

IT'S EASY TO WIN ONE OF OUR PRIZES!

SAILING YACHTS, CAMERAS AND PENKNIVES!

No. 907. Vol. XXVII.

Week ending June 27th, 1925.

The

Magnet

Library

Complete School Stories.

EVERY
MONDAY.



BILLY BUNTER RECOGNISES THE NEW BOY AS RAGGED DIOK!

"SO THAT'S COMPTON, IS IT! IT'S LIKE HIS CHEEK TO COME HERE!"

(A Dramatic Episode from the Grand Long Complete Greyfriars Story in this issue.)



3 CAMERAS, 6 MODEL SAILING YACHTS & 12 TOPPING PENKNIVES MUST BE WON!

THIS is the Third of our new and fascinating WEEKLY competitions the simplicity of which is obvious at a glance. Everybody is invited to join in. NO ENTRANCE FEE is required.

Below is a set of eight pictures dealing with OBJECTS and FEATURES SEEN IN THE TOWN, and as many of you live in towns the competition should offer little difficulty. Even those who live outside the cities know enough about them to solve the pictures below.

To show you how easy it is, the first picture is solved for you. That gives you a good start. Now, surely, you can find the answers to the remaining seven pictures.

To the three readers whose efforts are correct or nearest to correct I will award

3 MAGNIFICENT CAMERAS

made by the famous firm of Kodak, Ltd. To the six next best

6 TOPPING MODEL SAILING YACHTS

will be awarded. These models are guaranteed to sail. That's a point worth remembering. Last, but by no means least, on the list of prizes come

12 USEFUL POCKET-KNIVES.

RULES

(Which must be strictly adhered to.)

Readers must write, IN INK, in the space provided beneath each picture the name of the object or feature they think the picture represents.

When you have solved the complete set of pictures, sign your name and address IN INK on the coupon adjoining the picture-set. Then cut out the whole tablet—do not separate coupon from picture—and post the effort to "What is it?" No. 3, c/o "Magnet," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than Friday, July 3rd.

Readers may send in as many attempts as they like, but each effort must be separate and complete in itself and made out on the proper pictures and coupon.

Entries mutilated or bearing alterations or alternative solutions will be disqualified.

It is a distinct condition of entry that the Editor's decision be accepted as final and binding. The value of the prizes will be divided if necessary.

Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

"WHAT IS IT?" No. 3.

1 Church.	2	3	4
5	6	7	8

I enter "What is it?" Competition No. 3 and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name

Address

CLOSING DATE, FRIDAY, JULY 3rd, 1925.

A WAIF AT GREYFRIARS! *Knowing only the glorious present, and little realising what strange adventures are in store for him, Ragged Dick, now changed in name and appearance to Richard Compton, makes his entry into Greyfriars School!*



A Magnificent Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, featuring Ragged Dick, the waif of the open roads.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's Little Way!

CRASH!
"Oh!"
"Ow!"
"You silly owl!" roared Bob Cherry.
"You clumsy ass!" yelled Billy Bunter.

It was a terrific collision. Bob Cherry had run up the Remove staircase and sprinted into the Remove passage. Bob was generally energetic in his movements and now he was in a hurry. That would not have mattered had the coast been clear.

But just as Bob crossed the landing with a rush, Billy Bunter came scudding out of the Remove passage to the stairs.

Bunter had a bundle under his arm, and he seemed in even a greater hurry than Bob Cherry.

Neither saw the other till it was too late.

They met with a crash, and both of them sat down on the Remove landing, spluttering.

Bob leaned helplessly against the balustrade, almost winded by the terrific impact of William George Bunter. A charge with Bunter's weight behind it was no jest.

Bunter clutched at his big spectacles with one hand, with the other at his bundle, which he dropped as he sat down.

"You—you—you silly chump!" he spluttered. "You—you mad bull! You rhinoceros! What did you charge me over for?"

"You owl!" gasped Bob. "What did you rush into me for like a blind walrus?"

"You chump!"

"You fat dummy!"

Billy Bunter staggered to his feet, having set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose. Clutching his bundle, he rolled on to the stairs, leaving the hapless Bob still gasping on the landing.

Two juniors came along the Remove passage from Study No. 4—Vernon Smith and Tom Redwing. Smithy stopped to glance at Bob, and grinned.

"Anything broken?" he asked.

"Ow!"

Bob Cherry staggered to his feet, panting. He leaned on the balustrade to get his breath.

"I'll—I'll burst that fat bounder!" he gasped. "What the thump was he rushing about for, when he can't see a yard from his silly nose. Ow!"

Bob went panting along the Remove passage, and Vernon-Smith and Redwing descended the staircase, laughing. As a matter of fact, the collision had been as much Bob's fault as Bunter's, though Bob did not seem to see it for the moment.

Bob Cherry had recovered his good-humour, however, and almost his breath, by the time he reached his study, No. 13 in the Remove.

He hurled open the study door in his usual energetic way, and tramped in with his heavy tread.

Study No. 13 was vacant. It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and a sunny summer's afternoon. Most of the Remove fellows were out-of-doors, in the fields or on the river. Harry Wharton & Co. were taking a boat out that afternoon, and four members of the Famous Five were waiting below for Bob.

Bob crossed the study to the cupboard and threw the door open.

Then he jumped.

On the cupboard shelf there should have been visible a large plum cake, which had arrived from home for Bob that day. That plum cake was to accompany the Famous Five in their pull up the river. By the time they had pulled a few miles up the Sark it was probable that they would be able to do it full justice. Bob Cherry had left it there safe in the cupboard—at all events, it ought to have been safe. Apparently, however, it had not been so safe as he had supposed. For it was no longer there!

"Gone!"

Bob stared into the cupboard. He moved two or three articles, to make sure that the cake had not been shoved out of sight by one of his study-mates—Linley or Hurree Singh or Wun Lung. But it was not there. That big plum

cake, which was to have furnished a feast for five on the river, had vanished—gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream!

"Bunter!" roared Bob.

He guessed now why the Owl of the Remove had been fleeing out of the Remove passage in such a terrific hurry. He guessed what was in the bundle Bunter had been carrying.

"The—the—the fat villain!" gasped Bob.

He rushed out of the study.

Two or three Remove fellows dodged out of his way in a great hurry as Bob Cherry came speeding back to the staircase.

He went down the stairs three at a time.

Harry Wharton and Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent and Hurree Janset Ram Singh were waiting for him at the foot of the staircase.

"Hallo, you've been quick, old man," said Wharton. "But where's the cake? You don't seem to have brought it?"

"Bunter!" gasped Bob.

"What about Bunter?"

"Did you see him? Has he passed you?"

"Yes, five minutes ago!" said Harry. "He went out of the House. He was in rather a hurry, I think!"

"He didn't stop to answer when I asked him what he had got in his bundle," grinned Frank Nugent.

"The cake!" roared Bob.

"What?"

"It's gone—and Bunter——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"After him!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"Come on!" panted Bob.

The Famous Five rushed out into the quadrangle. They stared round for William George Bunter, but William George was not to be seen. Peter Todd was sunning himself on the steps, and Bob caught him by the arm.

"Seen Bunter?"

"Lots of times," answered Peter cheerily. "Oftener than I've wanted to. Don't jerk my arm off!"

"Where did he go?"

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"I think he went down to the gates. What's the row?"

Without stopping to explain what the "row" was, Harry Wharton & Co. sprinted down to the gates. It was very probable that Billy Bunter had gone outside the school to seek some secluded spot where he could devour his plunder undisturbed. Gosling was taking the air outside his lodge, and Johnny Bull shouted to him.

"Has Bunter gone out, Gosling?"

"Yes, Master Bull."

"Which way did he go?"

"I think he went towards Courtfield, Master Bull."

"Come on, you fellows!"

And the Co. rushed out of the gates and sped on the road towards Courtfield in towering wrath. There was a severe reckoning in store for the Owl of the Remove—if he was caught!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter Asks For It!

"SMITHY, old man!"

"Cut!"

"I say, Smithy—"

"Hook it!" said the Bounder tersely.

"I say, Redwing—"

"Nothing doing, Bunter!" said Tom Redwing, with a smile. "It's Smithy's car, not mine."

"Smithy, old chap—"

"Go and eat coke!"

Vernon-Smith's manner was uncompromising. Billy Bunter's little round eyes glittered behind his spectacles.

At a short distance from the gates of Greyfriars, hidden from the old school by a bunch of beeches, a handsome car was drawn up to the side of the road. Herbert Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing had walked along to it from the school gates, and they were about to step in when Billy Bunter arrived on the scene, in full and breathless flight, with his precious bundle under his fat arm.

Bunter was in terror of pursuit—a terror that was well-founded. And the sight of Smithy's car was like a windfall to him. Smithy, who had heaps of money to spend, had evidently hired that car for a drive that sunny afternoon with his chum; and Bunter instantly decided that he was going on a motor-drive also. Bunter liked motoring; and, still more, he wanted to get out of the reach of Bob Cherry with his plunder. Smithy's car was, from Bunter's point of view, the right thing in the right place at the right moment.

"I say, you fellows, I'll come," said Bunter. "I'll tell you what—I've got a cake from home, and I'll whack it out with you chaps. I've got it here."

"Whose cake?" grinned the Bounder.

"Mine!" howled Bunter. "It came specially by post this morning, from Bunter Court. Is it a go?"

"My dear ass, I wouldn't have your company for a dozen cakes—even if it was your cake! Buzz off!"

The chauffeur was starting the engine; and Smithy signed to his chum to get into the car. Tom Redwing stepped in.

"I say, Smithy—"

"Rats!"

"Beast!"

"Same to you, old fat man, and many of them! Good-bye!"

"Right-ho, you rotters! I'll tell Wingate you're going out of bounds!" yelled Bunter. "I know your game,

Smithy—going to the races on a half-holiday. You've not got leave to go in a car, I know that jolly well!"

"Why, you fat duffer—" began Tom Redwing indignantly.

Vernon-Smith looked back at Bunter, pausing with one foot in the car.

"You think I'm going out of bounds?" he asked.

Bunter sniffed.

"I jolly well know you are!" he answered.

"And you'll mention it to a prefect?"

"Not if you treat me as a pal, old chap," said Bunter affectionately. "I know you'd like me to come."

"So I would, on second thoughts," said Smithy. "Hop in! You don't mind, Tom?"

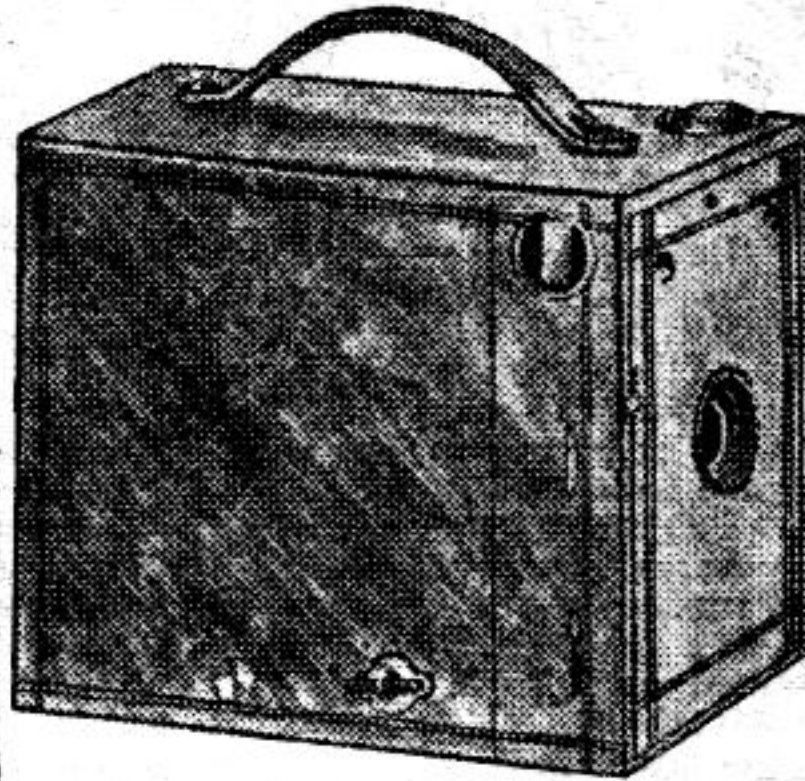
"Not at all, if you don't," answered Redwing.

"The fact is, I want Bunter to come, as he puts it so nicely," said the Bounder, with a lurking grin. "Hop in, Bunter!"

"Right you are, old chap."

WIN THIS CAMERA!

(By KODAK'S)



FIVE MINUTES' WORK!

See our Topping Competition on page 2.

Bunter rolled victoriously into the car, and sat down. Vernon-Smith slammed the door and sat down also, and the car moved. It was a good car, with a good engine, and it was soon racing away on the road to Courtfield. Billy Bunter cast an anxious glance back as it raced. Far in the distance he discerned five specks on the white road, and grinned. He guessed that those five specks were the Famous Five of the Remove, in wrathful but unavailing pursuit of the captured cake.

Billy Bunter proceeded to unwrap his bundle on his fat knees. A large plum cake was disclosed. Tom Redwing uttered an exclamation.

"That looks like Bob Cherry's cake!" he said.

"Cakes look alike, of course," said Bunter hastily. "This one came specially for me from Bunter Court this morning."

The Bounder chuckled.

"And they wrote Cherry's name on it by mistake?" he asked.

"Eh?"

The Bounder pointed to the paper in which the cake had been wrapped. The name and address of Robert Cherry, of Greyfriars School, were plainly discernible there.

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

Redwing glanced back from the car.

"Why, there's Bob!" he exclaimed. "Bob and the others—they're after Bunter and that cake, Smithy! Stop the car!"

"Don't stop!" roared Bunter in alarm.

Vernon-Smith grinned.

"Bunter's going to give us away for going out of bounds," he said. "We've got to be careful how we handle Bunter."

"Look here, Smithy—"

"Yes, rather," said Bunter. "You'll jolly well get a licking, Smithy! You keep on."

Vernon-Smith signalled to the chauffeur, and the car slowed down. The five running figures on the road came nearer.

Harry Wharton & Co. had sighted the car, and the gleam of Bunter's spectacles in the sunshine. They were running their hardest, and shouting to Smithy to stop; but the buzz of the car drowned their voices.

"I say, you fellows, I'm going to whack out this cake, of course," said Bunter. "It's my cake, you know—our cook at Bunter Court makes ripping cakes, and this is one of them. I don't know how Cherry's name came to be on the paper—"

"Chuck it!" exclaimed Tom Redwing, in disgust. "Look here, Smithy, that's Bob's cake—"

"We're slowing down!" grinned Smithy.

Bunter gave a yell of alarm.

"Beast! I tell you—"

"My dear ass, we're not going to become accessories after the fact in a giddy burglary!" chuckled the Bounder. "Drop the bundle out of the car."

"Sha'n't!" howled Bunter.

"Then we'll stop."

"I—I say, Smithy—"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. "It's a ripping cake!" urged Bunter.

"Look here—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" The Famous Five were near enough now for Bob Cherry's powerful voice to be heard. "Smithy! Stop, there's a good chap! Bunter—"

"Keep on!" shrieked Bunter.

The Bounder laughed.

Bunter blinked back along the road. Harry Wharton & Co. were quite near now, running hard in the dusty wake of the car, which had slowed almost to a crawl.

The Owl of the Remove quaked. Overtaken by the rightful possessor of the cake, he had not only the loss of his plunder to expect; he had also to expect to be yanked out of the car and thumped and bumped.

"Are you going to drop it?" chuckled Smithy.

"Beast!"

"Take your choice!"

Bunter groaned.

The loss of the cake was better than the loss of the car, with a thumping and bumping thrown in.

With an anguish that could not have been expressed in words, the Owl of the Remove dropped the captured cake over the back of the car. It dropped into the road, and Vernon-Smith signalled at once to the chauffeur to accelerate. The car flew again; and the three occupants, looking back, saw Harry Wharton & Co. come to a breathless halt round the cake.

The car turned from the Courtfield road, into the long country road that led to Lantham. Billy Bunter leaned back in his seat, and blinked in speechless wrath and indignation at the Bounder.

"You awful beast—my cake—" gasped Bunter, finding his voice at last.

"I've got you out of a licking!" grinned Smithy.

"Yah!"

Bunter sat glowering while the car ate up the miles. Really, Smithy's car had not been such a windfall as he had supposed. But he remembered that the Bounder was accustomed to doing things in style when he engaged a car for one of his half-holiday runs; and he cheered up again.

"I say, Smithy, I suppose we're having tea out?" he remarked.

"We are!" assented the Bounder, with a nod.

"A decent feed, I hope?" hinted Bunter.

"Quite decent."

"What's the programme?" asked Bunter, leaning back on the cushions and blinking quite affably at Smithy through his big spectacles. After all, what did the cake matter if he was going to enjoy one of Smithy's expensive feeds at a country hotel after a ripping run in the motor? In the circumstances Bob Cherry was welcome to his own cake—almost.

"We're going through Lantham," said the Bounder. "We stop in Lantham for a few minutes. After that, a straight run on to Canterbury."

"Good!"

"A toppin' tea at Canterbury—the best that can be dug up for love or money—"

"Ripping!"

"Then a run round the country, and a look at the sea, and home to Greyfriars just in time for call-over," said the Bounder.

"Smithy old man, you're a prince!" said Bunter. "I always liked you, Smithy."

"Let's hope that will continue," said the Bounder cordially. "You're such a nice chap to know, Bunter."

Tom Redwing eyed his comrade curiously. Smithy's dealings with Bunter that sunny afternoon puzzled him a little. But he made no remark, and the rapid car ate up the miles to Lantham. That town, with its railway junction, came in sight in a very short time.

The car slowed down in the streets, and stopped at the railway-station.

Vernon-Smith jumped out.

"Come on, Bunter."

"Eh? What are we getting down for?" asked Bunter.

"Get down and I'll tell you, fathead!"

Bunter rather reluctantly detached himself from the comfortable, cushioned seat, and stepped out of the car. Vernon-Smith pushed him aside with a rather heavy push and stepped into the car again and closed the door. Bunter staggered, and turned towards the car again in amazement. The Bounder regarded him with a cheery grin.

"I—I say, Smithy—"

"Good-bye, old fat man!"

"What?" yelled Bunter.

"You see, dear man, we're not going out of bounds this afternoon," explained Smithy sweetly. "I've got special leave from Mr. Quelch to go on a run to Canterbury to-day. See? So you can tell all the prefects at Greyfriars—Wingate, Walker, Loder, and the whole shoot—tell 'em as often as you like and as long as they'll listen. You can tell Mr. Quelch and the Head—and all the rest of the giddy staff, if you want to. You can tell Gosling and Trotter if you choose. You can shout it from the giddy housetops; you can mention it in Gath, and whisper it in the streets of Ascalon. See?"

Bunter blinked.



"Beasts! I'm coming with you!" roared Billy Bunter, as the car moved on. He clung desperately to the handle of the door. The Bounder reached out, and Bunter gave a yell as his hat was squashed on his head. He sat down on the pavement, roaring, and the car glided away. (See Chapter 2.)

Tom Redwing burst into a chuckle. The expression on Bunter's fat face at that moment was worth, so to speak, a guinea a box.

"I didn't bring you along because I was afraid you would sneak, old pippin," continued the Bounder. "I brought you along to land you at Lantham, and give you a walk home, for your thundering cheek! See?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Redwing.

The expression on Bunter's face was still more entertaining now. He had been under the impression that he had forced Smithy to take him on board. Smithy's explanation enlightened him on that point—and dismayed him. He blinked at Smithy in blank dismay.

"If you've got the tin you can go home by railway—change at Courtfield!" chuckled the Bounder. "As I know you haven't got any tin—as usual—you can walk. It's about ten miles by the road to—"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"But if you know the short cuts you can save a few miles. Anyhow, the walk will do you good. It will bring down your fat, you know; and it may impress on you that I'm a rather bad customer to threaten. Good-bye!"

"Beast! I'm coming!"

"I think not! Get on!" said Vernon-Smith to the chauffeur.

The car moved on.

Billy Bunter clung desperately to the handle of the door. The Bounder reached over, and Bunter gave a yell as

his hat was squashed on his head. He sat down on the pavement, roaring, and the car glided away.

"Oh dear! Ow!"

Bunter staggered up.

He blinked after the car; it was fast disappearing in the traffic of Lantham High Street. A minute more and it was gone.

Bunter stood and blinked in overwhelming dismay. He was landed at Lantham. Railway fares were high; but had they been low it would have been all the same to Bunter, as he was in his usual stony state. As usual, his long-expected postal-order had failed to arrive from Bunter Court. If the railway company had been prepared to carry Bunter home for threepence, Bunter could not have availed himself of the offer. He was fairly landed—and that, so far, was all he had gained by the raid on Bob Cherry's cake and by butting into Smithy's car—and undoubtedly it was all that he deserved.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Wet!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here's the giddy cake, anyhow!"

"Good!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were breathless after their race. Bob Cherry picked up the cake from the dusty road—it was intact. Bunter had not had time to take a single bite.

"Well, we've got the cake," said Frank Nugent, laughing. "Bunter ought to be jolly well bumped; but we've got the cake!"

"The bumpfulness ought to be terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But we have got the cake, and it is all right rainfully."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Remove turned back along the road, Bob with the cake in its wrappings under his arm. They walked down to the school raft by the boathouse. A good many Greyfriars fellows were on the river that sunny afternoon. Coker and Potter and Greene of the Fifth were pushing out a boat when the Remove fellows arrived. Harry Wharton & Co. were soon afloat, by which time Coker of the Fifth was catching a series of crabs, amid laughter from the fellows on the raft.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look out, Coker!" shouted Bob Cherry, as the Remove boat glided by Coker's craft.

Coker of the Fifth gave the cheery Bob a glare.

"You cheeky fag!" he roared.

"You're splashing us, you ass!" called out Harry Wharton.

"Keep clear, you silly fags!"

"My hat! How's a fellow to keep clear of you, Coker?" demanded Bob. "Which way are you going—up the river, or down, or across? You don't seem to know."

"What are you at, anyhow?" asked Johnny Bull. "There aren't any crabs in the Sark. What's the good of fishing for them here? Why don't you go down to the bay if you're after crabs?"

Potter and Greene chuckled. Horace Coker did not chuckle; he glared, and stood up in the boat to lunge at the Removites with his oar. Bob Cherry reached out and gave the Fifth Form boat a shove that sent it rocking, and Coker sat down in it with startling suddenness and a loud roar.

"Give way, you fellows!" chuckled Bob.

And the merry Removites pulled away up the river, leaving Coker sitting in his boat still roaring.

Greyfriars faded into the distance behind, and the powerful voice of Coker of the Fifth died away as the Famous Five pulled on between green, wooded banks.

It was a glorious afternoon, and Harry Wharton & Co. enjoyed the pull up the river.

Some miles from the school they pulled into the bank and landed on the tow-path under the shade of thick trees, and the good things—including the recaptured cake—were landed. The spirit-stove was set going, and the tin kettle set on it, and Bob Cherry brewed coffee.

"This is something like!" remarked Bob, as he sat down in the grass.

"The likefulness is terrific," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"It's a jolly good cake!" said Nugent.

"Hear, hear!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes a cheery-looking merchant! I've seen that chap before somewhere," said Bob.

The juniors glanced at the man who came loafing along the tow-path. He was not a pleasant person to look at—in ragged, dirty clothes, with a battered hat on the back of his untidy head. His face, which looked as if it had not been washed for several weeks, was surly and vicious in expression. A shabby pack which he carried over his shoulder indicated that he was a pedlar—though from his looks it seemed more probable that the pedlar's pack was a pretence.

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more likely to contain stolen goods than articles for sale.

The juniors eyed him as he slouched up to the camp. The man's dirty, ill-favoured, stubbly face was familiar to them.

"I remember him," said Harry Wharton quietly. "It's that brute who calls himself Pedlar Parker. You remember we came on him that day we went to Compton Woods, weeks ago. He was pitching into a kid—"

"Ragged Dick!" said Bob. "I remember. I wonder what became of that kid?"

"Goodness knows! I hope that brute never got hold of him again!" said Harry.

"He's not with him now, anyhow."

Pedlar Parker came loafing up, and stopped to stare at the schoolboys sitting in the grass under the trees. They recognised him easily enough, but he did not seem to know them again.

"'Elp a cove on his way?" he said gruffly.

"Certainly!" said Bob. "I'll help you with my boot, with pleasure, if you're in want of help."

"The helpfulness will be terrific, my esteemed and disgusting scoundrel!" said Hurree Singh.

The man stared at them savagely.

"Ain't got a civil word for a bloke, eh?" he grunted.

"Not for you," said Harry Wharton. "You don't seem to remember us; but we remember you, Mr. Parker."

"Ain't see'd you afore that I know of," growled the ruffian, staring at the captain of the Remove.

"We gave you some reason to remember us," chuckled Bob Cherry. "We handled you for walloping a kid at Compton Woods, and we kept you safe while the kid got away. Remember now?"

Pedlar Parker's eyes glinted.

"So you're that lot, are you?" he said. "You 'elped young Dick to get away, you did, and I ain't see'd him since."

"All the better for him."

Pedlar Parker laid down his pack in the grass. He had a thick knobby stick under his arm, and he slid it into his hand, with a very ugly expression on his face. The juniors jumped up, quite understanding that the ruffian meant mischief.

"You 'andled me, you did," said Pedlar Parker. "If I'd 'ad this 'ere stick in my 'and you wouldn't have done it so easy. Now it's my turn!"

"Go ahead!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. Bob had the boathook in his hand, ready for trouble.

"Shell out!" said Pedlar Parker. "I'll let you off for two quid."

Bob Cherry laughed.

The pedlar glanced up and down the tow-path. It was a lonely spot shut in between the woods and the river. There was no one in sight in any direction.

Then he whirled up the heavy cudgel and rushed at the juniors. Undoubtedly the ruffian expected them to scatter before that savage rush, and to knock them right and left with his cudgel. But the Greyfriars fellows were made of sterner stuff than he expected.

There was a crash as Bob's boathook met the cudgel, warding off a savage slash, and the next moment the boathook jabbed on Mr. Parker's ragged waistcoat.

"Ow!" howled the pedlar.

It was quite a painful jab, and it made the ruffian sit down in the grass with a sudden bump.

The next instant the Famous Five were upon him.

Johnny Bull jerked away his cudgel and sent it whirling out far into the river. Mr. Parker rolled in the grass, struggling in the hands of five active fellows.

"Duck him!" shouted Bob.

"Chuck him in!"

"Leggo!" yelled Pedlar Parker. "I'll out yer! I will, on my davy I'll out yer! Ow! Ooooooch!"

Splash!

With a terrific splash the ruffian went headlong into the shallow water amid the reeds and rushes.

He disappeared from sight for a moment, and then came up, spluttering and gasping.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooogh! Ooooooch!"

"It's time you had a wash, old bean!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ooooooch! Grooogh! Gug-gug-gug!"

Pedlar Parker spat out water and mud. "I—I—I'll— Grooogh! Let a bloke get out, blow yer!"

Bob Cherry lunged with the boathook as the ruffian strove to clamber out of the water. Pedlar Parker backed promptly, with the river up to his armpits.

"Ow! Keep off!" he yelled. "Do you want to drown a bloke?"

"It wouldn't be much loss!" grinned Bob.

"Lemme out!" yelled Parker.

"Dear man, you want a wash, and you're getting it. Are you going to 'out' us, as you express it with native eloquence?" chuckled Bob.

"Ow! I'll let you off! I'll clear—on my davy, I will! Let a bloke get out of this 'ere blooming water!" gasped the pedlar.

"Are you sorry?"

"Ow! I—I'll—"

"You're going to stay there till you're properly sorry, old bean!" said Bob, lunging again as the pedlar approached the bank.

"Ow! I'm sorry!" howled Pedlar Parker.

"Are you awfully sorry?"

"I—I—I'll—yes, blow yer!"

"Are you awfully, fearfully sorry?"

"Grooogh! Yes! Anything! Let a bloke out!"

"If he's awfully fearfully sorry I think we can let him off, you chaps!" said Bob. "You can come out, you rotter. We'll give you one minute to get clear—or you go in again."

"Ow!"

Pedlar Parker crawled out of the river.

He gave the Greyfriars juniors a venomous look, grabbed up his pack, and tramped away down the tow-path, squelching out water as he went. The ducking had taken all the truculence out of the ruffian, and it was evident that he did not want any more trouble with the heroes of Greyfriars. Bob Cherry sat down in the grass again as the pedlar disappeared.

"Pass the cake, Franky."

And the cake was demolished to the last crumb and the last plum, with general satisfaction.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Ragged Dick in a New Role!

RAGGED DICK sat in the corner seat in the railway carriage, looking out with thoughtful, almost wondering eyes at the trees and fields as they flew past the windows of the express.

Ragged Dick!

That was what he had been called in his days on the road, but the nickname seemed a ludicrous misnomer now.

Dick was no longer ragged. He was well-dressed—even expensively dressed. He carried his clothes well, too. In the quadrangle at Greyfriars he would have passed muster with the best.

He was not used to it yet. Even now he wondered sometimes whether it was not all a dream, whether he would not wake up under a hedge or a haystack, with the coarse, harsh voice of Pedlar Parker cursing in his ears, or hearing the drunken ramblings of Spouting Billy.

Ragged, nameless, friendless, forlorn only a few short weeks ago. And now—

It did not seem real. Ragged Dick had become Richard Compton, grandson by adoption of Sir Henry Compton, of Compton Hall. All that wealth could give him was his—and the dearest ambition of his life, an ambition he had never hoped to realise, was about to become a fact. He was going to school, to Greyfriars, where his keen desire to study and learn would be taken as a matter of course, instead of being the mockery and derision of the rough characters with whom he had associated on the road.

He stole a glance at the tall, stern-faced, rather grim-looking old gentleman on the opposite seat.

Sir Henry Compton was reading the "Morning Post," oblivious of his adopted grandson.

His hard brown face was grim in expression; nobody, looking at the old baronet, would have dreamed that he had a kind or tender heart.

Yet why had he done this for the nameless waif? Why had he taken into his charge, and given his ancient and honoured name to, the ragged, tattered lad who had trespassed in his park?

It was a mystery to Ragged Dick.

Why should the old man care anything for him? Indeed, he had shown no sign of caring anything for him. His manner was not unkind in dealing with the boy; but it could not be called kind. No affectionate word ever passed his lips; and he addressed the lad as Richard when he spoke to him—never by any chance "Dick."

Why had he done this—lifted the hapless waif from the underworld, and placed him in a position that crowds of fellows—even Greyfriars fellows—might well have envied?

Dimly, at the back of Dick's mind, was a misgiving—so faint that he hardly realised it; yet it was there. The baronet had had some motive—and that motive was not regard for the boy personally—it could not be that, and it was not that. Yet the motive must exist. If the old man, childless since his only son had fallen in the War, desired to adopt someone to carry on his ancient name, he would naturally have chosen a relative. If he, indeed, had no relatives, which seemed incredible, surely he would have chosen someone in his own rank in society—someone better fitted by birth and training to carry on the traditions of the Comptons, than poor Dick could ever be.

Was there something more behind it?

Ragged Dick had wondered about it—he could not help wondering. Perhaps his secret misgiving was chiefly caused by the secrecy of the affair. He had been taken to London—the only servant at Compton Hall who had seen him had been sent to the baronet's estate in Scotland to keep him out of the way. Dick was not to be seen at the Hall until the school holidays came round, and then he was to appear as Richard Compton; not the adopted

grandson, but the genuine grandson of the old landowner.

Why?

Was Sir Henry one of those who do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame? Why was the adoption to be kept so profoundly secret. To avoid chatter and comment? Certainly Sir Henry was the kind of man to dislike anything of that kind. Was that it?

But if Dick was to appear as the grandson of the baronet, there must have been a grandson in existence at some time—all Compton Hall would know whether Sir Henry's dead son had left a boy behind him or not. And back into Ragged Dick's mind would come the remembrance of the strange scene in Compton Park, when the old man had muttered the word "Dead!" after reading a telegram, and had fallen in a seizure. Had the grandson died, and was Dick taken in his place? It seemed so—yet why?

These questions were never quite out of the boy's mind; but generally they were rather at the back of his mind. He knew Sir Henry's wishes, and loyally meant to carry them out. Sir Henry had bidden him ask no questions; and he asked none. Sir Henry had bidden him keep his adoption a secret, and act and speak as though he really were Richard Compton, and it was for Sir Henry to decide upon that point. Dick had no remotest idea of gainsaying him. Perplexed as he was, it never crossed his mind, even vaguely

or remotely, that there could be anything wrong, anything illegal, in what the baronet was doing. That he was made heir to an entailed estate, which, by law, should go to the heir-in-entail at the old baronet's death, was a suspicion that was not likely to occur to him. That the baronet was at bitter feud with his cousin Roger, the spendthrift and gambler, and determined to keep an unmitigated blackguard out of Compton Hall, by fair means or foul, Dick was not likely to guess—he had never even heard of Roger Compton.

The mystery puzzled him, when he thought of it; but it did not trouble his spirits.

He was happy—there was no doubt about that.

This day he was going to Greyfriars—Sir Henry Compton had long since arranged matters with Dr. Locke, the headmaster. Now he was taking him to the school. All the Comptons had been Greyfriars men since there had been Comptons in Kent, and Greyfriars had had a local habitation and a name. Long, long since old Sir Henry himself had been in the Remove—the Form which Dick was to enter.

Dick's heart was light as he turned from his contemplation of the grim old face of Sir Henry, and stared at the scenery again. Fields and woods—the glorious scenery of the Garden of England—passed before his eyes; in the distance a spire showed that they were nearing Lantham.



Bob Cherry leaned forward and gave the Fifth-Form boat a shove that sent it rocking, and Coker sat down with startling suddenness. "Give way, you fellows," chuckled Bob. And the merry Removites pulled away up the river, leaving Coker sitting in his boat, roaring. His voice died away in the distance. (See Chapter 3.)

An hour or so more, and he would be at Greyfriars.

He wondered what the fellows would be like. He wondered whether any of them would suspect that the wealthy, well-dressed newcomer had ever been other than what he now seemed.

It was not likely.

Ragged Dick was not a conceited fellow, but he knew that he looked the part well enough. And he had only to hold his tongue—and that he was bound to do by his patron's instructions and by the solemn promise he had made.

Compton Hall, in the far distance, flashed by the train. Under those ancient red roofs was to be his future home—under those old trees he had first met the baronet, and helped him when he lay mumbling and groaning in the seizure which had followed the reading of the telegram. In the fields close by he had been beaten by Pedlar Parker—he remembered how a crowd of schoolboys had intervened to rescue him from the brute, and how, in his eagerness to escape from his tyrant, he had fled without even a word of thanks.

If ever he met those fellows again—But he smiled at the thought. It was not likely that he would meet them—not likely that he would know them again if he did. Still more unlikely that they would know him—the ragged, dirty, unwashed tramp transformed into the clean and well-dressed young gentleman.

His life had been strange enough, but this was the strangest of all. Long, long ago—so long ago in infancy that the memory was dim and blurred—he had had a father, like other fellows. What had become of him, whether he still lived even, Dick did not know. His next recollection was of tramping the roads with a gipsy van and a gipsy gang. Older, he had run away from the gipsies, and then had come his tramping with Poynings, the fallen Master of Arts, who had taught him in his sober hours most of what he knew, and in his drunken hours sometimes cursed and beaten him. But he had, on the whole, liked Spouting Billy, and was grateful to him, and sorry when the hapless wretch was hauled off to prison.

After that he wandered alone, till he had thrown in his lot with Pedlar Parker. And then had followed weeks of ill-usage because he would not "pinch," as the ruffian called it, Ragged Dick looking all the time for an opportunity of escape from his tyrant—an opportunity that had come the day the unknown schoolboys had chipped in to help him.

After that—the meeting with Sir Henry in Compton Park, and the strangest of all the many changes in his young life. The weeks in London had passed like a strange dream—the visits to the tailors and the outfitters, the days of "grinding" with a tutor who had prepared him to take his place in the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars. The tutor had known nothing of him save that he was Sir Henry's grandson, who had been in delicate health and whose education had been a little neglected; but his pupil had rather surprised him by the extent of his knowledge of some things, the extent of his ignorance of others. Spouting Billy, in his sober moments, had been a good teacher.

Even now, as the spire of Lantham Church grew nearer against the blue summer sky, and Greyfriars seemed quite close at hand, Ragged Dick wondered whether it was not all a dream.

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The train slowed down; and the hard voice of the old baronet broke in upon his musings.

"Richard!"

Dick started. He was getting used to being called Richard now, but it was still a little strange to him.

"Yes, sir."

"We change at Lantham, in a few minutes. There will be a quarter of an hour to wait for the train to Courtfield."

"Yes."

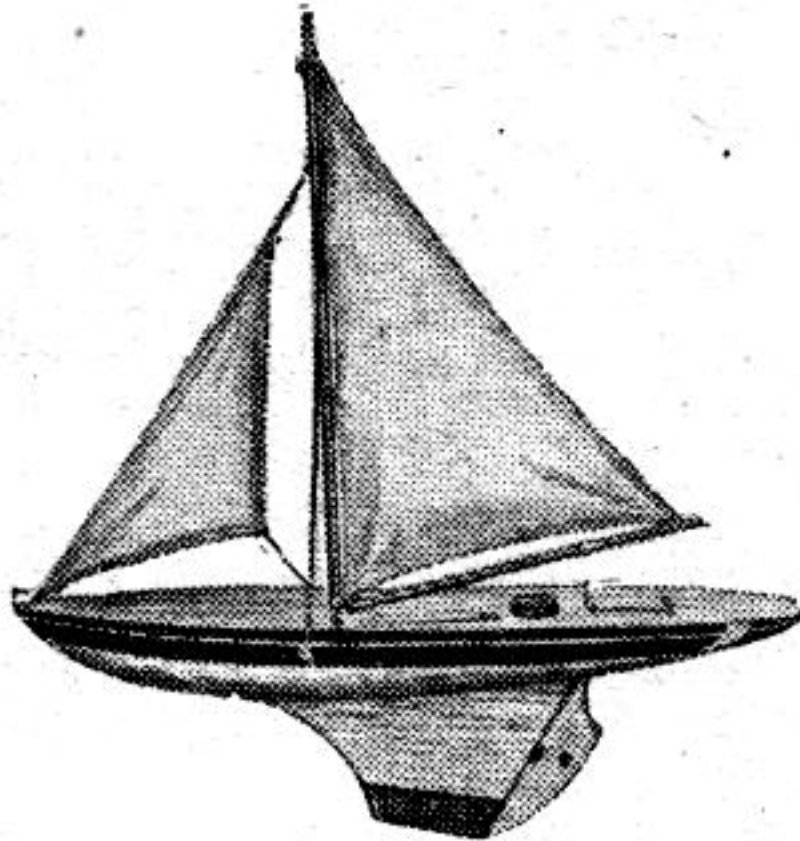
Dick answered quietly, submissively. He was awed, sometimes almost scared, by the grim old gentleman whose grandson he was supposed to be.

"I shall wait in the station; you may take a walk in the town if you choose. You will return in good time for the train."

"Yes, sir."

Dick understood that Sir Henry did not desire his company during the wait at Lantham. He wondered whether the old man was absolutely indifferent to him, for whom he had done so much. It seemed so.

AHOY, THERE! SIX SAILING YACHTS—



—offered in our Grand Competition
on page 2.

The express halted.

Sir Henry stepped out, tall and stately and icy. Dick followed him from the carriage. He was a sturdy fellow, but he felt strangely small as he walked by the side of the tall gentleman.

Sir Henry entered a waiting-room.

"Return here in ten minutes, Richard."

"Yes, sir."

"Use your eyes, Richard. As my grandson you may be supposed to know something of the neighbourhood in which you lived in childhood."

"Oh!"

"You may go, Richard!" said the baronet coldly.

Dick walked down the platform.

Sir Henry Compton stared after him, with a kind of grim approval in his face. The boy was handsome, well-set-up, decent. He was no Compton, but he would do credit to the name that had been given him. Sir Henry did not repent of the sudden resolution he had taken after his hostile interview with his cousin, the spendthrift blackguard—the waster and rogue from whose wasteful hands this boy was to save the old

Compton lands and the old Hall. Grim and hard and obstinate, the old man was not given to repenting of any wilful decision to which he might come.

He sat down in the waiting-room, and Dick—unconsciously lighter of heart out of the old man's icy company—walked out of the station, his handsome face cheery and bright.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Billy Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER groaned. From the dismal depths of his fat circumference came that groan, expressive of his dismal feelings.

Smithy's car had vanished. The Bounder and Tom Redwing were far away on their joy ride to Canterbury. And Billy Bunter stood alone, wrapped in dismay as in a garment.

He was hungry. That alone was a very serious matter—a matter, indeed, of which the seriousness transcended the seriousness of all other matters in the earth, in the air, or in the waters under the earth.

There was a cafe opposite the station at Lantham—there was a restaurant at the corner. But these establishments were not run on Good Samaritan lines. They succoured the hungry and thirsty only for cash payment—and Bunter was minus cash. He might as well have been in the middle of the Sahara Desert, so far as his chances of obtaining refreshment went. Water, indeed, was supplied free at the fountain in the market-place, but that was of no use to Bunter. He did not like water inside, and disliked it intensely outside. It was not like the sad case of the Ancient Mariner, with "water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink." It was with Bunter a case of provender all around, nor any morsel to eat. Which was a sadder case—at least, in Bunter's estimation.

Famished as he was—for it was two hours since dinner, when he had eaten only enough for three—there was no hope of sustenance until he got back to Greyfriars. Walking was impossible, for walking meant exertion. Railway travelling might have seemed impossible to any other fellow without cash in his pockets. Not so to Bunter. He was prepared to bilk the railway company for a ride. The only question was whether the railway company could be bilked.

He heard the roar of an incoming express in the station, and knew that the London train was in. He was aware that London passengers had to change if they wanted to go on to Courtfield, so there would be a train for that town before very long. He rolled into the station, hoping to sneak upon the platform in the slack time between two trains, then to dodge into the Courtfield coaches without a ticket. As for what would happen when he arrived at Courtfield ticketless, that had to remain on the knees of the gods. Bunter was accustomed to trusting to luck in such little matters. It was useless to meet trouble half-way. The immediate problem was to get on the platform undetected by meddlesome porters and guards.

Passengers by the express were coming out by one gate, and another, giving access to the Courtfield platform, was open. Bunter rolled towards it with an elaborate air of carelessness. He stooped to tie a shoe-lace, he stopped to stare at a poster which announced the glories of Blackpool for

summer holidays, he loafed round an automatic machine. Inch by inch, as it were, he approached the open gate, and rolled in.

But alas! for Bunter.

A station official emerged from behind a trolley, and a heavy hand dropped on Bunter's shoulder.

"Ticket, please!"

Bunter's fat heart thumped.

He turned an indignant blink on the porter. What right had the fellow to put a hand on his shoulder—the shoulder of a public-school chap, too! As a matter of fact, the Lantham porter had had an amused eye on Bunter for some minutes, and was quite aware that he was seeking to steal a ride.

"Ticket, sir!"

"Leggo! I mean, wait a minute! I've got it here!"

Bunter fumbled in his pockets.

The porter waited, grinning derisively. He had been there before, so to speak—he knew the manners and customs of a bilk. He was not at all surprised when the fat junior finally announced:

"Oh dear! I've dropped it somewhere!"

"Thought you 'ad, sir!" assented the man. "Sort of guessed it, sir! You looked like it!"

"I don't want any impertinence, my man!" said Bunter, with an attempt at bluster.

"I dessay!" assented the Lantham man. "I don't want any bilking, if you come to that. I've seen your sort afore, I 'ave! You just stand there, sir, while I call a copper to 'elp you find that there ticket you've dropped."

The porter turned away.

The instant his back was turned Billy Bunter scudded away from the gate, plunging across the station vestibule towards the street. And the Lantham porter chuckled, and gave no further heed.

The Owl of the Remove was baffled. After that attempt he was not likely to make a further essay at bilking that afternoon. He was only too glad to get clear without a personal interview with the "copper" the Lantham man had mentioned.

He rolled out of the station hurriedly. A blink behind assuring him that he was not pursued, he stopped to take breath. What was he going to do? That was the question. Or, to put it more accurately, whom was he going to do? Something or somebody had to be done, that was certain. Passengers by the express from London were leaving the station—and Bunter, as he noticed them, was struck by a happy thought. He was aware that a new fellow was coming to Greyfriars that afternoon—a fellow named Compton, who was going into the Remove. He had heard Mr. Quelch speak of it. New fellows were Bunter's game. New fellows were innocent enough to lend Bunter half-a-crown with the hope of seeing it again, new fellows might even advance a loan on the postal-order that Bunter was expecting—not being acquainted with that celebrated postal-order, like older hands at Greyfriars. This particular new fellow, Compton, would have to change at Lantham if he was coming from London, and if Bunter could get hold of him—

The Owl of the Remove brightened up.

The fellow would have to wait for the Courtfield train—it was not in the station yet. He would be hanging about somewhere. It was only a question of getting in touch with him.

The rest depended. If the fellow looked bright Bunter would simply



With a terrific splash, Pedlar Parker went headlong into the shallow water. He disappeared for a moment, and then came up, spluttering and gasping. Bob Cherry made a lunge at him as he attempted to clamber out of the water. "It's time you had a wash, old bean," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. (See Chapter 4.)

"touch" him for the fare home, as a Greyfriars chap who had lost his railway ticket and was stranded; but if he looked simple Bunter would tell him the old, old story of the expected postal-order, and extract from him a loan just as extensive as the new fellow's means and simplicity permitted.

Bunter felt quite bucked.

He turned back into the station, to blink about in search of a fellow who looked likely to be a new chap for the school—with one eye warily open for a suspicious porter and a possible copper.

And then Bunter jumped.

Coming out of the station was a fellow of about his own age, though resembling him in no other point.

A handsome, sturdy fellow, extremely well-dressed, with a bright and cheery look. Bunter's spectacles almost fell off as he saw him.

He was so astounded that he blinked and blinked again, scarcely able to believe the evidence of his eyes and his big glasses.

Bunter had seen that youth before—seen him when he was not well-dressed and spick-and-span, seen him when he was tattered and dirty and forlorn. He had seen him face to face and talked with him—under the old trees of Compton Park only a few weeks ago. Bunter's vision was not keen, and his memory for faces was not specially good, but he knew that face again in spite of the change in its owner. He

knew it well, and beyond the shadow of a doubt.

And standing in the path of the well-dressed youth as he came out of the station, blocking Richard Compton's way with his fat figure, Bunter stared and blinked at him in blank astonishment, and ejaculated:

"Ragged Dick!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Not Bunter's Lucky Day!

"RAGGED DICK!"

Bunter fairly gasped out the name.

He had never expected to see Ragged Dick again—he had never even thought of him since that meeting in Compton Park. And here was the fellow face to face once more, exhibiting every sign of wealth; the tattered tramp had become a well-dressed youth of the most prosperous appearance. Had Bunter not been a suspicious fellow he might have thought there was something queer about this startling change. And Bunter was not unsuspecting by any means.

"Ragged Dick!" he repeated. "My hat! What a change!"

Dick stared at him.

Like Bunter, he had forgotten that encounter in Compton Park—the fat schoolboy had not lingered in his memory. But he knew him again;

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Bunter—at least, his circumference—was not easily forgotten.

"You!" said Dick.

Bunter grinned.

"Little me!" he said.

Dick looked at him, expecting apparently that the fat fellow would move and give him room to pass. Bunter did not move, and Dick walked round him and went out of the station.

Bunter was after him like a shot.

Ragged Dick felt himself caught by the arm, and as he looked angrily round he found Bunter's grinning, fat face at his elbow.

"Let go!" he snapped.

"Do you want me to call a policeman?" grinned Bunter.

"A—a policeman?"

"Just that!" chuckled Bunter. "I know you, my pippin! You're the tramp I gave charity to in Compton Park—"

"I'm the chap you insulted, and who floored you," answered Dick. "And I'll floor you again if you don't take your paw off my arm!"

Bunter's fat hand jerked away.

"Look here—"

"Oh, let me alone!" snapped Dick. "I don't want to have anything to say to you. I don't know you, and don't want to!"

"I dare say you don't," agreed Bunter, with a fat chuckle. "But I jolly well know you, and I've a jolly good mind to give you in charge."

"Are you potty?" Dick stared at the fat junior. "How could you give me in charge, you dummy?"

"Where did you get that clobber?"

"This clobber?"

"And that watch and chain!" grinned Bunter. "And those pearl studs! Tramps don't dress like that, my boy! He, he, he!"

Dick stared at him, and his handsome face grew a little troubled. He understood Bunter's astonishment now at seeing him, and he hardly wondered at Bunter's suspicion that he had come by his present possessions dishonestly. The change in his fortunes, which seemed like a dream to himself, was quite unknown to this fellow, of course. Any fellow might have been suspicious, seeing that amazing change in the one-time tattered waif.

For Bunter's opinion and suspicions Dick did not care a jot. But he wanted to keep clear of any fellow who had seen him in his old character. His secret—the secret Sir Henry Compton had warned him so sternly to keep—was at stake.

He did not answer Bunter; he turned away and strode quickly down the High Street of Lantham.

"Stop!" shouted Bunter.

Dick did not heed; he hurried on. His idea was to shake the fat fellow off and return by another route to the railway-station.

Once he was safe in the train for Greyfriars he would be done with him, and he would be careful not to take another walk in Lantham, where he supposed Bunter belonged.

It did not occur to his mind then that Bunter belonged to Greyfriars—any more than it occurred to Bunter that this fellow, whom he knew as Ragged Dick, was the Richard Compton who was booked to arrive at the school that afternoon with his grandfather.

Bunter had forgotten about the new fellow, upon whose pocket-money he had such deep designs, in his surprise at this unexpected encounter—and in his deep interest in the strangely-changed waif.

He rolled down the street after Dick, shouting to him.

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"Stop! Do you hear? Stop!"

Dick paid no heed.

He hurried on, with burning cheeks, keenly conscious of the curious glances turned on him by people he passed. The pursuit was attracting attention.

"Stop!" roared Bunter. "I say, there, stop him!"

Dick halted at last.

He did not want a crowd gathering about him, and he had already attracted more attention from the passers than he liked.

Billy Bunter came up, panting.

"In a hurry—what?" he grinned.

"You fat fool!" said Dick fiercely.

"What do you want?"

"Better language, you cad!"

Dick clenched his fist.

"What do you want?" he repeated.

"If you've anything to say, say it and let me alone!"

"Lots!" said Bunter. "I know jolly well where you got those clothes—you pinched them!"

"Is that all?"

"I think I ought to give you in charge!" said Bunter loftily. "You've stolen those clothes and that watch and chain, it stands to reason."

Dick laughed impatiently.

"I've done nothing of the kind."

"Then how did you get hold of them?"

"That's my business!"

"Mine, too, I think!" sneered Bunter.

"I've a jolly good mind to call a policeman. Still, if you give me your word that you didn't steal those clothes—"

"Well, I do, if that is what you want."

Bunter grinned.

"Were they given to you?"

"Yes!" said Dick between his teeth.

"I know—given to you by a chap who didn't know it at the time!" chuckled Bunter. "Chap bathing, perhaps, and you came along and annexed his clobber—what? He, he, he!"

Dick smiled involuntarily. Perhaps that was a natural theory, so far as Bunter was concerned, to account for the startling change in his appearance.

"Well, I don't want to be hard on you," said Bunter generously. "I'm a kind-hearted chap. I'll tell you how the matter stands."

"What on earth do you mean?"

"I'm stony!" explained Bunter.

"Stony?" repeated Dick.

"Yes. Can you lend me a quid?"

"No!"

"Think again!" said Bunter. "There's a bobby at the corner. Think again, old bean!"

Dick stared at him. He did not know Bunter. Any fellow at Greyfriars could have told him that Bunter was a weird mixture of fool and rogue; but Dick had never been at Greyfriars—yet. It was natural, in the circumstances, that he should conclude that Bunter was all rogue—as his remarks certainly seemed to indicate.

"Why, you—you scoundrel!" exclaimed Ragged Dick indignantly. "You think I've stolen the money, and you want some of it! You ought to be taken in charge by a policeman yourself, you rascal!"

"What?" roared Bunter.

"You rascal!" exclaimed Dick.

"You're no better than a thief, on your own words!"

Bunter fairly spluttered with indignation. He was very far from realising that he was a rascal.

"You cheeky tramp! You—you impertinent waster! You—you are—"

Bunter gasped with rage.

There was a chime from Lantham Church. Ragged Dick started. It was half-past three, and the ten minutes allowed by Sir Henry Compton had more than elapsed. He had no more than time to scold back to the station and catch the train with the baronet.

He stepped back and turned, and Bunter clutched at his arm and stopped him, his fat face red with rage.

"You cheeky rotter!" gasped Bunter. "I'll show you! I'll—"

"Let go!"

"I'll jolly well give you a lesson! I'll—I'll—Yaroooop!" roared Bunter, as he received a hefty shove on his fat chest, and sat down on the pavement. "Oh! Ow! Wow! Groogh! Oh, my hat! Stop! Stop, thief! Ow!"

Ragged Dick, without another glance at the fat junior, was speeding back to the railway-station.

Bunter staggered up.

"Ow! Oh dear! I'll jolly well have him arrested! Ow! Wow!" He dusted his clothes, breathing wrath and indignation. "A common fellow like that—a tramp and a thief—shoving a chap over, laying his low hands on a gentleman! Oh dear! Oh! Now I sha'n't catch that fellow Compton. Oh dear! He will be gone on to Courtfield, if the beast came by that train. Oh, crumbs! Ow!"

Billy Bunter gasped and spluttered, and rolled on breathlessly to the station. But the Courtfield train was gone when he arrived there, and Ragged Dick was gone, and there was nobody to be seen about the station who looked at all likely to be Richard Compton, the new fellow for the Greyfriars Remove. It was not Billy Bunter's lucky afternoon.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Pedlar Parker is Surprised!

"RICHARD!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Dick.

Ragged Dick arrived breathlessly, and he found Sir Henry Compton waiting for him impatiently with a frowning brow.

"You are late?"

"Yes. I—I—"

"We have one minute for the train," said Sir Henry coldly. "Follow me!"

"Yes," gasped Dick.

The baronet did not speak again till he was seated in the Courtfield train with the boy. Then, as the train rolled out of Lantham, he fixed his eyes on the waif opposite. Dick's face was clouded. He could see that his protector was angry, and it made him troubled and uneasy.

"You were late. You should have returned to the station in ten minutes, as I directed you," said Sir Henry in a hard voice.

"I couldn't help it, sir."

"If the train had been lost I could not have kept my appointment with Dr. Locke, your future headmaster."

"I know, sir. But—"

"You must understand, Richard, that your old life is over for ever. That you are no longer free to consult your own whims and caprices," said Sir Henry. "Your life henceforth will be orderly and disciplined. You will obey the instructions of those set in authority over you, and will refrain from following your own wilful fancies."

Dick crimsoned. The baronet was evidently under the impression that he had wandered thoughtlessly about the Lantham streets, forgetful of the passage of time.

"I know, sir. But it was because—"

Sir Henry raised a brown hand.

"You need not excuse yourself, Richard. I understand. I am only warning you that you must take more care."

"Yes; but—"

"You need say no more."

The baronet opened his "Morning Post" again, and devoted his attention to it.

Ragged Dick said no more.

He had wondered whether it would be wiser to mention his meeting with a fellow who had seen him before as Ragged Dick, but it was plain that Sir Henry desired to hear nothing from him. That the boy had been delayed by no fault of his own had not occurred to the baronet, and he desired to hear no explanations.

Dick said no more. After all, he had done with the fat fellow who had troubled him; he did not expect ever to see him again. It was useless to describe the incident to Sir Henry.

The journey to Courtfield Junction was made in silence, save for the occasional grunt of the baronet, as he came

Friardale; he signalled to a taxicab. The taxi bowled along the Courtfield road towards Greyfriars, and Ragged Dick's heart beat faster as it went.

The school was close at hand now.

There was a little mirror in the taxi, and Dick looked at his reflection in it. He saw there a handsome face, bright and healthy. Somehow he would not have been surprised to see the reflection of the unwashed face of Ragged Dick of old, so unreal did all this seem to him. Uneasiness grew in his breast. He was going among a crowd of well-dressed fellows, fellows accustomed to the good things of life; fellows who would, perhaps, have sneered superciliously at the tattered waif Dick had been. He grew hot in the cheeks at the thought. Was he not, in a way, an impostor—a fellow pretending to be what he was not? Would he not be justly despised if it should come out what he was—what he had been?

And yet—and yet he was himself, whatsoever might be his outward trappings. In the garments, and with the

Sir Henry's face hardened again.

"I should not have brought you here had I not thought so," he answered coldly.

Dick flushed, and was silent. The words, hard as they were, gave him comfort. This was no man who was trying a dubious experiment from motives of kindness. Sir Henry would not have brought him there without the assurance that he would be able to take his place in the Greyfriars crowd. And Sir Henry knew.

Three well-dressed fellows lounged along the road and glanced idly at the taxicab as it whirled by. Dick glanced at them, wondering if they were Greyfriars fellows. As a matter of fact they were Ponsonby and his friends of Highcliffe School. Dick caught a careless word as the taxi passed them.

"That's old Compton."

They were gone.

They had looked at the old baronet, not at Dick. Certainly they had seen nothing to make them suspect that the



Billy Bunter clutched at Ragged Dick's arm as the latter turned away. "You cheeky rotter!" gasped Bunter. "I'll jolly well give you a lesson—I'll—Yarooop!" Bunter received a hefty shove on his fat chest, and sat down on the pavement. The next moment Ragged Dick was speeding for the railway station. (See Chapter 6.)

on some item in his newspaper which did not meet with his approval.

Dick stared at the scenery that fled by the windows. But he was not thinking of it; he was thinking of Greyfriars School, coming nearer and nearer now. Thinking of the headmaster, unknown so far, but awe-inspiring; of the crowd of fellows he would meet—two or three hundred complete strangers among whom his lot was now to be cast. Perhaps he would make friends there? Why should he not? Fellows who would have stared at the thought of making friends with Ragged Dick would probably be friendly enough with Richard Compton, heir of Compton Hall. Dick smiled as he thought of it. The poet has said that the rank is but the guinea's stamp, and the man's the gold, for all that. But the Compton stamp on the tattered waif made a very great deal of difference.

"Courtfield Junction! Change 'ere for Friardale and Greyfriars!"

The train stopped in the station.

Dick followed Sir Henry down the platform and out into the street. Sir Henry was not taking the local train to

name of Richard Compton, in a shining silk-hat, and with money in his pockets, he was still the nameless waif; but it was upon his character that all depended. If he made himself liked and respected he would owe it to himself, not to his trappings. But would he be able to play the part? Would not some keen and suspicious eye detect the tramp in the gentleman's clothes? His heart was beating painfully as a grey old tower rose in the distance over leafy trees.

Sir Henry's stern face relaxed a little.

"That is Greyfriars," he said.

It was his old school, and it had a place in his heart; not a tender heart, but not unfeeling. His glance went to the boy at his side doubtfully. Dick felt that he was being scrutinised, that a doubt was in the baronet's mind whether he would pass-muster. His strange way of life had made him quick of observation.

But the old man gave a nod, as if of approval and satisfaction. Dick breathed quickly.

"You—you think I—I shall pass, sir?" he stammered.

well-dressed youth in the taxi had once tramped the roads as a nameless, homeless waif. That was little enough, but the troubled boy drew comfort from it.

He caught a glimpse of the river through the trees. There were boats on the water, with schoolboys rowing—these would be Greyfriars fellows, he decided. Two big fellows in tail-coats were coming up from the direction of the boathouse; one had a cane under his arm. They looked like men to Dick. These could not be Greyfriars chaps. They were Wingate and Glynne of the Sixth, if he had known it. The trees hid them again.

The school gates were closed now. The road ran between Greyfriars and the river. On the grass by the roadside a tramp lay with a pack beside him, leaning against a tree, staring before him with evil eyes. Dick felt a throb of pity as he glanced at the tattered figure. This was what he had been—what he still would have been, but for Sir Henry Compton. And then suddenly his heart stood still as he recognised the dirty,

evil face. The man who lay in the grass was Pedlar Parker.

He shrank back in the taxi.

If the man saw him—

The evil eyes of the ruffian turned spitefully on the passing vehicle.

Then Pedlar Parker gave a jump.

He leaped to his feet, as the taxi passed, and stood staring after it, with amazement in his face.

Dick, with a sinking heart, looked out of the little window at the back of the cab.

He saw Pedlar Parker standing there, as if rooted, staring after the taxi with amazed eyes.

The man had seep him, recognised him, in spite of the change in him—recognised him as that fat fellow at Lantham had done. By what rotten ill-fortune was Pedlar Parker still tramping in that part of Kent? It was a stroke of cruel luck.

A bend of the road hid the tramp.

The taxi turned in at the gates; Gosling touched his hat with immense respect to Sir Henry Compton.

"Richard, what is the matter with you?" Sir Henry's voice was harsh. "Sit down, boy, and do not look scared!"

"I—I—"

"There is nothing to fear!" snapped the baronet. "Have I been mistaken in you?"

"But I—"

"That will do. Pull yourself together. You will be in the presence of your headmaster in a few minutes."

Dick sank back in his seat, his heart beating. After all, what was there to fear? Pedlar Parker could not hurt him now—the dirty ruffian would never even venture into the school gates—he dared not. There was nothing to fear—nothing. But his heart was still beating painfully as he was shown, with Sir Henry Compton, into the presence of Dr. Locke, headmaster of Greyfriars.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Coker Comes in Useful!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! It's jolly old Coker!"

Harry Wharton & Co. ran their boat cheerily up to the school raft. On the raft stood Coker of the Fifth; and Coker of the Fifth was looking wrathful.

Apparently Horace Coker had not forgotten the little incident that had occurred earlier in the afternoon, when he had sat down so suddenly in his boat. Such an incident was, perhaps a trifle in itself; but it derived importance from having happened to Coker—Coker of the Fifth being an exceedingly important person.

Coker had seen the Remove boat coming in, and he had waited on the raft to interview the cheery heroes of the Remove. Coker's wrath, like wine, had improved with keeping.

The Famous Five jumped on the raft, cheerily indifferent to Horace Coker and his wrath.

"So here you are, you young sweeps!" exclaimed Coker.

"Here we are again, old scout!" said Bob Cherry. "Lend us a hand to get this boat in, Coker."

"What?" roared Coker.

"Make yourself useful," suggested Harry Wharton. "You can't be ornamental, with features like those; but you can be useful."

"The ornamentality is not great, but the usefulness is terrific, my esteemed, ludicrous Coker," remarked Hurree Singh.

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"You cheeky young rascals—"

"Lay hold, Coker, if you're going to lend a hand," said Johnny Bull.

"You—you—you—"

"You're in the way, Coker," said Nugent. "Lend a hand or clear."

"Do you think I'm helping fags get a boat in?" roared Coker, justly incensed at the bare idea. "I'm going to lick you, that's what I'm going to do. See?"

"Not quite!" chuckled Bob.

"The seefulness is not terrific."

"Buzz off, Coker!"

Crash!

Instead of buzzing off, as bidden, Horace Coker crowded on the Famous Five, with obviously hostile intentions. Perhaps it was by accident that the boat, hauled up on the raft, crashed into Coker. Perhaps it was not by accident. At all events, it did crash into Coker, and his legs disappeared from under him, and he sprawled headlong on the raft.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Man down!" chuckled Bob.

"Come on! Don't mind treading on Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THIS IS WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR, BOYS!

A PENKNIFE THAT WILL CUT!



Full Particulars of the Easy
Competition on page 2.

The chums of the Remove took their boat in, leaving Coker sprawling on the raft in rather a dazed state.

The great man of the Fifth jumped up, and rushed after them into the boathouse.

He was in the boathouse for about a second. After the lapse of that brief period he came out again—flyfig! Coker of the Fifth did not count odds; but five to one were rather heavy odds, all the same. Coker realised it as he sprawled a second time.

He did not go into the boathouse again. Enough was as good as a feast; and the just punishment of these cheeky fags had to wait for a more favourable opportunity.

A little wet, and very wrathful, Coker of the Fifth tramped away to the school, and came out into the road in a towering rage, fairly yearning for someone upon whom to wreak his fury.

By the school gates stood a ragged, dirty figure, staring in at the gates—a frowsy, unpleasant-looking tramp. It was Pedlar Parker, staring in at the gateway as if the glimpse he had of the school buildings fascinated him somehow. Coker glared at him.

Pedlar Parker was a very unpleasant-looking person; but he had done nothing, so far, to give offence to Coker. But Coker was in a wrathful state of mind. It was a cheek of this tattered tramp to hang about the school gates—at least, so Coker considered. It was a cheek of him to come between the

wind and Coker's nobility, so to speak. The man was, in fact, the victim that the enraged Coker was yearning for.

Gosling had noticed the man, and came into the gateway to speak to him. Gosling had no love for tramps. He pointed a bony finger at Mr. Parker.

"Ere, you sheer off!" called out Gosling. "You 'ear me! Sheer off!"

Parker gave him an evil look.

"This 'ere road public, or 'ave you bought it?" he jeered.

"Wot I says is this 'ere," said Gosling impressively. "Tramps ain't wanted about 'ere! You sheer off!"

"Come out and sheer me off!" giped Parker.

Gosling did not accept that offer.

"You sheer, or I'll set the dorg on you!" he said indignantly; and he went back to his lodge.

Pedlar Parker gave a jeering laugh, and remained where he was. He approached the gateway a little closer, and peered and stared into the quad. Evidently there was something of greater interest to the tramp, within the walls of Greyfriars. And then Coker of the Fifth blew in, as it were, and his hefty hand on the tramp's shoulder swung him round.

"Travel!" snapped Coker.

Parker eyed him evilly. Coker of the Fifth was too big and muscular for the tramp to think of handling him, if he could help it. He was quite a different proposition from William Gosling, the ancient school porter.

"I'm doin' no 'arm 'ere, I s'pose?" growled Parker.

"Get out!"

"Look 'ere—"

"Go and get a wash!" said Coker, in deep disgust. "Take your dirty face away, anyhow! Shift, or I'll shift you sharp!"

Coker really hoped that the man would not shift, as bidden. He would have preferred to shift him. He wanted to punch somebody.

Pedlar Parker did not shift.

"Look 'ere, sir," he said more civilly, and backing a step or two. "I've seed a bloke I know go into this 'ere school. A boy what was a pal of mine."

Coker stared at him, and laughed.

"Yes, you look likely to have a pal among Greyfriars' chaps, I don't think!" he said.

"I know that kid," said Parker. "Dick's his name, and he ain't got any other. I want to see that kid."

"Oh, don't talk rot!" said Coker. "Just shift."

"He come 'ere in a taxi from Courtfield way," persisted Parker. "Well-dressed he was like a young toff, the young 'ound! Sitting up he was with an old toff with a heye-glass!"

Coker almost forgot his wrath in his astonishment. This frowsy ruffian's claim to know a "young toff" who had arrived at Greyfriars with an "old toff" was really rather startling.

"I ain't going till I've seed him agin," said Pedlar Parker doggedly. "I'm going to see him, I am, and—"

"I suppose you're drunk," said Coker at last. "Mean to say that you're going to hang about this school when I tell you to go? We'll jolly soon see about that!"

Coker pushed back his cuffs and advanced on Pedlar Parker with his hands up.

The ruffian backed away.

"'Ands off!" he exclaimed. "I tell you— Oh lor'! Oh, my eye!"

Coker was going strong.

With right and left, left and right, he pitched into the ruffian, and Pedlar

Parker was driven across the road under a rain of hefty drives.

He rallied and hurled himself at Coker of the Fifth, fighting like a wild cat.

But Pedlar Parker was no match for the hefty Fifth-Former of Greyfriars.

What Coker did not know about boxing would have filled volumes, but Pedlar Parker knew no more. And Coker was powerful and muscular and heavy, and he had unbounded pluck, and he was in a terrific temper. He fairly walked over Pedlar Parker, knocking him right and left.

For two or three minutes the hapless ruffian felt as if he were in the midst of a series of earthquakes. Then he found himself sprawling in the dust, gasping for breath, one of his eyes closed, and his nose streaming crimson.

Coker towered over him, panting.

"Going?" he asked.

"Ow! Ow! Let a bloke alone! Yow-ow!" howled Mr. Parker.

"Are you going, or do you want some help?"

"Ow! Wow!" gasped Mr. Parker.

"Well, I've got a boot to lend you," said Coker. "Say when!"

And he started with a large size in boots on the sprawling ruffian.

Pedlar Parker did not say "when." He yelled and scrambled up and fairly ran for his life. Coker rushed in victorious pursuit and landed a last terrific kick, which elicited a frantic howl from the tramp. Then Pedlar Parker vanished up the road with a really wonderful burst of speed.

Coker was feeling better as he walked in at the gates. He knew nothing about Richard Compton then in the headmaster's study, and Ragged Dick did not know from what Coker had saved him. As the chums of the Remove had told the great man of the Fifth, he never would be ornamental; his features were against it. But, undoubtedly, Coker had come in useful for once.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Compton of the Remove!

"THAT'S the giddy old baronet!" Bob Cherry made the remark as the chums of the Remove sauntered towards the House after putting up their boat.

The tall figure of Sir Henry Compton loomed up coming away from the House.

His interview with the Head and Mr. Quelch finished, Sir Henry's business at Greyfriars was over.

His face was grimly thoughtful as he came out. The taxicab, which had been waiting for him, buzzed up, and Sir Henry stepped into it.

"Compton Hall!" he said to the driver.

He glanced carelessly at the five juniors, and they "capped" him respectfully, the old gentleman slightly acknowledging the salute as the taxi buzzed away down the drive.

"Looks rather a gargoyle, doesn't he?" said Bob. "Sort of jolly old mastiff. I wonder what he's been here for? Some Greyfriars chap been on his land again?"

Wharton shook his head.

"Not this time, I think. There's a Compton kid coming to Greyfriars. Bunter heard about it, and told the Remove passage. I dare say the old chap came to bring him here."

"Oh, yes, I remember! A new kid for the Remove," said Bob. "The jolly old gent's grandson. Lucky young bargee—"

"With a grandfather like that?" asked Nugent. "I don't think I should quite like a chivvy like that around the house!"

Bob chuckled.

"But the kid's in for a good thing—Compton Hall and Compton Park and Compton Woods and an estate in Scotland, and no end of quids," he said, "as well as the jolly old title. A chap might like to change places with young Compton with his grandfather's chivvy thrown in. I dare say the old johnny isn't so jolly ferocious as he looks, too. May be quite a nice man inside."

"I don't know," said Nugent. "There is a lot of yarns told by the local gossips about old Compton. He's hard as nails. He gives poachers jolly stiff sentences when he's on the bench!"

"Well, they shouldn't poach, you know," said Bob tolerantly.

"And it's pretty well known that he's at daggers drawn with his cousin Roger who comes next in the entail after his grandson," said Nugent.

"I've seen that chap!" said Johnny Bull. "I saw him coming back from Courtfield races one day in a car with two or three horsey blighters and too drunk to sit upright."

"My hat! No wonder old Compton doesn't like him, then!" said Bob. "He doesn't look the man to like that kind of thing."

"There's a story about his brother, too," said Nugent. "He had a younger brother and rowed with him, and the

chap left the Hall after a frightful scene and has never been there since. He's supposed to be dead now. But I dare say a lot of it is gossip. I wonder what young Compton is like?"

"If he's a chip of the old block he won't be very nice, I fancy!" said Wharton. "Let's hope they won't crowd him into our study."

"Or into mine!" grinned Bob. "We are four in Study No. 13 already. You are only two in Study No. 1, so you're more likely to get him."

"Oh, rotten!" said Nugent.

The Famous Five went into the House, and Wingate of the Sixth called to the captain of the Remove.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, Wingate?"

"Mr. Quelch wants to speak to you in his study."

"Right-ho!"

The Co. went up the stairs, and Harry repaired to his Form-master's study. He found Mr. Quelch alone there.

"Ah! Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, laying down his pen, "I wish to speak to you, Wharton, about a new boy who is entering the Remove. I have decided to place him in your study."

"Yes, sir," said Harry resignedly. He had no prejudice against the new fellow, whom he had never seen—so far as he knew—but he did not want a new-comer in Study No. 1. But that was a matter for his Form-master to decide.

(Continued on page 16.)



As the car passed the tramp, Dick gave a start. He recognised the evil face of Pedlar Parker. As he shrank back into the seat the eyes of the ruffian turned on him, and Parker leaped to his feet. With a sinking heart Ragged Dick knew that he had been recognised. (See Chapter 7.)



THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

HARRY WHARTON
EDITOR

Supplement No. 228. Week Ending June 27th, 1925.



EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

TIS passing strange, my chums, that we have never yet had a number dealing with the joys of caravaning. The idea has been stored away in my subconscious mind for quite a long time, and now it has suddenly leapt to light. And here we are, with a Special Caravanning Supplement all complete.

Jogging around the country in a caravan is a rather old-fashioned way of spending a holiday, but it's a very charming way. I am speaking, of course, of the horse-drawn caravans in which the gipsies live and move and have their being. For those who want something more speedy and up to date there is the motor caravan—a house on wheels, in which you can feed and sleep and travel.

Very few fellows at Greyfriars are wealthy enough to own motor caravans, or even to hire them. But the lucky few who can afford such luxuries will find a tour by motor caravan a very jolly experience. Personally—and you can dub me old-fashioned if you like—I prefer the horse-drawn caravans, which crawl along at a snail's pace, but, at the same time, give you plenty of opportunities for seeing our wonderful country. I have been right through the New Forest by caravan, and I've also explored the West Country—Devon and Somerset and Cornwall—and I should be hard put to it to discover a happier way of spending a holiday. I've sampled pretty well every kind of holiday—the motoring holiday, the cricketing holiday, the houseboat holiday, and the walking and cycling tours; but the caravaning holiday has them all beaten, in my opinion. You see, you can combine so many things with caravaning. You can enjoy your early-morning dip in a near-by stream; you can pitch your wickets in a level mead and play cricket; in fact, you can enjoy yourselves in a hundred happy ways.

I am well aware that one man's meat is another man's poison, and one fellow's ideal of a holiday doesn't square with another fellow's notion. You will find that some of our contributors have some rather harsh things to say about the caravaning holiday. Even Gosling, the porter, indulged in this sort of holiday once, and he now echoes the raven's cry of "Never more!" People who are subject to Gossy's pet ailment—"rheumatics"—should never cruise around the country in caravans. Some of them are not exactly watertight, and the damp comes in "suthin' crool, as ever was!"

Gosling now spends his holidays in his parlour, with a person whom he calls "Old Tom." But I sometimes suspect that Old Tom isn't a person at all, but a popular brand of stimulant!

There are other people who do not like caravaning as well as Gosling. One I know happens to be Mr. Quelch, our respected Form-master. Quelch would no sooner think of going on a holiday in a van than of flying round the world in a Ford car. He would be utterly lost if left to himself to cook his own grub, drive a horse, or put up a tent. It would be a grand sight to see him at work on such a thing. Fancy Quelch sitting before a smoky fire, blowing it into a blaze with his mouth, with the black sparks decorating his features! Why, we would give a term's pocket-money to be on the scene! But there's no such luck as that ever happening. Quelch would never go on a caravaning holiday.

BOB CHERRY:

Caravan holidays are tip-top, first-rate, A1, and absolutely "IT"! What could be jollier than to cruise around the countryside in a well-equipped caravan, getting freckled and tanned by the sun? (A refreshing change from being tanned by Quelch!) But I don't agree with our noble Editor that horse-drawn caravans are preferable to motor caravans. When I travel I like to whiz along at a decent pace. Crawling along at six miles an hour doesn't suit my energetic temperament. Will some philanthropic gent kindly lend me his motor caravan for the summer vac? Don't all write at once!

MARK LINLEY:

Talking of caravans reminds me of those lines of Omar Khayyam:

"The stars are setting, and the caravan Starts for the Dawn of Nothing; oh, make haste!"

But I've no desire to visit the Dawn of Nothing. Far rather would I wend my way through the pleasant highways and byways of rural England, finishing up at some interesting spot which I've never seen before. I haven't visited Stonehenge yet, but I very much want to. A caravan excursion through Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, and Wiltshire, terminating at that famous historic pile, would be mighty interesting and tremendously enjoyable. Anybody got room for a little one in his caravan?

BILLY BUNTER:

There's one big drawback to caravan holidays. You often find yourself stranded, miles and miles from anywhere, without grub. Your supplies have run out, and the garstly specter of starvation stares you in the face. Now, if only they would put the school tuckshop on wheels, and konvert it into a caravan, it would be topping! You could travel day and night in comfort, without fear of running short of provender. That would be an ideal holiday; but there's too much privation about the ordinary caravan holiday to suit my grub-loving temperature.

DICK PENFOLD:

Caravans are ripping! Caravans are prime! Those who take to "tripping" have a happy time. Rolling down the highways, jolly as can be; bowling down the byways, full of mirth and glee. Getting brown as berries, banishing "the blues." Glorious wheeze of Cherry's—a caravaning cruise!

WILLIAM GOSLING:

Which I don't 'old with these 'ere caravan discursions. They are a snare an' a deloosion, as ever was! A few years ago I 'ad a break-down in 'ealth, an' the 'Ead says to me,

"Gosling," says 'e, "wot you wants is a caravan discursion into the 'eart of the country. It will put you on your feet again." Wot it actually did was to put me on me back again! That there caravan was as damp as a Turkish bath, an' as draughty as an 'ouse without winders! I caught me death of cold, an' got a bad bout of rheumatics into the bargain. I was a physical wreck when I got back to Greyfriars. "Well, Gosling," says the 'Ead, "I trust as 'ow you 'ave recooperated?" "I dunno wot that means, sir," says I; "but I can assure you that that caravan 'oliday 'as multiplied my grey 'airs—an' my ailments into the bargain! I shall want about three months off dooty afore I recovers from it. Don't you never suggest no more caravan discursions to me!" That's wot I told 'im, point blank, an' I ain't never slept nor travelled in a caravan from that day to this!

CARAVANNING!

By Lord Mauleverer.

SING a song of caravans—
Cosy, comfy caravans—
Drawn along by sturdy steeds
Through leafy lanes and pleasant meads.

Joltin', joggin', as they go,
Rockin' me to sleep—what-ho!
Blessings on the chap who plans
Jolly jaunts in caravans!

Limousines are nice an' snug;
I sit an' snooze beneath a rug.
An' charabancs are bright an' gay,
That thunder down the King's highway.
Motor-bikes mean dust an' heat,
Push-bikes paralyse your feet.
But, what a gatherin' of the clans
To cruise around in caravans!

Mornin' brings its magic spell,
Wakin' birds an' beasts as well.
Harnessed is our noble horse,
On he trots, through fern an' gorse.
Half a dozen miles an hour
Is the zenith of his power.
Reckless gallopin' he bans—
That's the charm of caravans!

Twilight steals from out the glen;
We decide to linger then
In some green an' grassy lea
Close beside the murmurin' sea.
Supper an' a sing-song gay
Now complete a perfect day.
More blessings on the chap who plans
These jolly jaunts in caravans!



"CARRAVAN for sail!" The Head's eyes glissened behind his goggles as he glanced at that advertissment in the local "rag."

"Just what I want!" he muttered. "I've always longed to crooze round the country in a carravan. My Ford car isn't in running order, and my motor-bike is in pawn, and I'm getting too old and decreppit to peddle a push-bike. A carravan is the very thing!"

The Head eagerly peroozed the advertissment.

"Carravan for sail! Fernished in luxurius stile, with every moddern konvenience. Sootable for skollastic jentleman who wishes to explore the country. Owner selling at grate sacrifice. Intending purchaser should send a check for a paltry hundred pounds to: Mr. U. R. Dunn, Sharp Street, Dishingham."

The Head promptly wrote out a check for a hundred pounds, and posted it to Mr. Dunn at the address given. Then he sat back in his chair, and dreamed rosy dreams of a glorious carravan holiday.

"When people see me coming along the road in my luxurius carravan, drawn by a noble steed, they'll fall on one knee and make obaysance," he muttered. "They'll think I'm a giddy King—or a Prince of royal blud at

least. Mr. Dunn didn't say anything about a horse in his advertissment. But I dare say the horse is being thrown in free."

That evening, while the Head was banquetting on fried fish and chipps in his dining-room, the tellyfone rang. Doctor Birchmall unhooked the reseever with a fishy hand.

"Hallo!" he said. "Birchemall here. Who are you?"

"Mr. Dunn," came the reply. "I say, old bean, I got your letter, and your check for a hundred quid."

"Is it a deal?" asked the Head.

"Yes. The carravan's yours. You can collect it as soon as you like. It's on Dishingham Moor at the moment."

"Is there a horse?"

"Afraid not," said Mr. Dunn. "There was one, but it's died of senile decay. But look here, old froot, when you buy a carravan for a paltry, beggarly hundred quid, you can't reezonably eggspect to have a horse thrown in. Do you want jam on it?"

"Certainly not!" said the Head. "If I find any sticky substance on the carravan, I shall be most annoyed! I shall eggspect it to be in perfect condition—spotless and staneless and flawless."

"Did you say floorless?" mermered Mr. Dunn. "Matter of fact, it's in that condition already."

Fortunately, the Head did not hear that remark. He rang off, and turned a beaming face to Mr. Lickham, as that gentleman came into the study.

"I say, Lickham, I've made a rare bargain!" he cried. "I've bought a perfectly priceless peach of a caravan, for a paltry hundred pounds!"

"Have you seen it, sir?" asked Mr. Lickham.

"No."

"Then how do you know it's a perfect carravan?"

"It said so in the advertissment."

"Bah!" said Mr. Lickham skornfully. "It looks to me as if you've been sold a pup, sir."

"Nonsense, Lickham! I have been sold a carravan. I will send a number of boys to Dishingham Moor to collect it, and bring it to the school. When you see it, my dear Lickham, in all its maggnificence and splendor, you will feel awed!"

But when Mr. Lickham did see the carravan, a cupple of hours later, he felt anything but awed. As for the Head, he had several sorts of a fit.

The perfectly priceless peach of a carravan turned out to be an old-fashioned railway carriage, of the sort used in George Stephenson's time. It was being pushed along by a party of perspiring juniors, and its wheels creaked and squeaked as they went round. The floor of the carriage had caved in; there wasn't a stick of ferniture inside it; and the antiquated affair wasn't worth a hundred pence, much less a hundred pounds.

"You've been done, sir," said Mr. Lickham. "Done by Dunn!"

But the Head, having recovered from his shock, now smiled.

"True, Lickham, I have been done by Dunn, but Dunn has also been done by me!" he said. "In other words, I have done by Dunn as Dunn has done by me! The check which I sent him was worthless—meerly a scrap of paper. There is no money at the bank to meet it! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Head chuckled gleefully as he ordered Jack Jolly & Co. to take the carravan away and scrap it.

CARAVAN CHATTER!

By Bob Cherry.

FOR a happy, healthy, out-of-door holiday there's nothing to beat the caravan holiday. My chums and I have been putting our heads together, and we mean to go on one of these jolly jaunts in the near future. We are hiring a furnished caravan from a johnny in Courtfield. We haven't fixed up about the horse yet; but Coker of the Fifth is a clumsy cart-horse, so I think we'd better borrow Coker!

I've been chatting to various people about caravan holidays, and they have told me of some comical experiences. Two summers ago Wingate of the Sixth went on a caravan tour. His chum Gwynne advised him not to go. "A caravan holiday isn't nearly so delightful as it sounds," said Gwynne. "You'll be badly let down if you go." Wingate ignored the warning and went. "I enjoyed it no end," he confided to me;

"but I was badly let down, all the same. It was a motor-caravan, and it was whizzing merrily along a country road, when one of the wheels flew off! But that was the only sense in which I was badly let down. Apart from that mishap, my caravan holiday was a perfect treat."

Mr. Prout went a-caravanning in his youth, and to this day he remembers being chased out of a meadow by an irate farmer, who mistook him for a gipsy! "His hunting-crop whistled through the air," said Mr. Prout, "and occasionally it curled about my shoulders. I have never run so hard in my life! Finally, I pitched head-over-heels into a stream; and the farmer, in his impetuosity, came floundering in after me. But I managed to struggle out first and give him the slip. I had been forced to abandon my caravan; but I returned to the meadow at midnight, and harnessed my horse, and migrated with the caravan to a safer spot, where farmers ceased from troubling, and weary caravanners were at rest!"

Alonzo Todd is a lover of the old horse-caravans, but you wouldn't get Lonzy to

travel in a motor-caravan, not if you bribed him with all the wealth of the Indies! He did travel in one once, and it got out of control when descending a hill. Alonzo was advised to jump for his life, and he did so, landing in a brimming ditch of muddy water! His feet became fixtures in the mud, and he was sinking lower and lower, until a couple of passers-by hauled him out of his perilous plight. Alonzo has avoided motor-caravans like the plague ever since!

There is some talk of forming a caravan club at Greyfriars. I must say I am heartily in favour, for there are few joys to compare with the joys of caravanning. The last jaunts of this kind are still fresh in my memory. I don't believe I shall ever forget them, not if I live to be a hundred years of age. When I grow older I intend to write a book about my caravanning adventures. I think I will call it, "Me and My Caravan!" and I'll get Dick Penfold to get out a set of photos and humorous cartoons illustrating the work.



(Continued from page 13.)

and it was for the junior to grin and bear it.

"Doubtless you have heard of Sir Henry Compton, of Compton Hall?" said the Remove-master.

"Yes, sir. I've just passed him," said Harry.

"He brought his grandson here this afternoon. Richard Compton has been in delicate health and has lived abroad under medical care for a long time, I am told," said Mr. Quelch. "Certainly he looks healthy and sturdy enough; but that is what I am told. He seems a very pleasant and well-behaved boy, and I hope you will find him an agreeable companion in your study, Wharton."

"I hope so, sir," said Harry demurely.

"I have sent him to your study, and told him to wait for you there," said Mr. Quelch. "I am sure that you will make him welcome, Wharton."

"I will do my best, sir," said Harry. "Thank you, Wharton!"

Mr. Quelch returned to his papers again, and the captain of the Remove left the study.

He met Vernon-Smith and Redwing on the stairs as he went up to the Remove passage.

"Bunter come in yet?" asked Smithy.

"Bunter! I haven't seen him," answered Wharton. "Didn't he go for a motor run with you? I saw him in your car."

The Bounder chuckled.

"I dropped him at Lantham, to walk home," he explained. "He thought we were going out of bounds, and threatened to report us to a prefect if we didn't give him a lift to get away with your cake. So I gave him a lift as far as Lantham, and left him there."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I suppose he's still crawling home," chuckled Smithy. "He will be nearly dead by the time he gets here. Poor old Bunter!"

"It was really rather too bad!" said Tom Redwing, laughing.

"Serve him jolly well, right!" said Harry, and he went on up the stairs and went into Study No. 1.

"Compton here?" he asked.

"Here he is," answered Frank Nugent. "He says he's going to be in this study."

"Yes, I've just had it from Mr. Quelch."

Wharton glanced rather curiously at the handsome lad who rose from the armchair. Ragged Dick, otherwise Richard Compton, returned his glance with equal curiosity.

"So you're going to be our study-mate, Compton," said Harry, and he held out his hand.

Dick shook hands with him. Wharton's eyes were still lingering on his face.

"I've heard from Mr. Quelch that you've been abroad a lot," he said. "But haven't I met you before somewhere?"

"Not that I know of," answered Dick, looking at him. "But it's rather

odd—I seem to have seen your face somewhere."

"I was thinking the same," said Nugent, with a puzzled look. "I seem to have seen Compton somewhere before to-day."

"Well, we've seen his grandfather often enough, and I dare say there's some resemblance. That would be it, I suppose!" said Harry—but he was puzzled.

Dick smiled involuntarily.

There was not likely to be much resemblance between Sir Henry Compton and a grandson by adoption. Nor for a moment did either of the two juniors think of the tattered lad they had rescued, weeks ago, from the brutality of Pedlar Parker. They had had only a passing glimpse of an unwashed face on that occasion. Some faint remembrance lingered, sufficient to give them a feeling that they had seen the boy before somewhere, but that was all. As for Dick, he had no recollection whatever of Wharton or his comrades, so far as looks went. He had scarcely glanced at them in that field near Compton Woods before he had fled to escape from the clutches of the pedlar.

"But very likely we've seen you before, if you've lived at Compton Hall," said Harry. "Might have passed you on the roads any time. Did you come over from the Hall to-day?"

"No; I've been in London with Sir Henry," said Dick. He did not say "my grandfather." Certainly Sir Henry was his grandfather by adoption, but somehow it seemed to ring untrue to his mind.

"What about tea?" asked Nugent. "We had a snack up the river, but I'm ready for tea—and I dare say Compton is, after his journey."

"Quite!" said Compton. "I've had some cake from your house-dame, but I'm ready for tea. Where do you have tea here?"

"In the study when the funds run to it," said Wharton, with a smile. "Of course, you can tea in Hall if you like. But we generally like it in the study if we can get it."

"Good!"

"You cut down to the shop, Nugent, while I get a fire going," said the captain of the Remove.

"You buy the stuff yourselves?" asked Dick.

"Yes, at the school shop."

"Let me do your shopping, then. One of you fellows can show me the way."

"New kid bursting with tips from uncles and aunts!" chuckled Nugent.

"No, I haven't any uncles and aunts," said Dick. "But I've lots of pocket-money."

"Hard cheese on poor old Bunter not to be here!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You're a chap Bunter would like to meet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who's Bunter?" asked Dick, little dreaming how well he had already made the acquaintance of that fat and fatuous youth.

"A Remove chap, the fattest fellow at Greyfriars, and a fellow who will borrow your last half-crown before you fairly know what he's doing," said the captain of the Remove. "Well, if you're well supplied you can go down to the shop with Nugent and put a few things on the list, and I'll ask three fellows to tea. You'd like to meet some Remove chaps—friends of ours?"

"Yes, rather!" said Dick brightly.

"Buzz off, then!"

The new junior left the study with Frank Nugent; and Harry Wharton,

after starting the fire, went along the passage to call Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh to tea in Study No. 1.

"Tea with the new kid!" announced Wharton. "He's stuck in our study—but he seems a decent sort of chap. Quelch says he's been in delicate health, but I'm blessed if he looks like it!"

"The Remove isn't the place for a giddy invalid!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"He doesn't look much like an invalid now, if he ever was one. Come on—they'll be back with the grub!"

"Has Bunter made his acquaintance yet?" chuckled Bob Cherry. "It's a chance for his postal-order."

"Ha, ha! Bunter's not in yet! Smithy landed him at Lantham, and left him to walk home!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Poor old Bunter!"

The four juniors went along the Remove passage, and Peter Todd looked out of Study No. 7 as they passed.

"Seen anything of Bunter?" he asked. "He wasn't in to tea, and it's jolly near call-over now!"

"Landed at Lantham, and walking home," answered Harry.

"What?"

Harry Wharton explained what he had heard from the Bounder. Peter Todd burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! Poor old Bunter! Ten to one he will try to bilk the railway company for a free ride!"

"Then he may get run in, and we mayn't see him any more!" chuckled Bob. "Let's hope for the best."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Evidently there was a plentiful lack of sympathy for William George Bunter among his Form-fellows in the Remove. No doubt he deserved just as much as he received, and no more.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Ragged Dick's First Day at Greyfriars!

RAGGED DICK had a bright face as he walked out of the House with Nugent of the Remove and crossed the quad to Mrs. Mimble's little shop in the corner behind the elms.

His first day at Greyfriars seemed to be turning out well.

Perhaps the departure of Sir Henry had been a relief to him. He was grateful to the old baronet, he respected him and was awed by him. But there was no doubt that the grim old gentleman was oppressive. He had been a little awed by the Head and Mr. Quelch, but they had been kind to him, kind and considerate. School life was new to him—utterly new; but Dick had learned in his strange and wandering life to adapt himself easily to new and strange surroundings. He had wondered rather uneasily, as he waited in Study No. 1, what his new schoolfellows—his study-mates—would be like. He had found them very pleasant—especially Nugent. Wharton had been agreeable enough; but Frank Nugent had a natural spontaneous kindness of disposition which made almost any fellow like him at first sight. It was only necessary for the fellow himself to be decent, to make him like Frank.

Ragged Dick reflected that if the rest of the Lower Fourth were like the two fellows he had already met his lines would be cast in very pleasant places at Greyfriars School.

Not all the Remove, however, were like the cheery members of the Famous Five. As Nugent piloted the new fellow

across the quad they came on Bolsover major of the Remove.

Bolsover stopped to stare at the newcomer.

"Hallo! New kid?" he asked.

"Yes—young Compton," answered Nugent.

"Who the thump's Compton?" asked the bully of the Remove.

"Grandson of old Compton, of Compton Hall," answered Frank.

"Oh, the jolly old baronet who comes over here to grouse if a fellow goes on his dashed land!" said Bolsover major. "He got me a licking last term."

"Come on, Compton!" said Frank.

"Here, hold on!" said Bolsover major unpleasantly. "Let a chap speak a word to the new kid. I suppose a chap can speak to him, even if he is the grandson of a baronet—what?"

"Oh, don't play the goat now, Bolsover!" said Nugent impatiently. "You've been long enough at Greyfriars to learn manners, I should think!"

"I don't want any cheek from you, Nugent!" roared Bolsover major.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Hasn't that new dummy a word to say for himself?" sneered Bolsover.

"Can't you speak, you imbecile?"

"Yes, I can speak," said Dick, in a state of considerable surprise. "What do you want me to say?"

"You're not going to put on airs in the Remove, I can tell you," said Bolsover aggressively. "Fellows here don't care if your grandfather is a baronet and your grandmother a duchess. See?"

"I see. I don't expect them to."

"Oh, you don't expect them to, don't you?" said Bolsover.

"No."

"We don't put up with airs and graces in the Lower Fourth, I can tell you!"

"Thanks!" said Dick cheerfully. "It's really kind of you to give a new fellow tips like this!"

Nugent laughed, and Bolsover frowned.

"I don't want any cheek, young Compton," he said. "If I get any cheek from a new kid I knock him into a cocked hat! See?"

"I see!" assented Dick. "Is that all?"

Nugent laughed again. It was quite clear that the new fellow was not in the least afraid of Bolsover major, big and burly as the latter was, and aggressive as he was in his manner. As a matter of fact, Dick had been through too much scrapping in his rough life on the road to have any fear of a fellow like Bolsover, big as he was. Ragged Dick was by no means the diffident sort of new "kid" that Bolsover supposed him to be.

"What are you chortling at, Nugent?" demanded Bolsover angrily.

"You, old bean!" answered Nugent. "Your face and your manners and your style generally, old man. Come on, Compton!"

He caught Dick's arm and drew him on, anxious to keep the new fellow out of a row with the overbearing Bolsover.

Bolsover major reached out and knocked off Dick's hat as he passed. That was Bolsover's idea of a jest on a new fellow.

Dick dashed after his hat and picked it up, while Bolsover major roared with laughter. The next moment his own hat was flying through the air, and he ceased to laugh very suddenly.

"You—you—you've knocked off my hat!" he ejaculated.

"Well, you knocked off mine, didn't you?" said Dick.

"Why, I'll—I'll—I'll—"

A PEEP AT THE CRICKET GIANTS OF GREYFRIARS!

JUST AN IDEA OF WHAT MAY BE SEEN ON THE PLAYING FIELDS OF GREYFRIARS ON A SUNNY AFTERNOON!



"Bolsover!" rapped out a sharp voice, as the bully of the Remove was advancing on Compton.

"Oh! Yes, Wingate?" said Bolsover submissive all of a sudden, as the captain of Greyfriars came up, with his ashplant under his arm.

"Bullying as usual—what?" said Wingate.

"I—I—"

"Bend over!" said Wingate tersely.

Bolsover major crimsoned with rage and mortification. It was a bitter humiliation, under the eyes of the new junior, whom he had been seeking to impress with his importance.

"I—I say, Wingate," he stammered, "I—I was only—"

"I know!" assented Wingate. "I think I told you to bend over, Bolsover! Did you hear me?"

The ashplant slipped down into the Sixth-Former's hand.

Bolsover, red with rage, bent over.

Whack!

"Now, clear off and mind you don't ask for it again!" said the captain of Greyfriars. And Wingate tucked the ashplant under his arm and walked away.

Bolsover major, with a bitter look at Nugent and Compton, cleared off. The two juniors went on their way to the tuckshop.

"Who's that big chap with the cane?" asked Dick. "Is he a master?"

"No fear! That's Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of the school," answered Nugent, laughing.

"Do the fellows cane one another, then?"

"Ha, ha! Not quite! Wingate's a prefect. You see, the big guns in the Sixth are appointed prefects by the Head, and they carry canes to keep the small fry in order. We're the small fry!" explained Nugent.

"And that chap you called Bolsover is—"

"He's small fry, too—only a Remove chap, though he thinks such a thumping lot of himself," answered Frank. "He's big enough to be in the Fourth, or the Shell, but he hasn't the brains. Here we are. Mrs. Mimble, I've brought you a new customer—one of the best, simply rolling in money; so trot out the best things, and remember you're serving the quality."

"Oh, Master Nugent!" said the good dame, with a smile.

That disagreeable encounter with Bolsover major was forgotten as the two juniors proceeded with their shopping. With parcels under their arms, they returned to the House in cheery spirits and made their way back to Study No. 1. And a powerful voice greeted them as they entered.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they are!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Tea in Study No. 1.

BOB CHERRY glanced carelessly enough at the new fellow as he came in with Nugent. But the next moment his glance became fixed in surprise.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Are you Compton?"

"I'm Compton," answered Dick.

"I've seen you before."

"My hat! Just what I said!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Blessed if I don't think I have, too!" said Johnny Bull.

"The samefulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Ragged Dick started and looked at the nabob.

Back into his mind there flashed a recollection.

On that day, in the field by Compton Park, five schoolboys had come to his aid as he struggled with the pedlar, and one of them had had the dark complexion of an Oriental. He had not noticed the fellows, had not remembered their faces; he did not remember Hurree Singh's features at all, so far as that went. But the nabob's dusky complexion was not so easily forgotten.

That the party of schoolboys had been Greyfriars fellows had not yet occurred to Dick. But the sight of the nabob brought a sudden enlightenment to him.

Five fellows who thought they had seen him somewhere before—and one of them an Indian! These were the fellows!

The sudden discovery almost overwhelmed Ragged Dick.

By a sudden intuition he knew the truth—that these fellows had, indeed, as they supposed, met him before, but in strangely different circumstances.

He stood dumbfounded. His natural impulse would have been to speak out frankly, to thank the Famous Five for the help they had given him on that occasion. But he could not speak out; it was impossible.

He was Richard Compton now, grandson of the master of Compton Hall. It was a secret—a dead secret—that he had ever been Ragged Dick, the tramp.

Not a word of that could pass his lips. But if they should recognise him—if they should know—What could he say in answer to a direct question?

Fortunately, Harry Wharton & Co. had no means of guessing what was passing in the new junior's mind.

The same thought had come to all of them, that there was something familiar to their eyes about young Compton. But that was all.

As he stood, with beating heart and flushing cheeks, under their eyes, they had no inkling of the real cause of his confusion.

Bob Cherry broke into a laugh. "Excuse us, old bean," he said. "I didn't mean to stare you out of countenance. It just struck me that I'd seen you before, though I don't remember where or when."

"The strikefulness of my esteemed self was also terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Same here," said Johnny Bull. "But never mind, we didn't mean to startle you, Compton."

Johnny turned his glance away, and the other fellows followed suit. In their surprise and curiosity they had really almost stared Dick out of countenance, and in a new fellow, fresh to the school, that was disconcerting enough to account for his confusion and his crimson cheeks.

"Got the stuff, Franky?" asked Harry.

Wharton, to change the topic, and get over the moment of awkwardness.

"Yes, here you are," said Nugent. "Compton's contributed a whacking big cake and a bag of tarts. I wouldn't let him do more than that."

"That's right."

"The jolly old kettle's boiling," said Bob. "I'll make the tea. Shove the eggs in the tin, Johnny."

"Right-ho!"

"You make the toast, Inky."

"With terrific pleasure."

All the Famous Five were soon busy, and Ragged Dick was left to himself, unregarded, to recover from his confusion. None of the juniors specially noticed, at the time, that he had made no answer to their words—that he had neither admitted nor denied having seen them before.

"Can I help?" asked Dick at last, rather timidly.

"That's all right, old scout. You sit down," said Harry Wharton. "We'll have tea ready in a brace of jiffies."

"Right-ho, then!"

Dick sat down in the armchair with his back to the window. He was glad of the respite to think things over a bit.

So it was these fellows who had intervened to save him from the brutality of Pedlar Parker that afternoon, weeks ago? He liked them all the more now that he knew it.

But they did not know it.

They never could know it—he never could tell them. He realised that. They were not likely to guess. Even if they remembered something of the tattered lad they had rescued, even if they realised that the resemblance that haunted them was a resemblance between Ragged Dick and Richard Compton, still they were not likely to connect the two in their minds. They would only think it a chance resemblance, even if they thought of it. How could they possibly suspect that the tattered tramp and the heir of Compton Hall were one and the same? They could not. He smiled faintly as he reflected that even if he told them, they were more likely to suppose that he was wandering in his mind than that he was stating facts.

No, he was safe in that quarter. As for that fancy of theirs that they had seen him before, they would probably forget all about it as they grew more familiar with him in the daily life of the school.

It was a relief to him, yet not wholly a relief. Keeping a secret was not pleasant. He had an uneasy feeling of being guilty of a subterfuge. But there was no help; he had no choice but to obey the old baronet's strict injunctions, and to keep the promise he had made. Ragged Dick was dead and buried, so to speak; Richard Compton lived in his place, and it was as Richard Compton that he must live and act, and feel and think, so far as he could.

It was not likely that any other Greyfriars fellow had seen him in his former character, or would remember him if he had seen him. It was different with that fat fellow at Lantham. That fellow had seen him at close quarters in Compton Park, had talked with him, blinked at him inquisitively, and would know his voice and bearing, as well as his looks. But that fat fellow was at Lantham, not at Greyfriars. Dick had still to learn that the fat fellow at Lantham was no other than the Bunter of the Remove whom Wharton had mentioned to him.

Dick had quite recovered his self-possession by the time tea was ready in Study No. 1.

Chairs and boxes were brought to the table, and the six Removites sat down to tea, chatting cheerily the while. Dick was quite content to listen more than to talk; he was anxious to learn more about his new school, and he was not anxious to talk about himself. A reference was made to his supposed residence abroad, but Dick easily let the subject drop. The chums of the Remove were not at all inquisitive, and not particularly interested in the new fellow's affairs. But that supposed retirement on account of ill-health was taken as an explanation of the slight knowledge he showed of the game of cricket, a topic which, of course, came up over tea in Study No. 1, as some of the most important of the Remove matches were now coming along.

Dick listened to it all, speaking every now and then with a cheery, smiling face, about as happy a fellow as could have been found within the ancient walls of the old school. These fellows, whom he hardly knew—whom he had never met before save on that unmentioned occasion—were treating him decently and kindly, with the careless good-nature of schoolboyhood. Their manners were not, perhaps, polished, but full of good-nature. They were healthy, cheery, decent chaps, and to Ragged Dick it was sheer happiness to sit among them on a friendly footing.

He liked them all; they were all different, yet all alike in their cheery good nature. Wharton, whom he had now learned was captain of his Form, was a little graver, a little more reserved, perhaps, than the others. Nugent was kind and almost gentle, Bob Cherry exuberant. Johnny Bull seemed a fellow of few words, but his words were generally to the point, and he never said an ill-natured thing. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh beamed with good humour, and his weird variety of English was oddly entertaining. Dick liked them all. He only hoped the other Removites were like these fellows. He was going to enjoy his life at Greyfriars, and he thought of Sir Henry Compton, grim and cold as he was, with a new feeling of gratitude. He had wanted to come to the school, but he had never dared to hope that it would be like this.

There was a knock at the door as the cheery circle finished tea, demolishing cake and tarts and other good things almost to the final crumb, and Squiff of the Remove looked in.

"Got a new kid here?" he asked.

"Yes, here he is," said Wharton. "Young Compton. Compton, that's Squiff, our tame kangaroo."

"Kangaroo?" repeated Dick.

Squiff chuckled.

"That means that I come from Australia, kid," he said. "Ever heard of Australia? It's an island, surrounded by the sea."

Dick laughed.

"And my name isn't Squiff—it's Field," said the Australian junior. "These chaps call me Squiff because they're asses. But I looked in to tell you fellows that Bolsover major is looking for a new kid. He says the kid got him a licking from Wingate."

"He got it for himself," said Nugent. "And if he comes here bothering Compton, we'll jolly well rag him."

"I'll lend you a hand," said Squiff cordially. "Here he is."

There was a heavy tread in the passage, and Bolsover major tramped past Squiff into the study. Behind him came Skinner and Snoop and Stott, and several other fellows, apparently interested in the forthcoming "row."

Bolsover major fixed a deadly glare on Dick across the table.

"So here you are!" he exclaimed.

"Just here," assented Dick.

"Get up!"

"I'm quite comfortable here, thanks."

"I'm going to lick you!"

"Poor little me!"

"You got me a licking from Wingate of the Sixth!" roared Bolsover major.

"I'm going to pass it on to you, see?"

"Not quite," said Dick cheerily.

"Perhaps I shall when you've passed it on. You haven't passed it on yet."

Harry Wharton rose to his feet, and pointed to the door.

"Get out, Bolsover," he said quietly.

"This is Compton's first day here, and you're not going to bully him. Get out, or—"

"Or what?" jeered Bolsover.

"Or you'll be chucked out!" said the captain of the Remove.

And Bob Cherry chimed in cheerily:

"Hear, hear!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bolsover Major Meets His Match!

RAGGED DICK had risen to his feet.

He was quite cool.

He had had to confess that he did not know much about cricket; in tramping days he had seen something of the game, but had had little opportunity of playing it. But in tramping he had learned other things—and when it came to fisticuffs there were few fellows in the Remove who could have taught him anything.

Ragged Dick had had to hold his own many a time against adversaries much bulkier than himself—he had even given Pedlar Parker a tussle sometimes, hefty as that ruffian was. It was probable that he could have stood up even to Bob Cherry, the champion boxer in the Remove—and undoubtedly he had no cause to fear Bolsover major, big and burly as the Remove bully was.

His new friends were obviously prepared to protect him from ragging; but Dick did not want to be protected. He sought no quarrel with Percy Bolsover; but he was prepared to meet trouble if it came.

As Bolsover major stood hesitating, glaring angrily and defiantly at Harry Wharton & Co., Dick came round the table towards the bully of the Remove. There was nothing aggressive in his manner; but he was cool and composed, and evidently not in the least alarmed by Bolsover's angry truculence.

"Keep back, Compton," said Wharton rather uneasily. "He's too big for you, kid; but we'll keep him in order."

"Will you?" roared Bolsover major.

"We will, old pippin!" assured the captain of the Remove. "It won't be the first time we've ragged you for bullying a new kid, and very likely it won't be the last."

"Well, I'm not going to scrap with the whole gang of you!" snorted Bolsover major. "I'll find another time to make that young sweep sit up for getting me a licking—when there's nobody for him to hide behind."

"Oh, shut up, Bolsover!" said Nugent.

"But I'm not hiding behind anybody," said Dick coolly. "Thank you fellows very much, but I can look after myself."

"Too heavy for you, old man," said Bob Cherry, shaking his head. "Better let us boot him out."

"I think I could boot him out myself," said Dick, with a smile.



Crash! Bolsover caught Dick's right with the side of his jaw—the left with his ear a fraction of a second later. He fairly spun over. "Look out!" yelled Bob Cherry. But Bolsover major was not in the state to look out. He crashed into the study table and set it rocking. There was a clatter of smashing crockery. "Oh, my hat!" (See Chapter 12.)

"You think you could boot him out?" bawled Bolsover major, hardly believing his ears. "Why, you sneaking little whipper-snapper—"

"Cheese it!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I don't want any quarrel with you," said Dick. "But if you're looking for trouble, I don't mind. Get on and get it over."

Bolsover major's eyes gleamed. That was exactly what he wanted. He was not looking for a ragging from the Famous Five. But if the new junior chose to accept the combat, it was not for the other fellows to interfere.

"Good!" he said. "I'll get on with it fast enough! Boot me out of the room, could you? Well, I'm going to chuck you out on your neck, and then come after you and boot you along the passage. See?"

"Go it, Bolsover!" chortled Skinner. "Chuck him out, and we'll catch him as he drops!"

"Look here, Compton—" said Harry uneasily.

"It's all right."

"Well, go it if you want to," said the captain of the Remove. "Call out when you've had enough, and we'll jolly soon stop Bolsover."

"Mind your own business, Wharton!" roared Bolsover major. "Now, then, you cocky little snipe, come on!"

"I'm ready!"

Bolsover major rushed at the new

junior, with his big fists thrashing the air.

He fully expected to send him flying across the study, overwhelmed by that slashing attack. Bolsover was not the only one who expected it; all the Removites looked on to see Compton crumple up under the Remove bully's heavy weight and muscular strength.

But it did not happen.

Dick had not the weight to stop such a terrific rush; but he side-stepped with great swiftness, and hit out with left and right before the bully of the Remove knew what was happening.

Crash!

Bolsover caught Dick's right with the side of his jaw; the left with his ear a fraction of a second later.

He fairly spun over.

"Look out!" yelled Bob Cherry.

But Bolsover major was not in a state to look out. He crashed into the study table and set it rocking. There was a clatter of smashing crockery.

"Oh, my hat!"

Bump!

The table rocked, and the crockery crashed, and Bolsover major went heavily to the floor, sprawling at full length.

"Oh! Ow! Oh!" spluttered Bolsover.

"Great pip!"

"Man down!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

Bolsover major sat up. He put his hand tenderly to his jaw. He blinked at the grinning Remove fellows in a

dazed sort of way. Ragged Dick rubbed his knuckles; they seemed to be a little hurt by the impact on Bolsover's hard head.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bolsover major. He scrambled to his feet, his head singing. "Oh, my hat!" He stared at Ragged Dick. "Blessed if I'd have thought you had it in you! I'm going to smash you for that!"

"Get on with it!" said Dick.

"The smashfulness appears to me a boot on the other leg!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were smiling now, cheerily. It was quite clear that Compton could take care of himself, and that the bully of the Remove had, so to speak, awakened the wrong passenger.

Bolsover major seemed to realise that himself. He advanced on Compton again, but with much more care and caution. In a few moments they were going it hot and strong.

Bob Cherry dragged the study table out of the way; Nugent pushed back the chairs. The combatants were given room.

In the Remove passage the crowd was thickening. Remove fellows crowded along from far and near at news of the fight between the new fellow and the bully of the Form. Many of them came along with the intention of chipping in and stopping Bolsover major; but one glance was enough to show that the new junior did not need rescuing.

He received a good many hefty thumps from the burly Bolsover; but he was handing back about five or six times as much as he received; indeed, he seemed almost to dance round the slow, heavy Removite, eluding most of his crashing attacks, and putting in rapid blows which Bolsover never seemed to expect, and hardly ever succeeded in guarding.

"That chap can box!" said Bob Cherry, with a nod of approval. "I'll jolly well take him on with the gloves myself."

"I fancy Bolsover wishes he had brought some gloves along with him this time!" grinned Johnny Bull.

Crash!

"How's that?" chortled Bob.

Bolsover was down on his back again. This time he remained there, in a dizzy state, and quite out of breath.

Ragged Dick stooped over him and rolled him bodily to the doorway. Bolsover was too breathless and spent to resist; and the new junior rolled him out, gasping and panting, into the Remove passage. Skinner & Co. chuckled as he was rolled among them.

Bob smacked the new junior on the shoulder.

"Good man!" he said. "You've learned to use your hands somewhere. Some of you chaps had better carry Bolsover home."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door of Study No. 1 was closed on the bully of the Remove. Bolsover major staggered to his feet, in the midst of a laughing and jeering crowd in the Remove passage, and limped away to his own study, crimson with anger and mortification. Some of the fellows expected him to pay a second visit to Study No. 1 when he had recovered a little. But there was no second visit. Apparently the bully of the Remove knew that he had had enough.

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THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter in Luck!

BILLY BUNTER wore a worried look.

He had cause for worry.

The fat junior was seated in a taxicab, which had turned in at the gates of Greyfriars, and buzzed up the drive to the House.

Bunter was home again after his afternoon out. The problem of transport had been solved. He was back from Lantham. But it had been replaced by another problem: the still more perplexing problem of settling with the taxi-driver.

The meter indicated that William George Bunter owed the chauffeur the sum of seventeen shillings and ninepence when the taxi came to a halt. And William George Bunter's total financial resources consisted of one penny, which—being a bad one—had remained in his possession instead of following the usual route of Bunter's pocket-money to the tuckshop. One penny, especially a bad one, was not much towards such a sum as seventeen shillings and ninepence. It was no wonder that a worried look had settled upon the Owl's fat visage.

Bunter had taken the taxi from Lantham because there was nothing else to be done. It had proved impracticable to "bilk" the railway company, and walking was out of the question for Bunter. The advantage of a taxi was that the man had to be paid at the end of the journey instead of at the beginning like the railway. Bunter was, at all events, landed at Greyfriars in time for call-over, and that was the most important thing. But the end of the journey had now come, and Bunter knew that eloquence would be wasted on the taxi-driver. He would want seventeen shillings and ninepence, and nothing less would satisfy him.

In the circumstances, considering how the playful Bunder had landed Bunter at Lantham that day, Smithy ought to stand the taxi fare, Bunter thought. He ought—it was certain that he ought—but Bunter doubted very much whether he would. In fact, he knew that he wouldn't. Peter Todd, as Bunter's study-mate, ought to shell out. But it was fairly certain that even if Peter had seventeen shillings and nine-

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pence at his disposal he would not part with it on Bunter's account.

If Mr. Quelch paid the man the bill would be sent in to Bunter's father, and that meant trouble twice over; first with Mr. Quelch and then with Mr. Bunter. That was a last desperate resource. Every other resource had to be tried first.

Bunter stepped out of the cab after a last blink at the meter. He blinked at the driver.

"Seventeen-and-nine on the clock, sir," said the man, evidently in expectation of something in addition for so long a drive.

That expectation did not worry Bunter. He did not mind disappointing anybody's expectations. But the seventeen-and-nine worried him deeply. Skinner was lounging in the steps, and he stared at Bunter and the taxi.

"Hallo! Doing things in style, fatty?" he asked. "Have you come into a fortune?"

Bunter blinked round at Skinner.

"I say, Skinner, old chap, I've left my—my money in the study. Settle with this chap, will you, and I'll square later."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner.

"What are you cackling at, you silly ass?" snapped Bunter. Billy Bunter, at least, was not in a mirthful mood.

"Your little joke!" chuckled Skinner.

"I'm not joking, you chump!"

"You are, old man—you are! One of your best!" assured Skinner.

Evidently there was no assistance to be derived from Harold Skinner. Bunter turned his blink on the taxi-driver again.

"Hang on a minute or two," he said.

The man gave him a suspicious look.

"I'll hang on till I'm paid, sir; you rely on that," he said, with emphasis. "And the clock's going on, sir."

Bunter rolled into the House, leaving the taxi waiting. Somehow or other that man had to be paid. There was not the slightest doubt that he would wait till he had his money, if he had to wait all the evening and all night for that matter. A low, grasping fellow, in Bunter's estimation. But there it was; he had to be paid.

Bunter blinked dismally in the direction of Mr. Quelch's study, but he simply dared not go to his Form-master with a confession that he had hired a taxi for a long journey and could not pay the fare. He limped up stairs to the Remove passage.

"Hallo, you've got back, old fat man!" It was Peter Todd's voice on the landing.

Bunter gave Peter an imploring blink.

"I—I say, Peter, I had to take a taxi from Lantham—"

"What?" roared Peter. "You've blued a quid on a taxi! Where did you get the quid?"

"The man isn't paid yet; he's waiting."

"Great Scott! He will be an experienced waiter by the time he gets his fare, I should say!"

"Lend me seventeen-and-nine!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter.

Toddy, like Skinner, seemed to take the request as a screaming joke. Bunter scowled at him and rolled on, and almost ran into Bolsover major.

"Bolsover, old man, will you lend me a pound? Yaroooooh!"

Bunter sat down.

Bolsover major was not in a good temper for good reasons. He did not answer Bunter. He just shoved him, and walked on as the fat junior bumped on the floor.

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter.

He picked himself up and limped on and looked into Study No. 4. Tom Redwing and the Bounder were there, and they grinned at the sight of Bunter's woebegone face in the doorway.

"Crawled home—what?" asked the Bounder.

"I came in a taxi."

"Phew! That's rather expensive, isn't it?"

"The man's waiting to be paid."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lend me a pound, Smithy," pleaded Bunter. "The man will kick up a row if he's not paid. You know what these common people are like about money. I shall get into a frightful row with Quelch!"

"You will," agreed Smithy.

"Lend me—"

"Only my boot," said Vernon-Smith, jumping up. Bunter dodged out and slammed the door just in time to escape that undesired loan.

He groaned dismally, and made his way to Study No. 1. Harry Wharton was his last resource, and he had a deep and dismal foreboding that the captain of the Remove would be drawn blank. However, there was nothing to be lost by trying, and Bunter blinked into Study No. 1.

Three juniors were there. One of them sat with his back towards the door, but Bunter could see enough of him to observe that he was a newcomer. He guessed that this would be Compton, the new fellow in the Remove—the fellow he had missed—as he supposed—at Lantham that afternoon. His dismal face brightened just a little. Sir Henry Compton's grandson was bound to have money in his pockets. Borrowing from a fellow who did not know him might be a difficult task. But, really, it was easier for Bunter to borrow from a fellow who did not know him than from a fellow who did.

"I say, you fellows!"

"So you've got back from Lantham," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "How did you get home? Bilk somebody? Or did you walk, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Ragged Dick started. He did not turn his head. He sat quite still, with a strange beating at his heart. He knew that fat voice. He remembered it very well. He knew that the fellow who had just come into the study was the fat fellow he had met at Lantham—the fellow who knew that he was Ragged Dick, the tattered tramp of a few weeks ago.

His face paled.

That fellow—that fat rascal—was a Greyfriars chap, then! Bunter—Wharton had mentioned Bunter of the Remove! It was Bunter of the Remove he had met at Lantham—Bunter, who knew—

He sat quite still.

Billy Bunter's fat voice ran on:

"Of course, I couldn't walk that distance, Wharton. And a low beast of a porter found that I hadn't a ticket—I—I mean, of course, I wouldn't have travelled on the railway without a ticket. I hope I'm above that. I—I had to take a taxi."

"A taxi from Lantham!" exclaimed Nugent. "Why, that must be fifteen bob, at least!"

"Seventeen-and-nine," said Bunter. "Eighteen by this time, or more. The beast is keeping his meter ticking! I say, you fellows, lend me a quid!"

"I can see us doing it!" remarked Nugent.

"You silly owl!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, staring at the fat junior. "Do you think fellows have quids to throw away on taxi fares? You'd better go to Mr. Quelch."

"It means a frightful row!" groaned Bunter. "I—I say, you fellows, you know I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!"

As Bunter had dismally anticipated, the captain of the Remove was drawn blank. But the new fellow was there, and he was Bunter's last hope—and the faintest chance had to be tried before Mr. Quelch was approached on the subject.

"I suppose that's Compton," said Bunter, blinking at the back of the new junior's head, wondering a little why the fellow did not take the trouble to glance round.

"That's Compton," assented Harry. "Compton, this is Bunter, the fat bounder I mentioned to you. If you lend him any money you'll never see it again. That's a tip."

"You mind your own business!" roared Bunter indignantly. "I suppose Compton can lend me a pound if he likes!"

"Certainly—if he's ass enough!"

"I say, Compton—"

Dick did not move.

He seemed frozen to his chair. Who could have foreseen this? Certainly Sir Henry Compton, in bringing Ragged Dick to Greyfriars as his grandson, had never foreseen anything of the kind. He was known! He was known! This fat fellow knew him, knew that he was Ragged Dick, knew that he was an impostor—for that was what it would be called. In a few minutes Wharton and Nugent would know—in an hour, all Greyfriars! What could he say? Could he deny it—pile falsehood on falsehood? He knew that he could not.

This was the end—the sudden end of the happy school life he had dreamed of. He sat overwhelmed.

"I say, Compton," repeated Bunter. As the new junior did not stir, Bunter rolled further into the study and came round in front of him. "I say, old chap, you'll do a fellow a good turn, won't you? I'm expecting a postal-order by the first post in the morning, but I happen to be short of a quid. I—why—what—what—what—"

Bunter broke off, stuttering.

He stared at the new junior's handsome pale face—stared at it as if it had been the face of a spectre. He was so astonished that his fat jaw dropped. He stared and stared, scarcely able to believe his eyes or his spectacles.

Dick looked steadily at him.

The blow was falling. He had to summon his courage to meet it. He did not expect Bunter to be silent. Why should he?

"You!" stuttered Bunter at last.

"Hallo, you have seen Compton before, too?" asked Harry Wharton.

Bunter gave a gasping chuckle.

"That's Compton, is it?"

"That's Compton," said Nugent. "Half a dozen chaps think they've seen him before somewhere. Are you another?"

"Great Scott!"

Bunter grinned.

"I fancy I've seen him before. I met him this afternoon at Lantham, didn't I, Compton? He, he, he!"

"Yes!" breathed Dick.

"You met Bunter?" exclaimed Harry in surprise. "You didn't mention—"

"I did not know his name," said Dick in a low, husky voice. "I didn't know he belonged to Greyfriars."

"I see."

"And I didn't know you belonged to Greyfriars!" chortled Bunter. "Not the least little bit! My only hat! It's like your check to come here!"

"What do you mean, Bunter?" asked Wharton testily. "Why shouldn't Compton come here, you fat ass?"

"He, he, he!"

Dick waited in silence. It was all coming out now. But it did not come! Bunter was amazed, puzzled, perplexed. He did not know how to make head or tail of this strange affair. But one thing was quite clear to Bunter's fat mind, and that was that this fellow, Ragged Dick, or Richard Compton, or whoever or whatever he was, was under his fat thumb. Bunter's podgy brain did not, as a rule, work very quickly, but it could work quickly enough when he had a turn to serve, as undoubtedly he now had.

He grinned cheerily.

"Well, here he is," he said. "I met him at Lantham. He, he, he! Do you know, I was going to borrow my railway fare of him, and he refused. He, he, he! Mean, you know! But I feel sure he will oblige me by settling with that taximan—won't you, Compton? He, he, he!"

Dick looked at him hard, a new hope rising in his breast. There was no mistaking the mocking grin on Bunter's fat face. His silence was to be had—if it was paid for! Dick understood.

"What rot!" exclaimed Wharton. "Don't let that fat bounder diddle you out of a pound, Compton! You'll never see it again!"

Dick rose to his feet.

"You're going to settle that little matter for me, old chap, what?" grinned Bunter.

"Yes."

"Give him a quid, old man. After all, he ought to have a tip after driving me from Lantham!" Bunter could be generous where his own money was not concerned.

"Very well."

Dick left the study.

Billy Bunter turned a triumphant blink on Wharton and Nugent.

"It's all serene, you see," he chuckled.

"Compton must be an ass!" said Nugent.

"He, he, he!"

"After all, Bunter generally does diddle a new chap," said Wharton, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Compton will soon come to know him as well as we do."

"He, he, he!"

"Oh, get out, you fat bounder!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of Study No. 1 with a fat chuckle. He was feeling extremely satisfied. His satisfaction was not shared by Ragged Dick of the Remove.

THE END.

You must not miss reading next week's Magnificent Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, entitled:

"RAGGED DICK'S RESOLVE!"

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The Getaway!

"PHEEP!" Another blast, more piercing than the others had been, seemed to galvanise the leader of the cracksmen into activity. With a muttered imprecation, he turned to his companion.

"Quick!" he ground out between his teeth. "We must beat it!"

"You fool!" came the hissing answer. "You've left it too late!"

But his words fell on deaf ears, for his companion was rapidly casting off his overalls and packing them into the suitcase. The nervous one followed suit. Then they stood there for a fraction of a second, their breath coming in laboured, nervous gasps, listening, listening to the repeated blasts of the police whistles and the dull sounds as of a door being beaten in.

"They'll nab us—"

The words came hoarsely from the taller of the two, as he dragged on his evening coat and opera hat. His companion, who had now recovered his nerve, smiled grimly, and seemed to pay more attention to the set of his hat than to the repetition of blows that echoed up from below.

"We'll take the window—get a move on!"

"The window?"

"Sure! You don't think I'm mug enough to walk out into the street the same way as I walked in, do you, you scatterbrained idiot! The window—and the roof!"

He seemed more capable of action than his companion, for he commenced to slip a length of cord around his middle, first passing one loose end through the handle of the suitcase. Ranging the case so that it dangled at his back, he strode across to the window, and, with infinite care, raised the sash. He poked his head out, eyeing the vicinity to right and left of him with an all-embracing survey.

"Easy!" was his muttered comment.

Without more ado, he started to clamber out of the window, his companion, a victim of nerves, not a couple of seconds behind him.

About a foot from the window was a drain-pipe running perpendicular with the wall, and up this the leader of the cracksmen began to swarm like a monkey.

Up, up he went, until the roof was reached. With the agility of a trapeze

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artist, he clambered over the stone balustrade skirting the roof, and paused to give a hand to his companion.

They stood there for a fleeting second silhouetted against the fickle rays of a

PEOPLE IN THE STORY.

DR. FOURSTANTON, a notorious motor-bandit, who has escaped from prison.

MONTAGUE MANNERS, a Society idol and an amateur cricketer of exceptional merit, who has taken up detective work as a living. Owing to his repeated successes in his new profession, "Monty" is deemed by the newspaper scribes to be fast ousting

FERRERS LOCKE, hitherto the most famous criminal investigator in the country, from his pinnacle of popularity.

INSPECTOR PYECROFT, of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard, a close friend of Ferrers Locke, and of

JACK DRAKE, the detective's clever boy assistant.

MOSTYN, the butler-valet of Montague Manners, an elderly gentleman retaining all the agility of his youth.

Soon after Dr. Fourstanton escapes from prison he commits a robbery at Lord Barling's house in Eaton Square. Monty Manners is called in to investigate, likewise Ferrers Locke. The two differ in their reconstruction of the crime, Ferrers Locke clinging to his theory that two burglars, working independently of each other, rifled the house, whilst Monty sticks to his theory that Dr. Fourstanton, and he only, was responsible for the theft.

The two detectives become friends, and Monty takes Locke down to Hampshire to play for Lord Thundersleigh's cricket team against the village eleven.

But hardly has the match been under way for two hours when Locke receives a telephone message purporting to come from Dr. Fourstanton. The sleuth hastens to London, but on the way he falls into the hands of a scoundrel calling himself "Stanton," who has the audacity to place Locke in Babblerbury Asylum.

Meantime, Lord Thundersleigh's house is burgled, and a ring that has been in his lordship's family for generations is stolen. Lord Thundersleigh, superstitious enough to have some belief in the legend attached to the ring that, should it leave his possession, the family fortunes would deteriorate, offers Monty Manners the sum of fifty thousand pounds if he will recover it for him.

By a clever piece of work Manners recovers the ring, and at the same time rescues Ferrers Locke from his terrible imprisonment in the asylum.

About the time Locke returns to his home two masked men enter the premises of a City jeweller, and, after looting the safe, are about to make good their escape when a police-whistle echoes through the night. An alarm has been given.

(Now read on.)

moon, but short as that space of time was, it was sufficient for some lynx-eyed fellow in the street far below to observe them.

"The roof!"

"The roof!"

The cry was taken up by a score of throats, and excited faces were turned skyward. Valorous policemen darted to the nearest doorway, obviously determined to climb to the roof and give chase. And still the leader of the two cracksmen never lost his nerve.

"We'll do them yet!" he chuckled. "They're a slow-thinkin' crowd, my buck! They won't expect to find me in their midst in a moment or two, urgin' the police to do their duty. But that's what I'm going to do." He laughed harshly, and turned to his companion. "For the love of Mike, pull yourself together, man!" he ejaculated.

A grin came to the face of the other—a sickly grin, and then he turned to follow his leader's directions. Away over the roof he went, bounding like a deer, clearing the stack-pipes without hesitation. With less agility, but with more speed, came his follower.

Two buildings were negotiated in this fashion, the shouts of the pursuers going less as the gap between them was widened.

"Here we are!"

The leader of the two signalled a halt as he came to a row of chimneys, whose brickwork bore a decided "newness" against the soot-eaten chimneys around them.

"The club!" breathed his companion with a gasp of relief. "I get your idea!"

The words were hardly out of his mouth, when the leader clambered to the summit of one of the chimneys, and slipped his feet inside its gaping mouth. Next moment he had disappeared from sight.

With a nervous glance behind him, the second cracksmen clambered to the top of the chimney and did likewise. And hardly had his head disappeared from view, when over the balustrade of the roof loomed the thickset figure of a man in blue, armed with a torch. For one lingering second the torch-light flashed across that chimney, and then it passed on in its survey.

Meantime, the two cracksmen were standing in an ordinary bed-room of the "Bandits' Club"—most appropriately named did the proprietors but know it—

smothered from head to foot with soot. Their opera-hats were sadly battered and grimy, their once-white shirt-fronts now plentifully besprinkled with black. But their spirits were high.

"Darned good!" muttered the taller of the two, making a wry grimace at the filth on his clothes. "I never knew you had schemed to drop in here—"

"Ah, one should never leave out a sure means of escape when one is hard pressed in this game. You don't think I was contemplating facing a judge, and perhaps umpteen years' penal servitude, do you? Not likely! This way of escape was always open. You'll find the door locked. Now, now! Don't get nervous! I gave the attendant strict instructions not to disturb me—"

"But you've not been staying here to-night!"

"Your little mistake! I came here at a quarter-to ten for ten minutes. I gave the attendant his orders, and when his back was turned, I slipped out of the club. There's my alibi—savvy?"

"Gee! You're a cute card! What do we do now?"

"You stay where you are for to-night. I'll explain your presence here. I'm going to clean myself a bit, and then watch the estimable police at work, in case they've got on our track. Here, give me a hand."

He dragged off his soot-begrimed clothes as he spoke, and began to don a lounge-suit which his comrade tossed him from the wardrobe. With a quickness that many a theatrical man would have envied, he changed. Then, with a few words to his comrade to tidy up the place and to remove the traces of soot that lay about before the fireplace, he vacated the room and made his way downstairs.

He nodded to the night porter as he strolled through the lobby.

"Sha'n't be long, Philips. Can't sleep! Going for a breath of fresh air, you know."

Philips saluted, and smiled in return. Well he knew the peculiar hours this eminently respectable member of the club kept.

With a nonchalance that was undoubtedly admirable, the cracksman bumped into the crowd in the street, and gently inquired of an excited policeman the cause.

"Big robbery," said the man in blue shortly. "Couple of the scoundrels—"

"By Jove, officer, you don't say! Where are the bounders now?"

The policeman eyed his questioner with a scornful glance.

"In the police-station!" he grunted. "That's why we're hanging around here looking for 'em."

A laugh went up from those near about at the constable's remark. It drew a certain amount of attention upon the cracksman, which was perhaps what that individual most devoutly wished for.

With an enigmatical smile on his face, he stood there among the mixed crowd watching the hurrying figures of the policemen on the roof, at the windows of the neighbouring buildings, and in the roadway alongside him. But of the cracksmen themselves, he naturally saw not the slightest sign, although by sundry words of encouragement that escaped him at intervals it would be supposed that he deemed their capture a matter of moments.

Three o'clock was striking before the crowd dispersed, before the disgruntled police gave up the chase. And as the sergeant in charge made his way back to the station, accompanied—unknown to him, it must be said—by one of the

cracksmen, he ground his teeth and spat viciously.

"Streuth, if I could get my hands on one of them skunks, I'd—"

He broke off, and passed a couple of brawny hands before his companion's face in a mock rehearsal of his intentions.

He was as near to the cracksman who had outraged his dignity and his peace of mind as it was ever possible for him to be.

But ignorance is bliss, and in this latter state the sergeant and the cracksman parted.

The Two Lists!

"NICE mornin', Mostyn!"

Monty Manners peered out of the dining-room window and gazed down into the activity of Jermyn Street below, what time his butler-valet padded about and laid the breakfast.

There were dark rings under Monty Manners' eyes as he turned and looked into a mirror over the mantel, and he frowned at his own reflection.

"I'm out of sorts, Mostyn," he chuckled. "And it's cricket to-day."

"Yes, sir," said Mostyn. "Gentlemen"—he put unnecessary stress on the word—"versus Players at the Oval."

"Go hon!" retorted Manners. "You spout it like a blessed wireless set. Do you think I shall make a century to-day?"

"I think you're capable of making centuries every day," replied Mostyn. "Nothing's too hard for you."

"Good! You're optimistic for once," said Monty, and he settled himself at the breakfast-table.

He had hardly sipped his first cup of coffee when the telephone-bell whirred out its summons. With a growl of annoyance he reached for the instrument.

"Hallo, hallo! Oh! That you, Locke?"

The growl and annoyance passed away in a flash as Manners conversed with Ferrers Locke. When he replaced the receiver he beckoned to Mostyn to hand him the morning's papers.

"Mr. Locke's just phoned up to ask me my opinion of the robbery in Regent Street," he said. "Seems to have been a daring affair, old scout!"

Together they scanned the paper and read the report of the burglary committed on the premises of Crossley Marchard, the well-known diamond merchant.

"Got clean away," said Manners at length. "Two of them. And not a single clue left behind."

"Is Ferrers Locke taking up the case?" asked Mostyn.

"Yes. He's just phoned me to say that he's making Marchard's place now. I wish him good luck. Don't you, Mostyn?"

"Why, of course!"

And while these two—master and servant—discussed the latest sensation of the West End, the subject of their good wishes was speeding from Baker Street towards Crossley Marchard's place in Regent Street.

"What do you think of the case, gov'nor?" It was Jack Drake who put the question as he throttled down the pace of the detective's car upon nearing a traffic block. "Sounds interesting, doesn't it?"

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"It's very daring, I grant you," he answered. "Beyond that I reserve my opinion until I've seen things for myself."

The car drew up outside Crossley

Marchard's place at last, and Ferrers Locke alighted. With Jack Drake at his heels he hurried into the shop, to be met by Inspector Pycroft and the proprietor himself.

Both were looking very harassed, but their faces brightened as Locke came into view.

"I do hope you will be able to help me, Mr. Locke," said Mr. Marchard, after a formal introduction to the great detective. "I am afraid that I shall suffer a very heavy loss, even with the insurance compensation taken into account, unless—"

"Your valuables are recovered, eh?" finished Locke cheerily. "Well, well, we'll see what can be done, Mr. Marchard. I take it from your last remark that a fortune has been taken from these premises?"

"Three hundred thousand pounds," said the proprietor, wringing his hands. "I had a string of fire opals—rare stones—worth fifty thousand pounds, and—"

"Three hundred thousand! Phew!" whistled the sleuth. "A nice haul!"

He left the proprietor's side and walked around the ground-floor room, noting at a glance the means of ingress the cracksmen had employed, and paying especial attention to the safe.

"Nothing has been touched," said Pycroft by way of something to talk about. "The rogues entered the next door premises, cut a hole through the dividing wall of the building, and as the door of the room above was locked and connected to a burglar-alarm, they took a couple of square feet out of the floor and dropped through."

"So I perceive," muttered Locke, gazing up at the hole in the ceiling. "The constable on the beat spotted something amiss with the shop, apparently just as the thieves were about to make their get-away."

"Yes, yes; that's how the alarm was given," broke in Marchard. "With a bit of luck the police would have caught the scoundrels"—he implied by his tone that with a "bit of skill" they would have accomplished more—"but the rogues got away over the rooftops."

Without replying to the proprietor's remarks, Locke ascended the staircase that led to the room directly above the shop. For over half an hour he remained there, examining every square inch of the place.

Then, of a sudden, his attention became riveted on the fire-grate. It was empty save for an envelope addressed to the firm. Marchard caught the look, and at once chipped in.

"That's nothing, Mr. Locke," he said quickly. "I threw that envelope in there myself last night before I left the premises."

"Hum!" Locke went down on his hands and knees and plucked the envelope from the grate. He paid especial attention to a slight discoloration on the exterior of the envelope—a faint tint of brown—and then his fingers slipped into the envelope proper.

"Ah!" When he withdrew them they held the remains of a smoked cigarette not more than a quarter of an inch in length.

Pycroft's eyes dilated as he saw his colleague's find.

"Now, what in the name of thunder made you look for that?" he asked.

"Why, the discoloration on the outside of the envelope suggested that something with heat in it had been tossed inside it. There's been no fire in the grate for weeks past," he replied.



A SECTIONAL DRAWING SHOWING HOW THE CRACKSMEN ESCAPED FROM THE HANDS OF THE LAW.

By the time the policeman had gained the roof, one cracksmen had clambered from the chimney into the room, and the other was already climbing down the stack inside. (See page 21.)

"This is a small clue, but it might lead to big things."

He turned to Mr. Marchard.

"Are you positive that you were the last person to leave this room before you went off for the night?" he asked.

"Yes. All the staff had gone half an hour before me," was the reply.

"And you state that you threw this envelope into the grate just before you left? You didn't by any chance throw this cigarette-end into it, did you?"

"I certainly didn't! I never smoke cigarettes, Mr. Locke."

"Good! Then it is fairly obvious that one of our cracksmen friends tossed this cigarette-end into the grate. It might prove his undoing."

Locke took the cigarette-end over to the window, looked at it a moment or two, and then, to the amazement of his audience, he began to smoke it.

Pycroft sniffed as a whiff of smoke caught his sensitive nostrils.

"Scented musk!" he grunted.

"Not much," admonished Locke, pinching the lighted end of the cigarette and putting it out. "But a very expensive brand of Turkish, Pycroft."

The private detective, with a weary gesture of the head that puzzled Pycroft, carefully replaced the piece of tobacco in the envelope, folded the latter in half and stowed it away in his pocket. Then he faced Mr. Marchard.

"From what I see," he said, "the rogues who broke in last night seemed to have a good knowledge of your premises. They evidently knew that the door-handle of this room was directly connected with a burglar-alarm, and, knowing that, never touched it."

"They couldn't have done," said Marchard. "If they had placed even a finger upon it the alarm would have been given, for the contact switch is ever so finely adjusted."

"The supposition is strengthened that the thieves were well acquainted with your premises, for the safe below was not broken into. It was opened by the proper combination."

"That's the most amazing part about the whole affair," said Marchard bewilderedly.

"Now, I want you to go to that desk, Mr. Marchard," said Locke, with a smile, "and think a bit. I want you to

write down on a sheet of paper the names of the people who are regular customers—or visitors—of this place; and then, in a smaller group, I want you to place the names of all the people who were aware of the amount of valuables you kept in that safe—if there are any such people."

It was on the tip of the jeweller's tongue to put a host of questions, but the sleuth turned away and crawled through the hole in the dividing wall. Pycroft followed him through.

"Only a plaster wall," said Locke, after one quick glance at the gaping hole. "This wall was evidently put in years ago to divide one large area. The room we are now standing in obviously isn't a separate building from a structural point of view, for if it were we should see a brick wall and not a plaster wall separating the two rooms."

"It shows that the thieves knew that," said Pycroft.

"It suggests that someone knew the plan of the building," said Locke. "And who, Pycroft, would be allowed to see the plan of a building?"

"Why, someone who intended buying or inhabiting the place," said the C.I.D. man.

"Exactly. I'm going to run along to the agents who have the disposal of these empty premises. You say the door downstairs was not forced?"

"Stake my life on it," said the inspector. "The thieves had a key to the place."

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"This is not going to be such a difficult case as one would imagine," he said shortly. "Cheerio, old man! See you in half an hour. Then we'll explore the roof."

And before Pycroft could recover from his astonishment Ferrers Locke was bounding down the uncarpeted staircase. In less than two minutes the door below had closed behind him.

He was back again in the room above the shop in less than the prescribed half-hour, and a peculiar expression of incredulity and doubt in his features caused the C.I.D. man to eye him sharply.

"What have you found out?"

"The shock of my life," returned Locke. "But I won't talk at this stage, Pycroft, if you'll forgive me. I've

dropped on one of the most amazing criminal cases on record this trip. Just give me my head and be patient."

The inspector grunted.

"Ah, the list," said Ferrers Locke, taking from Crossley Marchard's trembling hands a sheet of paper that contained a dozen names upon it in his straggling writing. "I wonder—"

"I see your friend Manners is a fairly regular customer here," said Pycroft. "We've just been conning the list. Mr. Marchard has done well out of him—eh?"

"Oh, Mr. Manners has certainly been a good customer," said Marchard, pursing his lips. "It's a good job there are some fastidious men in the world who like wearing a decent diamond tiepin."

"Or buy their young ladies decent brooches and rings—eh?" chuckled Pycroft. "You'll be able to chip him about it, Locke."

But Ferrers Locke was paying no attention to the conversation, seemingly. He was comparing something on Marchard's list with something on a sheet of paper he had evidently brought back with him from the estate agent's.

"The roof, Pycroft!" he snapped at last. "Let's climb out the same way the thieves did. We might drop across a clue."

"And we might drop a matter of a hundred feet to the street below!" grunted the inspector. "Still, I'm your man."

He followed Ferrers Locke out of the window in the empty room adjoining and shinned up the rain-pipe. Locke helped him over the stone balustrade. Drake, meantime, comforted Crossley Marchard with glowing accounts of his "gub'nor's" cleverness until the jeweller deemed it only a matter of a few hours before his beloved valuables were restored to him.

Up on the roof Ferrers Locke looked for "sign." He stayed up there for close on an hour, much to Pycroft's growing annoyance.

"Don't see what you expect to find up here!" he grunted as he followed the private detective over the roof to the adjoining building. "My men have scouted every inch of the place until they came to a gap between buildings

that the rogues couldn't possibly have jumped over."

"Which goes to prove that their exit is confined to one of these roofs," said Locke tersely. "Either they stayed up here all night and waited for a quiet moment to jump into eternity, or they——"

"Oh, don't rot!" snapped the C.I.D. man.

"I'm not rotting," said Locke. "I have had a good look at the buildings on either side of Marchard's premises, and it is next door to impossible for anyone on these roofs to get to the street below except by that one drain-pipe we came up. And that, according to your account, was guarded by one of your men."

He dodged round a chimney-stack as he spoke, leaving Pycroft staring out moodily over the roof top at the maze of traffic in Regent Street below.

When the C.I.D. man turned to make some remark to his colleague he found that he was alone.

"Now, what the thump——" he began.

"Pycroft!" An excited exclamation came from Ferrers Locke, and the inspector, tracing the sound whence it emanated, dashed round the chimney-stack.

"Hallo!" he grunted. "What——"

He broke off, his eyes opening wide in amazement as he followed Locke's index finger. For, attached to a jutting piece of brickwork, with a serrated edge, was a piece of black cloth.

"We're hot on the trail," said Locke, with a grin. "That material couldn't have been here long, because the weather would have left its mark upon it, the sun would have turned it green, the wind would have blown it away——although by the same token the wind couldn't have jammed it in such a fashion as we now see it. See! It's obviously caught on this jagged piece of brickwork and been wrenched from the main garment."

"And the material is like that used for evening clothes," volunteered Pycroft, eyeing the piece of material shrewdly.

"And what is more to the point," said Locke, "it shows that one at least of our cracksmen friends descended this chimney."

"Gee! Of course, I'm overlooking the main point," said the C.I.D. man. "That's evidently what happened. What's the name of this building?" he added suddenly.

"The Bandits' Club," returned Locke.

"Most appropriately named, is it not?"

"A club? Then it's quite on the cards that one of the thieves is a member of the place—or both of them. How else could they plunge down a chimney at dead of night without causing a hullabaloo——"

"A hullabaloo that would have been brought to police notice by the authorities of the club," said Locke quietly.

"For everyone in Regent Street knew that thieves had broken into Marchard's place and were escaping via the roof."

"Exactly!" exclaimed Pycroft excitedly. "We shall be able to find out who they are by enquiring below. Let's get a move on, old man."

"There's no hurry," smiled Locke; and he shook his head and smiled rather heavily.

"No hurry!" burst out Pycroft wrathfully. "Don't you want to know who the thieves were?"

"I know already," answered Ferrers Locke quietly. And there was a lack of enthusiasm that struck the inspector immediately.

"You know already?" he ejaculated in amazement. "Why——"

"Bend your head," said Locke. "I'm almost ashamed to say the names aloud."

Pycroft did as he was bid. Then, as he heard Locke's whispered words, he straightened up and gazed at the private detective as if he were beholding a lunatic.

"You can't be right!" he said hoarsely. "You've made some mistake."

"I wish to Heaven I had!" said Locke, with a trace of bitterness in his voice. "But I'll stake my all on what I have just said!"

"Phew!" Pycroft was obviously moved.

"But you'll first inquire at the club——" he began.

"Leave that to me," came the reply. "I'll make assurance doubly sure."

He did. He was shown into the club, was shown to the room that was directly in line with the chimney upon which had been found the clue of the piece of cloth, and after asking a few questions of the astounded porter, left the Bandits' Club, with sufficient evidence to place two men in prison.

"What will you do now?" said Pycroft, as they wended their way back to Locke's car drawn up outside Crossley Marchard's place of business.

"Drive to Lord Thundersleigh's place in Hampshire," returned Ferrers Locke. "I'm going to settle this myth of the two Dr. Fourstantons. This robbery has opened up the whole case—a clever case worked by a clever man, two clever men, in fact. Meantime, old scout, keep mum about what we have discovered, and await your orders from me."

Pycroft was pleased at the term "we." Really, he had done very little in the solving of the mystery, but he knew that when the final denouement came Ferrers Locke would give him a substantial part of the credit and glory of the capture. The C.I.D. man could hardly restrain his excitement as he saw Locke and Drake into the car.

"Don't keep things hanging about too long," he called after them as the car moved off. "Marchard is dying to see his valuables again."

A light laugh echoed back to him as the car turned the corner into Piccadilly Circus. Then Ferrers Locke, the man who held the key to the mystery, was gone.

Completing the Chain!

LORD THUNDERSLEIGH received the shock of his life when Locke's powerful racing-car drew up outside his country mansion, for his lordship was disporting himself in a deck-chair in the sunny grounds not far away.

He hastened towards the sleuth and his assistant.

"This is a surprise—and a pleasant one, Mr. Locke," he said warmly, extending his hand in greeting. "But what part of criminology brings you down here?"

"You're right in surmising that my visit is due to business, my lord," said Locke. "My time is brief, and I would be everlastingly grateful if you would help me out over a very simple matter."

"Delighted, I'm sure," said Lord Thundersleigh.

"Right. To-day is quarter day," began Locke, to his lordship's amazement.

"I presume that you have your phone bill in?"

"Begad! Is that meant for a joke, Locke?"

"It's no joke," returned the detective

gravely. "It plays a very important part in a little round-up of crime I am contemplating."

"The dickens it does!" ejaculated his lordship. "You amaze me. But the bill—let me see. Yes, it came in this morning."

"Have you looked at it?"

"I grimaced when I saw the figure, if that's what you mean," said Lord Thundersleigh jocularly.

"But you didn't check it?"

"Certainly not. But come, since this phone bill interests you we will examine it together."

He led the way into the house, and thence to his study. From a pile of correspondence he took the official telephone bill, and a full statement of outgoing calls he as the subscriber had had.

"Five-pounds-fifteen," said his lordship. "Deuced heavy!"

But Locke was running his finger down the statement. He breathed hard through his nose as his moving finger came to a "remark," underlined in red ink. It concerned a call that had been put through to the exchange by someone in his lordship's house to someone else in another part of the house.

"Here we are," said the detective.

"Here's a query from the Post Office concerning a call that was put through from a room in this house to a room in another part of the house——"

"What on earth are you talking about?" snapped his lordship.

"I know what I am talking about," replied Locke evenly. "You have three lines to this house, my lord. Well, then, on the day that I came and played cricket for you I received a call, you will remember, from a Dr. Fourstanton."

"Begad! I remember that call," said his lordship. "The scoundrel was phoning from London——"

"He was not," interrupted the detective shortly. "The scoundrel who phoned me and used Dr. Fourstanton's name was in this house."

"But—what—how——"

Lord Thundersleigh stammered and stuttered like a fish out of water.

"The man was in this house!" repeated Locke.

"It was a bare chance that the call would be queried, for the Post Office don't concern themselves as a rule with people who ring up their exchange number when they are already on to that number. But since you're so mighty particular as to the number of calls you have, my lord, and the date of the calls—for which extra work you pay a small fee—that particular call stands out on the full statement."

"Well, I'm jiggered! Who the deuce in my house plays monkey tricks with my telephone!" exclaimed his lordship. "I'll——"

"You'll excuse me," said Locke, with a smile. "But I must be off. You'll know all there is to know before the day is much older," he added. "And prepare yourself for a shock, my lord."

"A shock? Hang it, man, what are you talking so mysteriously for?" boomed his lordship.

But Ferrers Locke was already bowing himself out of the room. He was seated in his car in less than three minutes, giving instructions to Drake to "drive like the deuce" to London.

His lordship stood on the steps of his house, a puzzled frown upon his aristocratic features. It deepened still more when he returned to the study and gazed at the offending telephone bill.

"Those confounded detectives leave me cold!" he muttered. "Why the deuce couldn't he say what was in his mind? Prepare for a shock, indeed! Huh! I'll prepare for a nap!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 907.

And with that good resolution his lordship passed out into the grounds and settled himself comfortably in his deck-chair. While his gentle snore played strange music against the gay twittering of the birds Ferrers Locke and Drake were racing Londonwards.

Straight to Baker Street the great white car flashed, doing the journey in record time. Pycroft was awaiting the detective and his assistant as they entered the chambers.

"Well?" queried the C.I.D. man.

"As I surmised," said Locke. "But come, we'll talk it out in camera, as it were, in the privacy of my den."

He entered his cosy study, and gestured to his companions to make themselves comfortable. Then, starting with the telephone call, he had put through to Pycroft when he imagined Drake to be in danger of being blown sky high, Ferrers Locke made the C.I.D. man give him a detailed account of all that had taken place while he—Locke—was under detention in the Babbledbury Asylum.

Several times he made Pycroft repeat certain statements; an account of the robbery at Sir Ernest Paytree's house, followed by that at Lord Thundersleigh's especially. And when he had talked the C.I.D. man dry, Ferrers Locke rose to his feet, a smile playing about the corners of his mobile mouth.

"Many thanks!" he said genially. "We'll run along to the Oval now. I'm rather interested in the match."

Drake, who was at a complete loss to know what all this running about meant, brightened up considerably. He was keenly interested in cricket—and

in Monty Manners, the "amateur Hobbs," as he was known.

"Ripping!" he said. "I wonder how Monty—I mean Mr. Manners—has got on?"

Locke and Pycroft exchanged a smile above Drake's head, and then rose to their feet.

"We'll do the journey by car," said Locke. "We shall just be in time to see the closing hour of the day's play."

The trio once again left the chambers and entered the great racing car. Drake, keen to be at the Oval, allowed his eyes to wander from the speedometer when the needle ticked over the recognised speed limit.

And for once in a way Ferrers Locke did not reprove him.

The Oval was reached within a quarter of an hour, and Locke and his companions were allowed to pass through the turnstiles without making the usual payment, the late hour accounting for the privilege.

"You run along to the stand," said Locke to Pycroft and Drake. "I'm going to mooch about on my own and do a bit of thinking."

"Right-ho, guv'nor!" answered Drake, whose eyes were shining with excitement as he saw Monty Manners batting at the wicket. "Come on, Pycroft."

The two walked off and secured a seat, what time Locke, after a cursory glance at the field of play, which took in the fact that the sporting detective was going great guns, walked into the "six-penny crowd."

He remained unmoved as cheer upon

cheer rent the air when Monty Manners, with a beautiful full drive that lifted the leather over the pavilion, topped his century. Then, as many a man has experienced before him, Locke suddenly felt the presence of a pair of eyes bent upon him. They seemed to pierce him through and through, until his attention was drawn to the owner.

Gazing through half-closed lids, the detective allowed his head to turn slightly. When they drew on a level with the owner of the piercing eyes, he had the utmost difficulty from exclaiming aloud.

The face in view amongst that ring of heads and hats that drew him immediately turned in another direction. But Locke had seen enough. He would have staked his reputation that the man, disguised as he was, was none other than Dr. Fourstanton, the escaped convict. Those dark, piercing eyes, that doming forehead, even although a bowler hat hid most of it, belonged only to one man—Dr. Fourstanton!

That the man in question seemed anxious to put as much distance between himself and the detective was fairly obvious, for, in company with three tough-looking individuals, he shouldered his way out of the crowd.

"I must get him!" That was the thought uppermost in Locke's mind, as he, too, began to shoulder his way out of the crowd.

As he moved forward, he heard not the rousing cheer that went up, signalling the close of play; he was set upon a single purpose: the capture of Dr. Fourstanton. The crowd swept towards



Monty stood over the prostrate figure of Ferrers Locke, and hit out left and right with his fists as the toughs came at him. Thud! A right took one of the men fairly in the mouth, and down he crashed. (See page 2.)

the pitch, eager to pay homage to the hero of the match—Monty Manners—and Locke was carried along in its embrace.

Fourstanton and his companions were but a few yards in front of him, and by the same token a few yards away from Manners and his partner as they strolled from the crease.

Locke saw the ex-convict turn his head, saw the deadly fear in his eyes as he noted the nearness of the detective, but failed to see his mouth move as he whispered a few words to his colleagues.

So intent upon keeping Fourstanton in sight was Ferrers Locke, that he paid no heed to a sudden jab in the ribs he received from a jostling individual on his right. But when the blow was repeated a second time, and with more power behind it, he turned and remonstrated with the fellow.

"Pack that game up!" he ground out. "Keep your elbows to yourself."

"Garn! Who you talkin' to?" growled that individual, following up his remark with another jab in the ribs. "I'll knock yer bloomin' 'ead orf!"

The detective seemed fairly to have landed himself in trouble, for another voice—this time from his left—broke in:

"Hit 'im on the head, 'Arry! He looks a 'tee!"

Before Locke knew what was happening, he received a terrific blow over the side of the head. As he turned to grapple with the man who had hit him, another fist, this time from behind him, caught him in the nape of the neck.

Down he went among the feet of the moving crowd—a crowd with little time for a man who wanted to brawl. Next minute, bruised and kicked in several places, Locke was fighting desperately with the two men who had started the trouble.

But fighting against two such unscrupulous toughs in such circumstances was doomed to carry—but one result—the knock-out for Ferrers Locke. Blows seemed to rain upon him from all sides.

"Help!" he managed to cry out, as a buckle-belt slashed across his head, and then he knew no more. He lay in a dazed heap at the feet of the crowd, who were still more intent upon cheering Monty Manners than paying heed to the misfortunes of one man who would brawl. English crowds are like that; discretion has taught them that it is folly to interfere in a brawl where hundreds of people are about, where the next man's hand might contain a knock-out blow for a "meddler."

The crowd "minded its own business."

But one individual on the fringe of the crowd, to wit Monty Manners, heard that cry, and seemed to recognise the voice. He started back in amazement.

"Why, that was Locke's voice!" he muttered to himself.

And then, seeing where exactly the trouble was, seeing the two evil faces of Fourstanton's companions, Montague Manners dashed into the fray. The crowd made way for him like a lot of sheep. The crowd gasped its amazement as Monty caught the two toughs who, about to kick Ferrers Locke's prostrate figure, by the scruff of their necks, and jerked them round.

"You cowardly curs!" he exclaimed, his eyes flashing.

Smack!

A terrific, straight left landed full between the ugly eyes of the taller of the two toughs, and he went sprawling to earth, uttering a string of imprecations.

Thud!

A right, with just as much punch behind it, took the second tough fairly on

the mouth. Down he crashed, the crimson spurting from his mouth.

But Monty hadn't finished with those two scoundrels by any manner of means. The first man scrambled to his feet and struck savagely at the sporting detective. The crowd, still too amazed to interfere, stared with gaping eyes and mouth. It was a sudden and unlooked-for end to a cricket match.

Like a crowd will, it stood as if paralysed of all movement.

And through those seconds of inertia on the part of his admirers, Monty stood over Ferrers Locke's prostrate figure and gave back blow for blow. Then, from afar, came shouts. Policemen were pushing their way through the crowd. The two roughs did not wait for more. They bolted—bolted like rabbits to their warrens. The warrens, in this case, was the crowd, and no better hiding-place could they have sought.

The police and the officials of the club swarmed round Monty Manners and Ferrers Locke like a drove of bees, everyone asking questions. But Ferrers Locke was himself again now; the dizziness had passed. He was helped to his feet by Manners, who, a trifle white after the struggle, smiled at him.

"All right now?" he asked.

Ferrers Locke made no reply. For the moment he seemed speechless. Then, mumbling out his thanks, he tried to inform the police that Dr. Fourstanton, the escaped convict, was in the near vicinity.

"Fourstanton!" exclaimed Monty Manners. "Was that how all the trouble started?"

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"I saw him in the crowd, and tried to follow him," he explained. "But the rogue had evidently some of his pals with him, for they picked a quarrel with me, and, as gangsters do, dealt me the coward's blow."

"Lucky for you Mr. Manners chipped in!" said one of the policemen. "You might have got a nasty handling, sir."

They helped Ferrers Locke over to the pavilion, where Drake and Pycroft were. News had just reached the pair that Ferrers Locke had got mixed up in a brawl, and both naturally were anxious on his account. But there was

no cause for alarm. Locke had little to show for the encounter, except a dusty suit of clothes, a bump the size of a penny on his head, and a row of raw knuckles.

"I'm all right," he answered in reply to Drake's repeated inquiries as to his welfare.

"And Mr. Manners saved you, guv'nor!" exclaimed Drake with enthusiasm. "He seems fated to come across your path when you need him most."

Manners turned the compliment aside with a laugh.

"Tush, my lad!" he said. "You must excuse me—I'm going in to change. See you afterwards."

He sauntered towards the dressing-room, Locke, Pycroft, and Drake eyeing his broad shoulders as they swung away out of sight.

"Phew!"

Pycroft and Locke drew in their breath at the same moment, and there was a note of regret even in that wordless ejaculation.

"Some fellow!" exclaimed Drake enthusiastically. "Do you know, guv'nor, I think Mr. Monty is one of the whitest men I've ever met."

He wondered why it was Locke made no rejoinder, and he wrinkled his brows petulantly. But Locke and Pycroft were talking together in lowered tones, their faces owl-like in their gravity.

"When?" Drake heard Pycroft put the query to Ferrers Locke.

"To-night!"

It might have been just coincidental, but as Ferrers Locke spoke the words, a dark cloud raced across the heavens, settling like a pall over the cricket-ground.

And Drake, now aware for the first time that something untoward was in the air, something that affected the freedom of some poor wretch, shivered a trifle, and wracked his brains to piece the puzzle together.

"When!" he repeated to himself.

"To-night! Who?"

And as he muttered the last word, he shivered again.

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TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR!

A MAGNET DEBATING SOCIETY.

A LONG and interesting account of another meeting of a debating society, formed by readers of the **MAGNET**, was sent to me the other day. These enterprising fellows had gathered once again to a discourse on the subject of "Shakespeare and Schoolboys," and, from what I have read, there must have been a lively few hours at that meeting. I am not able to publish any of the report, as space is very limited this week.

The reader who forwarded me the report happens to be the originator of the scheme, or, rather, club. I believe he calls himself Master of the Circle.

Rather a good title—what? Smacks of a secret society, doesn't it? I think it's a good idea to gather together in this friendly manner, and it also tends to enlarge one's outlook on things.

Among the subjects that come under consideration at these meetings I saw the headings, "Magnet Stories," "Characters at Greyfriars," and "Public Schools' Sports"—all healthy topics. I have sent my best wishes to the club and all the members, hoping that they will not forget to keep me well informed of their progress.

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