doc. says the man's lost his memory. Wonder who on earth he can be?"

The boy sleuth was all curiosity to see the patient who knew him by name. Without delay he made tracks for the garage, and within five minutes was seated astride his motor-bike and speeding towards Richmond.

Within half an hour the boy sleuth had pulled up before the arched doorway of Richmond Infirmary, outside which a laundry van was drawn up.

The superintendent of the infirmary came down to meet him.

"You are Mr. Drake?" he asked, with a genial smile.

"Right first time, sir," said Drake cheerily. "Now, what's all this about a man who's lost his memory?"

"He's a middle-aged man we've had in the institution for over a fortnight—got smashed up in a motor accident and lost his memory."

"In a motor accident," said Drake sharply, suddenly recalling the man in the Daimler car who crashed into the motor lorry on the occasion of that fast run up to town in Major Carstairs' Rolls-Royce.

"Yes, let me see, he was admitted on

the Wednesday—yesterday fortnight," said the superintendent, taking Drake's arm and leading him inside the building.

"He appears to know you, or know of you and Mr. Ferrers Locke, for he mentioned your names continuously the first three nights we watched over him."

"That's strange," said Drake. "I rather fancy, too, sir, that I was in the car directly behind the one in which this individual was when he crashed. Now I come to remember it, he was taken into this hospital. I'm rather keen to see the gentleman, sir," he added.

"Come this way," added the superintendent. "We put him in a ward by himself when he began to recover, but he seems entirely to have lost his memory. Perhaps you will be able to identify him so that we can get into touch with his relatives."

He led the way into a small, cosily-furnished room, prepared to introduce Jack Drake to the patient. But he paused on the threshold in blank dismay as he saw that the room was empty—that the bed was unoccupied.

"Bless my soul!" he gasped. "He—he's not here!"

Drake was mildly amused at first, until a sudden wild flight of imagination came to him.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed suddenly. "I wonder—"

The superintendent was obviously agitated.

"Perhaps his reason has gone, too," he muttered, undecided how to act. "I wonder if he's wandering round the building?"

He summoned a nurse who was passing, and spoke to her in low tones.

"The patient was there a quarter of an hour ago, sir," said the nurse. "I left him reading the newspaper while I hurried off to check the laundry, sir."

The superintendent turned to Drake. "This is most strange," he said apologetically. "I have instructed the nurse to look for the patient. Perhaps we shall find him and—"

He broke off as he noted that the patient's clothes were gone, even to the shoes and hat.

Drake watched him, half afraid to put the question that came to his mind.

"You—you have seen the newspapers lately?" he asked at length. "Do—do you think for one moment that the patient could be Dr. Fourstanton—the man for whom all the police in the country are looking?"

The superintendent shook his head.

"I hardly think so," he said. "But really I am not in a position to say, for the man's face has been practically obscured by bandages ever since he's been here."

"But his clothes," said Drake eagerly. "Surely you noticed them?"

"I could describe them," smiled the superintendent, "but there again I am afraid they are similar clothes to what the average city man wears."

"Frock coat, striped morning trousers, patent leather shoes—" began Drake, remembering in what attire he had last seen the chief.

"Exactly! The only thing about the patient that gave promise of enabling us to establish his identity was a piece of paper bearing the name William Sharpling. But there must be hundreds of people with that name."

"Hum!" Drake, who could hardly restrain his excitement, strolled over to the bed and picked up the newspaper lying on the rumpled pillows. He started a little as he noted that it was opened at a page wherein a long account of the coming trial of the bandits was

given, and a lengthy description of Dr. Fourstanton himself.

"Funny that the patient should be reading that particular piece of news," he muttered, half to himself. "And William Sharpling—"

He wheeled sharply as the nurse came hurrying into the ward. She spoke excitedly to the superintendent.

"The patient has not been seen to leave the building, sir!" she exclaimed. "I've inquired everywhere—I've looked everywhere, too, sir. But there's no sign of him."

"Excuse me," said Drake, coming forward. "But was there by any chance a laundry basket in here ready to be collected?"

"There was, sir," said the nurse. "Number Thirteen basket, sir."

"Oh!" Drake's eyes opened wide. His theory was gaining strength. "Then there is no time to be lost!"

He had been studying the floor, and was more than interested in two parallel, fairly deep impressions on the polished linoleum, signifying that something heavy had been dragged over the floor.

"Was there very much laundry in the basket?" he asked suddenly.

"No, sir," was the reply. "It was only half-full."

"Knowing that, miss, would you not think it strange that a half-filled basket could make those impressions on the floor?" said Drake, indicating the scratch-marks.

The nurse looked at them and started.

"That's very strange!" she said. "Looks to me as if—"

"The patient became a bundle of laundry for the occasion—eh?" said Drake, now feeling sure of his ground.

"It does, sir," said the nurse. "And I wasn't present to see the men bring the basket out of this particular room either, for I was at the other end of the passage."

"Did Dr. Fourstanton—I mean, did the patient know that the laundrymen would be calling at this room?" asked Drake.

"He did, sir," was the answer.

"Bless my soul!" gasped the astonished and shocked superintendent. "The man must have lost his reason—"

"Not on your life!" said Drake grimly. "Your patient was none other than Dr. Fourstanton, I'll wager. No wonder he lost his memory: it was most convenient for him that he should. But I'll spoil his game yet. Those baskets were locked, weren't they, miss?"

"They were," answered the nurse.

"Good!"

And to the astonishment of the superintendent and the nurse, the boy sleuth swung out of the room and jumped the first flight of stairs in about half a minute. The next, and he was racing towards the main door of the institute.

"Number thirteen laundry-basket," he muttered as he ran forward. "And number thirteen on the list of the bandits. What a significant coincidence! Drake, my lad, you're in luck's way. I never gave it a thought before, but it now seems fairly safe to theorise that the chief was the man who crashed in the Daimler. To think that we've been hunting high and low for the doctor this last fortnight, when I should have known, with a bit of luck, that I had followed directly behind him in that run up from the country."

He laughed at the reflection. It certainly was an ironical fate that had dragged him as a witness to the motor smash, and yet had not allowed him a glimpse of the injured man.

The light of excitement was gleaming from Drake's blue eyes as he reached

the pavement. The laundry-van had gone, but the boy sleuth caught sight of it disappearing in the distance.

With a grim chuckle he mounted his motor-cycle, and followed in its wake.

A sudden brain-wave flashed into his head which nearly resulted in a spill, for Drake began to laugh at the ingenuity of it, and laughter is a bad thing to combine with motor-cycling. He righted the machine, however, and forged on. Three minutes later he was within arm's length of the tailboard of the laundry-van.

It stopped in front of a large restaurant.

Drake did likewise. Hastily scrawling a few words on a blank piece of paper, the boy sleuth scrambled off his saddle, stuck the piece of paper in a position where it could be seen, and made tracks for the laundry-van. The note ran:

"O.H.M.S.—Sorry to pinch your van. You'll find it outside the Old Bailey."

A glance at the exterior of the van showed Drake that it had been fastened up from the outside. Well and good. Another glance at the van, and Drake saw, to his great relief, that both men—the driver and his assistant—were clambering from their seat in the front and preparing to enter the restaurant.

"Good!" ejaculated Drake. "While they are collecting the washing, I'll collect my bird."

And the moment the two laundrymen were out of sight, he jumped into the driving seat of the van, threw in the clutch, and started off at a great burst of speed towards London.

A few pedestrians stopped and gazed at the van snorting its way through the High Street, and not a few of them wished that their laundry was brought backwards and forwards with the same despatch.

But little suspicion if any followed that daring exploit of the boy sleuth.

"This is prime!" he muttered, as he dodged by about half a second a policeman who was about to hold up the traffic. "This'll be a surprise for the folks at the Old Bailey. Fourstanton will have the fit of his life. That it is our worthy friend inside number thirteen basket, I'd wager my reputation," he added. "Who else would want to hide himself in a laundry-basket?"

He drove on, humming a gay tune, picturing to himself the little surprise he had planned for the crowded court at the Old Bailey.

"Lemme see," he muttered, consulting his watch. "The trial will have been on exactly ten minutes by the time I reach the Old Bailey. Splendid!"

The old Ford laundry-van fairly rattled its way through the seven-mile journey, and at last, snorting in protest, came to a standstill outside the world-famous criminal court of law.

A uniformed police-officer came hurrying forward in answer to Drake's beckoning gesture.

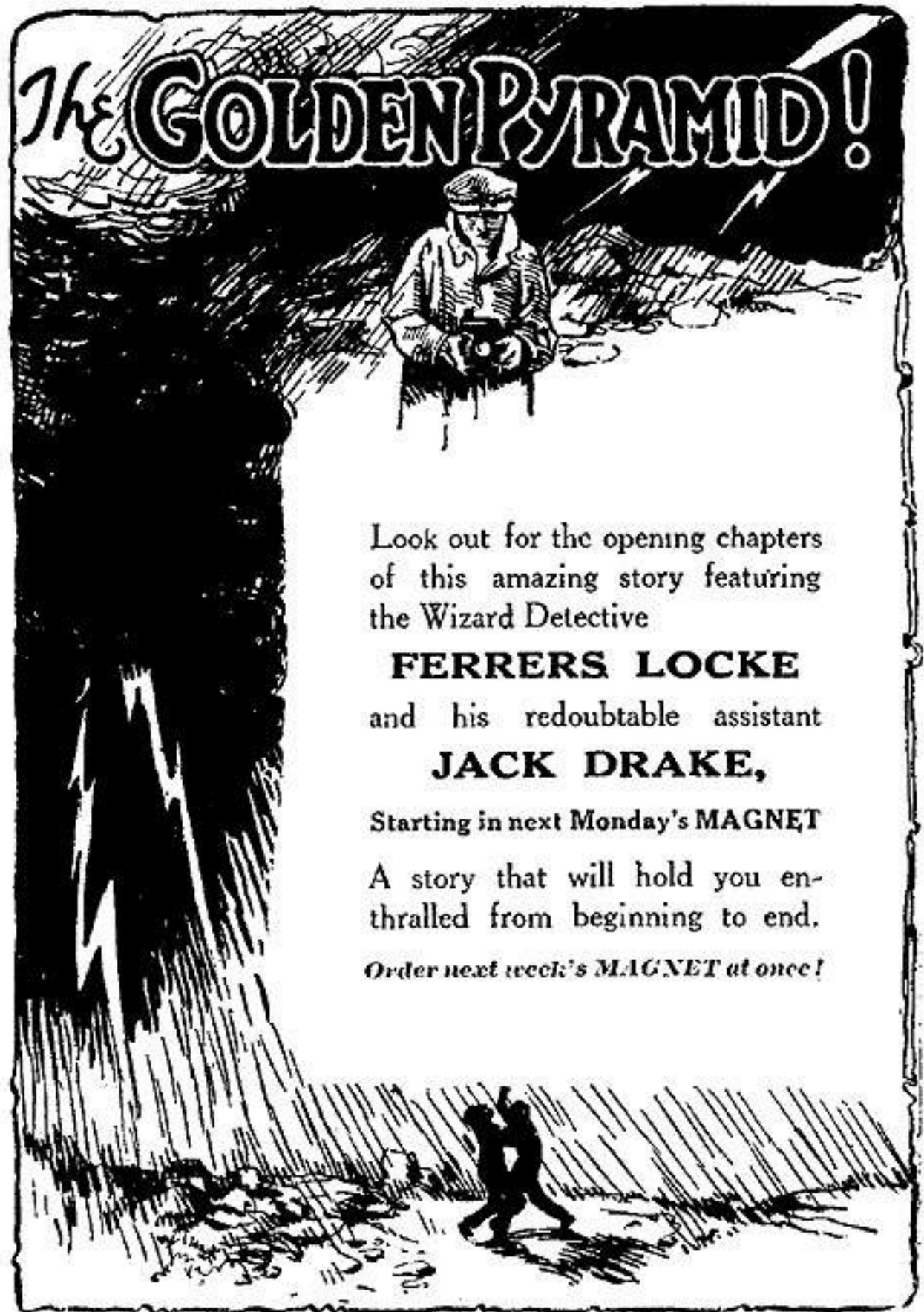
"What do you want?" he demanded suspiciously, and then recognising the boy sleuth's features, apologised. "What is it, sir?"

"Sssh!" cautioned Drake. "Fetch Pycroft and two hefty fellows, will you, constable. There's something inside this van I want to deliver—to deliver up to justice."

Run to Earth!

THE policeman scratched his head in wonderment. For the moment he wondered whether the boy sleuth was talking "through his hat."

"But Inspector Pycroft is engaged



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and his redoubtable assistant

JACK DRAKE,

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at the moment, sir," he said. "The trial's begun. Mr. Justice Barling opened up five minutes ago."

"Never mind, officer," smiled Drake. "You do as I ask you, you'll not regret it."

The constable turned on his heel and disappeared within the big, gloomy-looking building. He returned five minutes later with Inspector Pycroft and two other uniformed policemen in tow.

The C.I.D. man was red in the face and obviously annoyed.

"What's this fool's game, Drake?" he demanded, as the boy sleuth came to greet him with a cheery smile. "Barling has just vented some of his wit on my head—thinks a lady friend, or something of the kind, has called to see me. You know what Lord Barling is!" he added reproachfully. "He'll always draw a laugh where it's possible."

"Keep your pecker up, old scout," said Drake with a broad smile. "You'll be able to get one back on his lordship in a brace of seconds. Listen! I've got some wonderful news for you," he added.

Forthwith he explained. The C.I.D. man's eyes opened wide in astonishment, as the lad proceeded with his narrative.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" was Pycroft's comment in conclusion.

"A trifle mixed, old fellow," said

Drake. "It's Fourstanton who'll be hanged—or, at least, he ought to be."

Very cautiously, the C.I.D. man and the two constables picked the lock that held the iron bar spanning the doors of the van in place.

"Don't be so confoundedly quiet," said Drake, stepping forward. "Laundrymen dump the baskets about like sacks of flour. Besides," he added, "we want to make absolutely certain that Fourstanton is inside number thirteen basket, don't we? Give that basket a hefty handling—savvy?"

The C.I.D. man grinned.

"You're a cute 'un, Drake, my lad!" he chuckled. "This is too rich for words. 'Ere, give us a 'and, mate," he added, entering into the spirit of the thing and giving number thirteen basket a violent shove.

"'Tain't half 'eavy!" growled one of the constables, who was quick to catch on.

Number thirteen basket dropped from the tailboard of the van, a distance of four feet. It landed with a dull thud on the stone pavement in an up-ended position.

From within the basket came a subdued exclamation of surprise and pain. Evidently the "washing" had been caught napping. Drake, who was nosing round the interstices of the wicker-work, winked expressively at Pycroft.

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"It's Fourstanton, all right!" he chuckled. "I could just catch a glimpse of his face. Get busy, old scout!"

Between them the C.I.D. man and the two constables lifted the basket and carried it into the court. There was a roar of wonderment from the public and the officials as the procession moved down the aisle with Jack Drake bringing up the rear.

Lord Barling, the presiding judge, nearly jumped out of his chair. His eyes opened wide in astonishment; his hands trembled in righteous anger that the dignity of a court of law should be outraged in such a fashion.

"What—what—" he began.

Counsel for prosecution and defence seemed incapable of speech or movement. The officers of the court were in a similar condition. Only the prisoners in the dock were amused, but their "surprise packet" was to come.

Suddenly from the public gallery a raucous peal of laughter floated out. It was taken up on the instant by a hundred throats.

"Here comes the washing!"

"A change of linen for the prisoners!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

Regardless of the grim looks of the learned judge, Pycroft & Co. advanced up the aisle until they came within three feet of the judge's bench.

Then the basket was put down.

"What—what, in the name of all that's—" thundered Lord Barling.

"My lord, behold my lady friend!" exclaimed the C.I.D. man in a ringing voice, that carried throughout the crowded court.

"Haw, haw, haw!"

As the inspector spoke Jack Drake whipped back the lid of the laundry basket.

"Oh!"

The ejaculation went up from a hundred throats as there appeared from the interior of the basket the head and shoulders of a man—a man whose description had been broadcast throughout the country for over a fortnight. The man, in fact, who should have been standing his trial with the rest of his

rascally colleagues. In short, Dr. Fourstanton!

Had the proverbial bombshell dropped 'midst the dumfounded assembly the result could not have been more devastating. Everywhere rose shrill cries of amazement. Everywhere appeared gaping jaws, wide open, incredulous eyes.

The prisoners in the dock were almost on the point of collapse. They shot their necks forward, unable to believe the evidence of their eyes at ordinary range. But there was no mistake. Well they recognised the face of their chief, though hitherto they had seen but half of it, on account of the mask he habitually wore.

As for Dr. Fourstanton himself, it would be difficult to find words to describe him. His face paled and reddened by turns, his cruel eyes glared from one to the other of his captors, his hands shook in impotent rage.

Finally his sinister gaze rested upon Drake's smiling face.

"You dog!" he screamed. "You—you—"

His words trailed off, his long, tapering fingers worked convulsively, and a trickle of foam flocked the corners of his mouth. Dr. Fourstanton was as near to becoming a madman at that moment as it was possible to be.

"The game has been played to a finish," said Drake coolly. "You've lost, doctor. Take your defeat like a sportsman."

His words roused the cornered chief to a fury. Before any could guess his intentions he leaped from the basket, his long fingers clutching wildly at the boy sleuth's throat.

The court was in an uproar. Never in all the history of criminal trials, had such a scene occurred before.

Jack Drake found himself falling backward under the weight of that sudden onslaught; the breath was being squeezed from his body. But help was at hand. Inspector Pycroft, with a bull-like roar, charged down upon the bandit chief. His doubled fist took Dr. Fourstanton full upon the point of the chin,

and, with a muffled groan, the beaten scoundrel collapsed.

The handcuffs were on his wrists in the twinkling of an eye, and he was taken below stairs to the cells.

Then Lord Barling, to whom Pycroft hurriedly explained the whole affair, soothed the agitated crowd with a few well chosen words, in which he lauded the prowess, the grit, the tenacity of England's youngest detective.

He shook Jack Drake by the hand as he concluded his short speech, and his action was the signal for an outburst of wild cheering from the public—a transgression of the laws of an English court that was for once allowed to pass unchecked.

Never will the boy sleuth forget that proud moment. It more than compensated him for the dangers he had undergone. He was congratulated by one of England's cleverest judges, his name was being shouted to the old oak rafters by a crowd of appreciative Englishmen.

"England will not forget this service," added Lord Barling, shaking Drake's hand vigorously. "We are proud of you, and appreciative of the splendid work you have done. In a few hours the whole country—the whole world—will be ringing your praises. Well done, my lad! Well done!"

For weeks afterwards the name of Jack Drake was on everyone's lips, wherever he went someone was sure to recognise him, which meant handshakes, cheers, and the hundred and one ways in which English men and women like to pay their homage to a hero.

In addition to this continual round of feting Drake received from the Government a handsome sum of money, which would enable him to live in comfort and idleness for the rest of his days.

But that money went straight into the bank. Idleness and too much comfort were not related to an energetic youth like Jack Drake.

What was more to his credit still was the fact that his "head" remained the same. Pycroft, who, in his innermost heart expected to find a changed Jack Drake when he called at the rooms in Baker Street a few days after the sensational affair at the Old Bailey, was relieved to see his young colleague as hospitable and unassuming as ever.

"Hallo, old scout!" grinned Jack as the C.I.D. man advanced with outstretched hand. "You come at the right moment. I've just heard from the guv'nor—"

The C.I.D. man almost jumped clear of the floor.

"F-from the guv'nor?" he gasped.

"But poor old Locke—"

"Not so much of your 'poor old Locke,'" grinned Drake cheekily. "One only talks like that when referring to the dead."

"But poor old Locke—" persisted Pycroft.

"Is very much alive," exclaimed Drake, slapping the C.I.D. man on the back. "Just throw your blinkers on to this cablegram."

In hurried words the boy sleuth explained the case upon which Pycroft's Locke had been engaged, and which had demanded so much secrecy. Pycroft had another shock.

"Well, I'm—" Words failed him.

THE LUCKY THIRTEEN!

RESULT OF "CROSS-WORD" LIMERICK COMPETITION NO. 2.

In this competition THE FIRST PRIZE OF £5 for the best "last line" submitted has been awarded to:

C. S. MORRISON,
Trelawn,
Meadway,
Epsom, SURREY,

for the following:

"Now the 'Fat's' in the fire—no, the pool."

THE TWELVE CONSOLATION PRIZES OF POCKET-KNIVES for the next best have been awarded to the following competitors:

OSWALD AINSLEY, 8, St. Peter's Grove, Redcar, Yorks.
C. BOVINGDON, 66, Colville Road, South Acton, London, W. 3.
ERNEST BRAIN, 47, Dove Street, Kingsdown, Bristol.
E. DAVIES, 118, Stapleton Road, Bristol.
A. E. LEE, 261, Chichester Road, Portsmouth.
WILLIAM McDONALD, Arthur Avenue, Airdrie.
GLADYS L. MURFITT, High Street, Soham, Cambs.
K. M. NEWMAN, 48, Govanhill Street, Glasgow.
S. ROBINSON, 10, Cleveland Terrace, Bingley, Yorks.
EVA SNEIDER, 316, Gt. Cheetham Street, Hr. Broughton, Manchester.
EDMUND SPELMAN, 67, Stanton Street, Clayton, Manchester.
BERNARD WALLIS, 14, Egerton Road, Bishopston, Bristol.



JACK DRAKE.

"I'll read you the cablegram," said the boy sleuth, who was thoroughly enjoying the situation, "because there's now no need for secrecy. Listen:

"Hearty congratulations, Jack, on your success. Shall be back in London four hours after you receive this. My case also successful. Put poor old Pycroft out of his misery at once.

"FERRERS LOCKE."

"Well, I'm—" began the C.I.D. man in bewilderment. "If this doesn't take the biscuit! 'Poor old Pycroft,' indeed!"

He snorted, until, seeing Drake's grinning face, he, too, broke into a hearty fit of laughing.

Drake crossed to the sideboard and poured out his visitor a "refresher."

"Here, old scout," he said. "Drink this!"

The C.I.D. man raised his glass and cleared his throat.

"I'm going to propose a toast," he said. "There's no one to drink it except myself, but it's a genuine toast, for all that. I propose the very good health and continued success of the Deputy Detective!"

THE END.

(Be sure and read the opening chapters of "The Golden Pyramid"—a super story featuring Ferrers Locke, the world-famous detective, and young Jack Drake, his assistant. Starts next week!)



(Continued from page 20.)

"Good gracious! Bless my soul!" exclaimed Dr. Locke. "Loder! When did you return? And—and what are you doing with that—that boy?"

Gerald Loder released Bunter's ear, closed the door, and turned to face the Head again. He and Billy Bunter formed a striking contrast as they stood side by side, only their faces were equally pale. Loder, slim and set of face, was frigidly calm. Bunter, fat and unwieldy, was heaving convulsively, like a mountain of blubber set in an earthquake zone. William Bunter was afraid.

Twice Loder licked his dry lips, but the words did not come. Dr. Locke waited patiently. At last the prefect found his tongue.

"I've come here to confess, sir," he said. "I've come to make a clean breast of everything. The strain and worry of the last few days have nearly killed me. And when I heard this fat beast—I mean Bunter—telling the fellows in the Common-room that 'Monsieur Vevy was really myself, I decided to throw the sponge in."

"Bless me! Do you mean to tell me, Loder, that you had the effrontery to return to Greyfriars School in the role of a French master?"

"Yes, sir."
"But—but what's the meaning of this? Was that your idea of a hoax?"

"No, sir," said Loder calmly. "I returned to Greyfriars School to find a spanner of mine which was kicked under your carpet on the night that Monsieur Charpentier was laid out in this room. I—I was afraid that it might be thought that I had struck him with that spanner. Of course, I can't expect you to believe me now, but I didn't—I swear I didn't—strike Monsieur Charpentier with that spanner!"

Now the prefect's face was flushed, and his eyes flashing, as he spoke vehemently.

Dr. Locke seated himself at his desk and placed his finger-tips together.

"Calm yourself, Loder," he said. "Am I to understand that you admit to being in this study on the night when Monsieur Charpentier was unconscious?"

"I was, sir. Perhaps, though, Bunter would like to explain everything first, and I'll make my confession afterwards."

Thus exhorted, Bunter was forced to make his statement.

Under the keen examination of the Head, the fat junior admitted he had been indulging in a trance in the Common-room again. He had done so on account of the discovery and his putting two and two together. He took all the credit of the deductions to himself, keeping Alonzo Todd out of the picture altogether.

When the Owl had made his statement, Dr. Locke turned again to Loder. Then Gerald Loder made his confession. The Sixth-Former told how he had been afraid because Snub Pugsley, the bookie, had blackmailed him. He told how he had seen the letter addressed in the purple ink placed on the Head's desk by Gosling. He described how he had taken the letter from the blotting-pad in the semi-darkness, and afterwards destroyed it, without opening it, in his study.

"You see, sir," said Loder. "I knew I couldn't prove that I didn't owe Pugsley any money. If you had seen that letter from him, written in the purple ink, you would have believed I was still gambling with him, and have expelled me from the school."

"One moment," said Dr. Locke. "You say you destroyed that letter, Loder?"

"I did, sir."
"Are you positive it was that particular letter?"

"I—I think so, sir. I took it from your blotting-pad, where I saw Gosling put it. It was dark when I took it, and I didn't look at it particularly before I burnt it. But—"

"Because it appears to me, Loder," said the headmaster, "that you took the wrong letter from my desk. The letter you destroyed was one which I had written and had forgotten to post. Fortunately, I remembered it in London, and rewrote the letter. The missive written in the purple ink actually came to my hand."

"Then you knew about Pugsley's claim against me, sir?"

"No, Loder. As a matter of fact, I happened to turn that letter over, and I saw that it was an anonymous note. As is invariably my custom in these cases, I destroyed the letter without reading it."

"By the way," put in Mr. Quelch, "I saw in the newspaper yesterday morning that a man named Snub Pugsley was arrested for blackmail in Ramsgate."

"That's the fellow," said Loder. "His home is in Ramsgate."

"Then your case as regards the blackmail would appear to be proved, Loder."

(Continued on next page.)



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(Continued from previous page.)

said the headmaster. "I accept your word that you did not owe him money for betting transactions, but that he was blackmailing you on account of former transactions."

The eminent fairness of the headmaster encouraged Loder to continue his confession. He told how he had struggled in self-defence with Monsieur Charpentier, and how the latter had fallen and struck his head on the curb before the fireplace.

By this time the Owl had recovered his nerve to some extent. He thought he might do himself a bit of good by narrating the story of his own detective powers. But just then Monsieur Charpentier himself arrived at the headmaster's study.

Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch greeted him heartily.

"You have arrived at a most opportune moment, monsieur," said the Head.

He repeated all Loder's confession, and the French master was as astonished as the other two had been.

Then Dr. Locke took the bicycle spanner from Billy Bunter.

"Circumstantial evidence would suggest that you were struck on the head

with this weapon," said Dr. Locke. "Loder brought this to my study on the night when you were assailed. He tells me that it merely happened to be in his pocket, and you struck your head on the fire-curb. But the fact that you were struck on the head, and that Loder afterwards took such great pains to try and recover this spanner, suggests that this was the weapon by which you were rendered unconscious. Monsieur, can you help in the matter? Now that you have recovered, can you remember how you came to be struck on the head?"

The French master looked from Dr. Locke to the pale face of Gerald Loder.

"Ah oui!" said Monsieur Charpentier, smiling. "I remember ze whole business as clear as ze day. I struggle wis ze fellow, and I fall and hit my head on ze fireplace."

Gerald Loder heaved a great sigh of relief, and shot a grateful glance at the French master, Dr. Locke, and Mr. Quelch, too, looked relieved.

"It seems to me, Loder, that you have had your punishment already for this affair. In ordinary circumstances your actions would call for immediate expulsion. But your haggard appearance urges me to leniency. Unless Monsieur Charpentier himself has any further charge to make against you, I propose only sentencing you to confinement to the school for the rest of the term."

Gerald Loder, who had expected immediate expulsion at the very least, broke down completely.

The headmaster hid his own emotion by turning sharply upon the gaping Owl.

"Begone, Bunter!" he said. "This

time I will pass over your misguided action of entering my study. You should have come to me in the first place. And, my boy, I warn you to cease your ridiculous pretensions to prophetic powers."

"Y-yes, sir," said Bunter. "I—I'll never prophesy again. Never, sir!"

Hastily he rolled out of the study to go and convey the news of Loder's interview with the Head to the rest of the school.

A few minutes later Gerald Loder and Monsieur Charpentier were standing before the fire in the latter's room.

"I want to say how sorry I am, monsieur, for the injury I caused you that night," said Loder. "Honestly, it wasn't my fault. Jolly lucky that you remembered that you did strike your head in falling against the fire-curb! If you hadn't, the Head would have been bound to think I had struck you with that spanner."

The little French master shrugged his shoulders.

"But I did not remember, Loder," he said. "My mind is still a blank about ze whole business. But I believed what you said, and so I supported ze statement."

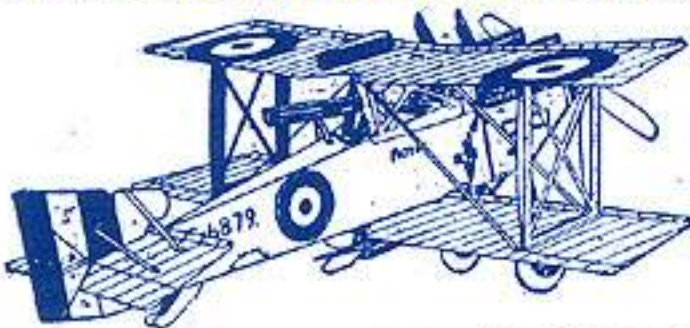
Slowly Loder drew a deep breath. "Monsieur Charpentier," he said, "you're a real sport!"

And he gripped the little Frenchman by the hand.

THE END.

(Now look out for "Coker's Cross Words"—next Monday's ripping story of the Greyfriars Chums. It's a scream from beginning to end.)

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