

"BUNTER, THE BAD LAD!" This week's extra-long complete school story

No. 1,014. Vol. XXXII.

Week Ending July 23rd, 1927.

The Magnet 2^d

EVERY MONDAY.

LIBRARY



BILLY BUNTER SETTLES HIS DEBTS!

There's quite a run on the "Bunter Bank" when it becomes known that the Owl of the Remove is prepared to pay ALL his creditors in hard cash! (See the grand school story of the Greyfriars chums—inside!)



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums. Write to him when you are in trouble or need advice. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a speedy reply. Letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

FREE GIFTS!

I AM never happier than when I am using those magic words in my chat to the thousands of MAGNET readers who have given me their loyal support, for if ever any body of readers deserved FREE GIFTS it's Magnetites. And Magnetites are going to get 'em! Top-hole Free Gifts that will be the envy of every fellow who isn't a reader of our grand little paper. These Free Gifts will put in the shade any other Free Gifts that have ever been presented with other boys' papers. Top-hole, scrumptious, magnificent—I can see these and many other hearty ejaculations leaping to your lips the moment FREE GIFT NUMBER ONE is in your hands, for Magnetites are ever ready to give praise where praise is due, and are never lacking in enthusiasm. And it's a series of Free Gifts, remember; not just a big show for one week—a series—I really must have that word in italics! Now, you Magnetites, aren't you feeling mighty pleased with yourselves? Aren't you glad that you've stuck to the old paper? Of course! What form are these Gifts going to take is the natural query that springs

to your mind as you read these words. What form? Why, it's— But that's telling! Just you keep an eye open for next week's chat. You'll find there full particulars of this A 1 treat, and, what's more, you haven't very long to wait before Gift No. 1 arrives. How's that, boys? Grand, isn't it?

A NEW SERIES!

It's only right and proper that the special issues of the MAGNET containing these Free Gifts should contain special programmes. Right, then! In our first Free Gift Number there will start a ripping new series of Greyfriars stories dealing with a treasure quest in the South Seas. That'll please you, I know. Wait a moment; I can add to that pleasure, for Tom Redwing—you all remember him—figures in this delightful series. Wait another moment—Mr. Frank Richards has turned up real trumps, for he's lengthening these new stories of Harry Wharton & Co. Think of that, you fellows who have been writing in, asking for longer Greyfriars yarns. Doesn't that prove once again what an obliging fellow your favourite author

is? Doesn't it show that he takes a real, live interest in the thousands of chums he will never see, but whose letters he reads with as much enthusiasm as you read his stories? Don't forget, then, longer Greyfriars yarns will arrive with the first of our Free Gifts.

A NEW SERIAL!

More good news! A new serial, and, Jove, chums, it's a real good 'un! Stanton Hope is the author, and you know him of old. He's travelled round the globe, he's roughed it in mining camps, lumber camps—everywhere where hard knocks have had to be taken, where experience was to be gained, Stanton Hope has been. And you fellows will get the benefit of his travels in a magnificent serial story that deals with a thrilling gold rush to the land of the midnight sun. The story will hold your interest from the kick-off, for it comes from the master pen of a man who has "been there." Don't lose sight of this coming treat, chums.

MORE "SHOCKERS!"

And, of course, we're not leaving our old friend Dicky Nugent out in the cold. Not a bit of it. He's been busy on a special series of St. Sam's yarns, and, take it from me, they're real screams. This is a programme you chaps will be able to talk about when you meet that fellow who isn't a MAGNET reader. And you won't forget to mention the FREE GIFTS. As I remarked early on, more about these handsome gifts next week.

SUNSTROKE!

Two or three readers wrote in during last summer saying that they had had sunstroke, and as this is a month when the sun shines strongly—that is, of course, if the Clerk of the Weather is in a good humour—it brings me to mention a few words of caution. When King Sol is blazing down it is advisable to protect the top of the head and the back of the neck. A wide-brimmed hat will do the trick. And while we're on the subject of sun and summer, let me add that a good plan to keep those disconcerting summer colds at bay is to wear light woollen underclothing.

Next Monday's Programme:

"SMITHY'S PAL!"

By Frank Richards.

This is a story dealing with Tom Redwing, the scholarship junior, who left Greyfriars a short time ago and resumed his old life at sea. You'll vote this yarn one of the best your favourite author has given us. Mind you read it, chums.

"THE HEAD'S TREZZURE HUNT!"

Once again Dicky Nugent comes up to scratch with a humorous story of St. Sam's. You'll laugh till your sides ache over this "shocker," believe me.

"THE CURSE OF LHASA!"

Then there's another ripping instalment of this popular Ferrers Locke tale. Kang Pu will have to look to his laurels now that the famous detective is on his track. Don't miss next Monday's instalment, whatever you do. Order your MAGNET early, chums.

Chin, chin,
YOUR EDITOR.

THE BEST THAT 4^D CAN BUY!

THE SCHOOLBOYS'
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103. *The FATAL PIT.*

104. *The CRIME IN THE WOOD*

GET YOUR COPIES TO-DAY,
CHUMS!

ROLLING IN MONEY! When Billy Bunter, the most impecunious member of the Greyfriars Remove—the fellow who borrows “tanners” and “bobs” from all and sundry—comes into possession of unlimited fivers, his Form-fellows rub their eyes and wonder if they are dreaming. But it's no dream; there's Bunter, large as life—there are the fivers! And the next question is to whom do these fivers really belong?

Bunter, The Bad Lad!



A Splendid New Extra-Long Story of Harry Wharton & Co., the Cheery Chums of Greyfriars.

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Different Bunter!

A MILLION pounds!" Peter Todd jumped. "Eh?" he exclaimed. "A million pounds!" muttered Billy Bunter abstractedly. "Oh, my hat!"

There was a deep wrinkle of thought in the podgy brow of the fattest junior in the Remove at Greyfriars, a circumstance, coupled with the ejaculation he had made, that caused Peter Todd to eye his study-mate with some concern. As Bunter was seldom given to thinking, unless it were upon matters affecting his capacious appetite, and as he was undoubtedly the most impecunious member of the Remove, his reference to a million pounds was certainly enough to raise alarm in any breast. And Peter Todd, who constituted himself Bunter's guardian, really did feel alarmed.

"You sure you're all right?" he asked gently.

Billy Bunter blinked through his big spectacles.

"Eh?" "You haven't been out in the sun and caught sunstroke?" ventured Peter solicitously.

"Fathead!" snorted Bunter.

Peter Todd heaved a sigh of relief. That was more like the Bunter with whom he was accustomed to deal. Evidently Bunter hadn't got a touch of sunstroke as Peter had at first supposed.

"A million pounds!" muttered Bunter thoughtfully. "A million—"

Peter Todd's suspicions returned. A fellow who was known to be stony seven days out of the week, and who kept muttering about such a handsome sum of money as a million pounds, was undoubtedly suffering from delusions. Such a fellow, Peter reflected, had to be humoured.

"You've got a million quids, old fat man?" he asked.

Billy Bunter grinned.

"My pater has."

"Oh!" gasped Peter.

It was well known in the Remove that Bunter senior did not possess such a handsome fortune, despite the wondrous tales of the family mansion, complete with innumerable butlers, and every modern convenience, so to speak, that the Owl of the Remove was wont to talk about. Indeed, it was rumoured in certain quarters that Mr. Samuel Bunter found it extremely hard at times to pay for his sons' school fees. Certainly, if he were a millionaire, very little of his fortune ever found its way into the pockets of Billy Bunter or his brother Sammy.

"What do you think of that, Peter?" asked the fat junior, watching his study-mate closely.

"Wha-a-at do I think of it?" stammered Peter.

Bunter nodded.

"I—I think it's spiffing!"

"Of course, now that my pater is a millionaire," said Bunter loftily, "I expect the fellows will be flocking round me for my money. But I give you fair warning, Peter Todd, that I'm not going to stand any sponging."

"Of course not, old chap!" said Peter faintly.

The Owl of the Remove wagged a podgy forefinger at his study-mate.

"Of course, you're only the son of a poverty-stricken lawyer," he sniffed. "You can't help that, I know. I'm not a snob I hope. I've always tolerated you, Peter—"

"T-tolerated me?"

"Yes. You can't help being poor any more than you can help your face. I'll do the decent thing by you, Peter. You've obliged me occasionally with some paltry loans—"

"Occasionally!" gasped Peter faintly.

"But I'll square up with you," smirked Bunter. "When my pater sends me five hundred pounds—"

"Five hundred which?"

"Five hundred pounds," said Bunter firmly. "I'll settle up the few paltry bobs you've lent me. But after that, mind you, I shan't expect you to sponge on me."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Peter Todd.

The idea of anyone sponging on the Owl of the Remove was too rich, for Bunter was the leading exponent of that wheedling art himself, possessing all the necessary attributes, including a hide like a rhinoceros, a remarkable faculty for finding out when a study feed or a picnic was in progress, and a habit of borrowing up and down the Remove on the strength of a mythical postal-order that was expected to arrive by the next post.

"That must be understood," said Bunter firmly.

"Understood—"

"Exactly!"

Peter Todd gasped.

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"Mad!" he muttered. "Mad as a hatter!"

"I shall stand a study spread every day," went on Bunter reflectively.

"That will be a change, old chap, and—"

"And I shall ask my friends. But I don't want any familiarity from you, Peter Todd. You're a bit of a beast, you know, and your table manners are simply awful!"

"Oh!"

"You can't help that," said Bunter. "After all, you're only a hard-up solicitor's son. Perhaps you wouldn't mind tea-ing in Hall."

Peter Todd glared. It was only the reflection that Bunter evidently had "bats in the belfry" that restrained Peter from wiping up the floor with him.

"When I get my five hundred quid I—"

Peter Todd rose from his chair and walked over to Bunter. He placed a hand on the Owl's fat shoulder.

"Come with me, old chap!" he said kindly.

Bunter glared.

"Eh?"

"Come with me! A rest will do you good."

"A rest?" snorted Bunter. "What the thump are you talking about?"

"It's a touch of the sun, you know," said Peter gently. "Lots of chaps get it this time of the year. But the matron will soon put you to rights. Lean on me."

"You silly owl!" hooted Bunter. "Are you potty?"

Peter Todd smiled indulgently. He remembered that most people afflicted with madness usually thought that the rest of the world was mad, and that they themselves were perfectly sane.

"Take it easy, old fat man," he said. But Bunter threw off Peter Todd's hand and rolled to his feet.

"You silly ass! Gerraway!"

"But you ought to see the matron, you know—" began Peter.

The Owl of the Remove snorted.

"Do you think I'm ill?" he asked.

"I can see your game, Peter Todd. You're sucking up to me now that you know my pater is a millionaire. Yah! Go and eat coke! Keep your distance, you low rotter!"

Peter Todd rose with a grim expression. Then his eyes caught sight of a newspaper cutting on the arm of the chair in which Bunter had been sitting. Bunter followed his study-mate's glance.

"You can see for yourself, Peter Todd," he said with dignity. "That's a cutting out of this morning's 'Daily Mail.'"

Peter Todd picked up the cutting and perused it, and a look of astonishment settled on his rather lean features as the full significance of what he read came home to him. The paragraph ran:

"METEORIC RISE OF AN OBSCURE STOCKBROKER!

ANOTHER CITY MILLIONAIRE!

"Another romance of the City is attached to the meteoric rise to fortune of Mr. Samuel Bunter, who was, until a few weeks ago, a jobbing stockbroker in a small way of business. Mr. Samuel Bunter would appear to be favoured by the gods, for he has accumulated over a million pounds in a few weeks, truly a remarkable achievement. Interviewed by our representative, Mr. Bunter admitted that he had been exceedingly fortunate in his investments, but that he had achieved his one ambition in life—namely, to give his sons a University education—"

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" gasped Peter Todd faintly.

Billy Bunter sniffed.

"I hope you'll keep your distance now, Peter Todd. The son of a millionaire must be particular with whom he mixes. I can't afford to have a poverty-stricken lawyer's son hanging at my heels, you know. Still, I'll take notice of you occasionally—"

"You'll t-take notice of me?" stammered Peter.

Evidently the sudden rise to fame and fortune of Mr. Samuel Bunter had gone like wine to William George Bunter's head. But one thing Peter Todd was certain of now—his fat study-mate wasn't mad. As that reflection came home to him Peter Todd's face set grimly.

"I shall be getting my five hundred quids to-morrow," said Bunter thoughtfully. "The pater wired me to say that it was in the post. If you could let me have a pound on account, Peter Todd—"

Peter Todd's eyes roamed round the study. There was a stump in the corner.

"You want a pound?" he asked grimly.

"That's it, old chap. I'll settle up when my—my five hundred quid arrives. I say, wharrer you doing—Yoooooop! Wow! Oh crikey!"

Peter had made a stride towards the cricket-stump and had caught it up. Next moment it was whistling round the podgy person of William George Bunter.

Whack!

"Yoooooop! Stoppit, you low rotter! Yowp!"

Whack!

"Whooop! Wharrer you doing? Ow!"

"I'm giving you a pound, old fat man," said Peter grimly. "One for every rude remark you've made to me. See?"

"Yaroooooh!"

Apparently Bunter did see if noise were any indication of seeing. The study rang to his yells of anguish and the rhythmic rise and fall of the cricket-stump.

"So I'm a low rotter, am I?" asked Peter.

Whack!

"Yoooooop!"

"And my table manners are simply awful, are they?"

Whack!

"Help! Wow-ow! Oh crikey!"

Bunter tore himself loose and bolted for the door. The stump fell across his fat shoulders as he charged through the doorway, and Peter Todd's boot helped him along. Bunter had certainly got a pound in advance of his five hundred; in fact, he had received several pounds in advance from the charitable Peter. But they were certainly not the pounds for which he had bargained.

Peter Todd tossed the cricket-stump into the corner and returned to his chair. If there was any truth in the newspaper cutting; if the Mr. Samuel Bunter mentioned therein was the father of William George Bunter, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, and Samuel Bunter, of the Second Form, Study No. 7 in the Remove passage would not be large enough to hold William George.

Peter examined the cutting closely. Everything seemed to point to the person mentioned being the father of the Bunters at Greyfriars, for it was well known that Bunter senior was a stockbroker in a "small way of business." There was also that reference to Mr. Samuel Bunter's sons. What didn't ring true, however, was the representative's report that the newly made millionaire's one ambition was to see those sons educated at a 'Varsity. From what Peter had seen of Bunter senior he did not seem to be the type of affectionate parent the report had made him out to be; his time being largely taken up with "bulls" and "bears" and various other intricacies of the Stock Exchange.

"I can't help thinking there's something wrong somewhere," muttered Peter, as he eyed the cutting again.

And Peter was right there, if only he knew it. Something was wrong—very much wrong. But how much wrong was not destined to come to light for some considerable time.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Major and Minor!

"HERE he comes!"

"Here comes the giddy millionaire!"

"Hail! Hail! His lordship Moneybags!" chuckled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter strutted with a great strut as befitted the son of a millionaire. At least he fondly imagined that it was a strut. What it did resemble, however, was a cross between a lumbering elephant in action and a rolling ship at sea. Still, unconscious of these impressions, the fat junior rolled into the Common-room after lunch the next day with his fat little nose high in the air.

"Lend us a bob, Bunter!" chuckled Morgan.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith and phwat about the tanner you borrowed of me yesterday?" inquired O'Reilly.

"And the half-crown you had of me at beginning of term?" asked Hazeldene.

Billy Bunter stopped and drew himself up proudly.

"I'll settle all those trifling loans when my pater's cheque for five hundred pounds arrives," he said, with a lofty wave of the hand.

"Sure, an' if you settle all the debts you owe, Bunter, ye spalpeen," grinned

Read this, Lads!



GRIT!

By
Edwy
Searles
Brooks.

Here's a vivid new real-life adventure yarn, packed with thrills and excitement. Read how Frank had to go out into the world. He had no one to help him, but he's grit all through! This stirring story is only one of many fine features in this week's

The Boys'

REALM

OF SPORT AND ADVENTURE

On Sale Wed., July 20th. Make sure of a copy.

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As the last carriage but one came abreast of him, Billy Bunter heard the sound of upraised voices in one of the compartments. Next moment something flew out of a window. Thud! "Yaroooh!" A wild howl escaped Bunter, as a tightly-packed roll of papers struck him, with no little force, on the tip of his podgy nose. (See Chapter 4.)

O'Reilly, "there won't be much change from the five hundred, begorrah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The news that Bunter senior had amassed a fortune of a million pounds or more had spread throughout the Remove like fire. Certainly it provided a fresh topic of conversation. The newspaper cutting had been pinned to the notice-board for all and sundry to see, Billy Bunter being a great believer in self-advertisement. And yet although the report was there right enough, the majority of the juniors in the Remove felt that something was wrong somewhere.

Billy Bunter's airy talk of five hundred pounds had been swallowed—up to a point. It would be swallowed whole, so to speak, when the five hundred pounds turned up. But at the moment, millionaire's son or not, the fat Owl of the Remove was just as impecunious as he was before his pater's sudden rise to fortune.

Really, such a state of stoniness was too bad, for a millionaire's son. Bunter loved the limelight, and he was getting more than an average share of it now, but he was just as hungry as ever.

"When's your five hundred coming, Bunter?" asked Snoop.

"Doomsday!" said Skinner. "Certainly not before!"

And a chuckle ran round the group of Removites in the Common-room.

"Oh, really, Skinner," said Billy Bunter, with some dignity. "You'll change your tune when you see my cheque!"

"But I wouldn't change the cheque," said the humorous Skinner. "It would

bound to be marked. 'Refer to Drawer.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You wait and see!" sniffed Bunter.

And he rolled on towards the fireplace.

Harry Wharton & Co. were talking there as the fat junior came up.

"We'd better be starting," said Bob Cherry. "It's a topping afternoon—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"We'll take it in turns to carry the bag," remarked Harry Wharton.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Yell away, Bunter," said Bob Cherry. "We're not fit company for a millionaire's son, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The unfitness of our ludicrous society for the esteemed and ridiculous Bunter is terrific," purred Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, the dusky member of the Co.

"But I say—" hooted Bunter.

He knew that the Famous Five had planned a picnic on the cliffs that sunny afternoon, and Bunter was determined to be included in the party. He had watched the lavish order Bob Cherry had given Mrs. Mimble at the tuckshop and his fat mouth had watered. Evidently the Famous Five were going to picnic on a grand scale.

"We'll pack the grub in a cricket bag, as Wharton suggests," said Nugent. "and we'll take it in turns to carry it."

"Oh, really, Nugent," said Bunter. "I'll carry it, you know."

Nugent snorted.

"I know where you'd carry it," he remarked dryly. "We've been there before, you know. Roll away, old fat barrel."

"Oh, really, Nugent," said Bunter, in pained tones. "I was counting on your help now that I've got all this money coming to me."

"You won't want any help when it does come," replied Nugent. "Especially if it takes as long to arrive as your blessed postal-order."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! I was going to stand you fellows a handsome spread when my postal-order—I mean, my cheque arrives. But I won't now! Yah! Beasts!"

And with that parting shot Billy Bunter rolled away.

"Oh, here you are!"

Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form, rolled into the Common-room.

"What do you want?" growled Billy. Brotherly affection had little in common with either of the Bunters.

"What's all this rot about the pater having made a fortune?" said Sammy.

Billy Bunter gave his minor a glare that nearly cracked his spectacles.

"Shurrup, you young ass!"

"Shurrup yourself!" retorted Sammy truculently. "I suppose it's another yarn of yours."

Bunter major felt a great yearning to grab his minor by the collar and kick him, but he suppressed the desire perhaps for the simple reason that Sammy would scarcely have submitted tamely to such unbrotherly treatment. The eyes of several juniors were on the Bunter brothers, too, as they stood there, and for reasons of his own, Billy Bunter did not want to discuss Bunter senior's rise to fortune with his minor in their presence. With a great show of

brotherly affection, therefore, Bunter major slipped his arm through that of his minor's and piloted him towards the door of the Common-room.

"What's this fool's game?" demanded Sammy, detaching himself from that brotherly grasp. "I haven't got any tin, if that's what you're after!"

"You silly ass!" breathed Bunter major thickly. "We must keep up appearances."

"Oh, can it!" growled Sammy. But he allowed his major to take him by the arm and lead him up to Study No. 7 in the Remove passage for all that. With all his obtuseness Samuel Bunter realised that his major had something "on." And as grub, glorious grub, usually formed the background of all his wheezes, Sammy Bunter meant to have his share in it.

"Now what's this silly talk about the pater?" Sammy came straight to the point when the door of Study No. 7 had been closed and they had that apartment to themselves.

"He, he, he!" That fat cachinnation from Billy made Sammy stare.

"Gono dotty?" he inquired. "He, he! Read this!" cackled Bunter major.

And he drew from his pocket the now historical news cutting.

Sammy blinked his eyes over it in astonishment.

"Then it's true!" he gasped, his eyes shining excitedly.

"Eh? What's true?"

"That the pater's made a fortune! Oh, my hat!"

Billy Bunter snorted.

"You silly ass! Of course it isn't true!" he said.

"But here it is in black and white!" protested Sammy. "If the pater's sent you a whacking remittance, and you're trying to pinch my share, there'll be a row!" he added darkly, which remark went to prove just how much brotherly affection and trust existed between the Bunters.

"You burbling idiot!" growled Bunter major. "It says Samuel Bunter there, I know; but it isn't our pater."

Sammy Bunter's face fell.

"Oh crumbs! What a sell! But are you sure it isn't?"

Bunter major granted and drew a grubby envelope from his pocket. Its exterior bore the well-known caligraphy of Mr. Samuel Bunter; its interior contained a message in the equally well-known style of that busy City gentleman. The letter ran:

"Dear Billy,—Sammy has written to me for some more pocket-money, little knowing that at the moment I find myself embarrassed to pay both of your term fees. Really, as an elder brother, I expect you to exercise a certain control over Sammy. You will kindly tell Sammy from me that it is impossible for me to send him any more pocket-money.

"In haste,
Your affectionate,
"FATHER."

"The stingy beast!" muttered Sammy. "Like his cheek, too, to expect you to have control over me. Yah! You come meddling with me and you'll get my boot!" he added defiantly.

Billy Bunter's face darkened.

"I don't want any of your cheek," he growled, "or I'll box your ears!"

Sammy Bunter immediately assumed a warlike attitude.

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"Yah! Come and try it on if you want a dot on the boko!"

But Bunter major had no particular desire for a "dot on the boko." He choked down his wrath and returned to the subject that had brought him and his minor into the study.

"If we play our cards properly, Sammy," he said, "there's no reason why this paragraph out of the paper shouldn't do us a bit of good."

"What do you mean?" Bunter major grinned complacently.

"The fellows'll come round pretty soon when I show 'em a letter from the pater apologising for the delay in sending the five hundred pounds—"

Sammy Bunter started.

"Five hundred which?"

"Pounds!" retorted Bunter major. "You see, I've been telling the fellows that a cheque for that amount is on the way to me."

Sammy Bunter looked at his brother admiringly.

"You're a cool card, Billy. But how can you show the chaps a letter from the pater if he hasn't sent one?"

"He, he, he!" cackled the Owl of the Remove. "That's easy. I'll nip into old Quelch's study and use his typewriter. See?"

"You mean fake a letter so that it appears to have come from the pater?"

"Of course!" said Bunter major. "The fellows would twig my handwriting if I wrote in my own fist."

"But what's the idea?" asked Sammy.

"Don't you see?" snapped Bunter major petulantly. "There's heaps of fellows who'll lend me a bob now and again if they really think the gov'nor's made a fortune."

"But what's going to happen when they find out that you've been spoofing them?"

"Hem!" That sudden reminder that after every feast, so to speak, there's a reckoning pulled the Owl of the Remove up with a jerk. "We don't want to worry about that now."

"We!" hooted Sammy Bunter. "Don't drag me into it, you silly ass!"

"Why—" began Bunter major warmly.

"I don't mind going halves in what you get in the way of grub or money," said Sammy Bunter thoughtfully. "In fact, I insist on that as my share. But—"

"You young rascal!" roared Bunter major. "You jolly well won't get anything."

Sammy's answer came swiftly.

"Then I'll give you away!"

"You young rotter!" exclaimed Billy wrathfully.

"You cheeky ass!" roared Sammy.

"I'll give you a jolly good hiding!"

"Yah! Try it on and see what you get!" retorted Sammy, squaring up to his major with clenched fists.

How this brotherly dispute would have ended it is difficult to say. Fortunately for the Bunter brothers, Peter Todd looked into the study at that moment in search of his cricket bat. He paused on the threshold as he saw Billy and Sammy in fighting attitudes.

"Hallo! Trouble over the giddy millions already?" he remarked, with a grin.

Billy Bunter winked at his minor.

"I—I— We—we were just practising with the gloves—I—I mean, I was just showing Sammy how to parry a straight left. Wasn't I, Sammy?"

And Sammy, playing up to his plump brother, nodded.

"Lucky you came in, Todd," he remarked, with cheek characteristic of

the Second Form, "or I would have given Billy a black eye—"

"Why, you cheeky rotter—" began Billy.

But Sammy knew he had the whip-hand, and the look he gave his major plainly said so.

"Billy thinks he can box," the fag prattled on. "Like a lot of you Remove men, he's got a thumping big idea of himself. But he couldn't box a blind man with one arm tied behind his back."

Peter Todd chuckled and reached for his bat, and Sammy took the opportunity of dodging out of the study.

"See you later, Billy!" he called out carelessly. "You'll let me know when the five hundred quidlets arrive, won't you?"

And with that remark he rolled away to the Second Form quarters, a very satisfied expression on his podgy face.

— — —

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter is Willing!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here's our giddy millionaire!"

Bob Cherry's stentorian tones rang out as the Owl of the Remove rolled down to the gates.

Four of the members of the Famous Five were there waiting for Harry Wharton, who was chatting with Wingate of the Sixth on Little Side. On the ground was a well-filled cricket bag, the sight of which made Bunter's eyes glisten and his mouth water.

"All ready for the picnic?" he panted as he rolled up.

"All ready, old fat man!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting," said Bunter. "Shall I carry the bag?"

"Hands off that bag!" growled Johnny Bull, "or there'll be a dead porpoise knocking around the quad!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Where are we going?" asked Bunter.

"I don't know where you're going," said Bob Cherry genially. "But we're going to ramble over the cliffs."

"Good! I'm ready," said Bunter. "But why wait for Wharton? Let's get on without him. There'll be more grub to go round then."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Isn't he the giddy limit?" said Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. Bob looked about him in wonder as that fat cachinnation rang out.

"Any of you chaps got an alarm clock about you?" he asked.

"He, he, he!"

"There it goes again!" said Bob. "Just like a cheap German alarm! Hallo, hallo, hallo! It's Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Here comes Wharton," said Nugent, looking along the drive.

The captain of the Remove came up at the double.

"Sorry to have kept you chaps waiting. Wingate was speaking to me about the St. Jim's match next Wednesday."

"We're ready! Take up the bag, Franky."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Clear off!"

"Oh, really, Bob, old chap, I was going to offer to carry the bag, you know!"

Bob Cherry stopped and winked at his chums.

"You're keen on coming with us for a ramble over the cliffs, old fat man?"

"Rather!" said the Owl of the Remove, blinking longingly at the cricket-bag full of tuck.

"Sure the walk won't tire you out?"

Bunter sniffed.

"I can walk as far as anyone," he said. "Don't worry about that!"

"Right-ho! Grab hold of that bag!" said Bob.

And the fat junior, hardly able to believe in his good fortune, grabbed hold of the bag. It was exceedingly heavy and rather cumbersome to carry. But the thought of what the bag contained stifled any objection Bunter might have had on the score of weight.

"Get busy, Bunter!"

"I'm coming!"

The Owl of the Remove moved off with the bag, and Harry Wharton & Co. ranged themselves round him. They had cottoned on to Bob's little wheeze, but they did not mean to take any chances with Billy Bunter en route, so to speak. They knew Bunter of old.

At a brisk pace the six juniors tramped along the sunny lane that led to the cliffs. But after five minutes of walking Billy Bunter began to pant and grunt like an overfed hippopotamus. Streams of perspiration stood out on his podgy brow, and his arms ached abominably from the weight of the cricket-bag.

"I say, you fellows," he panted, "hadn't we better stop here for a rest? Inky's looking fagged, you know."

There was an indignant hoot from Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"The fagfulness of my ridiculous self is not terrific, but the fagfulness of the ludicrous Bunter is of a wheezeful order!"

"Keep on, old fat man," said Bob Cherry. "We've only another four miles to go!"

"Oh crikey!"

The thought of a four miles' walk was enough to send a shudder down Bunter's spine. But he kept on manfully, the thought of the tuck inside the bag acting as a spur. Besides, he reflected, there might be a chance of giving the party the slip, in which case he would have the cricket-bag and its contents all to himself.

"Wow!"

Bunter's footsteps were lagging as the juniors began to mount the cliff path. He stopped, gasping, mopping the perspiration from his brow.

"Phew!" he panted. "It's beastly hot!"

"Come on, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry boisterously. "Only another three and a half miles, and then tea!"

"Groooough!" gasped the Owl. "I say, can't we have tea now and walk afterwards?"

"Not likely, old fat man!"

"But it's a good idea!" insisted Bunter. "I always walk better after a snack!"

Wharton shook his head.

"We're not tea-ing until we reach the old pirate's cave on the other side of Pegg," he said. "Get a move on, Bunter!"

"Oh crumbs!"

There was nothing for it but for Bunter to get a move on. Wheezing and puffing like a grampus he climbed up the cliff path, dragging the cricket-bag after him. At the top of the cliffs he stopped again and sank wearily against a tree-stump.

"Phew! I feel faint!" he panted. "A snack now would put me to rights!"

But the Famous Five had no intention of opening the bag until they reached the pirate's cave.

"I'll take the bag now," said Nugent, with a wink at Bob Cherry.

And he shouldered it and marched off. His chums followed him, leaving Bunter a very woeful figure by the tree-stump.

"Stop!" he howled. "Wait for me, Wharton—"

"See you later!" chuckled the captain of the Remove.

"Beast! Wait for me, Inky, you beast—"

"The waitfulness is not the proper caper!"

"Wait for me, Bob, old fellow—"

"You catch us up!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Ta-ta!"

"You rotter!" howled Bunter. "Johnny, old chap, you'll wait for me—"

"Yes, with my boot!" growled Johnny Bull.

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"Rotter! Nugent, old fellow—"

"Thanks for carrying the bag!" said Nugent, with a grin. "I'll hope you've enjoyed your walk. We'll save you a tart as a reward. Ta-ta!"

And the Famous Five strolled on at a brisk pace, leaving Billy Bunter sitting by the tree-stump waving a podgy fist after their retreating figures.

"I thought our fat man wouldn't stay the course!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Still, the walk will do him good. There's not much fear of the fat ass catching us up."

"Not likely."

And the Famous Five stepped it out, taking it in turns to carry the bag of tuck, and soon all thoughts of Bunter had been blotted out in the wonderful view the chums had of Pegg Bay as the powerful rays of the sun danced and swayed upon the blue water and the white cliffs.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Findings Keepings!

"PHEW! It's beastly hot!" Thus Billy Bunter. It was three-quarters of an hour since the fat junior had parted company with Harry Wharton & Co.—forty-five minutes of breathless anxiety and apprehension. For shortly after the Famous Five had marched off, leaving Bunter sitting pumping in breath by the tree-stump on the top of the cliffs four elegant youths, wearing the Highcliffe colours, had sauntered along.

They were Ponsonby & Co., and the Highcliffe nuts never let an opportunity go by of ragging Greyfriars, always providing, of course, that the odds were in their favour. Certainly Bunter was no match for any one of the Highcliffe juniors, let alone the four of them, and he had quickly scrambled to his feet and made off as the elegant Pon and his rascally chums hove in sight.

True, they had chased him. True, also, four hefty kicks had landed on the nether portion of Bunter's anatomy. But Pon & Co. were not given to much exercise on a warm afternoon, and they had soon given up the chase. But Bunter, in his blind terror, had not known of that little circumstance; he had imagined that the Highcliffe ragers were hard on his heels, and he had run as he had never run before.

It seemed to be Bunter's unlucky afternoon, for barely had he realised that Pon & Co. had been left far behind when he bumped into Dick Trumper & Co., the boys of the Courtfield Grammar School.

Trumper and his pals were not of the same vicious nature as Pon & Co., but they were always open for a rag with a Greyfriars fellow, and once again Bunter had been set to run.

Really, it had been a very energetic afternoon for the unwieldy, porpoise of the Greyfriars Remove. He had wandered towards the railway station at Friardale at length, for he suddenly remembered that a French penny reposed in his trousers-pocket.

Bunter had tried to pass that foreign coin on to Mrs. Mimble. But the good tuckshop dame had firmly and politely refused to accept same. There was no tuckshop dame to refuse him in one of the chocolate machines, however, hence the happy expression on the fat junior's face as he rolled, a little breathless, towards the station entrance.

At the best of times Friardale Station was a sleepy place. It certainly looked sleepy enough on this warm summer afternoon. Not a soul was in sight as Bunter passed through the barrier on to the platform.

"Good!" he muttered.

With a cautious blink round the Owl of the Remove rolled towards an automatic chocolate machine. There was a chink as the French penny dropped into the slot. A moment later Bunter was unwrapping the paper from a piece of chocolate.

"All blessed paper!" he muttered, in virtuous indignation. "I'm blowed if I'll buy any more!"

He jumped suddenly as the sound of the signal falling disturbed the quietude of the station. Then came the rumble of an approaching train. Munching at the bar of chocolate, Bunter idly watched the gleaming metal track. A few moments later the three-thirty from Courtfield thundered through the station.

Bunter stood back from the edge of the platform as the train sped past. But

as the last carriage but one came abreast of him he heard raised voices in one of the compartments. Next moment something flew out of a window.

Thud!
"Yaroooooh!"

A wild howl escaped Bunter as what appeared to be a tightly-packed roll of papers struck him with no little force on the tip of his podgy nose.

The train clattered by, and Bunter was left caressing the tip of his nose and staring at the object which had struck him.

It lay on the platform not a yard away from him.

"Who the thump threw that at me?" muttered the fat junior, as he rolled towards the bundle of papers. Then, as he stooped to pick them up a low whistle of astonishment escaped him.

"Notes! Pound notes!" he gasped, his eyes almost goggling out of their sockets in his excitement. "Oh, my hat!"

Trembling with excitement, the fat junior slipped the single rubber band that held the notes together. He had not been mistaken. Notes to the value of five hundred pounds lay within his podgy hands.

Pound notes, five-pound notes, and ten-pound notes!

With trembling fingers Billy Bunter counted them.

"Five hundred pounds!" he gasped. "Great Scott!"

Quivering with excitement, Billy Bunter hastily shoved the notes into his trousers-pocket, having first satisfied himself that no one had observed him. Then he rolled out of the station, shaking like a fat jelly.

His conscience told him that it was his duty to take the notes to the police station. Obviously they did not belong to him, and for a few moments the fat and fatuous Removite contemplated this course. Then the voice of the tempter began to whisper in his ear. No one had seen him pick up the notes.

In the seclusion of the woods Bunter pulled the roll of notes from his pocket.

"I wonder if they're genuine?" he muttered. "They look pretty grubby."

They were grubby, very grubby; but, as Bunter reflected, the grubbiness of a note did not lessen its value.

"Five hundred pounds!" he muttered, his eyes wide open with greed. "And they're mine, really. After all, I found them. Or perhaps the chap who threw them at me was an eccentric. I've heard of silly asses chucking their money about like that before."

This latter train of thought seemed to please Billy Bunter. Certainly it appeased the twitchings of his conscience. He remembered having read of an American recluse who had lived on a yacht at Wivenhoe, and who, in his eccentric moments, was wont to throw pound notes and fivers to those individuals who were fortunate enough to be passing at the time.

"That's it," Bunter told himself. "The chap liked the look of my distinguished figure. I must say I'm not surprised. Five hundred pounds!"

And then, as a sudden thought struck him, he let out a whoop of triumph. With five hundred pounds in his pockets the story of his pater's sudden rise to fortune should convince the hardiest of doubting Thomases in the Remove. Besides, the yarn which Bunter had spread amongst his Form-fellows in a moment of swank would serve to avert any suspicion in those who saw that Bunter was rolling in funds. Really, the afternoon had turned out very fortunately for

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him, after all. He almost blessed Ponsonby & Co., and Trumper & Co. for being the indirect cause of his presence at Friardale Station that afternoon.

Only for a moment did he pause to reflect that he was contemplating something of the basest dishonesty. In Bunter's fatuous view findings were keepings. That the law did not hold the same view, that the law took drastic steps to punish those misguided individuals who held that view, did not trouble Billy Bunter at that moment. Besides, he argued with himself, the notes had been thrown at him deliberately by a wealthy eccentric.

The more the fatuous Removite turned over the matter in his mind the weaker became the urgings of his conscience, until at length Bunter rose to his feet firmly convinced that he had every right to retain the notes.

"This will make the fellows sit up!" he muttered, as he rolled towards the school gates. "This'll put paid to the doubting Thomases. He, he, he!"

And with that fat cachinnation Billy Bunter strutted in at the gates with his little snub nose high in the air.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Legal Advice!

"PETER, old chap!"

Peter Todd looked up with a frown of annoyance.

"Shurrup!"

"But, I say—"

Peter Todd cast an expressive glance at the cricket-stump that reposed in the corner of the study, then his gaze travelled to Billy Bunter, who stood framed in the doorway. The two looks spoke eloquently of what was passing in his mind.

"I say, Peter, old man," said Bunter. "I want—"

"Nothing doing, old fat man!" growled Peter Todd, and he fixed his eyes on the bulky-looking volume that was propped up on the study table which signified the termination of his discussion with his fat study-mate.

Peter Todd was busy grappling with the technicalities of the law, for it was his ambition to follow in the footsteps of his father, who was a solicitor. And at such times as he concentrated on what he was pleased to term his "legal studies" Peter disliked any interruption.

Billy Bunter blinked at Peter reproachfully.

"I want—" he began.

Peter Todd snapped the bulky volume shut and rose to his feet. He took a couple of strides towards the corner of the study and caught up the cricket-stump.

"Hold on, old chap!" gasped Bunter.

"I want— Whoooooop!"

"Now buzz off!" snapped Peter curtly.

"Can't you see I'm busy?"

"Wow! You silly ass!" roared

Bunter. "I want—I want your advice! Legal advice, you know!"

"Oh!"

The cricket stump was returned to the corner of the study, and a genial smile spread over Peter Todd's face.

"Then why didn't you say so before?" he said.

Bunter assumed a look of injured dignity.

"You silly ass! You didn't give me a chance."

Peter Todd smiled.

"We'll let that pass, old fat man. Now, what is it you want advice upon? Have you committed a murder—?"

"Nunno!"

"Or a larceny—?"

"No!" roared Bunter.

"Then kindly state your case as quickly as possible," said Peter Todd, adopting the professional manner in which he had heard his father speak to his clients. "Sit down, Mr. Bunter."

"You silly ass!"

"Please be brief, Mr. Bunter," said Todd. "Now, sir!"

He seated himself at the table, and struck a legal-looking attitude, what time he indicated a chair at the other end of the table for his "client."

Bunter rolled towards it and plumped his heavy bulk into it.

"Now, what have you been up to, old fat man?" asked Peter Todd, coming back to earth, so to speak, or, rather, the Remove at Greyfriars. "Cough it up!"

"I haven't been up to anything," protested Bunter. "I want your advice on—"

"So you've said before!" replied Peter crossly.

"Supposing we take a syruptitious case—" began Bunter cautiously.

"A what?"

"A syruptitious case—"

"Oh, I see! You mean a supposititious case. Well?"

"A syrupt—I mean a supposititious case of a man who found, we'll say, a— a fiver!"

Peter Todd looked grim.

"If you've been finding any fivers, you fat ass, you'd better hand 'em over to the police or Mr. Quelch."

For a moment a look of alarm settled on Bunter's fat features, but he quickly regained his composure.

"I haven't been finding any fivers!" he hooted. "We're stating a syruptitious case, ain't we?"

"Go on!"

"What ought that fellow to do if he found a fiver, or, say, two fivers?" continued Bunter.

"I've told you, fathead. Take 'em to the police!"

"But supposing somebody threw them at him?"

Peter Todd snorted.

"I can see anyone throwing fivers at another chap, I don't think!"

"But it's true!" howled Bunter. "I—I mean it's a true supposititious case!"

Peter Todd's keen eyes scarched Bunter's fat face.

"Look here, old fat tulip!" he said grimly. "I don't know what you're driving at, but if you've been helping yourself to someone else's money, you'll take my tip and cough it up now."

"But I haven't. Besides, the chap threw 'em at me!"

"What chap?"

Billy Bunter blinked. He realised that he was overstepping the bounds of caution.

"What chap?" repeated Peter.

"Nobody, you silly fathead!"

"I can see you finishing up at Borstal yet," said Peter, wagging a bony forefinger at his fat studymate. "Now then, cough up the giddy fivers you're talking about."

"But I haven't any fivers!"

"Then what have you been talking about, you silly owl?" snapped Peter.

Bunter's brain began to work quickly.

"I was only st-stating a syruptitious—I mean a supposition—that is to say a preposition—I mean a sup-supposititious case!" he stammered.

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"What for?" asked Peter Todd shrewdly.

"Because—because I'm thinking of taking up law, you know. He, he, he!"

Really Bunter considered that reply a masterpiece.

"You're taking up law?" echoed Peter. "Oh, my hat!"

"I'm going to be a solicitor," continued Bunter. "Now that my pater's made a fortune, he's going to put me to the Bar, you know."

"Sure it's not the tuck-shop?" inquired Peter, with heavy sarcasm.

"Fathead!"

Peter Todd crossed to the corner of the study again, and his hand closed on the cricket stump.

Bunter eyed that proceeding with apprehension.

"Wharrer you going to do?" he gasped.

"Give you a start, if you're taking up law," said Peter. "Members of the legal profession have to have characters beyond reproach. You'll have a long way to go before you qualify in that direction. Still, a few hidings with a stump will do you a power of good. See?"

Apparently Bunter did see, for he backed to the door hastily.

"Don't you come near with that stump, Peter Todd!" he bawled.

Whack!

Peter paid no heed to his fat study-mate's injunction. The stump lunged out and there was a roar from Bunter.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Have another?" asked Peter.

But Billy Bunter did not want another. He turned and fled from the study like a fat rabbit, a second lunge of the stump catching him on his tight trousers, and giving him an additional turn of speed, so to speak.

Bunter had come to Peter Todd for legal advice. Whether a couple of lunges from a cricket stump could be called legal advice was doubtful. But Peter Todd was satisfied, at any rate. He tossed the stump into the corner and resumed his reading of the bulky legal volume. And in the interesting—interesting to Peter—long-winded effusion on the Law of Common Property, Peter Todd soon forgot the existence of Billy Bunter.

But Bunter hadn't forgotten Peter Todd. At a safe distance down the Remove passage the fat junior turned, panting for breath.

"Beast!" he gasped. "I wouldn't be a lawyer for anything. They're all beasts. And that rotter Peter Todd is the worst of the lot!"

And having delivered himself of these sentiments, the Owl of the Remove rolled on down the passage and made for the Common-room. He was glad to find it empty, for he wanted to be alone. The five hundred pounds that reposed in his pocket seemed to burn him like a red-hot cinder. Once he was tempted to go to Mr. Quelch, the master

of the Remove, and lay all the facts before him, together with the five hundred pounds. But the thought was painful to Bunter. He had never handled five hundred pounds before in his life, and the idea of parting with them now sent a shudder down his spine.

"I'll stick to 'em," he muttered. "After all, they're mine. Nobody can prove that they're not!"

For five minutes more Bunter sat

rolled to his feet, and walked to the window of the Common-room. Mr. Quelch was in the quad below talking to Mr. Prout, and as Bunter noticed this fact his fat grin deepened.

"Nothing like striking while the iron is hot," he muttered. "He, he, he!"

He rolled to the door of the Common-room and peered out cautiously. The passage was deserted, for most of the Removites were on Little Side. Next moment the fat junior had scuttled along to the master's passage. He arrived at the door of Mr. Quelch's study panting. With a nervous blink round he turned the handle and rolled inside.

Click!

The key of the Remove master's door turned on the inside, and Bunter, breathing heavily, moved to the table. Standing on it was a typewriter upon which Mr. Quelch was wont to type his "History of Greyfriars." In a few moments the cover of the machine had been taken off and a sheet of clean quarto paper slipped behind the roller. Then Bunter began to type.

This is what he wrote:

"Dear Billy,—I am enclosing a fiver. Will send you another in a day or so.

"In haste,
"Your affechnate,
"FATHER."

"Good!" muttered Bunter, surveying the result of his handiwork and oblivious of its weakness in the spelling line. "Now for the envelope."

Calmly he helped himself to one of Mr. Quelch's envelopes. On this he typed his own address. Then, gathering up the sheet of paper, together with the envelope, he scuttled to the door and softly turned the key.

Fortunately for him the coast was clear, and with a sigh of relief he rolled down the passage. The first part of Billy Bunter's wheeze had passed off successfully. It remained to be seen how the rest of it would fare.

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there in the Common-room, what time a really astute wheeze—in his estimation, at any rate—took form in his podgy brain. If it could have been worked, the five hundred pounds would remain his without danger to his fat hide. And as the wheeze took shape, a happy expression settled on the Owl's face, and a deep chuckle escaped him.

"He, he, he! Easy as falling off a log!"

With that comforting remark Bunter

"Well, there's been some high old times on the line between Courtfield and Friardale this afternoon," said Harry Wharton. "A chap was coming back from the races at Wapshot, when another fellow attacked him."

"Oh!" Frank Nugent was interested, for it was seldom that anything out of the ordinary happened in the quiet village of Friardale and the surrounding neighbourhood.

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THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Easy!

"SEEN the evening paper, Franky?"

It was after prep that night, and most of the Remove were assembled in the Common-room when Harry Wharton asked the question.

Frank Nugent shook his head.

"Well, there's been some high old times on the line between Courtfield and Friardale this afternoon," said Harry Wharton. "A chap was coming back from the races at Wapshot, when another fellow attacked him."

"Oh!" Frank Nugent was interested, for it was seldom that anything out of the ordinary happened in the quiet village of Friardale and the surrounding neighbourhood.

"Apparently the chap had won a pile of money at the races," said Wharton. "Five hundred pounds, so it said in the paper, and he must have been followed from the course by a footpad."

"Did the footpad merchant get away with the spoils?"

Wharton shook his head.

"That's the funny part about it," he said. "The chap who was attacked, know that it was his money the rotter was after, so he chucked a wad of it out of the carriage window rather than let his assailant have it."

"Oh, my hat! What happened after that?"

"The assailant Johnny got the wind up, and jumped off the train. So did the fellow who had been robbed. He raced back to Friardale Station, where he says he threw out the money, and began to hunt round for it."

"Did he find it?"

"No!" said Wharton. "The blessed wad of money seems to have disappeared from off the face of the earth."

Frank Nugent whistled.

"Well, that's queer," he remarked. "But what about the porter at the station?"

"He didn't know anything about it," said Wharton. "It was a through train, you see, and the porter was having his tea."

Frank Nugent grinned.

"Well, if the money wasn't found, it looks as if somebody was telling whoppers—"

"That's what I think," said Wharton. "About twenty yokels were roped in to hunt round for the filthy lucre, but nobody found it. Fishy affair altogether."

"Looks like it," said Frank. "But if the story is true, it won't be an easy matter for the chap—if any—who boned the cash to spend it. The numbers of the notes, for instance. Surely there were some five and ten-pound notes in the wad?"

Wharton nodded.

"But here's the rub," he said. "The notes were given on the racecourse. And notes change hands there about a hundred times in the course of an afternoon. It's impossible to trace the numbers."

Frank Nugent whistled.

"That makes it awkward for the chap who's been robbed," he remarked. "Still, he shouldn't be such a silly ass as to go racing."

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter edged nearer the mantelpiece where Wharton and Frank Nugent were standing. He had overheard every word of the conversation, and his piggy little eyes were glittering with excitement.

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"Hope you enjoyed your walk this afternoon," grinned Nugent.

"Yah!" exclaimed Bunter, as recollection of the trick the Famous Five had played on him returned. "But I say, is that right about the notes—"

"What notes?" asked Wharton. "Oh, I see, you mean about the robbery on the train this afternoon."

"That's it!" said Bunter eagerly. "I happened to hear you talking about it to Nugent."

Nugent's lip curled.

"Is there anything you don't 'happen' to hear when other chaps are talking?"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"What is it you want to know, old fat man?" he said.

"I heard you say that it is impossible

to trace the notes I've—I mean that that silly ass chucked out of the train."

"Quite true!"

Bunter's fat face cleared. For one terrifying moment it had come home to him that the five hundred pounds in his pocket could be traced by their numbers, for there were five and ten-pound notes amongst them. That important point he had overlooked when he had decided to retain his find. Fortunately for him, at least that was how he regarded it, the fact that the notes had been in circulation on a racecourse made tracing them a matter of almost impossibility. Bunter breathed a fat sigh of relief as these things penetrated his podgy brain.

Wharton eyed him curiously.

"You seem very excited about this train bizney," he remarked. "If it weren't for the fact that I know you couldn't have been in the vicinity of Friardale Station this afternoon I should begin to think that you had found the notes."

Billy Bunter jumped. Little did the captain of the Remove know how near he was to the truth.

"He, he, he!" Bunter forced an unmusical cackle. "I can take a little joke, Wharton, old chap. He, he, he!"

But that unmusical cackination was too much for Frank Nugent. He moved away from the mantelpiece, and Wharton followed him, leaving Bunter standing there, feeling very elated with himself.

Skinner & Co. strolled up to him. It wanted five minutes to bed-time, and the cad of the Remove intended to fill in the time by pulling Bunter's leg on the subject of his father's sudden rise to fortune.

"Your five hundred arrived yet?" inquired Harold Skinner.

And Snoop and Stott and Trevor grinned.

Billy Bunter blinked loftily.

"I'm expecting a remittance to-morrow," he said, with dignity.

"For five hundred?"

Bunter's brain worked quickly. A lie came easily to his tongue when he was in a quandary, and it came now.

"For a fiver at least," he answered. "You don't think I'm such a fool as to let the pater send me five hundred, do you? Old Quelch would confiscate the cheque on the spot."

Bunter's reply was an astute one, for it fell to the lot of Mr. Quelch to examine the incoming correspondence of the Remove juniors. Sometimes fellows like Smithy, Lord Mauleverer, Wun Lung, and Hurree Singh received "fivers," and these were allowed to "go through." But anything over a fiver was bound to cause an inquiry, and in many cases it had been returned to the sender.

"I suppose it will be for fivepence when it does arrive," chuckled Skinner.

"Fathead!" roared Bunter. "You'll see for yourself to-morrow, you rotter!"

"Bed-time, you kids!"

It was the voice of George Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, whose duty it was to see lights out that night. And the Remove broke up and began to mount the staircase for their dormitory.

Billy Bunter was the subject of much chipping before slumber settled on the Remove. His airy talk of five hundred pounds created much merriment. But despite it all, the fat junior stuck to his guns with the one amendment that he was going to receive a fiver in the morning and not five hundred quids, which drew further roars of laughter from the Remove. But Bunter was confident; on the morrow he was going to

receive a fiver, but the manner of its arrival would have astonished the doubting Thomases in the Remove had they but known it.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Treat!

"O H, my hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"My giddy aunt!"

These exclamations rang out on every side next morning as Billy Bunter made a dash for the post-rack, grabbed a letter addressed to him, and hastily slit the envelope.

His action was watched by a group of curious Removites, whose curiosity had changed to astonishment and wonder as the Owl of the Remove withdrew a slip of paper with a typewritten message on it, and, what was more to the point, a rustling five-pound note!

"Oh, Jerusalem!" gasped Fisher T. Fish, the Transatlantic junior. "If this doesn't beat the whole shebang!"

"Jumping snakes!"

Billy Bunter smirked and held up the fiver for everyone to view.

"Perhaps you rotters will believe me now. And there's plenty more to come. The pater says that he's sending me another in a day or two."

"But you haven't read his letter yet," said Harold Skinner, eyeing the fat Removite suspiciously.

Billy Bunter started. In his eagerness to produce proof he had nearly given himself away.

"Oh, that's all right," he said. "The pater told me that in his last letter, you see."

"Oh, my hat!"

The Removites crowded round Bunter, hardly able to believe their eyes. Bunter had received a remittance at last. Not a common or garden tip of ten bob, or a quid, but a whole fiver! Really it was time for the skies to fall.

"Is it a good one?" asked Skinner, with a sharp glance at the fiver.

Billy Bunter sniffed disdainfully and handed the note to Hazeldene, who stood at his elbow. Hazel took it like a fellow in a dream. But it was a genuine fiver. There was no doubt about that. Even Skinner was satisfied on that point.

"Well, this beats the band!" gasped Trevor.

"Who said the age of miracles was past?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter unfolded the letter and cleared his throat.

"Listen to what the pater says, your chaps. 'Dear Billy, I am enclosing a fiver. Will send you another in a day or so. In haste, your affectionate, Father.'"

With trembling fingers Bunter refolded the letter and hastily put it in his pocket. Then he took the five-pound note from Hazeldene.

"Wish I had a millionaire pater," said Ogilvy.

"Same here!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed Bob Cherry, coming upon the scene with the rest of the Famous Five. "What's all the rumpus about?"

"Bunter's fiver has arrived!" said Hazeldene.

"Gammon!" exclaimed Bob.

"The gammonfulness of the esteemed fiver is terrific," ejaculated Inky.

And Wharton and Nugent chuckled.

But their expressions quickly changed as Bunter produced the fiver and handed it over for inspection.

"My giddy aunt!" said Bob Cherry



Billy Bunter tore open the door of Study No. 7, and rushed inside. Slam! The door was banged to, the key was turned in the lock, and Bunter leaned against the door, drinking in great gulps of air. Crash! Horace Coker's big fist smashed against the panels, and Coker's big voice backed it up. "Open this door, you fat frog! I'll smash you!" "Yah!" yelled Bunter. "Go and fry your face!" (See Chapter 8.)

faintly. "Do I sleep, do I dream, do I wonder and doubt, are things what they seem: or is visions about!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter's told the truth for once!" ejaculated Frank Nugent.

"Great Scott!" gasped Wharton. "It's a genuine fiver!"

"Of course it is!" snorted Billy Bunter. "Do you think my pater would send me a dud one?"

"Well, if he's made a million of 'em in a few weeks," said Skinner, "I should imagine there's a good number of dud ones amongst them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the Removites, although they appreciated Harold Skinner's joke, could see that the fiver was a genuine one.

Just then the breakfast bell sounded, and the juniors trooped into the dining-room in a noisy throng, discussing Bunter's luck and his fiver.

And after breakfast Billy Bunter was surrounded by an admiring group. Really it was surprising what a difference a fiver made to a fellow's company! Without a fiver Billy Bunter was a person of no importance at all. Indeed, some fellows kicked Bunter every time they saw him. But a Bunter with a fiver was a very different sort of proposition; he was a person to be cultivated—while the fiver lasted, at least.

With all his obtuseness Billy Bunter knew exactly how he was regarded by the Removites, but it made no difference to him. He liked the limelight, and he was getting it in chunks now, so to

speak. And, moreover, his supply of fivers would last out for a considerable time. Of the baseness of his position he never gave a thought. He knew now that he had "found" five hundred pounds—that no eccentric had deliberately thrown them at him—and in the fat junior's view findings were keepings.

Surrounded by his admiring "friends," Billy Bunter rolled towards the tuckshop. His good-fortune had not impaired his appetite. Indeed, he had eaten more at breakfast that morning than any six fellows put together. Snoop and Stott, anxious to prove their friendship, had been charitable enough to pass their bacon over to Billy Bunter, doubtless as a sprat to catch the proverbial whale. Yet, despite the extra "helpings" the Owl of the Remove had consumed, he was still hungry.

In a chattering, buzzing group the juniors streamed into the tuckshop.

Mrs. Mimble came to the counter and eyed them in surprise. It was very unusual for her to receive custom at so early an hour in the morning. True, Billy Bunter made it a practice to roll tuckshopwards after breakfast every morning in an endeavour to inveigle the good dame into giving him credit. Equally true, Mrs. Mimble, with admirable consistency, refused to give the fat junior a crumb on tick. And there business ceased until after morning lessons.

"What do you young gentlemen want?" asked Mrs. Mimble, as the Removites poured into her little shop.

"Grub," said Bunter—"and plenty of it!"

"Who's paying, Master Bunter?" inquired Mrs. Mimble suspiciously.

The Owl of the Remove drew himself up haughtily.

"I am!"

Mrs. Mimble pursed her lips.

"Then I'd like to see the colour of your money, Master Bunter," she remarked grimly.

"Oh, that's all right!" grinned Bunter, diving a hand into his jacket pocket and producing the five-pound note. "Take it out of this."

"Lawks a mossy!" murmured the good dame, as she beheld the fiver.

"Three dozen tarts," ordered the fat junior. "That'll do for me for a start. And let these fellows have what they want," he added generously.

"Good old Bunter!"

"I've always liked old Bunter," said Harold Skinner, with a wink at Snoop and Stott.

"Such a generous chap!" said Snoop. "Rather!" agreed Stott. "One of the best!"

In five minutes the group of juniors were munching away at tarts, eclairs, buns, and other fascinating dainties, and the little tuckshop rang to the chatter and laughter of Bunter's newly-found friends, punctuated by the popping of ginger-beer corks.

But Bunter himself hardly said a word. He was too busy. Already two dozen of the jam-tarts had disappeared.

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inside his capacious stomach, and his fat face was sticky and shiny.

Very soon, however, the other juniors began to tire, some of them wishing that they hadn't eaten their breakfast that morning. But Bunter kept on. Indeed, he looked capable of demolishing everything eatable that the tuckshop contained. But he had to desist when the bell for first lesson pealed out.

He clambered from the stool reluctantly.

"How much is that, ma'am?"

Mrs. Mimble made a swift calculation.

"Two pounds seven shillings and elevenpence," she said.

Bunter handed over the fiver with an airy gesture and took his change, and, still surrounded by his group of admirers, rolled towards the School House.

In class Mr. Quelch noted his sticky face and rewarded him with an imposition of fifty lines for coming into the Form-room in a "disgusting state." But the fat junior didn't mind, for Snoop generously offered to do the lines for him.

So far the fat junior's wheeze was panning out well, but he was to be reminded ere long of the truth of the old saying that "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Halves!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here's Inspector Grimes!"

The Famous Five were strolling down to the gates after lunch that day when Bob Cherry sighted the stalwart figure of the police-inspector from Courtfield walking up the drive.

"Wonder what he wants?" said Nugent.

"Blessed if I know!" said Bob Cherry. "And blessed if I care!"

Someone else who had witnessed the arrival of the inspector apparently did care—and that was Billy Bunter. The fat junior was making for the tuckshop for a little snack before dinner, surrounded by a host of admirers, who doubtless hoped to join in the snack, when he sighted Inspector Grimes.

"Oh crumbs!"

For a moment Billy Bunter's heart stood still. Into his mind surged all manner of alarming thoughts. Had the inspector come to inquire about the missing notes? Had Bunter been seen picking them up? Had the inspector come to the school to take him away?

Bunter's jaw dropped.

Skinner & Co., who were with him, eyed these changing expressions on Bunter's face curiously. But they were not prepared for Bunter's next movement.

With an ejaculation of dismay, the fat junior tore himself away and scuttled back to the School House as fast as his legs would carry him.

"What's his game?" demanded Skinner, in surprise.

"Blessed if I know!" granted Snoop.

"It looks as if the feed is off!" growled Stott.

It certainly did look like it, for Bunter was now out of sight. And, with deep frowns of annoyance on their faces, Skinner & Co. tramped away—but not in the direction of the tuckshop.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter had rushed breathlessly up the School House steps, his one aim being to put as much distance between himself and the inspector as was possible. It was said of old that more haste usually means less speed.

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And the truth of the old saying was borne out with painful results as Bunter charged recklessly up the steps.

Crash!

It was unfortunate that Horace Coker of the Fifth should elect to come along at that moment. Bunter met him in full career.

"Whoooooop!"

"Oh! Oooooooch!"

Bunter and Coker collapsed in a gasping heap at the top of the School House steps.

"You clumsy fag!" panted Coker.

"Why, I'll burst you!"

But Bunter had no intention of staying there for Horace Coker to vent his rage upon. He scrambled to his feet and tore off down the Remove passage at top speed. After him rushed the outraged Fifth-Former, breathing threats of slaughter.

Slam!

Bunter tore open the door of Study No. 7, rushed inside, and slammed it home. The key turned in the lock, and Bunter leaned against the door, drinking in great gulps of air.

Crash!

Coker's big fist smashed against the panel, and Coker's big voice backed it up.

"Open this door, you fat frog! I'll smash you!"

Which was not exactly a diplomatic way of going about things. Certainly Bunter was not likely to open the door in order to be smashed by Horace Coker.

"Yah! Go and fry your face!" was the inelegant rejoinder that floated to the ears of the great man of the Fifth.

For five minutes or more Horace Coker hammered at the door, but he gave it up at last and trudged off down the passage, with scowling brow.

Meantime, Bunter had deposited his huge bulk in the only armchair the study boasted. His head was in a whirl. At any moment now he expected to hear the martial tramp of Inspector Grimes' footsteps halt outside Study No. 7.

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter.

He rolled to his feet and crossed to the cupboard. There was a loose board in the flooring at the bottom of the cupboard, and feverishly Bunter tore it up. Then he drew the four hundred and ninety-five pounds from his trousers-pocket, and, with a regretful sigh, deposited them in the cavity. A moment later and the floorboard had been returned to its accustomed place.

Bunter had just returned to the armchair into which he had collapsed, quivering like a fat jelly, when the passage without rang to the tread of several feet.

The Owl's heart almost missed a beat.

He heard the handle of the study door being turned, and a muffled groan escaped him. Then came a smart rap at the panels, and Peter Todd's well-known voice.

"Bunter! Unlock this door! You're wanted!"

"Oh dear!" gasped the fat junior.

"Open this door, you silly owl!" roared Peter impatiently.

"I'm not here!" gasped Bunter. "Tell him I'm not here, Toddy, there's a good chap!"

"But I know you're here!" It was Wharton's voice this time. "Coker told me that you barged him over and bolted in here."

"Coker's a liar!" said Bunter. "I'm not here. You tell Inspector Grimes that he's come to the wrong shop. See?"

"What on earth are you burbling about?" demanded the captain of the

Remove. "It's compulsory cricket practice to-day and you've got to turn out."

"And look smart about it!" growled Peter Todd. "I want my bat."

"Oh!"

Bunter breathed a sigh of relief. Evidently the inspector had not asked to see him yet.

"Has that beast Grimes gone?" asked the fat junior cautiously.

"Just," came Bob Cherry's voice. "He only came to leave some tickets for a polico dance, I believe."

"Oh!" There was no mistaking the relief Billy Bunter felt as he heard that intelligence, and the juniors on the other side of the study door looked at each other inquiringly.

But Peter Todd was growing wrathful. He hammered on the door impatiently.

"If you don't open this door in two seconds, you fat barrel, I'll skin you!" he hissed.

"Oh, really, Todd—"

The key turned in the lock at last and Peter threw the door open, with an angry gesture.

Wharton, Nugent, and Bob Cherry, attired in flannels, followed him in.

"What the thump did you want to lock me out for?" demanded Peter Todd, picking up his bat from the corner of the study. "I've a good mind to give you six with this bat!"

"Oh, really, Todd," said Bunter lamely. "I thought it was that beast Grimes—I—I—I mean Coker."

Peter Todd eyed his fat studymate grimly.

"You seem pretty anxious to keep out of Grimes' way," he remarked. "What's the little game? What have you been doing, old fat tulip?"

Billy Bunter's wits worked feverishly. He could hardly tell Peter Todd why he wanted to keep out of the inspector's way. Even Bunter realised that that wouldn't do. But he had to say something.

"You see, I—I checked him the other day," he gasped. "That—that's it, Toddy, you know. Awful beast, Grimes."

"So you checked an officer of the law, did you?" said Peter grimly, taking a businesslike grip on the handle of his bat.

"Ye-e-es!"

"Well, members of Study No. 7 are not allowed to check such eminent law officials as inspectors," said Peter Todd severely. "It simply isn't done. Neither is it the thing to keep a chap out of his study when he's in a hurry. Bend him over, you chaps!"

"But I say—" began Bunter in alarm.

And that was all he had time to say just then, for Wharton & Co. laughingly bent him over in the required position whilst Peter Todd swung the bat.

Smack!

"Whoooooop! You rotters! Yowp!" roared Bunter.

"Now travel!" said Wharton. "If you're not changed in five minutes and down on Little Side for the cricket there'll be ructions."

"Wow!"

Billy Bunter straightened himself, gave the juniors a reproachful glance, and rolled out of the study. But he felt relieved for all that. The five hundred pounds, or rather what was left of it, was still his. He was musing thus as he made his way up to the dormitory to change when a smaller edition of himself suddenly barred his passage.

It was Sammy Bunter of the Second. There was a curious expression on the fat fag's face.

"What the thump do you want?" growled Bunter major.

"You, old bean," said Sammy. "I've heard the fellows talking about a fiver the pater sent you from home."

Billy Bunter started. In the importance of looking after himself first he had quite overlooked the fact that his minor knew half the plot he had sprung on the Remove.

"What about it?" demanded Bunter major aggressively.

Sammy Bunter held out a grubby hand.

"Halves!" he said laconically.

"Eh?"

"Halves!" repeated Sammy.

"Go and eat coke!" exclaimed Bunter major rudely.

"I'll go and tell Wharton fast enough that you've bamboozled the Remove into thinking that the pater's made a fortune," said Sammy defiantly.

"Don't be a young ass, Sammy!" breathed Bunter major. "It would spoil the whole game."

"Shell out, then!"

Bunter groped in his pocket. He had the change from the fiver he had given Mrs. Mumble that morning, and amongst it were a few odd shillings. One of these he handed to his minor.

"There you are, Sammy," he said magnanimously. "Now run away and keep your mouth shut."

But Sammy did nothing of the kind. He eyed the solitary shilling with unmingled scorn and contempt.

"What's this?" he asked.

"A bob!"

Sammy glared.

"I said halves!" he exclaimed firmly. "And I mean halves. Two pounds-ten, please!"

"You young rotter—"

"You swindler!"

The Bunters were evenly matched. They watched each other for a couple of minutes, Billy wondering whether it would be safe to kick his minor the whole length of the passage, Sammy wondering if he could give his charming brother a couple of black eyes and "get away" with it.

"Look here, Sammy," said Billy at length, "I can't afford to give you two pounds-ten."

"Oh, can't you!" snorted Sammy. "Then I'll jolly soon put Wharton and his crowd wise. I don't know where you've got this fiver from. But you've got it, and I want my whack as arranged. See?"

There was no help for it. Sammy was very determined, Bunter major could see. But the fat Remove took comfort in the fact that there still remained four hundred and ninety-five pounds of his "find." Sammy didn't know that side of the plot, which was undoubtedly an advantage.

With as much grace as he could muster, therefore, Billy Bunter pulled out two pounds ten shillings from his pockets in notes and handed them to his minor.

"Thanks, Billy!" said Sammy eagerly. "I say, though, where did you get 'em?"

"Find 'out!" snapped Bunter major testily.

"Oh, I don't want to know," said Sammy, with a grin. "If there's any rumpus, I know nothing about it."

"But you've just had two pounds ten shillings from me."

Sammy poked his tongue out.

"There's nothing wrong in a young brother taking a tip from his elder brother, is there?" he asked innocently.

"You—you—you—" Words failed Billy Bunter. When it came down to brass tacks Sammy usually showed that

he possessed more of the Bunter brains than his major did.

"Ta-ta!" grinned Sammy.

And he rolled off down the passage, rustling the notes he had extracted from his major.

Something suddenly seemed to strike Billy Bunter.

"Stop!" he bawled, rolling after his minor.

"What's wrong now?"

"You didn't give me the shilling back," said Billy wrathfully.

"Oh!"

Sammy delved into his pocket and brought to light the shilling.

"Catch!"

The coin whizzed through the air straight for Bunter major. He caught it all right—on the tip of his nose, and he let out a fiendish roar.

"Yooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sammy roared with laughter. That was too much for his major. With a bellow like a bull he rushed after Sammy and aimed a tremendous kick at him. But at the critical moment Sammy moved, and his major's foot, meeting with no resistance, swept up high in the air in a movement that brought the Remove crashing down on his back.

Thump!

"Yaroooooh!" roared Billy.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chirruped Sammy.

"Do it again, Billy!"

"Wow! You grinning-rotter! You wait till I get up!"

But Sammy was wise in his generation. He had got what he came for, and there seemed nothing more to be gained by prolonging the interview, unless it were a kicking, so Sammy beat it while the going was good.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Nerve!

"ANOTHER fiver!"

Harold Skinner came abreast of Billy Bunter, who was standing by the letter-rack a few days later. In the fat junior's hand was a grubby envelope, with a typewritten address on it. But Skinner's eyes did not dwell on the envelope; they sought the crisp piece of paper in Bunter's hand. The cad of the Remove could see at a glance that it was a fiver.

"Another fiver, old chap," he remarked, by way of opening the conversation.

Billy Bunter nodded.

"Yes. The pater's going to send me another one in a few days' time," he said airily. "Money's no object to him now, you know."

"No, I suppose not," said Skinner gravely.

"By the way, Skinner," said Bunter, "you might make a list of the fellows of whom I've borrowed paltry loans from time to time, will you?"

"Are you going to square up with them?"

"Of course I am, Skinner. I hope I'm a fellow of my word. When I borrow money I always square up. Not like you, old chap. You're a bit shifty, if I may say so—"

"Oh!"

Skinner choked down something in his throat. But for that fiver Billy Bunter's bullet head would have been smiting the wall violently. Still, there were lots of nasty taunts Skinner would stand from a fellow with money that he would not stand from a fellow who was stony. So he forced a smile and looked as friendly as he could.

"If you'll get the names of the fellows and the amounts," went on Bunter cheerfully, "I'll settle up. See?"

"That'll mean a lot of money," ventured Skinner.

"Money is no object," said Bunter loftily.

"Ahem!" coughed Skinner. "I say," he added, by way of an afterthought, "what are you doing this afternoon, Bunter, old chap? What do you say to a little game of poker?"

But Billy Bunter shook his head.

"Not this afternoon," he said. "I'm playing cricket!"

Skinner nearly collapsed.

"P-playing cricket?"

Bunter nodded.

"Yes. I'm just going along to see Wharton about it now."

"Oh, my hat!" said Skinner faintly.

The idea of Bunter playing cricket was enough to make anyone feel faint—for the fat Owl of the Remove would hardly have been good enough to play with a team of kindergarten children.

"It's the St. Jim's match to-day, you know," said Bunter cheerfully. "Wharton will jump at the chance of playing me."

"Yes, I don't think," murmured Skinner.

"You'll get that list for me, Skinner," said Bunter. "Tell the chaps I'll settle up to-night. Tell 'em that I'm standing a ripping spread in the tuckshop to-morrow."

"Yes, certainly!" said Skinner, who was thinking how much he could stick himself down for on Bunter's loan list.

The fat Owl of the Remove rolled away down the passage and halted outside Study No. 1. The Famous Five, attired in flannels, with the exception of Nugent, were at home there when a fat face poked its way round the door. Immediately there was a chorus of injunctions.

"Get out!"

"Roll away!"

"Vamoose!"

"Beat it hopfully!"

Evidently Billy Bunter was not exactly welcome as the flowers in May, so far as Study No. 1 was concerned.

But that made little difference to a fellow with Bunter's thickness of hide. He advanced into the study with a cheery grin on his fat face.

(Continued overleaf.)



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persisted Skinner. "They would have been stopped by Quelchy."

"That's true," agreed Snoop. "But perhaps Bunter met his pater or something. After all, it's no business of ours how much a chap gets from his father, is it?"

"I suppose not," said Skinner, biting his lip; "but I believe there's something fishy about the whole business."

Snoop and Stott laughed. They were not quite so shrewd as Harold Skinner at seeing trouble in advance.

"If you feel like that about it," grinned Snoop, "you had better hand back your whack of the eight pounds to Bunter."

"That's it!" said Stott, with a chuckle. "You always were a virtuous youth, Skinny."

And Harold Skinner laughed and began to divide the eight pounds the three young scamps had won, but it was very noticeable that he put his "whack" in his wallet. There was not much chance of Bunter recovering it once it got there.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Whose Money?

"SEEN that ass, Bunter?"

It was Peter Todd who asked that question as he came upon the Famous Five after tea the next day.

There was a grave expression on Peter's lean features that arrested Harry Wharton & Co's attention at once.

"I believe he's in the tuckshop!" volunteered Nugent.

"Standing treat to his friends!" added Johnny Bull significantly.

"The friendfulness for the esteemed and ludicrous Bunter is terrific now that he is rolling in funds fundfully," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a dusky smile.

Peter Todd nodded.

"Can you chaps spare a minute?" he asked suddenly.

"Always spare a moment for you, Toddy, old bean!" said Wharton.

"Then come up to the study, will you?" said Peter.

And he led the way to Study No. 7 in the Remove passage, followed by the Famous Five, who saw at once that something serious had disturbed Peter Todd's equanimity.

When they were seated in Study No. 7, Peter drew a crumpled letter from his pocket.

"You chaps know me well enough to understand that I wouldn't read a fellow's correspondence in the ordinary course of events," he said, with a faint blush. "But this letter belongs to Bunter."

"Oh!"

"I've been feeling that there's something wrong about our tame porpoise with all his money," said Peter, breaking the silence that settled on the Famous Five. "You know I always make it my business to keep a friendly eye on him."

"Rather!" said Wharton. "The fat idiot would have landed in pretty hot water several times but for you, Toddy."

"Hear, hear!" added Nugent and Bob Cherry.

And Hurree Janset Ram Singh added that the "hear, hearfulness" was terrific.

"Read it!" said Peter, handing the letter to Wharton. "I found the thing lying about the bookcase half an hour ago."

Wonderingly, Harry Wharton took the letter and perused it. Then he jumped.

It was the letter Bunter had received or alleged to have received the day his first fiver had arrived.

Harry's chums crowded round him and looked over his shoulder. And from all of them came ejaculations of surprise.

"Great Scott!"

"Phew!"

"A fake!"

"The fakefulness is of the obvious order, my worthy chums!"

Peter Todd nodded grimly.

"You see the trouble with it, then," he remarked. "Queer, isn't it, that Mr. Samuel Bunter should spell another with a U instead of an O. More queer still, isn't it, that he should spell affectionate 'AFFECHUNATE.'"

The captain of the Remove looked troubled.

"Thumping queer!" he said, with a shake of the head. "And the letter isn't even signed."

Bob Cherry took a closer glimpse of the letter. Then he let out an ejaculation of surprise.

"My hat! That's Quelchy's note-paper!"

"And written on Quelchy's typewriter!" added Peter Todd. "I'd know his machine anywhere."

"Then Bunter wrote the blessed thing himself!" growled Johnny Bull. "That's his spelling right enough!"

Peter Todd nodded.

"It's Bunter's without a shadow of doubt!"

Harry Wharton's brows wrinkled in thought.

"What's Bunter's game, Toddy?" he asked, at length. "Why should he write himself a letter saying that there's a fiver inside and expectations of another following in a day or so?"

"That's what beats me," said Peter. "There's something really fishy going on—I'm certain of that. You remember the day old Grimes came up to the school?"

Wharton started.

"Yes. Didn't Bunter lock himself in here? Wasn't he in a blue funk?"

"He was!" agreed Peter Todd.

"Frightened out of his wits until he heard that the inspector had gone."

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Bunter's up to something!"

"There's another thing," said Toddy.

"The fat idiot has only had two fivers sent him since he started to talk about his father's wealth—or, rather, he said that they were sent to him. And yet I understand he paid out about ten quid to the chaps he's been borrowing from."

"That's so," said Nugent. "Trevor told me all about it!"

"It's the talk of the Remove," went on Peter Todd. "Bunter also stood the chaps a feed in the morning he received the fiver which I believe cost him over two quid. In all then he's spent roughly twelve quid when he only received two fivers."

"Phew!"

"Great Scott!"

The Famous Five began to look alarmed. The way Peter Todd put it was enough to rouse alarm in anyone. Obviously, a fellow who was known to be stony before two fivers were sent to him couldn't spend twelve pounds or more.

"But perhaps some of the chaps have made him a loan," said Wharton, "on the strength of his expectations now that his pater is a millionaire."

"There's that possibility," agreed Peter Todd, in a tone, however, that spoke the contrary. "I'm beginning to think now that the story of the sudden wealth of the Bunter family is all moonshine!"

"What!"

Peter's assertion certainly made the Famous Five jump.

"But it was in the paper!" said Nugent. "We all saw it! You did, as well, Toddy, you know!"

"I saw a paragraph that referred to a Mr. Samuel Bunter, I'll admit," said the schoolboy lawyer. "But really that proves little."

"You mean that there may be another Mr. Samuel Bunter on the Stock Exchange?"

"Exactly!" said Peter Todd. "And, what's more, I'm making it my business to find out. I wouldn't poke my nose into any other fellow's business, but with that footling idiot, Bunter, it's different. He doesn't know right from wrong."

Wharton & Co. nodded.

On that point indubitably Peter Todd was right.

"I'm writing to the pater to-night," went on the schoolboy lawyer, "and without giving anything away I'm going to ask him if the Mr. Samuel Bunter mentioned in the newspapers is any relation to the Bunters at Greyfriars."

"Phew!"

"The pater knows a heap of chaps on the Stock Exchange!" continued Peter Todd. "He'd find out like a shot for me!"

The chums of the Remove were silent. Into the mind of each one of them grave doubts as to the veracity of Billy Bunter's yarn were beginning to develop.

"There's still the question of the money," said Bob Cherry, breaking the silence that followed Peter Todd's words.

"There's still the question of money, as you say," observed Todd, "and at the back of my mind is a theory to account for it. But I'm not gassing about it to anyone at this stage."

There was a sudden tramping of feet in the passage which brought the conversation to a stop. Then the door of Study No. 7 was flung open and Billy Bunter, followed by a crowd of Removites, strutted in. The fat junior blinked in surprise as he saw Harry Wharton & Co. there and noted their grave expressions.

"What are you chaps doing in my study?" he inquired loftily. "Get out!"

Really, it was surprising what a difference had come over Bunter now that he had money to burn, so to speak.

"You get out too, Peter Todd!" he added, turning a superior glance on his study mate. "I don't like mixing with low bounders! Outside!"

Peter Todd rose to his feet and strode towards Bunter with a deadly expression on his face. The fat junior knew that expression of old, and his heart failed him.

"Back me up, you fellows!" he exclaimed over his shoulder. "Don't let this low rotter bully me!"

There were murmurings and growls from the crowd at Bunter's back, but they made no difference to Peter Todd. He reached out a hand and tweaked Bunter's fat ear.

"Yaroooooh!" howled Bunter. "Leggo, you beast! Whooooop! Back up, you fellows!"

But the fellows did not back up. True, Billy Bunter had just stood them a handsome spread at the tuckshop, but there were few amongst his "friends" who were fighting men. Backing up Bunter was all very well; but with Peter Todd and the Famous Five all ready for trouble, as their looks plainly showed, the prospect was not an inviting one.

Peter Todd gave Bunter's ear

another tweak, at which there was a fresh howl from the hapless junior.

"And if any of your sponging friends are looking for trouble," said Peter disdainfully, "let 'em come in."

Harry Wharton & Co. pushed back their cuffs. If there was any trouble they were prepared to stand by Peter. But there was no trouble. Really it was surprising how many of Bunter's friends suddenly remembered that they had engagements elsewhere.

When Bunter howled for the third time the passage was empty.

Wharton slammed the door shut.

"Now, my fat pippin," said Peter Todd grimly. "I want a talk with you!"

"Leggo, you beast!" roared Bunter. "I don't want to talk to you, Peter Todd. You're low! Not fit for a millionaire's son to mix with. Yooooop!"

Bunter's remarks ended with a howl as Peter Todd gave another tweak to his fat ear.

Then he produced the letter which had caused him so much alarm. Bunter's eyes goggled as he saw it, and his fat heart beat quickly.

"That's my letter!" he gasped. "My pater's letter!"

"The first statement was correct," observed Peter dryly.

"What do you mean, you rotter?" hooted Bunter. "That letter belongs to me!"

"I found it lying about," explained Peter coolly, "so I read it!"

"I always said you were a low beast!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "A chap who reads another chap's letters is a cad!"

But Peter Todd ignored the remark.

"Does your father spell another with a 'u' instead of an 'o'?" he inquired, with a smile of contempt. "Does your father spell affectionate affechunate?"

Billy Bunter started.

In his eagerness to bring evidence to back his possession of the money that had fallen so strangely into his hands he had quite overlooked the discrepancies in the spelling that would naturally be apparent in a letter he himself had written and which purported to come from his father. But his fat wits immediately sought a way out of the difficulty.

"He, he, he!" he cackled, and the juniors stared. Peter Todd's words ought, if Bunter were guilty of having faked the letter, to have scared him. "He, he, he! You think you're clever, Peter Todd. My father didn't write the letter."

"I know that, porpoise!"

"But his—his office-boy did!" exclaimed Bunter.

Peter Todd jumped.

"Eh?"

"You see, the pater was so busy attending to his investments," said Bunter, drawing freely on his imagination, "that he got Jelks to write the letter for him."

"And sign it, I suppose?"

"Nunno. You see, Jenkins was told to type the word father in place of a signature."

"Oh, my hat!"

Bunter believed in piling up whoppers when he was in difficulties, like Pelion on Ossa. The one great drawback, however, was that whilst Bunter believed in them all as they rolled out of his fat mouth, no one else did.

"So the office-boy was told to do that, was he?" inquired Peter Todd grimly.

"Exactly."

"How do you know all this, old fat barrel?" asked Bob Cherry.

"The—the pater told me in his second letter he was so busy that he had asked Jeffreys, the head clerk, to write the letter for him. Now I've been so frank about things I'd prefer to let the matter drop, Peter Todd," said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Bob Cherry softly.

But Peter Todd was not so easily put off.

"First you say that Jelks, the office-boy, wrote the letter, then you say that Jenkins wrote it, and now you say that Jeffreys, the head clerk, wrote it. Are you sure they didn't write it between them?" inquired Peter sarcastically.

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"Really, Toddy, if you doubt my word—"

"I do!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "As a matter of fact, Jelks is the office-boy's surname, and Jef—I mean, Jenkins and Jeffrey are his Christian names. Now I hope you're satisfied."

"Quite!" exclaimed Peter. "Quite satisfied that you wrote it, you fat scoundrel!"

Bunter jumped.

"Don't I keep telling you that Jerome—I mean, Jenkins—that is to say, Jelks wrote it?" he hooted.

"On Quelch's typewriter?"

The Owl of the Remove nearly lost his spectacles in his agitation.

"Really, Peter Todd, I think this matter had better drop," he said, mustering all the dignity that was left to him.

And with that he tore himself away and bolted for the door. Bob Cherry made a movement to detain him, but Peter Todd motioned to him to let the fat junior go.

"I think that settles one point," remarked Peter grimly. "The next thing is to find out just how deeply our tame porpoise has landed himself. There's one thing I want you fellows to do."

"What's that?" asked Wharton.

"I want you to stop Bunter spending any more money," said Peter Todd, "while I investigate matters a bit. Collar him every time he heads for the tuckshop and walk him off!"

"Count on us!" said Wharton, who could see that a very good purpose lurked in Toddy's astute mind.

"Rather!" chimed in the rest of the Famous Five.

"I rather fancy our porpoise has been qualifying for Borstal," said Peter. "And it's up to us to keep a Greyfriars man straight if he can't run straight on his own."

And, having come to that decision, the Famous Five and Peter strolled down to the Common-room.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Fatal Number!

"COME for a stroll, old fat man?" Bob Cherry grinned cheerily at Billy Bunter and received in return a look of lofty disdain.

It was the following day after morning lessons, and, as was customary with the Owl of the Remove when he was in funds, he made a beeline for the tuckshop. But on this occasion he found himself surrounded by the Famous Five.

Bunter stopped, and his snub little nose went high in the air.

"I'm rather particular whom I stroll with, Bob Cherry. Leggo, my arm, you beast!"

But Bob Cherry had no intention of doing that, neither had Wharton, who had linked up on the other side of the fat junior.

"You're coming for a stroll," said the captain of the Remove firmly.

"I'm not!" hooted Bunter.

"Your mistake, you are!" said Frank Nugent, planting his boot behind the fat junior. "Get moving!"

"Yaroooooooh!"

Bunter's howl echoed round the quad. The next moment there was a sound as of a window being raised, and Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, looked out of his study. His face grew grim as he saw Bunter struggling in the grasp of the Famous Five, with Nugent's boot landing on him at frequent intervals.

"Yow! Chuckit, you beasts!" roared Bunter. "Whooooop!"

"Boys!"

Harry Wharton & Co. released Bunter as if he were red-hot as Mr. Quelch's deep voice rang out.

"Boys, what are you doing to Bunter?"

"Hem! Only taking him for a stroll, sir," explained Wharton, turning crimson under the penetrating eyes of the master of the Lower Fourth.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch dryly. "I must remark that you appear to have very queer methods of—hem—taking a stroll."

"I don't want to go for a stroll, sir," said Bunter peevishly.

"Then if you don't want to, Bunter, I see no reason why these boys should

compel you," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "I'm surprised at you, Wharton. As head boy of the Form, I expect you to set an example, not to bully a youth like Bunter."

"I—I—that is, we—I mean—" stammered Wharton, and then he stopped in utter confusion. At that moment he blessed Peter Todd; whose orders the Famous Five were carrying out.

"Your remarks would appear to be as strange and incomprehensible as your methods of taking a stroll, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch sarcastically. "You will not molest Bunter, you understand?"

"Ye-e-es, sir!" said Wharton sheepishly.

And Mr. Quelch slammed down his window.

"Ho, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "You got it hot then, you rotters. Serve you right!"

And he rolled off with his snub little nose high in the air. Bob Cherry just restrained the impulse to go after him and kick him, but such tactics were hardly to be recommended beneath Mr. Quelch's window.

"Nothing doing," said Wharton, watching the fast retreating figure of the Owl. "He's heading straight for the tuckshop."

"Oh, let him rip!" said Bob Cherry crossly.

"The let him ripfulness is the proper caper," purred Inky.

And the Famous Five let him rip.

Bunter rolled into the tuckshop and seated himself at the counter. At that moment he had the place to himself. The order he gave Mrs. Mimble was a lavish one, but the good dame—despite Bunter's extravagant custom of late—never served him until she had seen the colour of his money. Bunter, knowing this unfailing habit of the tuckshop dame, flourished a five-pound note.

"Which reminds me," said Mrs. Mimble, "I've just had a circular from the police!"

At the mention of police, Billy Bunter's jaw dropped.

"You remember reading about that strange affair of the train robbery at Friardale the other day," said Mrs. Mimble. "I believe some poor fellow was robbed of five hundred pounds. Out of all that lot he's only got the number of one note. Fancy that; careless young man."

She paused; and fortunately did not see the extraordinary expression of alarm that spread over Bunter's podgy features.

"Fancy now, Master Bunter. Out of a mixed assortment of pound notes, five-pound notes and ten-pound notes the careless young fellow only had the number of one of 'em. I don't remember the rights of the case, but I believe that note had belonged to him before he went to the racecourse, and it hadn't left his hands. So he put it with his winnings."

"Wha-a-at's the n-num-number of the note?" gasped Bunter, his heart filled with a terrible fear.

"I'll just look it up!" smiled Mrs. Mimble. "Ah, here we are!"

She pulled to light an official document from the police which informed her that a five-pound note, bearing the No. A 98760, was stolen property. And as Bunter heard the number of the note his stodgy mental machinery was brought to bear to memorise it. Had the note left his possession? Did Mrs. Mimble have it in her till—

"Wow!" In his terrible anxiety Billy Bunter groaned.

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The tuckshop dame looked up sharply as she heard that faint groan. Then she threw up her hands in alarm.

"Lawks a mussy, Master Bunter, you do look ill!"

Billy Bunter did look ill, but it was nothing to the illness that he felt. He scrambled down from the stool and bolted out of the tuckshop like a startled rabbit. He made for Study No. 7 at full pelt, and he breathed a sigh of relief when he discovered that it was empty. Quickly slamming the door he turned the key and then rushed to his hidden store of wealth under the loose floorboard at the bottom of the cupboard.

Gathering up the wad of fivers, tenners, and pound-notes, he laid them out on the table and began to read the numbers on the fivers.

"Oh, dear!" The perspiration was dripping off him as he scanned each five-pound note without yet having come to the one that bore the fatal number.

"A 98760!" It ran through his brain unceasingly.

Then, before he could complete his search, there came a rattle at the handle of the door, and to Bunter's horror, for he fondly imagined that he had locked the door, it opened. For one fleeting second Bunter's heart stopped beating. Was he to be caught with over four hundred and fifty pounds in notes in his possession? He knew the story of his father's sudden rise to fortune wouldn't cover up that extraordinary spectacle.

And then, to his great relief, Sammy Bunter, of the Second, walked in!

"I— Oh, great Scott!" exclaimed Sammy, catching sight of the numerous notes that littered the table.

Next minute Bunter had dashed past him and was fumbling with the key at the lock. This time the Owl of the Remove made certain that the wards moved, for he tried to drag the door open and it failed to budge. Then, wiping the beads of perspiration from his podgy forehead, he returned to the table to find Sammy Bunter staring down at the unparalleled sight of four hundred and fifty odd pounds in notes as if he were gazing at a ghost.

Billy Bunter's face twitched spasmodically as he watched the changing expressions in the face of his minor.

"Where did you get 'em?" asked the fag hoarsely.

The Owl of the Remove did not answer. He continued his frantic search for the note that had engraved upon it the fatal number known to the police.

"Ah!" A great breath of relief escaped him as he found the note in question. There it was A 98760.

"My hat!" exclaimed Sammy in bewilderment. "What's this game? Have you opened a coiner's den?"

"Shut up, you fat fool!" hissed Bunter major.

Sammy regarded his major as if he were mad. Certainly his actions seemed to point to insanity somewhere, for Bunter made a sudden rush to the fire-place, screwed up the five-pound note, threw it in the grate, and then turned his back on it. In his agitation he quite forgot that fires in the study had ceased a month ago.

"Potty!" said Sammy, his eyes goggling open with astonishment. "But where did you get all this money, Billy?"

Still Bunter major declined to answer that question. But his mind was working swiftly. Somehow or other he had to get rid of these notes; already the

possession of them was becoming a weight on his mind, a never-ending source of anxiety. He glared at Sammy in a peculiar sort of way that made that amazed fag step towards the door.

"Look here, Sammy," said Billy suddenly, "I'll make a present of the whole lot of 'em to you!"

"Wha-a-at?" Sammy could hardly believe the evidence of his ears.

"I'll be—be generous, you know—as an elder brother, Sammy! I'll give you the lot, providing you don't say a word about it," said Billy Bunter generously.

But Sammy Bunter wasn't quite so obtuse as his brother reckoned.

"I wouldn't touch 'em with a barge-pole! My hat, Billy, you're for it! Did you pinch that money?"

"Nunno!" gasped Bunter major. "S-someone g-gave it to me, you know!"

"Phew!" whistled Sammy. "And you expect people to believe that yarn. What a hope! Now I know where my share of the fiver came in!"

Billy's brotherly eyes lit up with hope at the mention of the fiver of which Sammy had claimed a half as his just share.

"You're for it as well as me if things leak out, Sammy," he said. "You've had a whack in the cash!"

"Time I was off," said Sammy, with his hand on the key of the lock. "Good-bye, Billy! I don't believe they allow any visitors at Borstal. Ta-ta!"

And before Bunter major could stop him Sammy had turned the key and let himself out. Then it was for the first time Bunter realised that the fire was not alight in the grate. A cold sweat broke out on his brow as he realised how near he had come to giving himself away. There was the screwed-up note for which the police were searching.

Stooping, he reached out for the fatal piece of paper, and as his fat hand retrieved it, the study door swung open again, and in walked Peter Todd.

Peter fairly jumped when he saw the amazing array of notes on the table. Then he glanced at Bunter, who was shivering like a fat jellyfish.

"Phew! You young idiot!" he said.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bowled Out!

BILLY BUNTER rose to his feet, still clutching the note with the number A 98760 on it. For a moment, he seemed incapable of speech.

With a swift movement Peter Todd collected up the notes and shoved them out of sight in the drawer. Then he faced Billy Bunter, who had sunk into the armchair like an expiring porpoise.

"What have you been doing, fatty?"

"Nothing!" gasped Bunter.

"To whom do these notes belong?" asked Peter.

"Me!" said Bunter. "My father, you know—"

"I know all about your father," said Peter Todd. "My pater phoned me this morning and gave me a little information on the subject of the Mr. Samuel Bunter, of the Stock Exchange, who has been so fortunate of late."

"Oh, crumbs!" Bunter's face was a picture of woe.

"He's no relation of yours, old fat man," went on Peter. "so you can bottle up the tale of your father's millions. See?"

"Oh, lor'!" groaned Bunter.

"Now let's have this straight," said Peter, not unkindly. "It looks to me as



"If you won't play me on my merits, perhaps you'll play me for this, Wharton," said Billy Bunter; and he brought to light a five-pound note, and tossed it carelessly on the table. "There you are, you chaps," said Bunter patronisingly. "I know you're hard up. Split that up between you, and call it square by giving me a place in the cricket team." For quite a minute, dead silence reigned in Study No. 1. The colossal impudence of Billy Bunter fairly rendered Harry Wharton & Co. speechless. (See Chapter 9.)

if you've got yourself into a really fearful mess."

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Where did those notes come from?"

"My father sent—" began Bunter lamely.

Peter Todd wagged a bony forefinger at his fat study-mate.

"Cut that out!" he said sharply. "I'm trying to help you, you fat frog. Haven't you enough common sense to see that there's a stretch of prison awaiting you unless we can put things right in time?"

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter.

He wished that the ground would open and swallow him up.

"Now, how did you come by those notes?" asked Peter.

"They b-blew—blew in at the window!"

"What?"

"I mean they belong to Dutton, you know," said Bunter hastily. "I—I was looking after them for him."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Peter.

He had more than an idea where they had really come from. All the same, he could not conquer his surprise that Bunter should try and get rid of them, so to speak, on the innocent shoulders of Tom Dutton, who also shared Study No. 7.

Billy Bunter watched Peter Todd vaguely. He wondered how much the astute junior really knew, for it came home to him that it was Peter who had bowled him out over the story of his father's millions.

"Well?" asked Peter grimly. "What's the next giddy whopper?"

"Oh, really, Peter! I don't know anything about the blessed notes, as a matter of fact. I wasn't at Friardale when the three-thirty came through—wasn't anywhere near the place."

"Oh!"

"As if a chap would throw a bundle of notes out of a railway carriage, anyway," prattled on Bunter. "I hope I'm not the sort of chap to stick to money like that. Dishonest, I call it!"

Even now the fat Owl of the Remove was seeking to throw the blame on to anyone's shoulders but his own, if he could do so by telling whoppers. One whopper more or less made little difference to him.

But Peter put a stop to his whoppers in a drastic fashion. He jumped forward and grabbed hold of a cricket stump. With the other hand he grabbed hold of Bunter. Next moment the stump was falling about Bunter's fat person like a flail.

Whack!

"Yoooooop!"

Whack!

"Whooooop! Stoppit!" roared Bunter.

Whack!

"Groooooough! Help! Fire! Murder!"

"Now let's have the truth," said Peter grimly. "I'm going to stump you until I do hear it!"

And Peter wielded the stump until he got the truth.

The noise in the study was terrific, and as Harry Wharton & Co. came along the passage they stopped.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "There's a porpoise in danger of expiring!"

Wharton pushed open the door of Study No. 7, and his chums followed him in. Peter desisted when he saw the Famous Five.

"Close that door, you chaps," he said—"and turn the key!"

Wonderingly Wharton did as he was bid. Then Peter turned on Bunter, who was still howling at the top of his lungs.

"If you don't stop that row you'll have the beaks here, my fat pippin," he growled, "and then it'll mean the long jump for you!"

And Bunter, taking the warning, ceased to howl.

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"What's the trouble, Toddy?"

Peter Todd explained, to the growing astonishment of Harry Wharton & Co. When he had finished, Harry Wharton whistled.

"The awful young rascal!" he exclaimed. "Why, you might have been sacked, Bunter."

"Groooough!" mumbled the fat junior.

"How much of the money has he spent?" asked Bob Cherry.

"About twenty-five pounds," said Peter, counting the notes he had placed in the drawer. "And he was bound to get spotted in the long run, for the police know the number of one of the notes. Bunter was trying to destroy it, I believe, when I came in."

"Lucky for him that you did come in," said Nugent.

"The luckfulness of the ridiculous Bunter is terrific!"

"And has he confessed to the whole business?" asked Bob Cherry.

Peter Todd chuckled.

"My suspicions about the Bunter millions were correct," he said. "I had a phone call from the pater this morning. The Samuel Bunter mentioned in the newspaper is no relation whatsoever to this fat toad."

"Oh!"

"I've tried to get the truth out of Bunter with the stump," continued Peter, "but it's a job that would try the patience of a saint. Still, he owned up in his usual way, by denying everything and giving the game away at the same time."

Despite the seriousness of the situation the chums of the Remove could scarcely restrain a smile. Only Bunter was incapable of smiling. He lay curled up in the armchair, groaning deeply.

"Well, what are we going to do about it?" asked Wharton. "This is a jolly serious matter. The money must be returned, of course; but twenty-five of it, you say, is missing?"

Peter Todd nodded.

"That can't be helped," he said. "If the chap who lost it is a sport, he won't mind foregoing the twenty-five pounds, anyway. If the money had been returned in the usual way, I believe the finder would be entitled to a tenth of the value of the article, or articles, found."

"Oh!"

Harry Wharton and his chums breathed a sigh of relief.

"It's just possible, too," said Peter. "that the affair can be kept dark. We don't want a scandal, and we don't want to see our tame porpoise booted out of Greyfriars, much as he deserves it."

"What do you suggest, then?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I suggest that we send Mr. Turple—that's the name of the chap to whom the money belongs—an anonymous letter."

"Oh!"

"Telling him that notes to the value of four hundred and seventy-five pounds are to be found in the hollow tree in Friardale Woods!"

"That's not a bad idea," said Wharton. "But will he know the hollow tree?"

"I'll dig in a map with the letter as well," said Peter thoughtfully.

"But the postmark on your letter—"

began Johnny Bull.

"We must chance discovery in that direction," said Peter. "We'll go over to Courtfield on our bikes this afternoon, and I'll drop it in the post then."

"Good egg!"

"It's the only way," said Peter. "I've copied the chap's address from the newspaper."

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Then, turning to Billy Bunter, he shook him.

"I hope you understand what we're doing, you fat idiot," he said. "A nice mess you have landed yourself into!"

"I know you've got my money," protested Billy Bunter, "and I want it!"

The juniors jumped.

"Well, I found it, didn't I?" roared Bunter, who, now that the trouble was past, speedily became himself again. "I think I'm entitled to a better reward than twenty-five quid!"

"That's true," agreed Wharton grimly. "Your reward ought to be twenty-five spans with a stump—and it's going to be!"

And next minute Billy Bunter was collared and placed over the table. Then the stump rose and fell until Bunter had received his just reward.

"Now kick the fat rotter out," said Wharton. "He makes me sick!"

His chums needed no urging on that score, and Bunter was helped out into the passage as if he were a football. Then he fled to some quiet corner to mourn unseemly the loss of his fortune.

Meanwhile, Wharton & Co. and Peter Todd were putting their heads together over the writing of the letter that was to be dispatched to Mr. Turple.

The notes were recounted and placed in a box. A brown paper covering concealed the box, which was then put out of sight until the time was ripe for Peter Todd to conceal it in the hollow tree. The map showing the locality of the hollow oak was drafted, likewise the letter, the latter being penned in broad capital letters with a bad nib, likewise the envelope.

Then the chums surveyed their handiwork.

"That'll do," said Peter Todd at last. "I don't know why we should go to all this trouble for such a fat frog as Bunter, but there it is. We'll tootle along to Courtfield after lessons this afternoon."

"Good egg! We're on!"

And the chums of the Remove went into dinner arm-in-arm.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Millionaire!

AFTER afternoon classes that day Wharton & Co. and Peter Todd cycled out of gates en route for Courtfield. On Peter's carrier was the box containing the missing notes. In Peter's pocket was the letter that was to tell Mr. Turple where his notes were. Doubtless Mr. Turple would consider their depletion to the extent of twenty-five pounds a mere bagatelle when he handled the remaining four hundred and seventy-five. Wharton & Co. hoped that he would, at any rate.

"Here we are," said Peter, as he neared the post office at Courtfield.

The chums slowed up and Peter dismounted. The fateful letter was slipped in the box and Peter rejoined his companions.

"The giddy deed is done," muttered Bob Cherry, and the Co. chuckled.

The next job was to place the box in the hollow oak in Friardale Woods, and accordingly the chums cycled in that direction at an easy pace. On reaching the woods they dismounted and pushed their jiggers.

It was a fine, sunny afternoon, but the woods were deserted for all that. Certainly the Greyfriars juniors didn't encounter anyone as they made their way to the hollow oak.

"All serene," said Peter, with a sharp glance round. "Now for it!"

He cut the string on the bicycle carrier, lifted off the precious box and placed it in the hollow oak, covering it up with a handful of dead leaves.

"Hope no other johnny gets here before Mr. Turple," said Bob, with a chuckle.

"We must chance that," said Wharton.

"That's all right," said Peter, stepping back and dusting his hands. "Now let's get clear. The less anyone sees of us about here the better."

The juniors wheeled their bikes back to the main road and quickly mounted. Then, at an easy pace, they rode back to the school.

The bikes were put back in the shed and Harry Wharton & Co. made tracks for the end study, Toddy having promised to honour them with his company at tea. As the juniors came up the Remove passage they heard roars of laughter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Something on."

Something was on, apparently. By the notice-board were about twenty or thirty fellows, all of them chuckling or laughing at something that was pinned to the green baize.

"What is it?" inquired Wharton, pushing his way through the crowd.

"A letter from Bunter, the millionaire," chuckled Skinner.

Wharton ran his eyes over the letter. Since it was now common property, he felt no compunction in doing so. It was an extraordinary letter in view of Bunter of the Remove's claims to fortune. It ran:

"Dear Billy,—Sammy has written to me for some more pocket-money, little knowing that at the moment I find myself embarrassed to pay both of your term fees. Really, as an elder brother, I expect you to exercise a certain control over Sammy. You will kindly tell Sammy from me that it is impossible for me to send any more pocket-money."

"In haste,

"Your affectionate

"FATHER."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Some millionaire—I don't think!"

Harry Wharton & Co. could not help smiling as they read that frank epistle, which, unfortunately for Bunter's story about his father's wealth, was dated the same day as the newspaper cutting had been shown to the Remove. From that it was obvious to all in the Remove that Bunter's story was a fake—that the Mr. Samuel Bunter mentioned was another gentleman entirely, and not Billy and Sammy Bunter's father.

Yet the fact remained—Billy Bunter had received some whacking remittances; that was a point that puzzled the fellows who were now chortling over the letter from Mr. Samuel Bunter. But Bunter was destined to enlighten them on that subject in his own original way.

As Wharton & Co. looked at the letter they wondered how Bunter would account for all the cash he had had when his Form-fellows taxed him with it.

"Phew!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "That letter's pretty rich."

"Pretty poor, you mean," said Harold Skinner; at which there was a fresh outburst of laughter.

"Who put it up there, anyway?" asked Wharton.

Several glances turned in Skinner's direction, but the cad of the Remove did not speak, although a flush came to his cheeks.

"It looks like your handiwork, anyway," said Wharton. "Any other chap would have returned it to its proper



Stooping, Billy Bunter reached out for the fatal piece of paper, and as his fat hand retrieved it, the study door swung open, and Peter Todd walked in. Peter fairly jumped when he saw the amazing array of notes on the table. Then he glanced at Bunter, who was shivering like a fat jellyfish. "Phew!" Toddy whistled. "You young idiot!" (See Chapter 12.)

owner, that is presuming he had found it."

Skinner's lip curled in a sneer. "His Magnificence lays down the law now that he has read the letter and enjoyed the joke."

"I've enjoyed the joke in a way," admitted Wharton, "but all the same for that it was rather a caddish thing to do. Especially on the part of one of Bunter's bosom friends."

This time a laugh was raised at Skinner's expense, and the cad of the Remove hastily backed out of the crowd.

"Skinny found it," said Hazeldeno. "It was lying about in the Remove passage. But where did Bunter get all his money from if the letter's true?"

"Better ask him," said Wharton, and he moved away.

The rest of the Famous Five followed him, together with Peter Todd.

"We'd better give Bunter the tip," said the captain of the Remove. "He's thoroughly down now."

"The first thing is to find him," said Peter. "He won't be in the tuckshop this time."

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Oh, we'll soon find him," said Bob Cherry.

And they did. Bunter was finally run to earth in the box-room. He was sitting on a trunk staring moodily into space, doubtless visualising the number of feeds he had said good-bye to now that he had parted company with his money, or rather Mr. Turple's money.

He looked up and scowled as the chums came in.

"What do you chaps want?" he asked

peevishly. "You've taken all my money. Now leave me alone."

The Co. restrained the impulse to bump him. Really Bunter would have tried the patience of Job himself!

"You've put the money in the tree?" asked Bunter.

Peter Todd nodded.

"Yes. And posted the giddy letter. Thank your lucky stars, my fat pippin, that you've got your Uncle Toddy to look after you."

"Rats! I've a jolly good mind to go along to the oak-tree and get the money back again," growled Bunter.

Peter Todd lifted up his boot to kick Bunter, but he set his teeth and, turning, walked out of the box-room.

"Do what you like, old bean!" he called back. "But you won't like Borstal, take it from me. They'll have your weight down to half in a week."

Bunter winced as he heard that. If there was one way of appealing to him it was through his stomach.

Wharton looked at the fat junior compassionately for a moment, and then he broke the news about the letter that had been pinned to the notice-board. Bunter's face grew wrathful as he heard about it.

"The rotters! After the feeds I've given 'em, too! The beasts!"

But he saw that the game was up—at least, the major portion of it was. What he had to do now was to cover up his latest swank as best he could. And the method he chose quite took away the breath of Harry Wharton & Co., who knew the facts, although it satisfied the curious juniors who wanted to know where Bunter had got his money from.

For Bunter declared, with great conviction, that Mr. Samuel Bunter, the millionaire, was a distant relation of the Bunter family, and hearing that there were two of his "step-cousin's, aunt's niece's boys" at Greyfriars, had accordingly sent the elder brother Billy a few remittances.

The Removites had a job to swallow the portion of the explanation that affected the genealogical tree, so to speak, but the rest was more easy of digestion. Certainly Bunter had had the money and had spent it. That there was no denying. Only a few fellows knew the real truth.

As for the four hundred and seventy-five pounds that Peter had placed in the hollow oak, they eventually found their way back to Mr. Turple, that gentleman, so the newspapers said, being well content to let the matter drop, regarding the loss of the twenty-five pounds as the equivalent to the amount of reward he would have paid the finder had he come forward in the usual manner.

So what had looked like developing into a stretch of Borstal for Billy Bunter was successfully hushed up, thanks to Harry Wharton & Co., although for a long time the Owl of the Remove mourned for that which was lost, like Rachael of old, and would not be comforted.

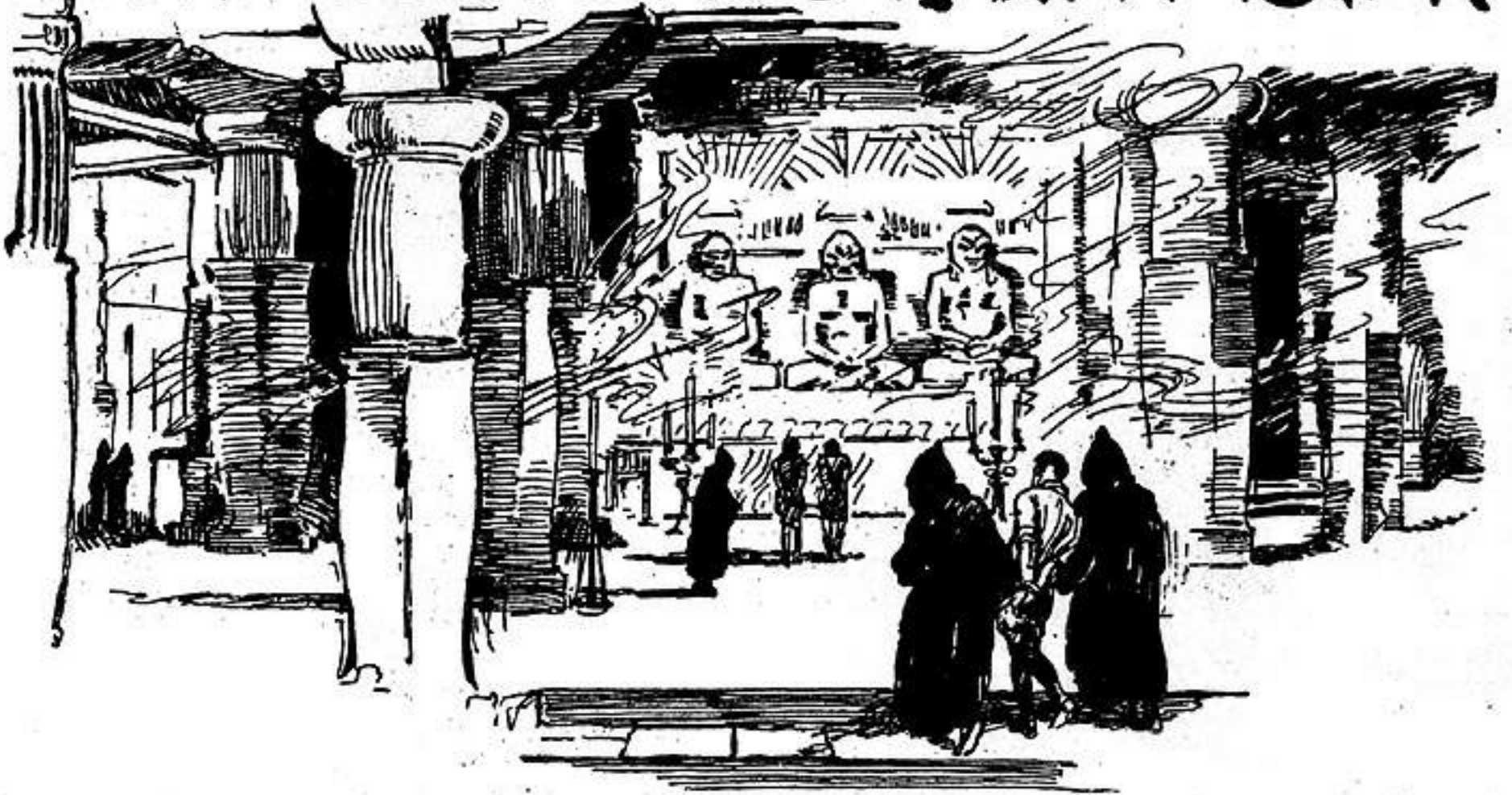
THE END.

(There will be another topping long yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET, chums. Note the title: "Smithy's Pal." You can only make sure of reading this by ordering your copy WELL IN ADVANCE!)

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THE SIGNAL OF WAR! The time is fast drawing near when Kang Pu, the self-styled chosen of Buddha, will give the signal that will set the White and Yellow races at each other's throats. But there's a Britisher out in Tibet who's determined to put a stop to Kang Pu's little game, and his name is Ferrers Locke!

THE CURSE OF LHASA!



A grand story of mystery and intrigue, featuring **FERRERS LOCKE**, the Famous Detective, and his plucky boy assistant, **JACK DRAKE**.

Into the Hills!

FERRERS LOCKE was jammed in a mass of men, and it was impossible to manœuvre his pony. He thrust up his sword to parry the blow as the monk struck. His arm was jarred to the socket as his sword, taking the full force of the blow, snapped in the middle.

With a yell of triumph the monk swung back his sword to strike again, but, seeing his opportunity, Ferrers Locke brought the flat of his broken sword across the man's head. The monk swayed in the saddle, then slithered across the withers.

Scarcely had he collapsed than another monk dragged him clear, and, leaving him to be trampled under foot, swung himself into the saddle. But before he had settled in his seat, a hillman slew him with a savage back-handed slash, and, inch by inch, the wedge-shaped formation moved forward towards the gate.

"They weaken—by the teeth of Buddha, they weaken!"

The hoarse shout from the leader of the hillmen brought a roar of triumph from his men. But it had the effect of galvanising the monks and soldiers into more stubborn resistance. Precious, hard-won ground was lost as the tide of battle turned in their favour and the hillmen were forced back.

A swirl of struggling men carried Jack's pony against that of the leader.

"Art still alive, lad?" roared the latter. "'Tis a great fight!"

Then slashing, hacking, hewing, they moved onwards again, the hillmen keeping their formation with wonderful skill and resource. Jack's arms were aching and his pony was bleeding from a dozen wounds. His right leg was warm with blood which oozed from a slash he had taken above the knee. Once he was almost torn from the saddle, but a wild-eyed hillman swept his attackers back

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with a fury which bordered on the berserk.

Then, after what seemed hours of fighting, and horrible confusion, Jack Drake became aware that overhead was looming the archway of the northern gate. And at the same moment the bull-like roar of the hillmen's leader sounded above the tumult of battle.

"The gate! The gate! Our passage is nigh won!"

The gateway was narrow, little more than twelve feet in breadth and about fifty yards in length. Into this comparatively narrow passage the weary monks and soldiers were forced. Pressing on them came the hillmen and their followers. Stubbornly the monks fought to hold their ground, but the hillmen, sensing that the crucial moment of the fight had arrived, fought like furies to keep the monks and soldiers moving backwards.

The black-robed ranks wavered. They were cramped for space, and those in the forefront could scarcely use their weapons. Above them towered the mounted hillmen, mad with the lust of battle, and eager to avenge the empty saddles of their companions.

Then came a great shout from throats parched and dry:

"They run! They run! The gate is open!"

It was true. The priests of Buddha had broken before the wild onslaught, and, throwing their weapons from them, had turned and run. To complete the rout, the mounted hillmen swept in pursuit, and many a fleeing priest was overtaken and hewn down.

Jack felt suddenly deathly sick. He swayed in the saddle, and a feeling of nausea swept over him.

"Steady, lad!"

The arm of Ferrers Locke was about him, and the calm, sane voice of the detective brought the boy back to realities.

"Sorry, gov'nor," he said, with a wry

smile, "but—but it was pretty ghastly whilst it lasted!"

Ferrers Locke nodded. His face was drawn, and streaked with perspiration and grime.

"The fight was inevitable!" he said gravely; "but we have to-night struck a shrewd blow against the power of these priests!"

The leader of the hillmen rode up, wiping his crimson sword on his torn robes.

"Now they run, those black-robed vultures!" he cried. "I vow this fight will shake holy Lhasa to her foundations!"

He patted Jack on the back, grinning through his beard.

"A courageous young one, this!" he went on. "By the teeth of Buddha, I wish he were my son!"

Then his face became grave, and he turned to Ferrers Locke.

"But we must not tarry here. They will pursue, the dogs, when word of their rout has been taken to the Dalai Lama!"

"Or to Kang Pu!" said Ferrers Locke quietly.

"Now, by the bones of my fathers, I had most forgot yon voice!" cried the other. "'Twas a strange thing, indeed, and for the moment made my blood run cold! Canst read the riddle of it, stranger?"

"Some day when we may talk in peace I will read ye the riddle," replied the detective. "It was trickery, and no sorcery! But best gather thy men and let us be moving!"

The rout of the priests complete, the hillmen returned. The casualties of themselves and their recruits were heavy, and a quick search was carried out for wounded men. These were slung across the front of saddles, and several scared and riderless ponies collected. Then, with a sadly-depleted rearguard, the party moved forward through the northern gate, and took the

trail which led to the hills and the Phembu Pass.

There was no time to bind and dress wounds, for black-robed ones; reinforced, might sweep down on them at any moment. They made as good progress as possible, and, when a mile out of Lhasa, took to a narrow winding path, which led upwards into the hills.

Jack's wound, though not serious, had caused a change in Ferrers Locke's plans. He did not wish to leave the boy with the hillmen, so decided to push on to the camp somewhere in the hills. Jack's wound would take but a day or two to heal sufficiently to permit him to walk in comfort.

"I think the black-robed priests do not follow," grunted the leader, as he called a halt and sat listening with straining ears. "Maybe they fear an ambush in the darkness, or maybe they hatch other plans. I have dispatched a man ahead for reinforcements from my camp, and I have scouts guarding our rear."

A halt was called when the first grey light of dawn was streaking the eastern sky, and the wounded were bandaged and made as comfortable as possible. A scrappy meal was then shared out from the satchels of the hillmen, and the party moved on again till they reached the Phembu Pass.

Ahead lay the northern road to Mongolia, winding over range upon range of bleak and rugged hills. Far to the north towered two snow-clad peaks, glittering and scintillating in the light of the morning sun.

Towards noon they were met by their reinforcements—twenty bearded hillmen—who listened eagerly to details of the fight as they rode back with the main party into the hills.

It was late afternoon, and Jack was saddle-sore and weary, when they rode up a narrow, boulder-strewn pass, and then downwards into a beautiful fertile valley through which a quiet stream meandered. This was the stronghold of the hillmen, and Ferrers Locke noted that, even as the leader had said, the narrow entrance to the pass could be held by four determined men against almost any odds.

Natural caves in the cliffs, which hemmed in the valley, afforded housing for the band and even stables for the ponies. It was a wonderful spot, and gave the impression of being cut off entirely from the world.

Ferrers Locke and Jack stayed for two days, and during that time it was arranged that Kala Dului should be kept a prisoner by the hillmen till it was seen what eventuated.

One of the hillmen was to guide the detective and Jack through the hills, avoiding Lhasa, and thus to the Monastery of Salai. There he was to keep in cover whilst Ferrers Locke and Jack attempted to gain an entry into the monastery.

"And if so be that ye require aid, then dispatch him in haste to me," said the leader.

The Tomo was to stay at the camp. This pleased him vastly, for wherever Kala Dului was, the Tomo was able to brood over the captive with gloating eyes.

Three days later, after a farewell with the leader, Ferrers Locke, Jack, and his guide mounted their ponies, and, leading a pack mule, turned away from the camp. As they reached the top of the valley Ferrers Locke reined in his pony and sat looking downwards on the scene below.

"Look well on that, Jack," he said, "for it is one of the few places in Tibet where men can call their souls their own,

and where the priests of Buddha do not rule!"

In the Monastery Garden!

THE journey through the hills proved uneventful. Their guide led the way with unerring instinct, and it was towards evening of the second day that, topping a ridge, they saw, far below them, the walls of Salai Monastery, rising stark and grim in the shadow of the Chagpo-Ri.

"We will descend so far," said the guide, pointing downwards, "and in that well-screened valley will I bide with the animals. It is not safe to approach closer without secrecy!"

Ferrers Locke assented, and they made their way down to the narrow valley which their guide had indicated. After a hasty meal, Ferrers Locke turned to the hillman.

"Rest here for two days. If by night-fall of the second day we have not returned, then ye can give us up as lost. Return then to thy master. He will understand that our mission has failed, and maybe his spirit will move him to avengo us. That must be a matter for himself alone!"

The guide nodded his understanding. "Do not quit this spot," went on Ferrers Locke, "for I may send my companion to ye with a message. There is little risk of ye being seen in this hidden valley!"

Leaving the guide with the ponies and the pack mule, Ferrers Locke and Jack then quitted the valley and set out in the deepening dusk to scale the ragged, sloping, northern face of the Chagpo-Ri, beyond which lay the Salai Monastery. Their only weapons were knives, thrust into their belts. Their automatics had been taken from them in the ruins of the Seven Monasteries by Kala Dului; but it is doubtful if that wretched priest of Buddha had ever solved the problem as to how they were meant to be used.

"So this sees the end of our journey, Jack!" remarked Ferrers Locke, as, two hours later, they accomplished the descent of the southern side of the Chagpo Ri. "We have won through so far, but the hardest part is yet to come!"

"We'll do it!" said Jack bravely. "I only hope that Major Beverley and his companions are still alive!"

The dark, forbidding walls of the Monastery loomed up in front of them,

.....

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Prompted by the murderous activities of the all-powerful

KANG PU, the self-styled Chosen of Buddha and fanatic who, to satisfy his own monstrous ambitions, would set the whole world ablaze with war,

FERRERS LOCKE, the famous Baker Street detective, accompanied by his plucky young assistant,

JACK DRAKE, leaves England for Tibet, determined to discover the fate of an expedition led by

MAJOR BEVERLEY, which is believed to have fallen into Kang Pu's clutches. At the outset of their journey Locke and Drake come up against

KALA DULUI, a priest and one of the zealous agents of Kang Pu. But they manage to give him the slip. Then, led by a

TOMO, an outcast, the twain eventually win their way to Lhasa, where the peasants of Tibet, for years past ground down under the merciless yoke of the priests of Buddha, readily acclaim Ferrers Locke as their leader and rise up in arms against their past rulers. Headed by the detective and a huge-bearded hillman, the peasants are hacking their way through the frenzied mob of monks, when a mounted priest bears down on Ferrers Locke, his sword raised for a downward, skull-splitting slash.

(Now read on.)

and Jack felt a tingle of excitement in his blood.

Salai Monastery, the stronghold of the mysterious, sinister Kang Pu!

Ferrers Locke had noted that the monastery was encircled by gardens, enclosed by the wall before which they now stood. Those were the gardens in which Dr. Lamonte had walked prior to making his escape. The detective and Jack had discussed their plan of campaign in detail during the journey from the camp. The first thing was to get inside the monastery garden.

Reaching the wall, Ferrers Locke bent his back. Jack clambered on to his shoulders, then the detective straightened up. Jack's hands clutched at the top of the wall. He got a grip and swung himself up. Reaching downwards, he groped for Ferrers Locke's hands, and the detective made the ascent in a sort of half haul and half scramble.

For a long minute they sat astride the wall, listening intently. Not a sound disturbed the stillness. The monastery was plunged in darkness and might well have been deserted. Yet Jack was vividly conscious that it was not deserted. There was life and black-robed priests within those walls, and—Kang Pu. There were also, Jack hoped from the bottom of his heart, three fellow-countrymen of his, and, if they were alive, then he knew that never would he and Ferrers Locke return without them.

And yet how hopeless was their task. Two men against the fanatical priests of Salai. But it was no time for counting the odds, and Ferrers Locke and Jack were not of the type that counts the odds when life and death are at stake.

At a whispered word from Ferrers Locke they dropped into the garden. Groping their way through shrubs and bushes, they felt beneath their feet the firmness of a well-worn path. Following its course, they crept silently onwards till it terminated in a wooden door let into the wall of the monastery. Ferrers Locke ran his hand over the uneven, iron-studded surface of the door. There was no handle on the outside, and it was bolted on the inner side.

Realising the hopelessness of trying to force the door, Ferrers Locke crept cautiously round the building, hugging the wall, and moving step by step. More than once he halted in the black shadow of a buttress, but nothing broke the stillness, and an unearthly silence brooded over all. Then on, until they arrived at the silent and deserted cloisters. At the far end a narrow beam of light glimmered through a slit-like aperture in the wall.

Without a word the detective and Jack approached. Crouched down below the aperture, Ferrers Locke slowly raised his head and peered through. He found himself gazing into a plain, bare cubby-hole of a room, stone-walled and stone-floored. It was bare of all furniture, save a reading-desk and stool. And seated, poring over a book on the desk, was the black-robed and black-hooded figure of a monk. At his girdle dangled a large bunch of keys.

As though conscious of the detective's gaze, he slowly lifted his head. But Ferrers Locke forestalled discovery by rapidly resuming his crouching position below the paneless window.

Then, with a whispered word to Jack, he led the way silently back into the blacker shadow of the cloisters.

"There is a door in the wall a few feet from that window," he said softly, after telling Jack what he had seen.

"The monk on duty is the guardian of THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,014.

the door, and can, in daylight, see through the aperture all who crave admittance. We will wait till a late hour of the night, when, presumably, the chances of our forcing an entrance will be more favourable. We will attract the attention of the monk, get him to come to the door, and then overpower him. Once inside—"

He paused; then added quietly:

"Once inside, we must trust to our own ingenuity to see us through, for we will be in more deadly peril than we have ever been in our lives!"

"I wonder if Major Beverley is alive?" whispered Jack, voicing the thoughts which had been ever in his mind. "And if Kang Pu is lurking somewhere inside this monastery? It is strange to think that the major and his companions might be lying in some dungeon a few feet below where we are now standing!"

"We shall soon be inside this monastery of Salai," said Ferrers Locke tensely, "and we will not leave it without having discovered the fate of Major Beverley, and having settled with this sinister murderer, Kang Pu. Whether Kang Pu be lurking inside or not, we know that this is his stronghold; and it is here that we can strike most effectively against him!"

The Entry!

LONG hours drifted slowly past whilst Ferrers Locke and Jack remained hidden in the shadows of the cloisters. Once from somewhere inside the monastery there came the muffled tolling of a bell. It was followed, after an interval of silence, by the faint, droning chant of many voices. To Jack there was something unreal about those distant voices. It seemed to him that they came from another world.

Impatiently and half scornfully, he tried to shake off the feeling. The voices died away and silence again descended, but somehow the eerie feeling persisted. Jack was a normal, healthy-minded boy, and one not given to wild fancies. But as the hours dragged by he became more and more acutely conscious of something evil which seemed to brood over the grim and sinister monastery.

Was it imagination? Or did it emanate from Kang Pu, the Chosen of Buddha, the fanatical priest who claimed immortality, and who, unless he were stopped, would plunge the world into war?

Was there, after all, some strange power in the man which enabled him to cheat death, which enabled him to throw his voice through space, and which enabled him to sway and terrorise the countless priests of Buddha by the magnetism of his voice?

Impossible! And yet—

Jack was conscious of a strong relief when at length Ferrers Locke whispered:

"We will make our attempt now! The chanting we heard was probably the last of the services for the night. There will be another in the early hours of the morning, if the routine is as in other monasteries and lamaserics. We will try to lure the monk on duty to the door, and then overpower him. He must not be allowed to cry out, or we are lost!"

Quietly he and Jack crept to the window, through which the shaft of light still streamed. A quick, cautious survey proved that the monk was still on duty, seated at the reading-desk. He

was reading aloud to himself from a massive tome, and the murmured words came clearly to the detective's ears.

Leaving the window, he and Jack crept quietly to the door. Taking up their positions, one on each side of it, Ferrers Locke drew his knife. Then softly he began to scrape the blade against the stonework. The grating sound must have been heard by the monk, for there came a rustle of robes from inside the small room.

With bated breath, Ferrers Locke and Jack lay doggo in the darkness. Then from the other side of the door came the sound of bolts being withdrawn. The monk was coming to investigate.

"Ready, lad!" breathed Ferrers Locke.

The door swung slowly open, and the black-robed monk stood silhouetted on the threshold. Suddenly from out of the darkness on either side of the doorway two forms launched themselves upon him, and a hand groped for his mouth, stifling his cry of alarm. His feet were then jerked from under him, and he fell heavily, his attackers on top of him.

Ferrers Locke and Jack had come prepared with strips of plaited cloth, which served admirably as rope. Taken completely by surprise and handled with skill and dexterity, the monk had no chance. Within a few moments he was gagged and bound.

"Inside with him—quick!" said the detective crisply.

Without losing a moment Ferrers Locke and Jack carried the writhing and squirming monk into the small stone room in which he had been seated. Closing the door and dropping the wooden bar, on the inside, into place so that none could force an entry, the detective turned to the captive.

"I am about to remove your gag!" he said, in a low voice. "And if ye but raise your voice above a whisper I will—"

He made a gesture with the knife which he held in his hand. The monk shuddered, a look of terror in his eyes. He did not doubt for a moment what the gesture meant, nor the truth of it. Two such as these, who dared to face an entry into Salai Monastery, would not hesitate to slit the throat of a black-robed one. Of that he was sure.

Ferrers Locke removed the man's gag and placed the point of the knife above the heart.

"Now answer well my questions, lest I drive this weapon home!" he whispered.

The monk licked his bloodless lips and his fear-stricken eyes gazed into those of the detective in the manner of one hypnotised.

"Some long time ago," said the detective softly, "four white men camped in the shadow of these walls. They were taken prisoners by your master, Kang Pu! One escaped, but three were left."

He paused, his eyes cold and hard. Then he went on:

"Now tell me, ye dog, where are those three to-day? Do they lie rotting in some dungeon of this cursed monastery, or have they found release in death? Answer, ye priest, else I drive home the blade!"

The monk glanced wildly round the room, then, as though against his will, his gaze returned to the detective's face.

"I—I know nothing!" he whispered huskily.

Ferrers Locke's expression became grim. He pressed slightly with the

knife, and sheer panic leapt into the eyes of the priest.

"Think again, ye dog," purred the detective. "else thy treacherous soul shall quit thy body!"

"It—it is forbidden to speak of the things which concern the—the Chosen of Buddha!"

The words fell jerkily from the monk's livid lips. There was the fear of instant death in his eyes, and Jack marvelled at the influence Kang Pu had over the priests who served him. This man was scared to his very soul, yet his tongue was unwilling to discuss the affairs of his master, Kang Pu, which would thereby save his life.

"Dost then prefer death?" said Ferrers Locke softly. "I have no time to waste on ye. One will I count, then two, then three. If ye have not answered, then by that Buddha whom ye serve, my knife shall find lodging in your heart!"

The monk writhed in his bonds. A bead of perspiration broke out on his brow.

"One!"

The word fell quietly from the detective's lips. Steadily he increased the pressure of the knife.

"Two!"

The monk moaned and a shudder racked his body. Not thus could he sit and by his silence sign his own death warrant.

"Th—"

"Stay thy hand, thou devil!" groaned the monk. "I will speak!"

Ferrers Locke waited in grim silence.

"The white men of whom ye ask," went on the monk huskily, "have long been hidden from our eyes. Whether they still live or are dead I know not. That I swear, by the Buddha whom I serve!"

"But they are here?" said Ferrers Locke softly. "They languish somewhere inside these walls?"

The monk shook his head.

"I cannot say," he replied. "In very truth I do not know! There are many prisoners in this monastery of Salai, and their gaolers cannot speak."

"Cannot?"

"Nay, for they are tongueless!"

The words brought an exclamation to Jack's lips. As though noting the inquiring look in the eyes of the detective the monk continued:

"Our master, Kang Pu, hath said in his wisdom that the most silent of men are those who must perforce remain silent. His gaolers, the servants who attend to his needs, his bodyguard of priestly soldiers—all who need not the power of speech, are tongueless by his orders!"

"So that they may not speak of his goings and comings and of any of his affairs?" said Ferrers Locke.

The monk nodded. Something of his courage was returning to him.

"I tell ye this so that ye might know some little of what is in store for thee should ye fall into his hands, ye daring ones. Release me and begone, for ye tread the path which leads through the valley of shadows."

It was no thought for the safety of his captors which prompted the words, as Ferrers Locke well knew. Were the intrusion discovered, then Kang Pu, the merciless, would demand some fitting explanation from this servant of his who had so illy guarded the door. Further, it was obvious that the monk was by no means sure that he was not to be slain by these intruders. It was better, from every point of view, that they departed, and did so without loss of time. He eyed their peasant dress.



Ferrers Locke was jammed in a mass of men, and it was impossible to manœuvre his pony. As the monk prepared to strike, the detective thrust up his sword to parry the blow. (See page 22.)

"If 'tis gold ye seek—" he began. "Tis not gold we seek," replied Ferrers Locke curtly, "and it is ye and not us who treads the path which leads through the valley of shadows. Note well this knife of mine, for 'tis poised above your heart, and rest assured I shall not stay the thrust should ye refuse to talk! As far as ye know, these white men languish still in some dungeon of this monastery?"

The monk nodded, his flash of courage gone.

"I have not heard that the white ones have been moved, nor have I heard that they are dead," he mumbled.

"Then ye shall show us later where these dungeons are," replied Ferrers Locke. "Now, hark well to this question! Is your master, Kang Pu, in this monastery?"

The monk shook his head.

"Ye know not the thing ye ask," he whispered. "He is here and he is not here! He goes and comes at will, and his earthly form may be in some distant monastery whilst his spirit is with us."

"It is with his earthly form that I am most concerned!" replied Ferrers Locke dryly. "Now answer, ye priest! Is his earthly form in Salai Monastery this night?"

"Fool that ye are," snarled the monk,

stung into anger by some sudden emotion. "Know ye not that Kang Pu, the Chosen of Buddha, is immortal? And ye prate of his earthly form. I tell ye he is here, he is there, he is everywhere. His spirit broods over this land of Tibet, guarding the peoples against all evil! He is immortal, and his eyes will have seen this violence which ye have showed to me, his unworthy servant!"

"Now speak not so loud, ye priest!" warned the detective sternly. "Ye had not such faith in his eyes and his watchfulness some short time ago! I—"

He broke off. Shuffling footsteps were approaching the door. Then came a knock on the stout panels.

"Ho, brother," called a harsh voice. "Art thou asleep, that thou barrest thy door?"

The Plan of Campaign!

FERRERS LOCKE bent forward; his lips at the monk's ear.

"As ye answer so shall I act!" he whispered, and pressed with his knife till the point must have well-nigh penetrated into the prisoner's flesh.

The monk glared at him, hate and fear strangely mingled in his eyes. But, alive to the peril in which he stood, he answered in a voice which shook in spite of himself.

"I am not asleep, brother! I read from the book of Ma-ong Lung-Ten, and I wish not to be disturbed!"

A harsh laugh came from the other side of the door.

"A pretty watch ye keep, I vow! Unbar the door, for I have a message for thee from our master, Kang Pu!"

Ferrers Locke and Jack exchanged glances. Then, with a deft movement, the detective slipped the gag into the captive's mouth. Crossing to the door he unbarred it and allowed it to open a few inches.

As he had expected, the impatient monk on the other side, thrust open the door and stalked across the threshold. Before his eyes could take in and understand the meaning of the bound figure which lay on the floor, Ferrers Locke and Jack leapt on him from behind the cover of the door. At the same instant the detective kicked out at the door with his foot and it swung shut.

The struggle which followed was sharp and brief, for within a few minutes the newcomer was gagged and bound, and joined his fellow priest on the floor.

"That's two of 'em," murmured Ferrers Locke grimly. "I wish we could deal with the others as easily!"

He crossed to their new captive.

"No time or words have I to waste on thee," he said, "and as I can expect
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no mercy in this monastery of Salai, then assuredly no mercy will I show. Speak now this message from Kang Pu! Speak, else will I cut out thy tongue by its very roots!"

He removed the gag, whilst hate-filled eyes glared into his. Then, his knife poised, he waited.

"I know thee, thou cursed infidels!" The words fell harshly from the monk's lips. He was of sterner stuff than his companion.

"I know thee," he snarled, "and willingly will I tell thee my message, for it concernest thee. The spirit of Kang Pu was warned this night that thou wert approaching the monastery of Salai. From some secret place where he sojourns in communion with the spirits of our fathers, he sent a message bidding his servants keep good watch for thee. His eyes are on thee even now, thou cursed of Lhasa, thou violators of Buddha's holy shr—"

His voice, rising to a scream, was abruptly choked as Ferrers Locke shoved him to the gag.

"A noisy customer, Jack," he said grimly, "but a well-plucked one. Lucky for us if he has not brought the whole monastery about our ears!"

He and Jack listened, but nothing disturbed the stillness. Had they but known it, such screams and shoutings were of common occurrence in the monastery of Salai. Had the noise been heard by drowsy monks in their cells then it would have been put down as but the wails of some wretched prisoner.

Ungagging the other monk, Ferrers Locke questioned him closely. The man answered sullenly, and the detective learned that the first service of the day was held in the Great Temple at dawn. Few, if any, would be traversing the corridors, as the priests of Salai spent the hours between midnight and dawn in strict seclusion of their cells.

It wanted still an hour till dawn, but Ferrers Locke knew that he and Jack had little time to spare. The second monk whom they had overpowered wore the red badge on his hood which betokened the office of lesser abbot. The detective and Jack stripped him of his vestments, and Ferrers Locke donned them. He also slipped a ring set with a blood red ruby from off the priest's finger and put it on his own. Jack then donned the robes of the guardian of the door and, at a gesture from Ferrers Locke, accompanied the detective from the chamber, securely shutting the door behind him.

"We will have to leave those fellows in there," said Ferrers Locke. "We have not the time to find a place in which to hide them!"

He glanced round. The stone corridor in which they stood was silent and deserted.

"Now listen, Jack," he said earnestly. "Go at once to where the hillman waits with the ponies. Ride with him as fast as you can to the camp in the hills. Tell the leader that I have won an entry into Salai Monastery, and that I now wait for that aid which he freely offered. Tell him to return at once with you, and to bring a score or more of picked fighting men. You should be outside the walls of the monastery garden by midnight of the fourth day from now. Scale the wall and lead the men here, Jack. This door, through which we gained entry to-night, will be open. If it is not open then I will be either a

prisoner—or dead. In that case the fulfilment of our mission will rest on your shoulders, Jack, and you will act as you think fit!"

Stepping forward, he unbolted the door and swung it open.

"Good-bye, lad, and Godspeed!" he said quietly, holding out his hand.

"Good-bye, guv'nor!"

Their hands met in a firm clasp. Both knew that it might well be the final parting. Then, reluctantly, Jack turned and slipped away into the night. Never, for him, had the path of duty been so difficult to tread.

The Corridor of Cells!

FOR a moment Ferrers Locke stood plunged in thought, then turned and paced with slow, deliberate tread along the stone corridor.

He knew there was little chance of discovery, for none of an inferior order dare question one who wore the robes of a lesser abbot. And, by its size, Salai Monastery probably housed fully three hundred monks. A stranger, provided he trod warily, might escape discovery for some little time.

The first thing to be done was to dispose of his captives. Ferrers Locke knew the average personnel and routine of a monastery or lamasery, and was aware that the tongueless gaolers, of whom the guardian of the door had spoken, would be little more than slaves, who had, perhaps, once been prisoners themselves, full-witted, soulless automatons, dragging out their lives in some underground passageway. And it was in search of that passageway, wherein he felt sure would lie the dungeons, that Ferrers Locke bent his steps.

He had no time to spare. Soon the giant gong would sound, calling the priests of Buddha to service in the great temple. Then the corridors would be aswarm with hooded, hurrying monks.

For close on fifteen minutes, Ferrers Locke traversed corridor after corridor, walking slowly along with bent head, but ever on the alert for some staircase which led downwards. More than one monk he passed, engaged in trimming the wicks of the oil-lamps or shuffling along engaged on some menial task. But none questioned him, and he kept his hood drawn well over his head.

He could have returned to the chamber and questioned the captives, but he knew that with the approach of dawn the men might well misdirect him, knowing that with the coming of daylight their plight must be discovered and the intruder captured.

He traversed at length a narrow, echoing corridor, and at the end saw a monk standing motionless at the head of a staircase. He made as though to pass, but the monk barred his way with the two-edged sword which he held. With a numble of impatience, Ferrers Locke thrust forward his hand, upon the first finger of which glowed the blood-red ruby. He was tensed, ready for trouble, should the token not win him passage. But the sight of the ring, however, caused the monk to lower his weapon and stand aside.

Passing down the staircase, Ferrers Locke's thoughts dwelt thankfully on the words of the Abbot of Patong: "Show me the token of Kang Pu that I may know ye are his servants."

Whether the blood red ruby was the token of Kang Pu or not, it most certainly was a token of authority. This

the detective had known must be the case, for no priest of Buddha would wear jewellery unless it were to indicate some office which he held.

The staircase led downwards to a long, badly lighted, and dank corridor. On either side of its entire length were thick, solid-looking doors, of wood, braced with iron. And as he passed slowly along, Ferrers Locke heard from behind the doors, moans, groans, and disjointed sentences. Here, without doubt, were the dungeons, where lay the wretched prisoners of Salai, tossing and turning in either wakefulness or uneasy slumber. And, maybe, in some of these cells lay Major Beverley, Heyward, of the Geographical Survey, and Carstairs, the big-game hunter and explorer. It was a thought which brought a grimmer look to Ferrers Locke's eyes and a tightening of his lips.

At the end of the corridor a door stood ajar. Pushing it open, Ferrers Locke stood on the threshold of a room. The atmosphere was foul and fetid. Along the four walls of the room were ranged tiers of wooden bunks where lay hideous, dirty, unwashed and unshaven caricatures of humanity. Others, squat, ugly creatures, were seated at a long trestle table which ran down the centre of the room. Men they might have been once, but now more akin to animals. At each man's girdle dangled a bunch of keys. It was the rest-room and living quarters of the gaolers.

At sight of Ferrers Locke, standing hooded and robed on the threshold, the men seated at the table rose to their feet and stood silent with lowered heads. Silent, indeed, for these were the tongueless ones.

Ferrers Locke beckoned to the two men nearest to him. He was about to adopt a bold course which, by its very daring, might well succeed. With the two gaolers at his heels, he returned the way he had come, till finally he reached the chamber wherein lay the bound and gagged priests.

With a gesture, he indicated the captives. Without hesitation, the gaoler stepped forward and, picking up the priests, slung them across their shoulders with the greatest of ease. It was as Ferrers Locke had thought to be the case. Deep down in the bowels of the monastery, the tongueless gaolers saw few of the black-robed priests. If they recognised their prisoners as two inmates of the monastery, they gave no sign. Enough for them that this hooded and black-robed man, who wore the badge of office of lesser abbot, and who had on his finger the blood-red stone, had ordered the removal of the bound and gagged captives. It was not expected of gaolers to wonder as to why these things should be, nor how they had come about.

So back to the corridor of cells they went, the grim and silent figure of Ferrers Locke stalking in front. He realised the deadly peril he was in, but if only he could get the two priests safely lodged in some cell before the monastery awoke to life, then the open door leading into the cloisters might well be misconstrued. It might be thought that the two missing monks had deserted. The gaolers would not talk, for they could not. The monk on duty at the head of the staircase probably dare not discuss matters which he was permitted to see only by virtue of his office.

Reaching the end of the corridor, Ferrers Locke turned to the gaolers.

"Lodge the dogs safe in separate cells!" he said harshly. "See well to their gags and bonds! Do not remove a gag in order to give them food unless I am present, and admit none to their cells else thou shalt die on the rack!"

The gaolers signified their understanding. Ferrers Locke stood grimly by whilst the two priests were put in separate cells and the doors double-locked upon them. Then, with an inward sigh of intense relief, he turned away.

At the same moment the silence of the monastery was broken by the deep booming notes of a gong. It was the call to service in the great temple.

The Altars of Flame!

WITHOUT hesitation, Ferrers Locke strode boldly along the corridor and ascended to the upper story, where the Great Temple was situated. The first faint light of dawn had caused no appreciable lightening of the gloom which shrouded the corridors and passageways. Priests, heavy-eyed, and walking with bent heads, were drifting towards the Great Temple.

Waiting his opportunity, the detective stepped into an alcove from which a narrow winding staircase led upwards. Making the ascent, he found himself in a long, low-roofed stone gallery which overlooked the Great Temple below. It was void of any artificial lighting, but the greyness of early morning showed him tier upon tier of long stone seats.

Settling himself in a corner, well hidden in the shadows from the gaze of any below, he took stock of the scene.

At one end of the Great Temple a huge Buddha towered away towards the roof. Before it stood an altar, lit by six flat oil-lamps. And in front of the altar was a flat, square slab of stone, stained with the blood of many victims who had been slaughtered to the glory of the great Buddha.

Some short distance from the god were three great images of the buddhist trinity—the Buddha of the past, of the present, and of the future. In front of them were three altars and three sacrificial slabs. And, his gaze travelling slowly round, Ferrers Locke saw yet another great image—that of the many-handed Buddha. Here, again, was the altar and the sacrificial slab.

In front of each of the gods stood priests, in gorgeous vestments of blue, silver, and gold, wearing peaked caps of the same material. On the walls and pillars of the temple were hideous scrolls and devil masks. About the floor of the temple ran little white mice, in whose bodies were supposed to lodge the spirits of long-dead priests.

Little side chapels opened off the main temple, and entry to these was barred by hanging nets of heavy chain-work. And over each network of chain there was extended from the wall a hand, red with blood and clenched as though to strike to the ground any who dared attempt to penetrate beyond the barrier.

The temple was lit by thousands of oil-lamps, some of gold and others of baser metal.

As Ferrers Locke watched, the gorgeously-clad priests in front of the gods suddenly became tense and rigid. From somewhere, vague and elusive, there came the subdued chant of many voices. Then, walking slowly with bent head, a scarlet-clad figure emerged from the shadows and approached the giant Buddha. He made a deep obeisance, and the twenty monks who followed in his train did likewise. From god to

god he passed, making obeisance at each. The subdued chanting from the unseen choir rose and fell in an unbroken wave of harmony.

Then as the scarlet-clad priest, whom Ferrers Locke judged to be the abbot conducting the service, paced slowly back to the giant Buddha and stood before the altar, the chanting suddenly stilled, and silence, broken only by the reverberating echoes, settled on the temple.

The scarlet-clad abbot raised both hands above his head, his lips mumbling some sort of prayer or blessing. Every head was bowed, and the droning voice went on. Ferrers Locke could not catch the words, but he missed no detail of the service.

Finishing his incantation, the abbot turned to the giant Buddha. Throwing up his arms in a pleading gesture, he cried:

"O, Buddha, look down on these servants of thine who, in this monastery of Salai, serve well thy chosen one, Kang Pu! How long, O Buddha, how long, ere the feet of thy servants be turned to the path of war? We grow weary, O, Buddha, and the peoples of this fair land of thine have long unsheathed the sword. We but wait upon thy word, delivered to us, O, Buddha, through thy lips, but in the voice of thy chosen one, Kang Pu, whose spirit thou allowest to enter into thee! How

PEPLER, Mina, Gerrard, O.K.R., 1912. Will the friend of May Cubitt please write

What was the meaning of the mysterious "Agony" advertisement that appeared in the "East London Despatch"? For the answer, see the long, complete story of Sexton Blake in the UNION JACK this week. On sale Thursday. Price 2d.

long, O, Buddha, how long ere thy chosen one, Kang Pu, shall lead thy peoples to war against the accursed ones beyond our frontiers?"

There was something in the abbot's voice which, although impassioned, bespoke that the words were somewhat in the nature of a ritual. Ferrers Locke was, therefore, not greatly surprised when, from the lips of the giant Buddha there came a voice. And every monk prostrated himself.

"Hark ye, my servants, ye that grow weary with long waiting! The day draws nigh when my chosen one, Kang Pu, shall ride in triumph through the western world! The day draws nigh when the countless millions of the East shall arise in their might and sweep the infidels from the face of the earth! The day draws nigh when holy Lhasa shall rule the world and Kang Pu, my chosen one, shall rule in holy Lhasa!"

The voice paused. "Oh, fools that you are," murmured Ferrers Locke, "not to see the simple trickery in that voice!"

Then he stiffened with interest as the voice continued:

"But I, in my wisdom, see that ye do indeed grow weary! Watch; then, and thine eyes shall see what is about to be!"

Slowly every light in the temple was

extinguished, leaving only the greyness of the growing dawn. This also slowly faded into complete darkness as cunningly wrought screens moved of their own volition over the mullioned windows.

The darkness was intense. Nothing stirred. Ferrers Locke watched grimly, his eyes cold and hard. What further trickery was toward?

Suddenly, from the altar in front of the Buddha of the past, there leapt a veritable sea of blood-red flame. It glowed eerily on scrolls, on priests, on grotesque devil-masks. And slowly the leaping flames took shape till they formed the hideous, leering visage of some fiend-like creature. It was a visage utterly horrible in its evil ugliness. Ferrers Locke caught his breath and he craned forward.

"Look now, my servants," came the voice from the giant Buddha, "on Kang Pu, my chosen one! Look now on Kang Pu, the immortal! Kang Pu, who ruled in holy Lhasa in ages now long past!"

And in thunderous chorus from the prostrated priests came the words:

"Hail, Kang Pu! Hail, the chosen one of Buddha!"

Slowly the face faded in the leaping, writhing flames. Then slowly they took shape again and showed a mighty city of noble domes and minarets.

"Look now on holy Lhasa," came the voice, "as this my city stood in those ages which are long dead! Look on holy Lhasa, the fairest city of the earth! Thus she stood in her pomp and power, and countless thousands worshipped at my holy shrines!"

Slowly the city faded in the flames. The flames themselves decreased, dying gradually away until at length they flickered out and the temple was once more in darkness.

Then from the altar of the Buddha of the present the sea of blood-red flames took shape and showed holy Lhasa as Ferrers Locke had seen it—a city where pariah curs roamed amongst the filth which littered the ruins of many monasteries.

"See now the holy Lhasa of to-day!" came the voice from the giant Buddha. "See now the holy city of Lhasa bereft of her one-time glories! See now the city which cradled the peoples of the earth, and rend thy hearts. O my servants, that such a thing has come about!"

The flames leapt and danced until slowly the picture faded. Then there took shape something which caused Ferrers Locke to watch with bated breath. There came slowly into view a broad river, fringed on one side with wharfs and warehouses and on the other with noble buildings and a tree-lined embankment.

"See now the Lhasa of to-day!" thundered the voice. "See now the accursed city which has usurped the power of holy Lhasa! See now, my servants, the greatest city in the world! 'Tis London, the seat of Government of the accursed English race!"

Ferrers Locke felt tempted to rub his eyes. The leaping flames had formed into a perfect representation of the Thames and the Embankment. Westminster Bridge and Waterloo Bridge were picked out in every detail. Pedestrians and cars were moving along the pavements and roads.

The flames died down, and again the temple was plunged in darkness. Then they leapt into life on the altar

of the Buddha of the future. Slowly they took shape, and showed countless hordes of marching men, at the head of which rode a figure on a fiery steed.

"See now, ye weary ones," came the voice, "my people treading the path of war! See he who rides in front—Kang Pu, the immortal! Kang Pu, who will lead-ye to a glorious victory and who will restore her vanished glories to holy Lhasa!"

The picture changed, and showed a noble city in flames.

"Tis the fall of the seat of power of the cursed English! 'Tis the burning of London, the usurper of holy Lhasa!"

Again the picture changed, and slowly there came into being a Lhasa of broad avenues and lofty buildings above which towered dome on dome.

"Look now on holy Lhasa as she will stand when the swords of my people are sheathed! Look now on holy Lhasa and rejoice, for I say to thee, my servants, that the hour of waiting is well nigh done! The day is at hand when word will go forth for my peoples

to band themselves together! Allies have ye, my servants—allies in the countless hordes which people the East! They will flock to my banner, and with

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my chosen one to lead them they will wade with thee through a sea of blood—the blood of the accursed infidels!"

The flames died away, and, by some unseen agency, the thousands of lamps became steadily more bright, till at length the temple was relighted.

The scarlet-clad priest turned to the prostrate monks.

"Through the eyes of the Buddhas of the past, of the present, and of the future, thou has seen what was, what is, and what shall be!" he cried. "And this I say to thee: Following the great sacrifice before this altar to-night, there shall appear to thee in the flesh Kang Pu, the chosen of Buddha! The hour draws nigh when we shall quit the paths of peace for those of war! Kang Pu hath bidden me, his unworthy servant, tell thee that this night he will come to thee from where he sojourneth with the spirits of our fathers!"

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BUNTER, THE BAD LAD!

(Continued from previous page.)

Harry Wharton & Co. eyed him grimly. "I've come to see you about the cricket, Wharton, old fellow—"

"Not so much of the 'Wharton, old fellow,'" said the captain of the Remove. "Oh, really, old chap!"

Bunter the millionaire's son was more intolerable than Bunter the poor stock-broker's son, and his company had palled on the Famous Five even more than usual since the arrival of his favor.

"I've come about the cricket," went on Bunter. "So you said before," grunted Johnny Bull. "Get it off your chest and hop it!"

Bunter greeted Johnny Bull to an indignant stare. Somehow or other the really decent fellows in the Remove had less time for Bunter now that good fortune had come to him, and no one was quicker to see that than the Owl of the Remove, obtuse as he was. But that same obtuseness put it down to jealousy.

"Look here, Wharton," said Bunter. "I'm looking," said the captain of the Remove. "But it gives me a pain. Get it over quick!"

fatuous Bunter. "You want to win the match, of course. And you want to make certain of winning the match?"

"One can't make certain of winning a match, old fat man," said Wharton, with a smile. "One can play up and hope that the better team will win."

"But you can make certain of a win if you play me!" said Bunter, striking a dramatic attitude. "Oh, my hat!"

"Bunter in the team!" "Ye gods and little fishes!" "Apparently Bunter's generous offer was not being taken seriously by the Famous Five. They roared.

"There's nothing to cackle about!" said Bunter wrathfully. "If you play me in the match it's a certain win, I tell you!"

Bob Cherry wiped the tears of merriment from his face. "Certain win for St. Jim's," he remarked. "You're right there, old fat barrel, but we want the Greyfriars to win. See?"

His words ended in a frantic yell, as Bob Cherry sprang at him and banged his bullet head on the wall of the study. They ended in several yells to be precise, for next minute Billy Bunter was "going through it."

The enraged members of the Famous Five were trying to impress upon the fatuous Owl of the Remove that bribery and corruption would not be tolerated even from the son of a millionaire. Certainly, if Bunter had anything to do with it, Billy Bunter was learning his lesson pretty thoroughly.

He was bumped, stumped, thumped, and stumped again before the Famous Five rolled him into the passage and stuffed his liver down his neck.

For quite a minute dead silence reigned in Study No. 1. The colossal indifference of Billy Bunter fairly rendered Harry Wharton & Co. speechless. But Bob Cherry broke the silence with a roar of wrath beside which the roar of the celebrated bull of Bashan was but a whisper.

"You awful rotter!" Billy Bunter jumped back, startled by the look of ferocity in Bob's face. "Eh?" he stammered.

"You fooling, fooling, worm!" roared Harry Wharton, beside himself with anger. "Why, I'll burst you!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER. Skinner is Suspicious!

"WAAAL, I SWOW!" Fisher Tarleton looked in danger of swooning as Billy Bunter handed him three shillings. "Now you're settled, Fishy!" said the fat Owl, blinking round upon an assembly of Removites.

"Great gophers!" ejaculated Fishy, looking at the three shillings dazedly. "Bunter's actually paid me back the three bob I lent three terms ago!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" It was the same evening, and Skinner's visit amongst the Removites had turned up, and Bunter was doing a great business. Beside him stood Harold Skinner, a list of names in his hand.

On the table in front of them were neat little piles of silver of varying values, also piles of coppers. It needed but a swift calculation to see that the amount on the table exceeded ten pounds.

Really, it seemed too good to be true. Here was Bunter, once the most impetuous fellow in the Remove, the fellow who would pester another chap for a bob or a tanner on the strength of a postal order that was due to arrive at any moment—and, of course, never came—actually rolling in money.

There was no doubt about it, the sudden rise to fortune of Bunter senior had opened up his heart where his son's tips were concerned. Not even Lord Maulverer, who was perhaps the wealthiest junior in the Remove, handled such sums of money as Bunter handled his. It was a new side to Bunter altogether.

"Who's next, Skinner?" asked Bunter, beaming round upon the assembly. "Trevor—two bob first day of last term!"

"That's me!" grinned Trevor, and he pocketed two shillings that Bunter handed him. "It was a lengthy job, but at last all claims had been met, even Skinner's. Bunter never turning a hair when that young rascal had calmly stated that, in all, Bunter owed him twenty-five shillings."

"It's made a hole in your cash," said Skinner. "Bunter shrugged his shoulders. "What's it matter? There's plenty more where that came from," he said. "Lucky barge!"

Snoop enviously. "Skinner gave him a wink. "What about a game of poker before bed-time, you chaps?" he said. "I'm on," said Snoop. "Same here," remarked Stolt. "What a bout Bunter?"

The Owl of the Remove grinned. "Oh, I'll join in, with pleasure!" he said. "I like a little flutter now and again!"

Skinner linked his right arm in Bunter's left, and Snoop put his left through Bunter's right, whilst Stolt Bunter's right, whilst Stolt No. 11. "Once inside that apartment Skinner closed the door and locked it. "You risky leaving it open," he said. "Pretexts may be on the prowl!"

The four young rascals sat down to the table and Snoop produced a pack of cards. "What limit shall we make it?" asked Skinner casually. "A bob," said Snoop, taking his cue from Skinner. "A bob? Let's make it ten bob!"

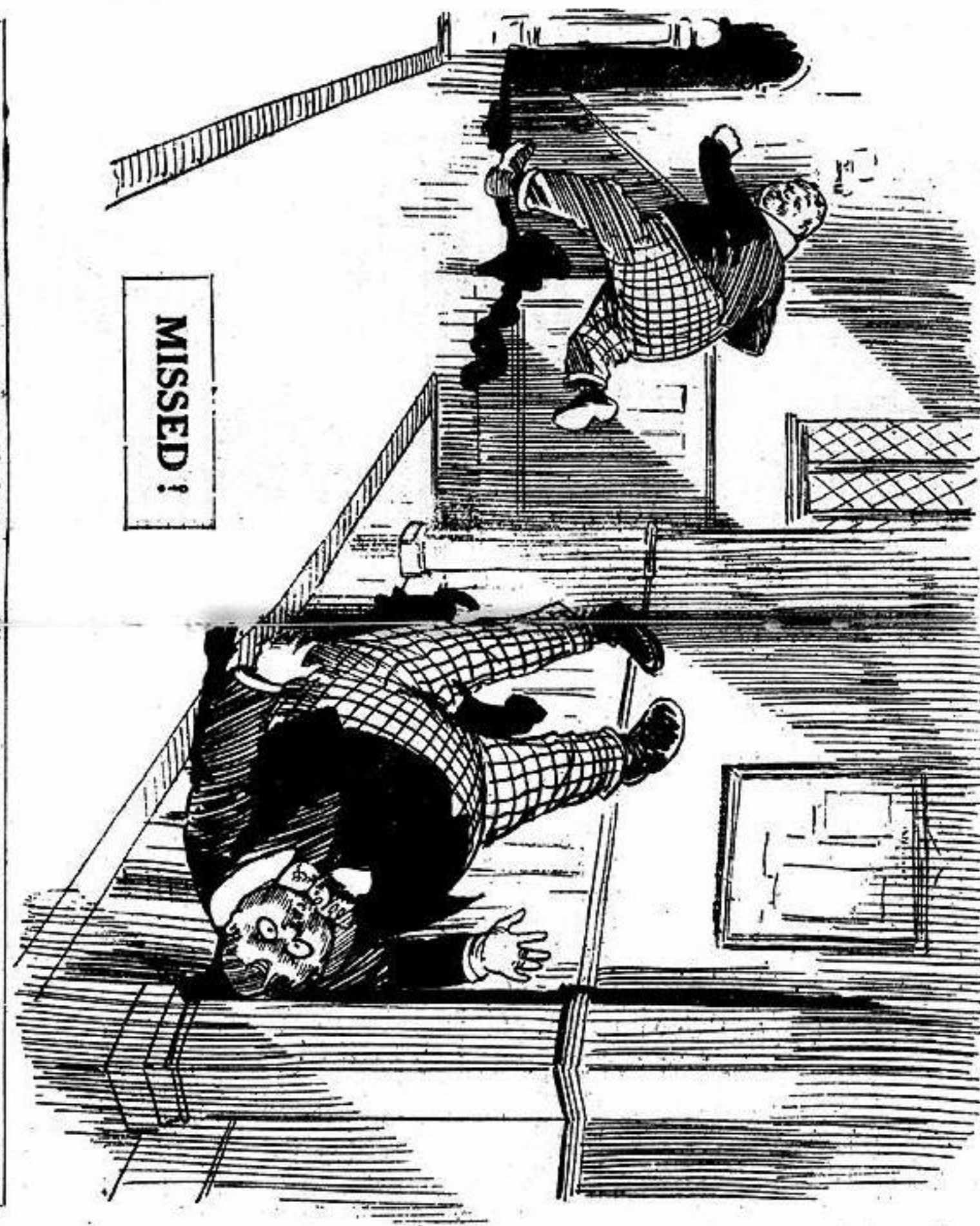
But the wily Skinner shook his head. "Snoop's right," he said. "After all, this is only a friendly game. We're not out to rook each other. We'll make it a bob!"

Bunter granted something unintelligible, and Stolt shuffled the cards. In a moment more they were being dealt. As had been arranged by Skinner and his cronies, Bunter was allowed to win, Skinner knowing enough about human nature to know that with a fellow of Bunter's kidney a bob limit would not satisfy him if he won.

And it didn't. The stamps of the Remove had been playing for twenty minutes, and about fifteen shillings stood at Bunter's fat elbow. "Oh, I'm fed-up with these paltry stakes!" he grumbled. "Let's make it a ten bob limit, as I suggested."

Skinner & Co., playing their parts, demurred at first, and then agreed to Bunter's proposal. And from the moment the stakes were increased Billy Bunter began to lose. There was no need to introduce any cheating into the game, which was perhaps a certain amount of palm to the conscience of Skinner & Co., for Bunter knew as much about the "calls" of poker as he knew about football and cricket. And very soon the pile of notes that stood at his elbow began to dwindle.

"The luck will change again if we keep on," said Skinner commiseratingly, as he raked in the "kitty," to which Bunter had generously contributed in his ignorance of poker. "Stick it, old chap." And Bunter did stick it! Eight pounds of his found their way across the table to Skinner & Co. before he realised that poker was hardly a game at which he shone. "I'm fed-up with this game!" he grunted. "I'm going to get a snack before that beast Wingate comes turning us out!"



With a bellow like a bull, Billy Bunter rushed after his intruder and aimed a tremendous kick at him. But at the critical moment Sammy dodged, and his major's foot, meeting with a resistance, swept high in the air in a movement that brought the fat Removite crashing down on his back. Thump! "Yooooooooh!" howled Billy. "Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Sammy. "Do it again, Billy!" (See Chapter 8.)

And there they left him groaning and gasping. "Grough! Beasts! Wow!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "I wouldn't play now if the rotters asked me on bended knees. Ow!"

Really, Bunter's efforts to secure himself a place in the team had not met with the success he had anticipated, although they had certainly met with the success they deserved. And instead of a place in the Greyfriars Remove cricket team, Billy Bunter had captured a record licking and an uncomfortable place in the Greyfriars Remove passage—a slight difference that even the obtuse Bunter could see and appreciate.

But the majority of the Removites search of all the juniors to whom Bunter owed money had produced surprising results. Nearly all the Removites had given in their names to Skinner and had promised to attend the "general meeting" as Skinner termed it, in the Bag at eight o'clock. Harry Wharton & Co., who had lent Bunter money practically from the day they had arrived at Greyfriars, refrained from attending the meeting. They had, after all, lent the fat junior sundry sums with the full knowledge that it was money gone for "keeps." It was not for them, at any rate, to call upon Bunter and demand repayment.