

BILLY BUNTER—THE FATTEST AND FUNNIEST BOY IN FICTION!

Read all about him—inside.

The

No. 1,066 Vol. XXXIV. Week Ending July 21st, 1928.

Magnet

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EVERY SATURDAY.



IN BORROWED PLUMES!

(An unusual incident taken from the grand school yarn of Greyfriars in this issue.)



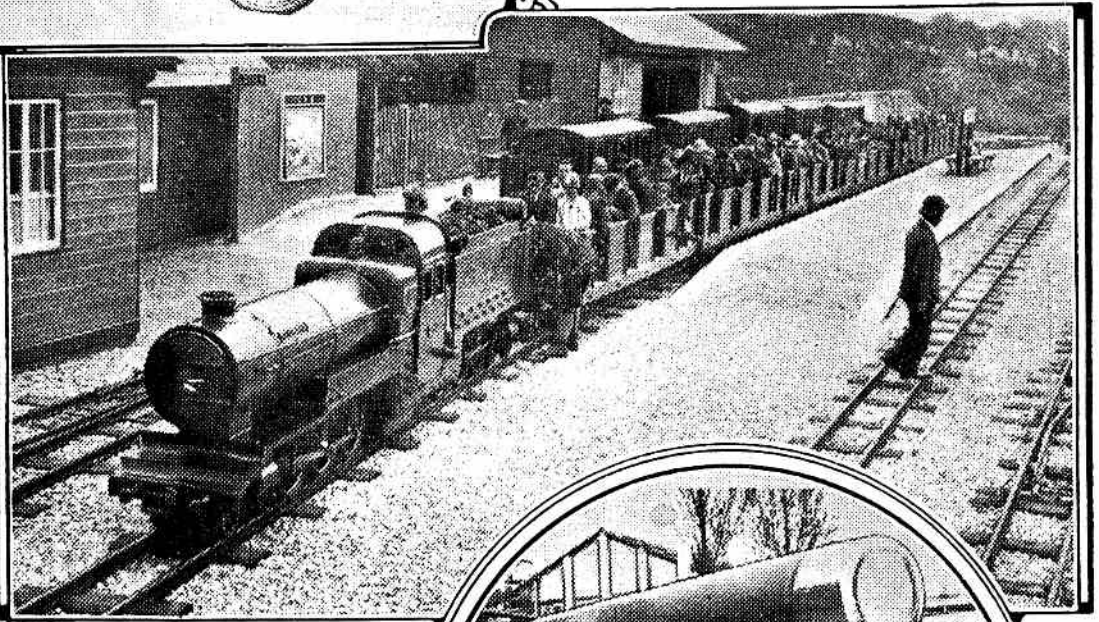
BRUIN GOES CYCLING!

These two bears, who actually ride a specially constructed cycle and sidecar, are appearing in a new British film, which is being produced at Isleworth. This photograph was taken when they were out for a spin. Kindly note the sunshade!



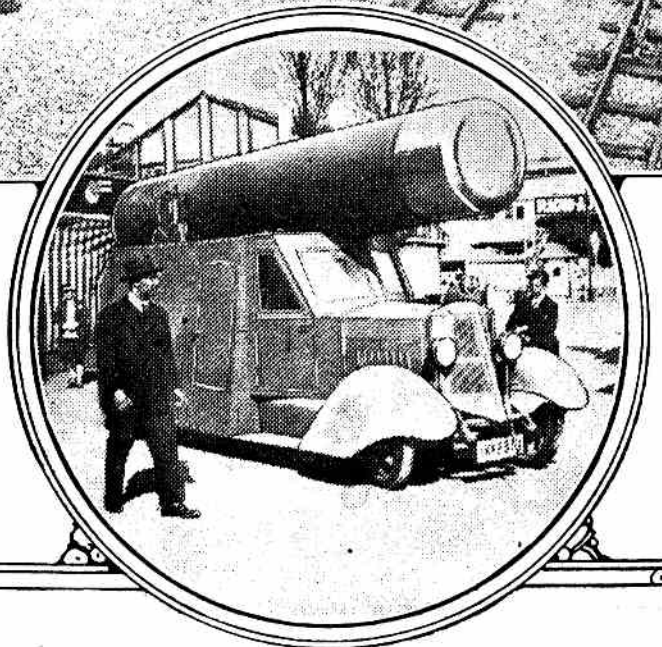
ALL ABOARD!

This is not a toy—oh, dear no!—but the real thing. In other words, it's the famous 15 in. gauge railway which runs from Ravenglass, on the Cumberland coast, right into the heart of that beautiful and mountainous country. In the photograph we see the engine, "River Mite," waiting to draw out its load from the station at Ravenglass. This engine, together with its sister, "River Esk," are the only two locomotives in Great Britain, of which the tenders help the engines to haul the load.



FOR AMUSEMENT!

This is not a real armoured car with a Big Bertha on the top, but one of the most popular "shows" at an Amusement Park in Berlin. You pay your money and step into the car. Next moment you're shot out of the muzzle of the gun. The photograph does not show where you land, but presumably you come back to terra firma quite safe and sound.



A DIFFERENT BUNTER! *Bunter's the sort of merchant who believes in making hay while the sun shines. It certainly shines for him this week, for he's simply rolling in money, and Bunter with money is the last word in comicality and fatuous folly!*

In Borrowed Plumes!



A magnificent new long complete story dealing with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., the world-famous chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

YOU fellows ought to get out."

"Eh?"

"Slacking about indoors on a half-holiday!" said Billy

Bunter, severely.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at Bunter.

Slacking about indoors on a half-holiday was rather in Bunter's own line; but it certainly was not in the line of the Famous Five of the Remove at Greyfriars.

Bunter jerked a fat thumb towards the open doorway of the House.

"Look at the weather!" he said, "Lovely! Just the afternoon for a bike spin! Why don't you fellows take your bikes out?"

"What?"

"Or go up the river," said Bunter. "Marjorie will be glad to see you. Why not?"

The Co. stared.

Billy Bunter's sudden and inexplicable interest in their doings that sunny afternoon was really surprising.

As a rule, William George Bunter's fat thoughts were concentrated upon only one person—William George Bunter, of the Greyfriars Remove.

Now he seemed deeply concerned about the Famous Five; which was unusual, surprising, and mysterious.

"Or there's the pictures, at Courtfield," went on Bunter. "They've got a new picture at the Courtfield Picture Palace—I hear that it's jolly good. British film, instead of the usual American crook muck. Why not trot down to Courtfield, and see it?"

"Well, my hat!" said Harry Wharton.

"Or why not take that chap Da Costa for a walk round the country, and show him the local sights?" suggested Bunter. "He's new here, and he would like it. It would be kind and thoughtful."

"Great pip!"

"Or trot over to Highcliffe, and give Courtenay a look-in!" went on Bunter. "It's a long time since you've been

to see Courtenay. He will be feeling rather neglected."

In sheer astonishment, Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at the Owl of the Remove.

Had Bunter proposed to join in any of these excursions he was suggesting, there would have been no mystery about the matter. But that evidently was not his intention. It was not his object to inflict his fascinating society upon the chums of the Remove. Apparently he was only deeply interested in seeing them busily and happily occupied for the half-holiday. His motives seemed to be purely philanthropic. And that was not merely astonishing—it was astounding, almost unnerving.

"Or what about Lantham?" pursued Bunter. "There's a county cricket match on at Lantham. It's rather a long way; but that's nothing to you fellows. Why not make the effort?"

"Is the esteemed fat Bunter wandering in his absurd and preposterous mind?" asked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, in wonder.

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"You fat frump!" said Frank Nugent.

"What are you driving at? What the merry dickens does it matter to you what we do this afternoon?"

"I don't like to see fellows slacking about," said Bunter. "Lots of things you can do out of doors. What's the good of frowsting about the House?"

"Who's frowsting about the House?" roared Johnny Bull.

"You fellows are! Shocking, I call it."

"You fat chump—"

"You can call a fellow names!" said Bunter. "But I tell you, in my opinion, it's sickening to see fellows frowsting indoors on a glorious afternoon like this."

The Famous Five did not merely stare at Bunter—they glared. Frowsting was not their way at all. They had not the slightest intention of hanging about idly that afternoon, as Bunter often did, and fellows like Skinner and Snoop. Indeed, something like a sheet-anchor would have been required to keep Bob Cherry indoors on a half-holiday; were the

weather fair or foul. Harry Wharton & Co. were going out that afternoon; and they were merely waiting now for Arthur da Costa to join them—the Eurasian junior being now a constant companion of the Famous Five on holiday occasions. Billy Bunter was unaware of that circumstance.

"What do you want to get us out of the House for specially, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Eh?"

"Oh, that's it," grinned Bob Cherry. "What's the little game, Bunter? If there was a cake in my study, I could understand it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows! Of course, I don't want to get you out of the House—nothing of the sort. If you think that I'm anxious to see the last of you, you're making a mistake," said Bunter, eagerly. "There isn't any little game! Nothing of the kind."

"Which means that there is!" remarked Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Are you thinking of borrowing my bike again, when we're gone?" demanded the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"If you do, remember that you will be found dead afterwards," said Harry, impressively. "I've had enough of fettering my bike home after you've left it out of gates. You touch that bike, you fat villain, and I shall strew you in little pieces along the Remove passage."

"I don't want a bike at the bun-shop," said Bunter. "I mean, of course, I should disdain to borrow a bike from a fellow who wasn't willing to lend it." "So you're going to the Courtfield bun-shop?"

"Oh! No! Nothing of the kind," answered Bunter, hastily.

"Wandering in his mind!" remarked Bob.

"If any!" said Nugent.

Really, it was mysterious and intriguing. Had the Famous Five laid in a supply of tuck for tea on their return,

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Bunter's anxiety to see the last of them would have been easily explained. But they hadn't! If he was going to the Courtfield bun-shop himself—as evidently he was—there appeared to be no reason why he should care two straws whether the Famous Five went out or stayed in. But clearly he cared much more than two straws; he was all eagerness to see them go.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Da Costa."

The Eurasian junior came down the stairs, and joined the chums of the Remove. There was a general movement towards the door. The mystery of Billy Bunter was still unexplained; but it did not matter, anyway. The extent to which Billy Bunter did not matter was, as Hurree Singh would have said, terrific.

"I say, you fellows," Bunter rolled after them. "You're going out, then?"

"Yes, ass."

"Yess," said Da Costa, in his lisping voice.

"Oh, good! I mean, I hope you'll have a good time. Where are you going, old chaps? Not to Courtfield?"

Apparently Bunter did not want the chums of the Remove in Courtfield, while he was disporting himself at the bun-shop there.

"We're taking Da Costa for a ramble round the country," answered Wharton. "Anything more you want to know?"

"Get your hat and come along," suggested Bob Cherry. "We're going to do about ten or twelve miles."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fancy I could walk you fellows off your legs," said Billy Bunter, disdainfully. "But I happen to have an engagement this afternoon—a rather important engagement. But I'll see you off at the gates."

"You needn't trouble."

"No trouble at all. Pleasure, old chap."

Billy Bunter rolled out into the quad after the juniors. He rolled down to the gates with them. This kind attention from Billy Bunter would have been rather flattering, had it not been evidently dictated by his keen desire to see the last of the half-dozen Removites.

"Have a jolly good long walk, you fellows," said Bunter. "Don't slack, you know. Make it fifteen miles. No need to get back early. You could stop for tea at Redclyffe—nice little place there. Then you needn't get back until call-over, see?"

"You fat fraud!" exclaimed Bob. "What the thump do you want to keep us out of the school for this afternoon? What do you mean?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"He's got something on!" said Harry puzzled. "Blessed if I can make out what it is. Luckily, it doesn't matter."

"Well, get off, you know," said Bunter. "What's the good of hanging about the gates? Wasting time on a glorious day like this."

"Fathead!"

The Famous Five and the Eurasian walked away down the leafy lane towards Friardale. Bunter, who had obviously dreaded to see them take the opposite direction—towards Courtfield—gave a gasp of relief. He stood in the gateway watching them through his big spectacles, till the leafy lane swallowed them up from sight. Then he grinned.

"Thank goodness they're gone!"

And Billy Bunter rolled back to the House—at liberty now to carry out whatever stunt it was that required the absence of the Famous Five.

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Something for Captain Marker!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"What—"

"Look!"

Bob pointed through the trees.

Harry Wharton & Co. had stopped to rest a little, after a long tramp through the scented summer woods. It was a glorious day, with a blaze of sunshine from a cloudless blue sky. Four members of the Co. found it hot—Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh and Arthur da Costa found it mildly warm.

All of them were glad to sit down in the ferns and moss under the old trees of Redclyffe Wood, in deep shade, and take their ease for a while. The green, shady wood climbed the slopes of Redclyffe Hill, and the paths were steep. Almost on the edge of a high, chalky acclivity, the juniors had thrown themselves down to rest—deep in ferns, thick branches over them—looking idly down the steep slope, at the bottom of which a bridle-path wound through the wood. They were twenty feet above the path, and the slope down was almost sheer, where at some distant period a great mass of chalk had fallen away after the rains.

Along the bridle-path below, appearing and disappearing from moment to moment among the trees, a horseman came riding. He was a youngish man, dressed in well-cut riding-clothes. A horseman riding along the bridle-path that led through the woods to Courtfield Common, was not an unusual sight; and, as a rule, would not have attracted a second glance from the Greyfriars juniors. But Bob Cherry's eyes had fixed on the dark, tanned face, the narrow, close-set eyes, the loose mouth. He knew that face.

"I've seen that Johnny before!" said Harry Wharton, as his eyes followed the direction of Bob's pointed finger. "But who—"

There was a quick-drawn breath from Arthur da Costa.

"It is Captain Marker!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Harry.

"He came to Greyfriars to see me last week—most likely you fellows saw him go—"

"I saw him," said Bob. "I remember that chivvy! Not a nice face, if you ask me, my infants!"

Wharton's face contracted as he looked down at the horseman in the bridle-path far below. Captain Marker was still at a little distance, his horse proceeding at a walk; but every step drew him nearer and nearer, and in a few minutes he would be passing along the foot of the high bank, on the crest of which the juniors lay in the ferns. "Captain Marker!" muttered Wharton.

He had had only a glimpse of the man before; on the single occasion when Eric Marker had come to Greyfriars, he had departed hurriedly; and as the Remove happened to be out of class, the juniors had seen him as he went.

Da Costa's eyes gleamed at the captain. Marker did not glance up; he obviously had no idea that the Greyfriars juniors were there, in that solitary spot deep in the wooded hill-side.

"So he is still hanging about!" said Frank Nugent. "It's a week since he came to the school. What is he doing here?"

"Mischief!" said Johnny Bull, with a grunt.

Wharton watched the man in silence. This was his enemy—the man who, in

distant India, had sent Da Costa to Greyfriars, to carry out his scheme against the captain of the Remove. The man who, if Wharton was expelled from Greyfriars, would draw fifty thousand pounds under the will of the old Calcutta merchant. The man who knew that that great legacy was dependent on Wharton's clean record—and who had plotted and schemed to blacken him. Wharton's eyes glistened.

"What does he want here?" he muttered.

But he knew the answer to that question. Da Costa, the plotter's emissary at Greyfriars, had failed him—instead of carrying out his instructions, he had fallen under the influence of the chums of the Remove, and had become the friend instead of the enemy of the boy he had been sent to scheme against. Captain Marker could have only one reason for hanging on in the neighbourhood of Greyfriars School—to make some attempt to carry out the dastardly scheme that had been assigned to the Eurasian, and which the Eurasian had dropped.

Wharton noted the cloud of deep thought on the hard, dark face of the man from India. Was he thinking, even then, of some scheme to carry out his purpose—some miserable plot to bring about the disgrace of his rival for a fortune? It was likely enough.

"The cur!" muttered Wharton. "I can't imagine what he thinks he can do—I don't see how he can do anything to harm me. But he can't have any other reason for hanging about this quarter."

"Did I not warn you?" said Da Costa, in a low voice. "There is too much at stake for him to give in. You know why he sent me to Greyfriars—to lead you, if I could, into evil, and betray you to disgrace—to fasten upon you a false accusation if I could not." The Eurasian's voice trembled. "I loathe myself when I think of it."

"Don't think of it," said Harry. "That's all over—and I never believed you were as bad as you fancied you were. You could never have done it."

"I could—I would—if you had been other than what you are," the Eurasian muttered. "It was because you were straight, because you always played the game, that I learned from you to do the same."

"That's a giddy unsolicited testimonial!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Chuck all that out of your mind, Da Costa—"

"I wish I could!" muttered Da Costa.

"Where there is wilfulness there is an esteemed way, old bean, as the English proverb says," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

And the juniors grinned.

At a walking pace, the horseman below came nearer and nearer. Wharton glanced down at him again.

"Look here, you men," he said slowly, "that rascal is hanging about here for mischief. He's a thoroughly bad egg. I don't see how he can do any harm, but we jolly well know he will do all he can. Old Mr. Cortolvin's legacy to me depends on my keeping a clean record—and it goes to that rotter if I come a mucker. That's what he wants, as we know. We don't want that rank outsider hanging about near Greyfriars. What price ragging him?"

There was a chuckle among the juniors.

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry heartily. "You have jolly good ideas sometimes, old chap."

"The goodness of the egg is terrific," grinned Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Wharton watched the rider below.

"He will pass right underneath us

in a couple of minutes," he said. "We can't get down this bank, but we can jolly well pelt him from where we are. Get hold of something."

"Hear, hear!"

Missiles were ready at hand. Clods of earth, lumps of chalk, were within reach. The juniors, silent now, waited for the horseman to pass directly beneath the spot where they lay looking over the steep bank.

"It will be a giddy lesson to him," murmured Bob Cherry, his eyes dancing. "A tip to keep away from Greyfriars—and Greyfriars chaps!"

"But do not show yourself. Wharton," said the Eurasian uneasily.

"Why not?"

"Marker does not know you by sight. The day he came to the school, he wanted me to point you out to him, and I would not. All he knows of you is that you are in the Remove at Greyfriars. Let him know no more. I tell you he is dangerous—let him not know you."

Wharton laughed carelessly.

"I don't care whether he knows me or not."

"It is safer not! I know the man better than you do," muttered Da Costa. "He is as dangerous as the cobra in my own country."

"Well, if he sees me, he won't know my name," said Harry, laughing, "and I can't leave chalk at him without his seeing me."

"But do not speak to him—let me speak." "Just as you like."

The horseman was below the juniors now. Da Costa moved a little forward, on the very edge of the steep, chalky bank.

"Captain Marker!" he called out.

The rider started and looked up. His eyes glittered at the sight of the olive face of the half-caste. He started again as five grinning faces looked down at him from the thickets on the edge of the bank.

"You!" he muttered, staring up at the Eurasian.

"Yess!"

Captain Marker scanned the faces above.

"Is Wharton with you?" he called out.

"We are all friends of Wharton's," answered Da Costa. "I as much as any of the others, Captain Marker. You are not wanted here—you are warned to go, and keep clear of Greyfriars. Do you understand, you rascal? We are going to give you a lesson."

"Fire!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

Whiz, whiz, whiz! Crash!

There was a startled yell from the horseman as the fusillade started from above. His hat flew off, whirled from his head by a whizzing lump of turf. The horse, as startled as the rider, made a sudden bound, and there was a bump as Captain Marker sprawled in the grassy bridle-path.

"Goal!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Captain Marker sprawled in the grass for some moments, his dark face convulsed with fury. The startled horse

galloped on down the path and vanished from sight in the wood. The captain staggered to his feet, gripped his riding-whip, and started clambering up the steep bank, with the evident intention of getting to close quarters and taking summary vengeance on the ragers. With gleaming eyes and gritting teeth, the man from India came clambering furiously up.

"Go it!" roared Johnny Bull.

Whiz, whiz, whiz!

From the top of the steep bank, missiles fairly rained on the clambering man. Half-way up, the captain discovered that the bank was too steep for climbing. Pelted mercilessly from above, he spat out savage words, unable to advance farther. A lump of chalk scored a hit on his chin, and he lost his hold and rolled helplessly down the steep slope to the grassy path at the bottom.

"This way, old bean!" roared Bob Cherry. "Come up again, old top! Let's see you do that again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Captain Marker scrambled to his feet again. He brandished his riding-whip furiously at the grinning faces above; but he did not attempt to negotiate the bank a second time. With lumps of chalk still raining on him, he started



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along the path in the direction the runaway steed had taken, catching up his hat as he went. A roar of laughter from the Removites followed him.

"Here endeth the first lesson!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "I shouldn't wonder if he has had enough of Greyfriars now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The captain vanished from sight in the wood. Whether he succeeded in recapturing the runaway horse or not, the juniors did not know—but as the startled animal had been going at a gallop, it was not likely. Harry Wharton & Co. resumed their ramble through the woods towards Redclyffe, quite satisfied with the result of their unexpected encounter with Captain Marker.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Borrowed Plumes!

"FAN me!" ejaculated Skinner of the Remove.

"Help!" gasped Snoop.

Peter Todd put his hand before his eyes, as if dazzled by the glorious vision that had burst suddenly upon him.

It was a vision of William George Bunter in all his glory!

William George Bunter had many failings and drawbacks; but a tendency to dandyism was not included among them. There were well-dressed fellows in the Greyfriars Remove—Lord Mauleverer was rather a dandy, Harry Wharton was always carefully clad, the Bouncer was rather dressy. But William George Bunter, so far from being a dandy, had often been reproved by his Form master, Mr. Quelch; for slovenliness. Bunter had been known

to be sent out of the Remove Form-room to put on a clean collar—even to wash his hands! Bunter generally had baggy knees to his trousers, stickiness on his waistcoat, and shining elbows to his jacket.

According to the Owl, the Bunters were landed people; and according to Skinner, Bunter had brought all the family land to Greyfriars with him, under his finger-nails and round his neck. It was on record that Bunter had once been given a forcible bath in the Remove dormitory; and it was rumoured that on that occasion, all sorts of things had been discovered, such as garments that Bunter had worn in earlier years, and had lost and forgotten.

That was no doubt an exaggeration. But it was certain that the Owl of the Remove had reduced ablutions to a minimum; and that a detective's eye was not needed to trace on Bunter's fat countenance what he had had for his last meal.

Hence the amazement of the Removites who saw Bunter issue forth from the House into the sunny quadrangle, dressed to kill.

It was an absolutely new Bunter—almost unrecognisable but for his unmistakable and forgettable circumference. There was not much of Bunter measured by the yard; but he was double-width.

The Removites gazed at him. Bunter was newly swept and garnished—his fat face was spotlessly clean; the keenest eye at Scotland Yard could not have detected what Bunter had had for dinner. His trousers were well-cut and pressed—extremely tight, it is true, looking as if they had been made for a much slimmer fellow; but very handsome trousers. His waistcoat fitted as tight as the skin of a drum; but it was a beautiful waistcoat. His jacket was rather grubby—but it was carefully brushed, and had no crumbs or stickiness on it. His necktie was a bright new one; his collar spotless; his shoes delightful to behold; his silk hat reflected in the sunshine like a mirror, and did not look in the least like a bushy, as Bunter's topper generally did. On one of his fat fingers was a ring, with a gleaming ruby in it.

"My only hat!" said Peter Todd, in a hushed voice. "What's come over Bunter?"

"Somebody else's silk hat!" said Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's washed!" said Ogilvy.

"He's got a clean collar!" said Bolsover major.

"His knees don't bag!" said Wibley.

"Fan me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter bestowed a lofty and disdainful blink on the grinning juniors.

"I say, you fellows—"

"What does it mean?" demanded Peter Todd. "Have you been asked to take a walk with the Head?"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Where did you get that clobber?" roared Skinner. "Whose hat?"

"Whose necktie?" howled Snoop. "Why, I know whose it is! That's Nugent's best necktie!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Da Costa's ring," yelled Ogilvy. "I remember seeing that Indian chap sporting a ring when he first came here. He chuckled it afterwards."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Da Costa lent it to me!" said Bunter hastily.

"Who lent you the trousers?" shrieked Skinner.

"They're not Johnny Bull's best trousers, if that's what you think, Skinner."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Whose waistcoat?" yelled Snoop. "I believe I've seen that waistcoat on Bob Cherry on state occasions."

"Nothing of the kind! Besides, I suppose a pal of mine can lend me a waistcoat if he likes."

"Won't he be surprised to hear that he lent it to you, when he gets it back sticky?" asked Peter Todd.

"Beast!"

"That's Inky's cane he's got under his arm!" roared Russell.

"Inky lent me this cane!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's got his own jacket on," chuckled Skinner. "He couldn't get any other fellow's on—that's the reason. Bet you ten-to-one in doughnuts that that waistcoat is split up the back and pinned!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter grabbed Wharton's Sunday hat from Bolsover major, jammed it on his well-oiled head, and rolled onward. The juniors followed him. It was quite a procession down to the gates.

Something of an unusual nature, evidently, was on—to cause Bunter to burst out into splendour like this. Certainly, his own wardrobe would never have supplied all this magnificence. Had the Famous Five beheld Bunter now, in all his glory, they would have known why he was so anxious for them to spend that half-holiday out of gates. Had the chums of the Remove been about the House, certainly William George Bunter would not have been able to walk off in peace in his borrowed plumes.

"I say, you fellows, don't play the goat!" exclaimed Bunter peevishly. "Haven't you ever seen a chap well-dressed before?"

"Not you!" grinned Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But what's the game, Bunter?" asked Peter Todd. "Where are you going in that style?"

"Find out!" retorted Bunter.

"Let's go with him," suggested Skinner.

Bunter looked alarmed.

"I say, you fellows, I don't want you butting in at the bunshop! You jolly well keep your distance!"

"The bunshop!" repeated Peter Todd. "Is all this gorgeous magnificence for the bunshop?"

"Certainly not! The fact is, I'm going for a—ramble in the woods," said Bunter. "Nice day for a walk, you know. Mind your own business, anyhow! Look here! Sheer off, you beasts!"

Some of the juniors sheered off, laughing, as Bunter reached the gates. But Skinner & Co. stuck to Bunter. They were very curious to know what

"Does he know?" inquired Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Whose topper?" asked Bolsover major, jerking the silk hat suddenly from Bunter's head.

"Ow! Beast! Give me my hat!" yelled Bunter.

"Wharton's hat!" roared Bolsover major. "Wharton's Sunday hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tain't!" yelled Bunter. "It's my own best hat! Give it to me, you beast!"

"There's Wharton's name in it!" howled Bolsover.

"Oh! I—I mean, Wharton lent me that hat!"

"Who lent you the trousers?" shrieked Skinner.

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled on again. He broke into a run, and Skinner & Co. trotted behind. Bunter was puffing and blowing as he came out on the path across Courtfield Common, which was a short cut into the town. Three grinning young rascals trotted behind. Bunter, in the desperate hope of shaking them off, put on a spurt.

Crash!

Bump!

"Oh, gad!"

"Yaroooh!"

A man in riding-clothes, with a whip under his arm, had emerged from a path through the trees into the path Bunter was following—just in time to meet Bunter.

Really, Bunter was hardly to blame for the collision.

But it was a serious collision.

Bunter was going at full speed. And Bunter's charge, with Bunter's weight behind it, was something like that of a battering-ram.

The man in riding-clothes went spinning, and rolled over. Bunter sat down with a heavy concussion, his silk hat spinning in one direction, his nobby cane in another. Quite winded by the collision, the Owl of the Remove sat and spluttered. Not so the man he had flogged. That gentleman leaped up, his dark face convulsed with rage, and gripped his riding-whip savagely. Skinner & Co., as they noted the whip and the savage look on the face of the man who held it, decided at once that the spot was not a healthy one for them, and they departed at great speed.

Skinner & Co. vanished into the horizon, leaving William George Bunter to it. And the look that the man in riding-clothes fixed on the fat junior indicated that Billy Bunter was booked for the time of his life.

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all this unaccustomed gorgeousness might mean. Bunter stopped in the old gateway, and glared at them.

"Buzz off, you rotters!"

"Can't we take a walk if we like?"

grinned Skinner.

"Beast!"

Bunter rolled out of the gateway, and started up the road towards Courtfield. Perhaps he hoped that Skinner & Co. would tire of their entertainment, and leave him to himself. But Skinner and Snoop and Bolsover major followed on. They were loafing about that half-holiday with nothing to do, and they found Bunter an entertaining diversion. And they were quite curious to know what it all meant. Bunter rolled as rapidly as his weight would allow towards Courtfield, and the three grinning juniors walked behind. Bunter accelerated, and Skinner & Co. accelerated. The fat junior blinked round at them in great exasperation.

"You beasts, sheer off!" he roared.

"I'm not taking you with me to the bunshop! Besides, I'm not going to the bunshop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled on again. He broke into a run, and Skinner & Co. trotted behind. Bunter was puffing and blowing as he came out on the path across Courtfield Common, which was a short cut into the town. Three grinning young rascals trotted behind. Bunter, in the desperate hope of shaking them off, put on a spurt.

Crash!

Bump!

"Oh, gad!"

"Yaroooh!"

A man in riding-clothes, with a whip under his arm, had emerged from a path through the trees into the path Bunter was following—just in time to meet Bunter.

Really, Bunter was hardly to blame for the collision.

But it was a serious collision.

Bunter was going at full speed. And Bunter's charge, with Bunter's weight behind it, was something like that of a battering-ram.

The man in riding-clothes went spinning, and rolled over. Bunter sat down with a heavy concussion, his silk hat spinning in one direction, his nobby cane in another. Quite winded by the collision, the Owl of the Remove sat and spluttered. Not so the man he had flogged. That gentleman leaped up, his dark face convulsed with rage, and gripped his riding-whip savagely. Skinner & Co., as they noted the whip and the savage look on the face of the man who held it, decided at once that the spot was not a healthy one for them, and they departed at great speed.

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sunny summer's afternoon he was particularly bad-tempered. His experience at the hands of Harry Wharton & Co. in Redclyffe Woods might have annoyed even a good-humoured man. And since then the captain had been in chase of his runaway horse. That steed—perhaps having had a little too much of the whip while the captain was in the saddle—showed a strong disinclination to let Marker get into the saddle again.

By bridge-path and footpath the captain had followed him, coaxing and threatening in turns, sometimes stealing cautiously towards the horse, sometimes making sudden rushes, and every time the wary steed dodged and scudded off, leaving the captain afoot and infuriated. On the open stretches of Courtfield Common the runaway had led the captain up and down and round about, still keeping at a safe distance, till Eric Marker gave it up at last in despair.

Had the captain succeeded in recapturing the steed, certainly the animal would have suffered severely at his hands. But he had not succeeded, and the runaway was grazing peacefully at a distance, with one wary eye open for the discomfited rider.

Captain Marker, seething with rage, tramped across the common towards the road, with the intention of walking into Courtfield and getting a taxicab there. And then had happened his sudden meeting with William George Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove. It was no wonder that the captain's face was black and savage as he approached Bunter, whip in hand. What he could not give to Harry Wharton & Co., and what he could not give to the exasperating runaway, he could bestow on this fat fool who had run into him and knocked him over. And that was Captain Marker's intention. There was solace in the thought of Bunter yelling under the whip to the amiable captain.

But that thought, which was so solacing to the gentleman from India, had no attractions whatever for Billy Bunter.

He sat and gasped, feeling as if he could not have moved at that moment to save his life. But as he caught the expression on Marker's face, he found that he could move, and quite quickly.

Before the enraged captain was at close quarters, Billy Bunter made a sudden bound, and just escaped the cut of the whip as he bounded.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

"You young rascal!" hissed the captain. "You clumsy young idiot! I—I'll—I'll tan your hide, you young scoundrel!"

"Whoop!"

Bunter bounded again. It was really a wonderful bound, considering the weight that Bunter had to lift.

Again he just escaped the lash.

He plunged headlong into furze and hawthorns, forgetful of the silk hat and cane on the path—forgetful of everything but his wild desire to escape that lashing whip and the furious man who wielded it.

Fear is said to lend wings. It seemed to lend Bunter not merely wings, but planes. He fairly flew.

"Stop!" yelled the captain.

"Ow! Oh! Ooooh!"

Captain Marker, rushing in chase, fortunately caught his foot in a trailing root in his haste and went sprawling headlong. Among the hawthorns was a liberal growth of nettles and thistles, and the captain found them as he fell. The discovery did not please him; the remarks that streamed from his lips almost turned the atmosphere blue. He

scrambled up again, more infuriated than ever.

But Bunter had gained a minute—of which he had not lost a second. He burst through the hawthorns into the open common and ran for his life. Fellows in the Remove supposed that Bunter could not have run with a man-eating tiger behind him. He had too much to carry. But Bunter could run on occasion, as he demonstrated now. Any fellow witnessing his performance at this moment would have admitted that Bunter had a good chance for the school mile if he kept up the same form. His fat little legs fairly twinkled as he flew.

Captain Marker, bursting savagely through the hawthorns in pursuit, found Bunter fading into the horizon across the wide common.

He made a few strides in pursuit, but slackened down and stopped. His long chase of the runaway horse had tired the captain, who was never in very good condition, anyway. Bunter had a good start, and was going strong, and the captain gave it up. He brandished the riding-whip after Bunter, and hurled after him some verbal expressions that he had doubtless learned in India, of an expressiveness in accord with the sultriness of the climate. Then he tramped savagely back to the path, leaving the Owl of the Remove to his own devices.

On the path lay the cane and the silk hat that Bunter had dropped when he collided with the captain.

Marker picked up the cane and twirled it in the air and sent it spinning to a great distance, where it dropped into deep grass and vanished. It was unlikely that Hurree Jamset Ram Singh would ever see that nobby cane again. Then he picked up the silk hat, with the intention of knocking in the crown, and then sending it after the cane. And then he paused suddenly, and stood staring into the hat with a stare of astonishment and dismay.

"H. WHARTON."

That name, stamped on the lining of the hat, stared him in the face, and it seemed to petrify the captain.

"Great gad!" he ejaculated.

He stared at it blankly.

It was Harry Wharton's hat—that was a certainty. The hat belonged to the captain of the Remove, the Greyfriars junior whose ruin the schemer had plotted—the junior he did not know by sight, but whom he was watching for, plotting against, in spite of the utter failure of all his scheming so far. To get to know Wharton by sight was the first step in his campaign; then, according to his judgment of the junior, he would know how to proceed. Now he had seen him—at least, he held the junior's hat in his hand, and obviously the fellow who had been wearing Wharton's hat was Wharton. That was so obvious that it did not occur to the captain for a moment that the facts were otherwise.

"So that was Wharton!" the captain muttered at last. "If I had only known—"

He gritted his teeth.

If he had known that that fat junior was Wharton, there and then had occurred his opportunity to become acquainted with him, to talk to him and "size him up"; to ascertain whether he was a fellow to listen to evil counsels, to follow an evil example and pave the way to his own ruin. If he had only known!

But, of course, he could not have known. He had no knowledge of what Harry Wharton was like, but he had

pictured him in his mind as a fellow quite different from that fat fellow in glasses. One of the juniors who had pelted him in Redclyffe Woods might have fitted his mental picture of Harry Wharton. On his looks, he certainly would never have guessed that fat fellow to be Colonel Wharton's nephew.

He tramped through the hawthorns again, and stared across the common. But the fat junior was out of sight now beyond some grassy fold of the wide common. It was too late. The captain's evil, vicious temper had been his undoing, as it had been his undoing more than once before; his opportunity was gone. Had he taken that accidental collision good-humouredly, as a good-tempered man would have done, he might already have been on friendly terms with the junior, succeeding, perhaps, in eradicating from his mind the impression that Da Costa had implanted there. Now he had impressed the boy as a savage-tempered, vicious, cruel man—a man to be very carefully avoided.

He gritted his teeth again.

"Hang him! Anyhow, I know him now! I should recognise him anywhere!" he muttered. "That's something! I cannot go to the school now that that rascal Da Costa has turned against me! It might have taken me a long time even to get to know the boy by sight, and until I know him nothing can be done or even attempted! After all, I have gained something!"

Bang!

Wharton's best hat crumpled up under a savage blow from a clenched fist, and the captain tossed the wreck of it into the bushes. Then he tramped away towards Courtfield, with a black and moody brow.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

What's in a Name?

"O dear!"

Billy Bunter gasped.

He had run and run till his little fat legs were incapable of further exertion. Even had the angry gentleman from India been close at hand, with riding-whip upraised, Bunter could not have taken another step. He had come out of the common, upon the road to Courtfield, about half a mile from the town, and he sank down—or, rather, collapsed—upon one of the long wooden benches which a thoughtful rural district council had placed at intervals along the road. Never had a seat been so welcome to William George Bunter. That hard, wooden bench was as welcome as a bed of roses.

"Ow! Wow! Oh dear! Beast!"

Bunter was quite winded. Perspiration poured in glistening streams down his fat face. He was moist and sticky all over. And he was no longer in the gorgeous state in which he had walked out of Greyfriars that afternoon. Wharton's hat was gone. Inky's cane was gone. Nugent's collar had jerked loose from its stud. Nugent's best necktie hung loose from one end. Johnny Bull's best trousers were thick with dust and scratched by thorns. Bob Cherry's waistcoat, already slit up the back to enable it to go round Bunter, had finished slitting up to the neck.

Bunter's wild exertions had told severely upon his borrowed plumes, and he was in a dusty, dishevelled, and draggled state, as slovenly to look at as if he had kept to his own wardrobe.

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. "Beast! Wow! Oh dear!"

He was rid of Skinner & Co. if that mattered. But in his present dishevelled state, and without even a hat, it was impossible to carry out the plan for which he had sallied forth so gloriously from Greyfriars. He was not in a state to present himself at the bunshop in Courtfield. The young lady, at the bunshop, though no doubt much impressed by Bunter's good looks, would hardly have bestowed a second glance on him in his present dismantled condition.

Luck had been against William George Bunter.

That afternoon he had gone forth to conquer. More than once, when he had dropped in at the bunshop in Courtfield, he had noticed—he could not help noticing—that the golden-haired young lady who handed out tea and cakes had glanced at him and smiled.

There was no false modesty about Bunter. That he was a handsome, fascinating sort of fellow, he knew; he had only to blink into the glass to be reassured about that had he doubted it.

That his fascinating looks had made a deep impression on the bunshop girl was equally certain. If not, why had she always glanced at him and smiled?

That it was his circumference that did it, Bunter did not suspect for one moment.

Full of the belief that he had made a conquest, the Owl of the Remove had sallied forth that day, clad in his best—or rather, in several other fellows' best—to fascinate the young lady at the bunshop.

Whether he would have succeeded was perhaps doubtful. But there was no doubt about it now. Even Bunter had to admit that, at the present moment, he did not look fascinating.

He looked—as he felt—a wreck!

It was the fault of those beasts, Skinner and Co. Had he not been dodging them, he would not have run into that ugly, black-jowled boulder who had wanted to pitch into him. He was lucky to have escaped from that savage-tempered brute: but his plans for the afternoon were completely knocked on the head.

Bunter sat and gasped for breath, in a dismal, pessimistic mood. His only comfort was that he still had in his pocket a ten-shilling note that he had borrowed from Lord Mauleverer, and which he had intended to expend at the bunshop. It still remained to be expended: and ten shillings worth of tack would be a comfort.

Bunter leaned back on the bench and rested. He heard, without heeding, the footsteps of a pedestrian on the road.

But a sudden ejaculation made him look up.

He jumped.

"Oh, dear! Here, you keep off!" he gasped.

Captain Marker stared at him, in happy surprise. Striding along the road towards Courtfield, he had noticed the dusty figure sprawling on the wayside seat, and as he came nearer he recognised the fat junior whose hat he had smashed and left in the bushes. His dark, angry face brightened at this unexpected stroke of luck.

He stopped directly in front of Bunter, who blinked at him through his big spectacles in sheer terror.

Escape was impossible.

He was within reach of the captain's grasp if he stirred: and he could only sit and blink at the man, like a fat rabbit fascinated by a snake.

But to his amazement and relief, there was no anger in the dark face of

the stranger now: no threatening motion of the riding-whip.

The man was smiling!

"So we've met again, my dear boy,"

said the captain genially.

Bunter could not believe his ears.

"Eh! What? Yes," he stammered.

"I'm glad of it! I'm afraid I was a little put out when you crashed into me a little while ago," said Captain Marker. "I apologise."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He could not understand this change of temper in the least. But he could understand that he was no longer in danger of a terrific thrashing.

"The fact is, you rather winded me," said the captain smiling, "and perhaps we get a little short of temper in India: a hot climate, you know. I hope I did not alarm you, my dear lad."

"Oh! No! Not at all!" articulated Bunter.

"You have lost your hat," went on the captain. "I hope you will allow me to replace it. There are some good shops in Courtfield, I believe, and I shall insist upon your allowing me to buy you a new hat."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He almost wondered whether he had fallen asleep on that wayside seat, and was dreaming this.

Otherwise, the thing was really unaccountable.

On bun-shop girls and the fair sex generally, Bunter was accustomed to exercising fascination—at least, he firmly believed so. But his good looks, his distinguished appearance, his air of natural nobility, and his other attractions, would hardly have had any such effect on this stranger as they had—or he believed they had—on bun-shop girls. So there was really no accounting for the genial cordiality on the part of a man he did not know, and whom he had taken for an exceedingly ill-tempered beast. Bunter could only blink at the gentleman from India in astonishment.

Captain Marker took a seat on the bench beside him.

"A little fatigued, what?" he asked with a smile.

"Eh! Oh! Yes!"

"I shall never forgive myself for having lost my temper," said the captain. "Had I known who you were, of course, I should have been only too glad to meet you—even in the rather informal manner in which we met—ha, ha!"

"Oh!"

Apparently this dark-complexioned gentleman knew Bunter! That was odd enough, as Bunter did not know him.

"I am glad of this opportunity of offering my apologies, and of shaking my old friend's nephew by the hand," said the captain.

Bunter could only blink. This seemed to imply that the man knew one of his uncles.

"Perhaps you guess who I am, Wharton," added the captain.

Bunter jumped.

The fellow's conduct had already been inexplicable. Now he called Bunter by another fellow's name. The only explanation was that he was a little out of his mind. Bunter cast a longing blink round. But there was no escape—he felt that if he moved, the man beside him on the seat would clutch him. Bunter could only hope that he would continue calm. If he was a lunatic, he seemed a good-tempered and peaceable one, at the present moment.

"You are surprised?" asked the captain.

"Eh! Yes! No!"

"You did not think I knew your name?"

"Oh! Nunno!"

"Your resemblance to my old friend and comrade in arms, Colonel Wharton, naturally struck me at once," said the captain.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And, in point of fact, I saw the name in the hat you left behind," said Captain Marker.

"Oh!"

"Had I guessed that I should meet you again this afternoon, I should certainly have brought the hat along with me," said the captain. "I regret, very much, now, that I did not do so."

Bunter grinned.

The man was not a lunatic, after all. He was some fellow who knew Harry Wharton's uncle, and supposed that Bunter was Wharton, because of the name in the hat. The explanation was simple enough.

From the bottom of his heart, Billy Bunter thanked his lucky stars that he had borrowed Wharton's hat that afternoon, and that it was a rule in the Lower School at Greyfriars for all juniors to have their names in their hats. But for that—Bunter ceased to grin as he reflected what would have happened, but for that: what would have happened now, as he realised, if this fellow discovered his mistake?

This black-jowled, scowling brute wanted to be friendly to Colonel Wharton's nephew—but had he known that he was dealing with quite another person, there was not the slightest doubt that his geniality would have vanished on the spot, and the riding-whip would have come actively into play. Bunter was fairly in the jaws of the tiger, so to speak: and only the captain's mistake as to his identity saved him.

Naturally, Bunter did not think of setting the captain's mistake right. He did not want the fellow to lay the riding-whip round him, instead of grinning at him in this friendly manner.

Captain Marker was watching the fat face intently, with sidelong glances. He was a little puzzled by the changing expressions on Bunter's face. But he thought he guessed the cause.

"I am afraid, Wharton, that you have been led into holding a somewhat poor opinion of me," he said. "I fear that you have been deceived and deluded by a young rascal whom I befriended, and who has repaid my kindness by the grossest ingratitude. You guess, of course, that I am Captain Marker."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He had not guessed anything of the kind. He turned his big glasses on the captain in a stare of amazement and uneasiness. Captain Marker—the plotter and schemer: the man who had sent Arthur da Costa to Greyfriars—the man who, as Bunter knew only too well, had schemed to cause Wharton to be expelled from school. This was the man! Bunter made a sudden movement to rise from the seat: and the captain—no doubt on the watch for such a movement—caught him by the arm.

"Don't go, my dear boy!" he said.

"I—I've got to get back to the school!" stammered Bunter. He was afraid of the man, and his looks left no doubt on that subject.

But the grip on his arm was like that of a vice. The captain was still pleasant and smiling: but he evidently did not intend to let the junior go.

"You will give me a chance of setting myself right in your eyes, I am sure," said the captain.

"I—I—"

"I fear that that treacherous boy Da Costa has represented me to you as your enemy, Harry. I will prove that it is



In the desperate hope of shaking off Skinner & Co., Bunter put on a spurt. Crash! Bump! "Oh gad!" "Yar-oooooh!" A man in riding clothes, with a whip under his arm, had emerged from a path through the trees, into the path Bunter was following—just in time to meet the fat Removite. (See Chapter 3.)

false. You will give me a hearing, I am sure."

"Yes!" gasped Bunter. With a vice-like grip on his arm, Bunter had little choice in the matter. He sank back on the seat again; and the captain released his arm. But his eye was still upon him, as watchful as a hawk's. And Bunter, as he resigned himself to listening to the explanation that the captain believed he was pouring into Harry Wharton's ears, could only hope that Eric Marker would not discover that he was not Harry Wharton. While the captain watched Bunter, Bunter watched the riding-whip.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Under False Colours!

"HARRY— You don't mind my calling you Harry—"

"Not at all!" stammered Bunter.

He did not mind, as a matter of fact, whether the captain called him Harry, or Hubert, or Hildebrand, or anything else, so long as he did not discover that he had, so to speak, the wrong pig by the ear. That was the important point, from Bunter's angle of view.

"Well, Harry, you must hear my explanation," said the captain. "Probably you had never heard of me till you met that young rascal Da Costa; but we are, as a matter of fact, distantly related, both of us being connections of the late Mr. Cortolvin, of Calcutta."

"Are we?" gasped Bunter. "Has not your uncle told you so?" "Nunno!"

"But you have seen your uncle since Da Costa came to Greyfriars?" exclaimed the captain.

"Oh! Yes!" "Has he told you nothing about Mr. Cortolvin?"

"Not a word!"

Bunter's uncle certainly would have found it difficult to tell him anything about a Calcutta gentleman of whom he had never heard!

But the captain, of course, was thinking of Colonel Wharton, and he was a little perplexed.

He could only conclude that Colonel Wharton had not considered it advisable to tell his nephew of the terms of Mr. Cortolvin's will. Yet that was not in accord with what Da Costa had said; he had had the impression from the Eurasian that Harry Wharton knew the whole story.

He watched Bunter's face with almost fierce intentness.

"You may be frank with me, Harry," he said in his softest voice. "I repeat that we are relations, and I am your friend. You believe me?"

"Oh! Yes!"

"The boy Da Costa is a young rascal!" said the captain. "I found him at a school in Lucknow, poor and despised; and as he seemed to be a clever lad I resolved to give him a chance at a public school in England. But I fear that his nature is incurably treacherous. From what I hear, he has ingratiated himself with your uncle, Colonel Wharton, by telling him untruths about me and prejudicing your uncle against me. I hope, my dear lad,

that you will be on your guard against this wretched half-caste."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Yes!"

"I shall see that he leaves Greyfriars at the end of the term," said the captain. "Are you friends with him now, Harry?"

"Eh? Oh, yes!"

"Did he give you that ring?"

"That—that ring!" Bunter had forgotten the Eurasian's ruby that glittered on his finger. "Eh? Oh! Yes! He—he lent it to me! I—I was going somewhere special this afternoon, and Da Costa lent me his ring, you know. We—we're great friends; he'd lend me anything."

"He has told me that you are friends," said the captain. "I was sorry to hear it; he is no friend for you, Harry. I hope you will take my advice and be on your guard against the young rascal."

"Oh! Certainly!"

"And I hope you will learn to trust me, and regard me as your best friend," said the captain.

"Certainly!" gasped Bunter. His cue now was to agree with everything the captain might say—until he could get away from that friendly gentleman.

The captain watched him doubtingly. If he could win the junior's confidence his task was half done. And in the fat and fatuous face he could read Bunter's character fairly clearly—a character that made his task easier than he could possibly have hoped. Fatuous obtuseness was the distinguishing characteristic of William George Bunter—it leaped to the eye, so to speak. An obtuse, conceited,

self-indulgent sort of fellow. That was the captain's opinion of Bunter—or Wharton, as he supposed him to be. That was not the kind of fellow Captain Marker had expected Colonel Wharton's nephew to be, but undoubtedly it was the kind of fellow he wanted him to be!

"You may need a friend," said the captain slowly. "Schoolboys are often in little difficulties that they do not care to confide to parents or guardians. I remember that from my own school-days."

"Oh, yes, rather!" agreed Bunter. "Sometimes money runs out," said the captain, with a smile; "and a letter home does not always produce the desired result—what?"

"What-ho!" said Bunter, with deep feeling. He had been there, as it were, many times.

The captain breathed hard. Was this fat bird going to fall into the snare as easily as all this?

"My dear Harry, if you should ever be in any such little difficulty, remember you have a friend in me," he said.

"Oh!" said Bunter. He blinked at the captain with a new interest.

"I have no doubt that Da Costa has told you that I am a needy man, and that I grudge you your share of old Mr. Cortolvin's fortune," said the captain. "The fact is, Harry, I am already rich, and the legacy from Mr. Cortolvin makes me richer than I have any need to be."

"Oh!" "You will not receive your legacy until you are of age, of course. I have already received mine," said the captain. "You will be a rich man some day, Harry. And no doubt you would like some of the wealth in hand, rather than in the bush—what?"

"What-ho!" said Bunter. "Then you may look on me as your banker," said the captain. "You may, if you like, repay any little sums later, when your legacy is paid over. That will put you upon an entirely independent footing."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. The greed in his fat face was not to be mistaken. Captain Marker smiled—a very unpleasant smile.

"Come, come!" he said. "I dare wager that you are short of pocket-money at the present moment."

"I'm down to my last ten bob," said Bunter, "and I had to borrow that of Manly. I've written home, but there's nothing doing."

"Then you must let me stand your friend."

Captain Marker took out a little note-case and counted from it five pound notes. Bunter could scarcely believe his eyes. He could scarcely believe his fat fingers when they closed on the little bunch of currency notes that the captain pressed into his hand.

"Oh!" he gasped. "I—I—I say—" "Say nothing, my dear lad!" said the captain pleasantly. "Only remember that I am your friend, and desire to prove it. Now, shall we walk into Courtfield and buy that hat? You do not want to return to school without one."

Bunter jumped up with alacrity. Captain Marker's company was no longer alarming or obnoxious. Bunter was beginning quite to like him.

"Let's!" he exclaimed. "And anything else you may want," said the captain, with a genial grin. "What about a round of shopping?"

Bunter's eyes danced behind his spectacles. This was better than fascinating the young lady at the bunshop!

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"I say—" he began.

"Well, my boy?" "We might drop in somewhere to tea after we've done a bit of shopping," suggested Bunter.

"The very thing!" said the captain. He took a cigarette from a case and lighted it. "No good offering you one of these, I suppose?"

"Yes, rather," answered Bunter, with emphasis.

"I mustn't let you break any of the rules of your school while you are in my company, Harry."

Bunter winked, a fat wink. "That's all right," he answered. "Fellows ain't supposed to smoke, but they do a lot of things they ain't supposed to do, sometimes. The fact is, I'm rather a bit of a dog."

"A—a what?" "A bit of a dog," explained Bunter. "Nothing 'pi' about me! Never could stand pi. Give me a smoke."

Captain Marker presented his case. Bunter selected a cigarette, and lighted it with a swaggering air.

The captain's eyes gleamed. It was more than he had dared to hope. He had not had the faintest idea that Harry Wharton was like this!

But he glanced round uneasily. He did not want to let even a stranger see him smoking in company with a schoolboy. If the captain had no conscience, at least he had some regard for appearances. But there was no one in sight on the road, and Bunter had his smoke out. As a matter of fact, he threw away the cigarette before he was half through. It was only a peculiar kind of fatuous swank that made Bunter smoke; he did not like smoking, and he was aware, too, that smoking spoiled the appetite, which was a very serious thing from Bunter's point of view.

He coughed, and grinned at the intent face of the man from India.

"Ripping!" he said. "Topping! Of course, a man has to keep these things dark at school! But why not kick over the traces a bit sometimes?"

"Why not?" agreed the captain. "The fact is, I'm rather rorty at times," said Bunter.

"Oh!" ejaculated the captain. "Awfully rorty, when I get going," said Bunter. "You should see me in the hols, sometimes. Painting the town red, you can bet!"

"I can see we are going to be friends," said the captain; and he walked off towards Courtfield with William George Bunter.

For the first time since he had learned from Mr. Gedge that Da Costa had thrown him over, Captain Marker was feeling satisfied and easy in his mind. That fat, fatuous, foolish, footling duffer was as wax in his hands, as clay in the hands of the potter. Harry Wharton's rich legacy from the old Calcutta merchant depended upon his keeping a clean record at school. How he had kept a clean record so far, was a puzzle to the captain. At all events, he was not going to keep it much longer.

Success was in the schemer's grasp—he had never dared to dream that his task would be so easy. He hummed a tune as he walked along beside Bunter. All was going well—or at least, would have been going well, had the captain's fatuous companion been Harry Wharton. And that he was not, the captain never dreamed of suspecting—and it was absolutely certain that William George Bunter would not enlighten him!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Late Hours!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. arrived at Greyfriars in time for call-over, a little tired, but quite merry and bright after their long ramble through the woods and lanes and over the chalky downs. They noted that there was a general smile among the Removites, as they joined their Form in Hall; and wondered what was the cause. They noted also that Bunter was not present—a fact that became known to Mr. Quelch, when the Remove master called the roll. Mr. Quelch repeated the name of Bunter, crescendo, but there was no answering "adsum" from the ranks of the Remove. And Mr. Quelch looked thunder and marked W. G. Bunter as absent. William George, apparently, was making a day of it.

After roll-call, the Famous Five of the Remove found that they were the centre of smiling faces when they went to the Remove passage. It was clear that some joke was on, and they rather restively inquired what the merry dickens it was, anyhow.

"Seen Bunter?" grinned Peter Todd. "Bunter! No; he's missed call-over," said Harry Wharton. "We haven't happened on him out of gates. I fancy he went to Courtfield."

"If you'd seen him, you'd have been dazzled!" chuckled Peter.

"No end of a dandy!" chortled Skinner. "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "He was washed!" said Squiff.

"Gammon!" said the Famous Five, with one voice.

"Honest Injun! And he had on a clean collar."

"Draw it mild!" "And a nobby silk hat."

"Whose?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Yours." "Wha-a-t?" Wharton ceased to laugh quite suddenly, while all the other fellows shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"The fat burglar! It will look more like a busby when he brings it home."

"And his waistcoat!" grinned Skinner. "Somebody else's waistcoat?" shrieked Bob.

"Yes, rather."

"Whose?" "Yours."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled a crowd of Removites, at seeing Robert Cherry reduced to sudden gravity.

"And his trousers!" chuckled Skinner. "I'm afraid you'll find them rather burst next time you want them, Bull."

"My trousers!" roared Johnny Bull. "Your best Sunday bags, old chap."

"Why, the fat villain! I—I—I'll—"

Words failed Johnny Bull.

"He had Inky's cane, too," yelled Snoop.

"The terrific and execrable rascal!" ejaculated Hurrec Jamsset Ram Singh.

"And Da Costa's ruby ring—"

"Oh!" exclaimed the Eurasian.

"And I think it was Nugent's necktie—"

"My necktie!" exclaimed Frank.

"The fat villain!" roared Johnny Bull. "That's why he was so anxious for us to go out of gates this afternoon."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I'll burst him!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"The burstfulness will be terrific!" "But what was the silly owl dressing up for?" asked Harry Wharton. "I think he was going to the Courtfield

bun-shop; but there's no need to dress up to go there."

"I fancy I've spotted it," grinned Skinner. "There's a beautiful young lady at the bun-shop, with golden hair at two-and-six a bottle. I've seen her grin at Bunter—I know she's often wondered where he put so much tuck, and why he didn't burst all over the bun-shop—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's the attraction," said Skinner. "Bunter thinks it was the glad eye, and doesn't know that she was only wondering how he got out of the Zoo."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But he had bad luck," added Skinner sorrowfully. "We walked after him, and he ran for it, and biffed into a bad-tempered gent—and we left him to it. I think Bunter's clothes will have been damaged by the whip the man had in his paw. We didn't stay to see—he looked very cross, and he might have given us some. We were willing to let Bunter have it."

"Quite!" chuckled Snoop.

"I daresay that's why he hasn't come in for call-over," added Skinner cheerily. "That bloke looked as if he was going to make mincemeat of poor old Bunter. I daresay he left him for dead."

"If there's anything left of him, I'll leave it for dead, if he's had my trousers," said Johnny Bull ferociously.

"And my best hat!" exclaimed Wharton wrathfully.

"Your hat right enough—I saw the name in it," chuckled Bolsover major. "You'll get it back with lollipops sticking to it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Evidently the Removites were taking Bunter's borrowed plumes as a screaming joke. But it did not seem quite so funny to the owners of the property that Bunter had so recklessly annexed.

The Famous Five proceeded to look for the articles in question, and found that they were undoubtedly missing; and Arthur da Costa's ring was missing from No. 1 Study. So there was no doubt that what they had heard was true; and six juniors waited for William George Bunter to come in, with the intention of scalping him as soon as he arrived.

But Bunter was slow to arrive.

He had not come in when the Remove went to prep; and after prep, Peter Todd looked in at No. 1 Study with a rather serious face.

"Bunter's not come in yet," he said.

"Perhaps he knows what he'll get when he does," remarked Wharton.

"I can't make it out," said Peter. "It's only an hour now to dorm, and Bunter will get into a frightful row if he's out after bed-time."

"Can't be at the bun-shop all this time," said Frank Nugent.

"Of course not; it's closed hours ago. I say, do you fellows think something may have happened to him?"

"What could have happened?"

"Blessed if I know," confessed Peter. "But it's not like Bunter to stay out like this. I don't catch on at all."

When the Removites went down to the Rag, Bunter was the general topic. He had not come in, and others beside Peter Todd were beginning to wonder whether something had happened to him. Mr. Quelch was seen to go down to the big doorway, and peer out into the summer evening, and walk back to his study, with a grave and perturbed air. Bunter was one of the most troublesome fellows in Mr. Quelch's Form, being the laziest and most obtuse member of the Lower Fourth, but he was not in the habit of giving trouble

of this kind. It was rare indeed for the fat Owl to cut call-over and stay out of gates after look-up. Probably Mr. Quelch was beginning to wonder uneasily whether there had been some accident.

The big door was open to let in the cool air of the evening. The day had been hot. A group of Remove fellows gathered there to look out for Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the sound of a distant tinkling bell was wafted across the quad. "That's somebody."

"Bunter at last!" grinned Vernon-Smith.

"No accident, after all, anyhow," said Peter Todd, as a fat figure and a pair of large spectacles loomed up in the summer dusk.

"No such luck!" remarked Skinner. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter, you fat villain—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Where's my hat?" demanded Harry Wharton. "Hand over that topper, you podgy pirate!"

"Hand over those trousers!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Not in the quad!" ejaculated Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bunter!" There was sudden silence as Mr. Quelch appeared. "Bunter, you have returned, then?"

"Yes, sir," said Bunter.

He blinked at the Remove master. Mr. Quelch's stern eyes fixed on him with a look that might have daunted a bolder youth than Bunter. But the Owl of the Remove seemed quite undaunted.

"Bunter, how dare you remain out of gates till this hour?" exclaimed the Remove master sternly.

"I'm sorry, sir. I couldn't help it," explained Bunter. "I got into the wrong train."

"What?"

"I—I was afraid I might be late back

from Courtfield, sir, so I took my ticket to Friardale," said Bunter. "I had lots of time, sir. Only a fool of a porter pointed out the wrong train, sir, and, being short-sighted, I didn't find it out till it had started, and I was booked for Lantham, sir."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I've only just got back from Lantham, sir," said Bunter. "I took the next train back, sir. I'm awfully sorry!"

Mr. Quelch gazed at him.

The explanation was a plausible one. Bunter was exactly the fellow to get into the wrong train, and to find out his mistake after it had started. He had, in fact, a genius for such things.

"Well," said Mr. Quelch, at last. Then he sniffed. "Bunter, you have been smoking!"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"There is a distinct smell of tobacco about you, Bunter!" exclaimed the Remove master.

"A lot of nasty racing men got into the carriage, sir," said Bunter. "They were smoking all the time, sir, though I told them it wasn't a smoking carriage. I was very nearly sick, sir. I feel quite ill now."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch.

His glance dwelt upon William George Bunter searchingly and suspiciously. Bunter's explanations were prompt and plausible—perhaps a little too prompt and a little too plausible. Had it been Skinner or the Bounder, Mr. Quelch, no doubt, would have known what to think. But it seemed scarcely possible to suspect the fat Owl of having gone on a disreputable "spree." Still, Mr. Quelch was extremely searching in his look.

"Very well, Bunter," he said, at length. "I will refer to this matter again later."

"Yes, sir," said Bunter.

Mr. Quelch returned to his study, with
(Continued on next page.)

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a very dubious expression on his face; and William George Bunter rolled into the Rag, grinning, where he was immediately the cynosure of all eyes.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Rorty Dog!

BILLY BUNTER blinked round at the Remove fellows complacently.

He was receiving a great deal of attention. All the Form, for once, were interested in Bunter. That, of course, was exactly as it should have been. For once, the Owl of the Remove was receiving the limelight that was always his due.

"I say, you fellows——" began Bunter.

"You podgy pirate!" said the captain of the Remove. "We know now why you wanted to get clear of us this afternoon. You've been borrowing our clobber right and left."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"
"The right-and-leftfulness is terrific! Where is my gold-headed cane, you esteemed and absurd rascal?"

"Oh, really, Inky, I suppose you don't expect me to look after your silly walking-sticks?"

"Where's my waistcoat?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"I hope you don't expect me to mind your waistcoats while you're gone out of gates, Cherry?"

"My necktie——" began Nugent.
"What about your necktie?" asked Bunter.

"If you think I would be found dead in your necktie, you're flattering yourself. I never wear any of those cheap things!"

"Oh, my hat!"
"My ring!" exclaimed Da Costa.

"Oh, yes! I borrowed the ring," said Bunter. "Here it is. No damage done, so far as I can see. If there is, I'll pay for it."

Arthur da Costa laughed as he took the ring. Certainly that article had not been damaged, whatever might have happened to the rest of Billy Bunter's borrowed plumes.

"Now, those trousers——" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"
"This isn't my hat!" said Harry Wharton.

He had jerked the silk topper away from Bunter and looked into it. There was no name in the hat. It was a brand new silk hat, and evidently a rather expensive one.

Bunter blinked at him indignantly.
"I should jolly well say it wasn't!" he exclaimed warmly. "That's my best hat. Gimme my hat, you beast!"

"You went out in Wharton's hat!" shouted Bolsover major.

"Oh, really, Bolsover——"
"Must have lost it, and bought a new one," said Skinner, in wonder. "But that hat never cost less than thirty bob——"

"Two guineas!" hooted Bunter.
"Where on earth did you get two guineas to buy a new hat?" yelled half a dozen astounded Removites.

"Oh, really, you fellows——"
"That's not my necktie," said Nugent. "My necktie's gone from the box, but that's not it on Bunter."

"They're not my trousers," said Johnny Bull, having inspected the garments in which Bunter's fat limbs were encased. "What have you done with my trousers, you burglarious porpoise?"

"Oh, really, Bull——"
"That's not my waistcoat," said Bob Cherry. "But my waistcoat's gone, and

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six or seven fellows say they saw Bunter in it."

"I jolly well did, for one," said Skinner.

"And I, for another," said Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, you fellows!" exclaimed Bunter. "I hope you don't think I'd borrow your old clothes."

"But you did!" roared Bob.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Bunter. "If I've got anything that belongs to you men, give it a name."

The juniors stared at Bunter. With the exception of Arthur da Costa's ring, his borrowed plumes were entirely gone. He had returned to Greyfriars better dressed than he had ever been seen before; and there was a striking newness about all his garments. The mystery was absolutely inexplicable.

Apparently the Owl of the Remove had gone out in borrowed clothes, and had bought himself a new outfit to replace them. The cut of the clothes, and the quality of the material, showed that he had gone to the school outfitter's in Courtfield, and made his purchases regardless of expense. That the school outfitter would let Bunter run up an account of twenty pounds or so, without written authority from a master, was in the highest degree improbable.

That Bunter had paid cash for the goods was not merely improbable, but impossible. So the mystery was very deep.

"Where did you get all that clobber?" asked Bob Cherry at last.

"Oh, I thought I'd drop in and get myself a new outfit," said Bunter carelessly. "Making hay while the sun shines, you know."

"Eh! What do you mean by that?"

"Oh! Nothing," said Bunter hastily. "If you think I've made a new friend and let him stand me these things you're making a mistake. Nothing of the kind, of course."

"My only hat!"
"Where did you get the tin?" shrieked Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy! You remember I told you I was expecting a postal-order," said Bunter. "Well, it came."

"A postal order for about twenty pounds?"

"Exactly!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Had it come when you were dunning Mauly for a loan this afternoon?" chuckled Hazeldene.

"I believe Mauleverer lent me a trifle," said Bunter, with dignity. "I don't need it, as it happens, and I want to see Mauly to square."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "You're wanted, Mauly."

"Yaas."

Lord Mauleverer was reclining gracefully in an armchair. He did not take the trouble to rise; but he bestowed an inquiring glance on the group of juniors.

"Here you are, Mauly," called out Bunter.

"Eh?"

"The ten-bob note you lent me, Mauly."

"I never lent you a ten-bob note, fat-head; I tipped you one," answered Lord Mauleverer calmly. "Don't be an ass, Bunter."

Bunter snorted.
"I hope I'm not the fellow to accept a tip from anybody!" he said scornfully. "Here's your ten-bob note, Mauly; much obliged for the loan, though I don't need it."

"Oh gad!" said Lord Mauleverer,

staring at the ten-shilling note as if it fascinated him. It was the first time on record that one of his lordship's many loans to William George Bunter had found its way home again.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Skinner. "Bunter squaring a loan! What ass said the age of miracles was past?"

"Oh, really, Skinner——"
"What have you done with our clobber, you fat frump?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"I don't know anything about your clobber," answered Bunter disdainfully. "Don't worry me about your cheap old things! Have a smoke?"

"What?"

Bunter drew from a pocket a handsome, evidently expensive, gold cigarette-case, opened it, and presented it to the general view. It was full of an expensive brand of Turkish cigarettes. The Remove fellows gazed at it blankly. The possession of such an article was enough to earn Bunter a severe caning; but that was not all. The case must have cost several pounds, at least; and the smokes it contained were expensive.

Unless William George Bunter had found the purse of Fortunatus during his ramblings that afternoon, there really was no accounting for these wonders.

"Where did you get that, Bunter?" Peter Todd almost gasped.

"Oh, a friend gave it to me!" said Bunter carelessly. "Any of you fellows care for a smoke?"

"You fooling ass!"
"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Put that thing away before a prefect sees it, you thumping chump!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Who cares for prefects?" jeered Bunter. "Who cares for masters, if you come to that? I don't."

"You burbling bandersnatch——"
"Oh, rats!" said Bunter. "I'll tell you fellows what! Next half-holiday come along to the Three Fishers with me. That place up the river, you know. You can have a jolly good time there. I'll stand a car, and the smokes, and a whiskey-and-soda if you like."

"A what?" yelled Bob Cherry.
"Whiskey-and-soda."

"Ye gods!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a yell in the Rag. Billy Bunter had evidently been kicking over the traces, and making a fool of himself, and evidently it had got into his head. But whiskey-and-soda was the limit! The whole Rag shrieked.

Bunter gave the yelling juniors an angry and disdainful blink.

"I say, you fellows——"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can jolly well tell you I've had a high old time!" snorted Bunter. "I've been round the town, I can tell you. I can tell you I'm rather a dog when I get going."

"Do you mean rather a hog?" asked Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, I don't!" roared Bunter. "You fellows are a lot of pi duffers! You don't know what life is. I'll bet you've never been rorty, Peter."

"Rorty!" gasped Peter. "Nunno, I can't remember ever having been rorty!"

"The rortiness of our esteemed selves is not terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Bunter sneered.
"Well, I'm the man to show you round the town, when you want to see



"Here's your ten-bob note, Mauly," said Bunter scornfully. "Much obliged for the loan, though I didn't need it." "Oh, gad!" said Lord Mauleverer, glancing at the note in astonishment. "What!" ejaculated Skinner. "Bunter squaring a loan! What ass said the age of miracles was past?" (See Chapter 8.)

life! I can tell you that when I get going I'm a rorty dog!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "If any of you fellows want to see life, just give me the tip," said Bunter. "Only too glad to oblige, you know."

"Oh, fan me!" gasped Skinner.
 "Hold me, somebody!" moaned Bob Cherry. "Oh, my ribs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 The door of the Rag opened, and Wingate of the Sixth looked in. It was bed-time for the Remove. The cigarette-case disappeared into Bunter's pocket as if by magic. It seemed that he did, after all, care for prefects—when a prefect was in the ofling.

"Dorm!" said Wingate laconically.

And the Remove marched off to their dormitory, more interested than ever in William George Bunter. Something had happened to Bunter—that was clear. He was in possession of funds—remarkable funds! He had been playing the giddy ox—that was certain. He had been taking a considerable stride on the way to getting sacked from Greyfriars—not a desirable destination, had Bunter thought it over. But thinking was not in Bunter's line. Bunter's genial propensities had hitherto been restrained by a dearth of cash. Now he had plenty of cash he was coming out, as it were.

The Remove had fancied that they knew every kind of an idiot William George Bunter was; but he had still one more surprise for them. And Bunter as a "rorty dog" took the Remove by storm; and it was a hilarious Lower Fourth that marched off to the dormitory,

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Mystery of Billy Bunter!

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER looked a little off colour the next morning.

Possibly he had overdone the smokes on his day out. A rorty dog, of course, had to expect that "next-dayish" sort of feeling in the morning. But Bunter was peeved.

He ate only enough for two at breakfast, so it was clear that the wild excitement of a rorty dog had affected his appetite.

In the Form-room that morning he was peevish and moody, and rather sickly to the view.

It was possible that, for a time, he rather repented him of his rorty doggishness.

But that passed off. After dinner Richard was himself again, so to speak. Meanwhile, the general interest of the Form in Bunter had not decreased. It had grown and extended.

Bunter was in funds. That was so rare that that circumstance alone would have drawn attention to the Owl of the Remove.

He was not merely in funds—he was in great funds. He did not merely jingle half-crowns in his trousers-pocket, he flashed about a bright new morocco note-case, in which were four or five pound notes.

Skinner and Snoop and several other fellows became very civil to Bunter. Aubrey Angel of the Fourth, noticing Bunter change a note from a well-filled case in the school shop, gave him a very amiable nod and smile. Skinner & Co. accepted smokes from him, and

smoked them, and declared—not very truthfully—that they enjoyed them immensely. They were quite as puzzled as the other fellows to account for Bunter's new-found wealth; but they were ready to share it as long as it lasted.

Bunter—having recovered from the effects of his doggishness—was in high feather.

Of Captain Marker, and his meeting with that designing gentleman, he said no word. It was difficult for William George Bunter to keep a secret; but he realised very clearly that he had to keep this secret. His new and amazing prosperity was founded upon the fact that Captain Marker had taken him for Harry Wharton. But that Marker, believing him to be Wharton, was seeking to undermine his character, to lead him into rascally ways, with destruction marked out for him. Bunter did not understand, and did not dream of suspecting.

Bunter's view was that Captain Marker was a jolly good fellow, as generous as they make them, and that Wharton was a fool not to have sought out the captain and made a friend of him. With a friend like that staying in the neighbourhood of the school, a fellow could have a good time—a ripping time—a glorious time; could be, in fact, a rorty dog.

It was sheerly from an instinct of self-preservation, at first, that Bunter had allowed the captain to remain in his mistake; but when it had dawned upon him what a good thing it might be for him, Bunter had been more careful than ever not to undecieve the man

(Continued on page 16.)

In Borrowed Plumes!



(Continued from page 13.)

from India. He was feeling quite friendly towards Captain Marker now. But he had a feeling that the captain's generous geniality was intended only for the nephew of Colonel Wharton, and that it might vanish suddenly away if he discovered its recipient to be some other person.

There was no reason, so far as Bunter could see, why the captain should ever discover his mistake.

Having, as he supposed, become acquainted with Wharton, he would no longer haunt the neighbourhood of the school to get to know that junior by sight. Indeed, now that he knew Wharton, as he supposed, it was the captain's cue to keep clear of Greyfriars. He was planning to bring about the downfall of his rival for a fortune; but he certainly did not want his hand to be seen in Wharton's downfall if he could help it. From Bunter he was never likely to learn the facts; from any other Greyfriars fellow, still less likely. Bunter was safe on all sides, or so it seemed.

Bunter blessed the circumstances that he had been wearing Wharton's hat that eventful afternoon. Had the captain seen the initials on the inside of Bunter's collar, he might have taken him for Frank Nugent. But he had not seen the inside of Bunter's collar; he had only seen the inside of Bunter's hat. Bunter blessed the borrowed plumes in which he had gone forth to conquer; blessed even the chivvying of Skinner & Co., which had led to his meeting with Captain Marker, and his profitable acquaintance with that gentleman.

Bunter had had a great time. The captain's munificence was unbounded. The more greed the fat junior had shown, the more the captain had been pleased. Every bad quality that Bunter displayed made the captain feel more and more certain of success in his scheme for the downfall of Harry Wharton.

Bunter had stood himself a new "rig." He had fed gloriously at the Courtfield bun-shop, and made glad eyes through his big spectacles at the smiling young lady there—who had smiled more than ever, doubtless at the weird effect of glad eyes through the medium of a large pair of glasses. After which Bunter had fallen in gleefully with the captain's suggestion of a "hundred up," and he had gone in a car up to the Three Fishers—a resort which was severely out of bounds for Greyfriars men.

Bunter, however, cared little for school bounds on the rare occasions when he had a chance to be rorty. He had played billiards with the captain, and won his money easily—a circumstance which did not make him suspicious, but only made him feel what a ripping billiards player he was. He had nearly given himself away by telling the captain about the magnificent billiards-room at Bunter Court, but fortunately remembered in time that his identity had undergone a change.

After that glorious jamboree, Bunter had felt a little uneasiness as to what

might happen when he got back late for call-over, almost late for dormitory. But his kind friend, the captain, had suggested a line of defence—and the falsehoods he had suggested had been gobbled up so greedily by the fatuous Owl, that the captain's opinion of him was more than confirmed.

A fellow who was ready to take all he could get from a stranger, to break the school rules recklessly, to smoke, and play billiards for money at a forbidden resort, and to tell falsehoods to account for his absence when he got back to school—that was the kind of fellow the captain had hoped to find Harry Wharton to be—but the kind of fellow he had hardly dared to dream that Wharton would be. Really, it seemed hardly a matter for scruples, to get this unpleasant young blackguard kicked out of Greyfriars.

If the captain had a conscience, no doubt it was soothed by this reflection. Indeed, from what he saw of Bunter, he wondered that the fat junior had not been sacked before this, and considered that it must have been for want of resources. The captain was more than willing to supply him with the necessary resources for his own undoing.

All the captain's motives were lost on Bunter. He only knew that Marker was treating him in this generous way because he believed him to be Wharton, and for that reason he wanted Marker to go on believing that he was Wharton. So long as the captain believed so, Bunter was going to lead the merry life of a fat pig in clover.

That afternoon Bunter was beaming. He had an appointment to meet his new friend again on Saturday afternoon. There was a plan of going to the races in a car, of meeting some sporting fellows and having a high old time. It was a blissful anticipation to Bunter. That it meant the sack from the school if he was found out, he hardly reflected at all. He was accustomed to wriggling out of scrapes by the aid of his wonderful inventive powers; and had he thought the matter out, no doubt he would have relied upon his remarkable gifts as an Ananias to see him through. But, as a matter of fact, he did not think the matter out—mental exertion of any sort did not appeal to Bunter. He was going to be a rorty dog, and have a glorious time, and that was enough for him.

Meanwhile, the affair of Bunter's borrowed plumes, and the total loss of those borrowed plumes, did not worry Bunter; but, naturally, it worried the owners of the property that was missing. Bunter, finding that the captain was willing to foot the bill, had done himself well and expensively at the school outfitter's, and had left the discarded clothes at that establishment.

It was a matter of no moment to Bunter. But it was a matter of some moment to the juniors to whom the trousers, the waistcoat, the shoes, and the other things, belonged. After class that day they tackled Bunter once more upon the subject, much to the fat junior's annoyance.

Bunter promptly denied having borrowed the clothes, and further asserted that he did not know what had become of them, rather unfortunately adding that the trousers had been too tight, anyhow, and that waistcoat a rotten thing that had split up the back.

"But where are they?" demanded Wharton. "You seem to have got yourself a lot of new clobber, goodness knows how. What did you do with the others?"

"I never had them," explained Bunter; "and they're not worth worrying about, anyhow. The trousers burst."

"My best bags!" roared Johnny Bull. "If you think I'd be found dead in your trousers, Bull—"

"You'll be found dead in your own, if you don't hand over mine!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows, this sort of thing is rather sordid, you know," said Bunter. "I told them to chuck the old things away. I couldn't be bothered with them! There! Look here, I'll pay for them!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Pip-pip-pay for them!" ejaculated Bob Cherry dazedly.

"My only esteemed hat!"

"Certainly!" Out came Bunter's expensive note-case. "Name your figure! I'm not the fellow to be mean! If your rotten old duds were worth anything, give it a name!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"How much did you give for your silk hat, Wharton?" asked the fat junior derisively. "Ten-and-six?"

"Never mind how much I gave for it," said the captain of the Remove quietly. "If you had the money, we'd certainly make you pay for the things, you fat rascal. But I'd rather know where that money came from before I touch any of it."

"It's mine!" roared Bunter.

"You were stony yesterday—"

"My postal-order came—"

"Oh, cheese it, you ass!"

"I mean, I had a registered letter from my pater!" explained Bunter.

"That's what I really meant to say.

Full of notes! See?"

"Not much difference between a postal-order and a registered letter full of notes!" remarked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Exactly! I suppose you can take a fellow's word."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Where did you get the money, Bunter?" asked the captain of the Remove quietly.

"Find out!"

And Billy Bunter, elevating his fat, little nose—not a difficult task, as Nature had started it well on its way in that direction—turned on his heel and rolled haughtily away. He did not roll more than two steps, however; for five pairs of hands were laid on him, and William George Bunter smote the quadrangle with a resounding bump.

"Yarough!"

"That's for bagging our clobber," said the captain of the Remove. "Now give him another for telling lies."

Bump!

"Yooop!"

"Now another for luck!"

Bump!

"Yow-ow-ow-woooooop!"

Billy Bunter sat and spluttered. The Famous Five walked away and left him to it.

"Look here, I don't see why we should lose our things," growled Johnny Bull.

"Bunter had them, and he ought to pay up. He's in funds!"

"Where did he get the tin?" asked Harry.

"I suppose he hasn't been robbing a bank," grunted Johnny Bull.

"There's something jolly fishy about it. He's been playing the goat, and he's come back rolling in money. Fellows who play the goat don't generally have a profit to show. I can't make it out." Wharton wrinkled his brows. "He must have got into bad hands yesterday—but that doesn't account for

the money! Why should anybody give him money?"

"Goodness knows! But it's jolly fishy," said Nugent. "He seems to have run into a millionaire philanthropist."

"He must have run into some thumping rascal, as the fellow seems to have taken him to the Three Fishers to play billiards, and let him win."

"It's a giddy mystery!" said Bob Cherry.

Exasperating as Bunter was, and undoubtedly deserving of more than the bumping he had received, Wharton was feeling rather anxious about him. The fat junior had obviously fallen into bad hands; that was unmistakable. But that did not account for his new wealth. Some disreputable rascal, like Hazel's sporting friend Mr. Spratt, might have made the fat Owl's acquaintance for the purpose of rooking him; but most certainly not for the purpose of supplying him with money. It was a mystery; and the chums of the Remove had to give it up.

But if other fellows felt anxious on his account, Bunter was not feeling anxious for himself. All that William George Bunter was anxious about, was that that generous and openhanded sportsman, Captain Marker, should not discover that he was not Harry Wharton. So long as the man from India remained in the dark, William George Bunter was going to remain in clover; and that was a state of affairs that, in Bunter's opinion, could not last too long. But it was not destined to last so long as William George Bunter hoped.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Going Strong!

"CALL that a feed?" Bunter spoke in tones of the deepest contempt.

Bunter seldom, or never, stood his "whack" when tea was on in Study No. 7 in the Remove. If the meal was sometimes rather scanty, Bunter at least had the consolation of reflecting that it was cheap.

But the Owl of the Remove was a moneyed man now. That made a great deal of difference.

He blinked at the tea-table in Study No. 7 contemptuously, and blinked at Peter Todd and Tom Dutton, his study-mates, with equal contempt. Bread-and-butter and sardines, and a tiny allowance of jam, were not what Bunter wanted now. In ordinary circumstances he would have tucked in and devoted all his mental energies to annexing the lion's share of the sardines, and all the jam if possible. Now he sniffed at them. The circumstances were not ordinary.

"For goodness' sake, Peter, let's have something better than this," said the Owl of the Remove.

"What-ho!" agreed Peter cordially. "Anything you like to fetch in—and pay for! Go it!"

Bunter jerked out his new note-case. With a magnificent air he threw a pound note on the table.

"Cut down to the shop and get something for that, Toddy."

Toddy did not stir. "Gone deaf, like Dutton?" hooted Bunter.

"No, old top! You can cut down to the tuck-shop yourself!" yawned Peter. "And before you spend that pound note, you'd better get permission from the owner."

"It's mine," roared Bunter. "You cheeky beast, you're always making

out that I don't stand my whack here—"

"No making out about it; I state the fact. You never do!"

"Well, then, there's a quid—"

"Whose?"

"Mine!" shrieked Bunter.

Peter Todd shook his head.

"If you picked up that note-case, Bunter, out of gates the other day, you ought to have taken it to the police station. You know jolly well it's stealing to keep money you find anywhere."

"I didn't pick it up, you silly chump."

"Where did you get it, then?"

"Find out!"

"Well, I'm not inquisitive, but until I find out, you're not spending any of that money in this study," said Peter firmly.

"Mind your own business!" snapped Bunter. "Dutton will jolly well go to the shop for me, if you won't. I say, Dutton."

"Eh?" Tom Dutton looked up. Dutton was afflicted with deafness; or to speak more correctly, Study No. 7 was afflicted with Dutton's deafness.

"Cut down to the shop and get in some tuck," said Bunter.

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Dutton. "These sardines are all right. If you think they're muck, let them alone."

"Tuck, you ass, not muck! Tuck!" shrieked Bunter. "Look here, I'm standing a spread, see?"

"Eh?" "Spread!" yelled Bunter.

"Head? Whose head?"

"Oh, my hat! Feed!" roared Bunter. "I'm standing a feed in the study!"

"What utter rot!" said Dutton peevishly. "If you mean my head, it's not muddy. How can it be muddy?"

"Oh, you deaf chump—"

"Eh?"

"You silly ass, will you cut down to the shop and change that pound note?"

"Don't call a fellow names, Bunter! You call me a goat again, and I'll pull your nose."

Peter Todd chuckled; and Bunter grabbed up the pound note again and rolled out of the study. It was hard lines that a fellow rolling in money should have to do his own fetching and carrying. Evidently Bunter had to. But if Peter Todd was un-

willing to bask in the sunshine of Bunter's sudden prosperity, there were others who were willing. In the Remove passage, Bunter almost rolled into Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish.

Instead of showing him unceremoniously off, and calling him a clumsy ass or a blind owl, Skinner & Co. smiled at him sweetly.

"Looking for you, old bean!" said Skinner.

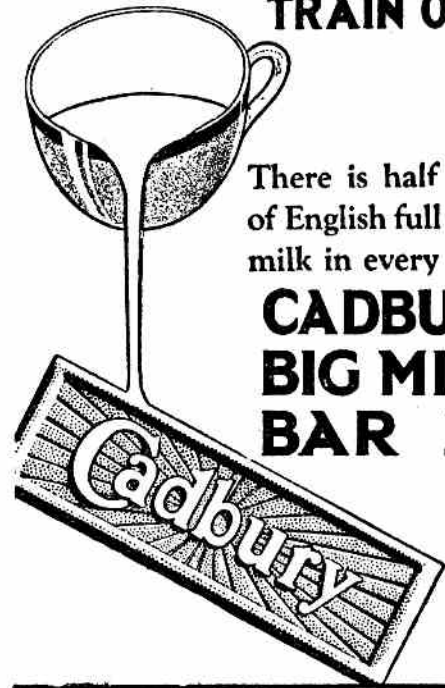
"Sure!" agreed Fisher T. Fish.

"Tea in our study, Bunter," said Sidney James Snoop. "We haven't got much to offer; but we want your company, old chap."

Billy Bunter grinned complacently. Harry Wharton & Co. had bumped him; Peter Todd had hinted that his wealth was not his own. But Bunter had friends. Here were three fellows ready to stick to him to the last shot

(Continued on next page.)

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in the locker; at least, to the last note in the note-case.

"Come on, old fellow," said Skinner. "It's not much of a spread—hardly worth your while; but we want you, old chap."

"Oh, I'll come!" said Bunter. "But look here, one of you fellows cut down to the tuckshop and get in some tommy. Here's a quid! Spend the lot."

Which was exactly what Skinner & Co. had expected. Bunter in funds was not likely to sit down to a meagre spread; Skinner had no objection to fetching and carrying, and no concern whatever as to the source of Billy Bunter's amazing wealth.

"Anything to oblige a pal," said Skinner.

And that afternoon there was a royal spread in Skinner's study, Bunter being the founder of the feast. Bunter, certainly, disposed of the lion's share; but Skinner & Co. did themselves very well. Fisher T. Fish joined cheerily in the feed, making mental calculations of the value of each article that came his way, and Fishy walked away afterwards in a happy mood, with the knowledge that he had consumed tuck to the exact value of three shillings and threepence-half-penny.

After Bunter was gone Skinner and Snoop looked at once another.

"Jevver see such a fat idiot, Snoopy?" asked Skinner.

"Never!"
"Where did he get that cash?"
"Goodness knows."
"Found it or pinched it—which?" asked Skinner.

Snoop gave that conundrum up.
"What I wonder is, whether he will be run in?" said Skinner reflectively.
"If we see a bobby coming along, we shall know he wants Bunter. He can't have been picking pockets—he hasn't sense enough. Somebody may have left that notecase on a table in the bunshop, and Bunter bagged it. That may be it. I've got rather an idea that Bunter will be sacked before the end of the term. Still, that's no reason why a fellow shouldn't make hay while the sun shines."

And Snoop grinned and agreed that it wasn't.

Billy Bunter rolled along from Skinner's study to Hazel's, No. 2 in the Remove. Hazeldene and Tom Brown were at tea there when the fat Owl put his face in at the door. Hazel waved him off.

"Hook it!" he said.
"If you think I've come here to tea, Hazel—"

"Haven't you?" grinned Tom Brown.
"No!" hooted Bunter. "I've been standing a feed to a few friends up the passage. Keep your measly cake! I want to speak to you, Hazel."

"No charge for that, so long as you keep your paws off the grub," answered Hazeldene cheerfully.

"About that man Spratt," said Bunter.

Hazel jumped.

"I don't know anybody named Spratt," he snapped.

Bunter winked.

"Tell that to the Marines, you know. I mean that sporting man who's been staying at the Cross Keys. It's pretty well known that you backed a horse at Wapshot and got him to put the money on for you."

Hazel glared at the Owl of the Remove. Tom Brown looked from one to the other with a grin.

"I'm not going to tell anybody, of course," said Bunter. "I happened to hear about it—"

"You happened to be at a keyhole," said Bunter, blinking at him. "I didn't mean you were a pi duffer, old fellow, not at all. I—I mean—"

"What I want is an introduction to the man," said Bunter, blinking at Hazel. "When do you see him next, old chap?"

"I don't see him at all!" snapped Hazel.

"Gammon! Look here, I mean business. I've got a fancy for a race, and I want to back my fancy."

"You silly owl!"

"What's the good of a fellow having plenty of money if he doesn't get a good time?" said Bunter recklessly. "I'm going to put a couple of pounds on that gee. That's why I want to see Spratt. See? Look here, you take me along and introduce me to the man, and I'll lend you ten bob to put on the same horse. He's going to win."

"Oh, my hat!" said Tom Brown.
Hazel rose to his feet. Hazel's late sporting speculations had landed him in such serious trouble that he had had the scare of his life, and he was now in one of his deepest moods of repentance and reform. It was rather an unfortunate moment for Bunter to have chosen. Hazel came round the table and grasped Bunter by the collar.

"Here, leggo!" exclaimed Bunter, in surprise and indignation. "Wharrer you at? Yaroooh!"

Bang!
Bunter's bullet head smote the study door. Bunter's roar could be heard at the other end of the Remove passage.

Bang, bang!
"Yow-ow-ow! Yooop! Help!"
"There, you fat idiot!" said Hazel.
"Now get out!"
"Whoop!"

Bunter got out—with Hazel's boot to help him depart. He sprawled in the Remove passage and roared, and Hazel slammed the study door after him.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"
Billy Bunter picked himself up and rolled dismally away. Why Hazel had cut up rusty like this Bunter did not know, but he gave up the idea of getting an introduction to the sportive Mr. Spratt. There were unforeseen difficulties in the way of William George Bunter's career as a rorty dog.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Still Rorty!

"SMITHY, old bean."
It was Friday evening, and prep was over in the Remove studies.

Harry Wharton had dropped into Study No. 4 to speak to Vernon-Smith on the subject of cricket. Smithy, Tom Redwing, and the captain of the Remove were engaged in a cheery conversation when a fat face looked in at the doorway. Billy Bunter rolled into the study and closed the door behind him, a proceeding that drew a stare from the Bounder.

"Anybody ask you here, Bunter?" inquired Vernon-Smith.

"Eh? No."

"Then travel!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Kick him out, Reddy."

"Certainly," said Tom Redwing, laughing.

"Oh, don't play the goat, you know!" said Bunter. "I've come here to talk business, Smithy! I'm looking for a little game."

"A—a—a what?"

"A little game," explained Bunter. "You're a sporting chap, Smithy—not a pi duffer like Wharton—"

"What's that?" ejaculated Wharton.

"Eh? I didn't see you, old chap,"

said Bunter, blinking at him. "I didn't mean you were a pi duffer, old fellow, not at all. I—I mean—"

"You mean you want a thick ear?"
"Nuuno! Shut up, old chap, while I'm speaking to Smithy! Look here, Smithy, what about banker?"

"Banker!" repeated the Bounder.
"Or nap," said Bunter.

"Nap!"

"Any game you like," said Bunter recklessly. "I've got the dibs! You needn't be afraid that I shan't square! Look at this."

Bunter displayed his new notecase. There were still some currency notes in it, though the Owl of the Remove had been expending currency notes at a great rate during the past few days.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Vernon-Smith.

Tom Redwing frowned, and Harry Wharton smiled. The Bounder had earned his nickname by his reckless ways—which were not the ways of the captain of the Remove. Fellows knew that Smithy played banker with Angel of the Fourth in his study, and that his proceedings, out of bounds, sometimes, were of a kind that would have caused his expulsion had the Head known about them. But if the Bounder was a blackguard sometimes, and a scapegrace at all time, it was certainly not on the lines of William George Bunter. If there was anything ridiculous in his own blackguardism Smith could not see it; but the ridiculousness of William George Bunter, in his character of a rorty dog, leaped to the eye.

Vernon-Smith rose to his feet, with the obvious intention of kicking Bunter out of the study—an intention so obvious that even the Owl of the Remove could see it.

Bunter backed away promptly.

"I say, Smithy, don't be an ass! I've come here for a little game! If you're afraid of losing your money—"

"You fat idiot!" urged Bunter. "Be a man like me, you know!"

"A man like you! Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Roll away, fatty, and don't be a silly ass!" said the captain of the Remove.

"You mind your own business, Wharton! Look here, Smithy, we're safe enough here! There won't be any prefects butting in. Quelchy ain't likely to come up. Look here, where do you keep your cards?"

The Bounder looked at him, and sat down again.

"Right-ho!" he said. "Lock the door!"

"Good!"

Bunter promptly turned the key in the lock. His fat face was beaming. Bunter's supply of cash was running low—generous as Captain Marker had been. Having beaten Captain Marker so easily at billiards, Bunter had no doubt that he would beat Vernon-Smith just as easily at cards. Bunter's confidence in himself was unbounded—before taking, so to speak. After taking, he was likely to be in a rather deflated condition.

From some recess in the study Vernon-Smith produced a pack of cards. Harry Wharton's face grew rather grim for a moment; but he said nothing. The Bounder laid the cards on the table.

"Excuse me for a minute, Wharton," said the Bounder politely. "I'm bound to give this sportsman a game. No time for banker, Bunter. Cut the cards, at a quid a time, and highest card takes the stakes."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"Ready?"

"Open the door, Reddy," said Vernon-Smith. Tom Redwing threw the door of Study No. 1 wide open. "Now, all kick together!" said the Bounder. "Ha, ha, ha!" Three pairs of boots were planted on the Owl of the Remove's tight trousers, and he fairly flew through the doorway. (See Chapter 11.)



"Yes, rather," said Bunter valourously; and he cut the cards and showed a six.

The Bounder cut and showed an eight. "Quid!" he said laconically.

A currency note was detached from the case.

"Cut again!"

There was a brief hesitation in Bunter's manner. But he had come there for a game, and he was getting it. He cut and showed a queen.

The Bounder turned up a king.

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

"Quid!" grinned the Bounder.

"Oh! Ah! Yes!"

Only one note remained in Bunter's notecase now. He hesitated still more; but again he came up to the scratch.

This time he turned up a king.

"Ace counts lowest!" he announced promptly.

"Just as you like," said the Bounder indifferently.

He turned up a king.

"Tie!" he remarked. "Cut again!"

Bunter showed a jack. The Bounder showed a queen, and Bunter's last pound-note passed across the table.

The fat Owl stood blinking after his three pound notes, with a fascinated blink. He had had his little game.

"Going on?" grinned the Bounder.

"Eh? Oh, yes! You can trust me to square on Saturday, Smithy, if I lose. I'm getting a lot of money on Saturday."

"I'll believe that when I see it," assented the Bounder. "Come along next time you're in funds!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"There's the door!" said the Bounder.

Bunter blinked at him. He blinked at the pound notes. It was quite a pathetic blink.

"Oh dear!" he gasped.

"You fat, frumpions idiot!" said the Bounder, pushing the notes across

the table. "Put your money in your pocket, and clear out! And don't play the giddy ox again!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "You—you—you're not keeping them?"

"You fat frump, take them and go! I was giving you a lesson!"

"Oh!"

Billy Bunter grabbed up the pound notes, and they disappeared into his pocket. He rolled to the door, and unlocked it.

Then he turned back.

"I say, Smithy—"

"Well, ass?"

"What about a game of banker?"

"What?"

"I'm rather a dab at banker," said

Bunter. "Look here, don't be afraid to play! Be a man, you know!"

The Bounder gazed at him. Evidently that valuable lesson had been lost and wasted on William George Bunter. With his currency notes in his pocket again, Bunter was once more a roty dog.

"Well, my hat!" said Vernon-Smith. "You're asking for it, and you won't be happy till you get it. Give me that cricket-stump, Reddy!"

"Here you are!" grinned Redwing.

"I say, Smithy, leggo! Yarooooogh!"

roared Bunter, as the Bounder grasped him by the collar, and bent him forcibly over the study table.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-wooop!"

"Open the door, Reddy!"

Tom Redwing threw the door wide open.

"Now, all kick together!" said the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Three boots were planted together on Bunter. The roty dog of the Remove fairly flew. Redwing closed the door after him.

"Beast!" came a howl through the keyhole. "Yah! Rotter! You come out of that study, and I'll jolly well mop up the passage with you!"

"Coming!" called out the Bounder cheerily.

The door was opened again; but by the time it was open, the Remove passage was vacant. The roty dog was gone.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Asking for It!

"THE sackfulness will be terrific!"

Hurreo Jamsset Ram Singh made that statement, and four heads were nodded in unanimous assent.

It was morning break on Saturday, and the Famous Five were sauntering in the quad. For once, the subject of discussion was not the summer game, or the approaching match with St. Jim's, or plans for the half-holiday that afternoon. William George Bunter was the subject.

Bunter, the roty dog, had surprised and amused all the Lower Fourth. But he had rather alarmed some of them. Bunter was not exactly a credit to his Form or school. But nobody wanted to see him expelled. Peter Todd, his study mate, was willing at any time to give him away with a pound of tea. Nevertheless, he regarded himself as in some measure Bunter's keeper. And he was quite anxious about him now.

It was not, perhaps, particularly the business of Harry Wharton & Co., but they felt concerned. Wharton, as captain of the Form, felt a little responsibility in the matter. A resolute fellow like the Bounder had to be let go his

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own way—a fellow of vicious tendencies like Skinner was not amenable to his Form captain's influence. But it was different with a fatuous ass like Bunter. The Remove knew him, and knew that he was a prize duffer. His dabbings in "rortiness" only made them roar. But if Bunter was discovered by the school authorities to be pub-haunting, or backing horses, Bunter was booked for the sack, short and sharp. That was certain. The fact that he was a fool would not save him. And the chums of the Remove realised that it is the duty of the strong to help the weak, of the sensible to guide the erring footsteps of the foolish. Bunter was a prize ass. And on many an occasion the Famous Five had been fed-up with him; but they did not want to see him expelled from Greyfriars.

"He's asking for it!" said Bob Cherry. "Fairly sitting up and begging. He dropped a cigarette in the Form-room yesterday. I wondered Quelchy didn't spot it! Luckily, Squiff got his foot on it."

"Toddy found a pink sporting paper in the study, with Bunter's favourite gee-gee marked in Bunter's fist," grinned Nugent. "He destroyed the paper, and banged Bunter's head on the door. But—"

"Now he's sneaked off into the Cloisters," said Harry. "He's gone there to smoke."

"And he's got something on for this afternoon," said Johnny Bull. "He's confided to half the Remove that he's going to paint the town red this afternoon at the races."

"The crass ass!" said Wharton. "The sackfulness will be the dead cert!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and absurd Bunter is terrifically superfluous, but the sorrowfulness would be great to see him sackfully bunked!"

"We don't want any Remove man sacked," said Bob, "and the fat idiot doesn't really deserve it! He makes out that he's a shady rotter, but he's really only a benighted chump!"

"We've got to stop him," said Harry. "I believe Quelchy has an eye on him already. He never half-believed that yarn Bunter spun him the other night. If he finds out the fat idiot's game it will be a flogging at least; it may very likely be the sack. The beaks don't know Bunter as we do. He's got into bad hands, and it's clear that some awful rotter is leading him into rotten ways, though goodness knows why! It's got to stop!"

"Hear, hear!" said Harry, knitting his brows. "From what I can make out, he has made a friend outside the school who has lent him no end of money, bought him a lot of things, and taken him to a disreputable place to play billiards, and is going to take him to the races this afternoon! It beats me hollow why any man should do it; he's got nothing to gain from Bunter."

"The mystery is terrific!" said Harry. "But there it is," said Harry. "It's just incomprehensible; but there it is, and that rotter, whoever he is, has got to let Bunter alone."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Bob Cherry. "The fellow seems to be playing the same game with Bunter that that blighter, Captain Marker, would play with you if he could. But I suppose no old gent in Calcutta has left Bunter a fortune, too, on condition that he doesn't get bunked from the school?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Not likely!"

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"It's jolly queer, though," said Nugent. "The man, whoever he is, is deliberately leading Bunter into things that will get him the sack. Bunter thinks he's a friend, but he can only be an enemy. What is he doing it for?"

Wharton shook his head hopelessly. The facts of the matter seemed clear enough, but an explanation of the facts was not to be found.

Some person unknown was seeking to ruin Billy Bunter through the medium of his own crass and fatuous folly—that seemed clear. But what the man's motive might be was utterly inexplicable.

Bunter had already done enough to earn the sack. That afternoon he was planning to do more. If he was seen at Wapshot Races the outcome was hardly to be doubted. The man who was leading him astray could not fail to be aware of that. Why was he doing it?

Some motive he must have—but what? It was an impenetrable mystery. But if the chums of the Remove could not guess the explanation of what was going on, at least they could make up their minds to intervene and put a stop to it. If Bunter had not sense enough to save himself, the Famous Five were going to save him, whether he liked it or not.

"We're going to chip in," said the captain of the Remove. "We're not going to let a man in our Form be sacked to amuse some rotter outside the school! Bunter's not going to the races this afternoon."

"He thinks he is!" grinned Bob Cherry. "He's told half the Remove, and offered to put money on their fancies for them while he's there."

"The fat idiot! Bookies wouldn't take bets from him at Wapshot!" said Nugent.

"He's going with a friend," said Bob—"that jolly old friend who has been lending him money, the man who is going to make the bets for him. Bunter will come home with his pockets full of bookmaker's tickets, and I dare say he will drop one under Quelchy's nose!"

The Famous Five chuckled. The rortiness of William George Bunter undoubtedly had its comic side, but it had its serious aspect also; the "chopper" loomed over Bunter's devoted head, though he was too self-satisfied and obtuse to understand his danger.

The Famous Five walked into the Cloisters. A scent of tobacco guided them to the spot Bunter had chosen for his smoke. They found the fat Owl leaning on a buttress, with a cigarette in his mouth.

He grinned at them through a little cloud of smoke.

"I say, you fellows, have a fag?" he asked.

"Fathead!"

"Be men, you know!" said Bunter. "Jolly good smokes. I can tell you! I had them from a friend—a man who knows a good smoke!"

"The man who lent you a lot of money?" said Harry.

"He may have lent me a few pounds," said Bunter. "I won a few pounds off him at billiards, too. I'm rather a dab at billiards!"

"You crass ass!"

"Oh, really, Wharton, you fellows haven't any go in you!" said the Owl of the Remove scornfully. "I'll bet you don't dare to go to the races this afternoon and chance it!"

"I suppose you know it means the sack if you're spotted, Bunter?" said the captain of the Remove.

Bunter grinned.

"Oh, I'm wide," he answered—"jolly

wide! I shall take care! If anything happens, I shall stuff the beaks all right! Didn't I last time?"

"You didn't quite stuff Quelchy, and he's got an eye on you!"

"Oh, rats! Who cares for Quelchy?" jeered Bunter. "Old-fashioned frump! Quelchy can go and eat coke! Look here, if you've any fancy for the races this afternoon, I'll get the money on for you—see? Dash it all, I'll lend you the money if you're hard up!"

"Hasn't it all gone to the tuckshop?" grinned Bob.

"I can get some more if it has!" sneered Bunter. "I'm not likely to be hard up again this term! I've got a friend who will lend me as much as I like to ask for!"

"And why?"

"Oh, that's telling!" said Bunter, with a fat grin. "Not that I shall need to borrow anything of him, most likely. I expect to win a potful of money this afternoon! I say, you fellows—"

"Why—what—"

It was the voice of Wingate of the Sixth, and it interrupted Bunter. The captain of Greyfriars came sauntering along the Cloisters with Gwynne of the Sixth, and he came fairly on Bunter with the cigarette in his mouth.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

Wingate stared at him.

"You young rascal! Smoking!"

"Oh! Ow! No!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I—I—was—was—"

Wingate gave Wharton a frown.

"You ought to have stopped this, Wharton! You're head boy of the Remove, and you're looking on at that fat fool playing the goat like this! You know very well you ought to have stopped him!"

Wharton turned red.

"Bunter, bend over!" rapped out Wingate, slipping his ashplant from under his arm into his hand.

"I—I say, Wingate—" stuttered the rorty dog of the Remove.

"Bend over!"

"Oh dear!"

Bunter dropped the cigarette and bent over. The ashplant fairly rang on his tight trousers, and Bunter's yell of anguish echoed from one end of the Cloisters to the other.

"I shall have an eye on you after this, Bunter!" said Wingate, tucking his ashplant under his arm again. "I warn you to be careful!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

The great men of the Sixth walked on, leaving Billy Bunter wriggling and squirming. He had had only one cut, but it had been a searching one. The fat junior wriggled frantically.

"Ow! Beast!" he groaned. "Ow! Wow! I say, you fellows— Wow, wow, wow!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Bob Cherry unsympathetically. "That's nothing to what you'll get if you keep on as you've started!"

"Beast!"

"Take the tip, and chuck it up, Bunter," suggested Nugent.

"Yah! Go and eat coke!"

In third lesson that morning Bunter wriggled very uncomfortably in his form. That hefty lick from Wingate's ashplant had taken a considerable amount of the rortiness out of the rorty dog of the Remove. But it was only for a time. After dinner Bunter had recovered from the ashplant and recovered all his rortiness. He was dressed in his best, with a flower in his jacket, when he rolled down to the school gates to go out, evidently to keep his appointment with his mysterious sporting friend.

Harry Wharton was staring after the

departing Owl, with a knitted brow, when Arthur da Costa tapped him on the arm.

"Games practice this afternoon?" asked the Eurasian, cheerily.

Wharton shook his head.

"No—we're going out of gates first. Like to come along—we're going to look after Billy Bunter."

"Yess," said Da Costa. "What does Bunter matter?"

The captain of the Remove laughed. "Not very much; but some shady rotter has got hold of him, and is getting him into mischief, and we're going to stop him. He will be sacked before the end of the term if this goes on."

"Ready," called out Bob Cherry, coming out of the House with Nugent and Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh. "Bunter's started."

"Come on," said Wharton. "You coming Da Costa?"

"Yess."

And six juniors walked out of the gates on the trail of William George Bunter.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Stalking Bun'er!

BILLY BUNTER blinked round cautiously several times as he rolled along the road towards Courtfield Common.

Bunter had all the recklessness of fatuous folly; but he knew he was doing a risky thing. Going to the races with his sporting friend, sitting in a car to watch the races, and backing his fancy, appealed to the sporty dog of the Remove very strongly. But even Bunter realised that a little caution would not be out of place on such an occasion. So like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way; and was relieved to see the road behind him clear. He did not want to see a Greyfriars master or prefect just then; and he had had a suspicion that those beasts, Harry Wharton & Co., had some intention of keeping an eye on him. But his cautious blinks over his shoulder revealed nothing but an empty, dusty road, and Bunter rolled on satisfied.

Had he been a little less short-sighted, and a little less obtuse, he might have observed six juniors, who were not following the road, but following the same direction in the fields.

The chums of the Remove were stalking Bunter.

That he was going to meet his mysterious sporty friend, who, intentionally or not, was leading Bunter to certain expulsion from Greyfriars, they knew. Arguing with Bunter was futile; reasoning with him was a waste of breath. The chums of the Remove were going to argue with the unknown and mysterious individual who was leading him into trouble, instead. They were prepared to use forcible arguments; to the extent of ragging the rascal, and reducing him to a state of wreckage if necessary. Whatever might be his mysterious motive, he was going to learn to let Greyfriars fellows alone. That was the fixed intention of the Famous Five.

So it was necessary to stalk Bunter without being seen. Fortunately, that was quite easy.

Unconscious of pursuit, the Owl of the Remove rolled cheerily on his way.

He turned from the road over the common, into a footpath across the grass, among the hawthorns, that led to another road; where Captain Marker was to be waiting for him with his car.

Bunter's fat face was bright with

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anticipation. Nothing had happened to undeceive the captain on the subject of his identity. Eric Marker was still in the firm belief that he was dealing with Harry Wharton. Bunter, in his obtuseness, believed that it was the captain's object to give Colonel Wharton's nephew a good time—had Bunter been given to reflection. But if Bunter reflected at all, it was only upon the glorious time he was going to have—letting loose, at last, all the rortiness that had been bottled up so long for want of financial resources. His opinion of the captain now was, that Marker was a very pleasant, agreeable, and sporting fellow.

In these circumstances, it might have occurred to Bunter that he was getting that glorious time on false pretences. But if that occurred to the Owl of the Remove, he did not let his fat mind dwell upon it. Bunter had a wonderful faculty for dismissing from his mind anything of which he did not choose to think.

He rolled on cheerily, heading for the Wapshot road; and at a little distance behind him, six juniors with grinning faces walked on his trail, the clumps of trees and hawthorns covering them from view as they stalked Bunter.

From a rise in the common, the juniors had a view for some distance ahead, where the Wapshot road, white and dusty, ran in a streak across the green expanse.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's a car!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

A motor-car—untenanted—was halted by the side of the road. Near by was a wayside seat; and on that seat, a man was sitting. His back was to the common; and the juniors could see little of him but his bowler hat.

"Is that Bunter's sporting friend, I wonder," said Bob.

"That's what Bunter's heading for, at

any rate," said Harry Wharton. "I fancy that's the man."

"And that car's to take Bunter to the races!" said Frank Nugent. "Blessed if I can make it out! What's the man taking all this trouble about Bunter for? He can't like his company."

"Hardly!" grinned Bob Cherry. "The likefulness can scarcely be terrific," chuckled Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "But the esteemed and preposterous rotter must have some reason for taking up the absurd Bunter."

"Whatever his reason is, he's going to chuck it," said the captain of the Remove. "Keep in cover—the man may spot us if Bunter doesn't, and we don't want him to get away. We're going to make an example of him."

"Make sure he's the right man first!" grinned Bob.

"Of course, ass! We shall soon see, if Bunter speaks to him."

Billy Bunter was rolling on across the grass towards the Wapshot road and the seat where the man in the bowler hat was sitting. The man sat facing the halted car, his back to the common; and he did not look round, evidently not hearing Bunter's approach across the grass. That he was the mysterious friend was fairly plain now, for the Owl of the Remove was heading directly for him.

All the juniors were quite keen to see him, and to see who and what he was. His conduct, in regard to Bunter, was so inexplicable, that they could not help being curious. What object he could have in leading Billy Bunter into reckless mischief, was a baffling mystery; but, that he was a bad character was clear as daylight. Only a thoroughly bad man could have thought of leading a schoolboy into vicious folly, for any reason whatsoever. And that was what

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the unknown man was doing with Bunter.

As Bunter drew nearer to the man on the seat, and the pursuers drew nearer in their turn, the latter became more cautious. They did not want to have taken all this trouble for nothing; the matter had to be settled there and then. Bunter's sporting friend was to receive a severe lesson before he got away; and he was not to be given an opportunity of starting up the car and clearing off unpunished.

Close by the roadside seat was a clump of trees, and the juniors kept that clump in a line with the seat as they advanced. Bunter passed beyond the trees and disappeared from their sight. Harry Wharton & Co. hurried on—the clump concealing them from the man on the seat, and from Bunter, who had now joined his mysterious friend.

They heard the sound of voices as they came up to the trees, which were only a few yards from the road.

"It's the man right enough!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Bunter's talking to him."

"Make quite sure, though, before we collar him," said Nugent.

Da Costa gave a sudden start, as a man's deep voice was heard. The juniors did not hear the words; but they heard the voice that was speaking in answer to Bunter. A strange look came over the Eurasian's face.

"I know that voice!" he whispered. "Seems to me I've heard it before," muttered Bob Cherry. "Anyhow, we'll see the fellow in a minute."

The juniors pushed through the clump of trees. Keeping in cover, they looked out on the roadside. The man on the seat had risen to his feet now, and was standing facing Bunter. Harry Wharton & Co. had a full view of his face; and they stared at it almost in stupefaction. It was a face they knew.

"My only hat!" breathed Wharton.

"Captain Marker!"

"The esteemed and terrific rascal Marker!"

In utter amazement the chums of the Remove stared at the man. They had wondered who Bunter's mysterious acquaintance might be. They knew now! The man who stood talking to the Owl of the Remove was Harry Wharton's enemy—Captain Marker!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Well Thrashed!

CAPTAIN MARKER greeted Bunter with great cordiality. He told his young friend that he was glad to see him—and that undoubtedly was the truth.

The captain was very glad indeed to see the junior whom he believed to be Harry Wharton.

The man from India had expected a difficult task—possibly an impossible task—in dealing with Colonel Wharton's nephew. Da Costa had failed him, and had not only failed him, but had done his best to put Harry Wharton on his guard. Wharton knew—he must know—how much it was to the captain's interest for him to be guilty of reckless folly. That, with his eyes wide open, as it were, he should walk into the trap was strange enough, and only to be accounted for by the evident crass obtuseness of the junior with whom the schemer was dealing. But the very ease with which he was accomplishing a task that had seemed so difficult made the captain uneasy. It seemed, as it were, too good to be true.

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During the days that had elapsed since he had seen Bunter, Captain Marker had doubted and feared. Unless the fellow was absolutely a born fool, he must suspect what the game was; he must have sense enough to keep clear of the tempter. Knowing what depended upon his keeping a clean record, he must surely have commonsense enough to keep away from the man who was almost openly plotting his ruin. Captain Marker felt that it must be so; and, though he had kept the appointment, hoping for the best—or, rather, the worst—he had scarcely believed that the junior, on his side, would keep the appointment also.

Bunter's arrival was, therefore, a great relief to him. Undoubtedly he was glad, as he said, to see his young friend.

"Here we are again, old bean!" said Billy Bunter cheerfully. "Haven't kept you waiting, what?"

"Not at all," said the captain. "I came early. I'm really very glad to see you, Harry!"

Bunter grinned.

He was relieved, as well as Marker. Cordial as Marker was, there were lines in his face, a glint in his eyes, that warned even the fatuous Owl of the Remove that he was a bad man to trifle with. Had he discovered the cheat. Bunter was aware that the meeting would have been a painful one for him. But it was evident that the captain suspected nothing. It had not even occurred to him that this fatuous, foolish fellow was capable of taking him in. He did not make allowance for the slyness that so often accompanies fatuousness.

"It's only half an hour's run to Wapshot from here," went on the captain cheerily. "We shall be in time for most of the races. I hope we're going to have an enjoyable afternoon."

"What-ho!" grinned Bunter.

The captain smiled cynically. His plans were cut and dried for that afternoon. It was useless, and might be dangerous, to prolong the affair. If Colonel Wharton learned that his nephew had made friends with Captain Marker he was likely to become very suspicious. The nephew might be a fool; but Marker knew only too well that the uncle was nothing of the kind.

The matter was to come to an end that day. Bunter, sitting in the car watching the races, was to be left to it; the captain was to slip away on some excuse, leaving him there. A telephone call to Greyfriars would apprise the Head that a Greyfriars junior was to

be found at Wapshot races—all particulars given. Wapshot was only three miles from the school. It was certain that a master would be sent at once to take the young rascal away. After that, it was all clear for the captain!

He would not appear personally in the matter at all. Expulsion from the school for the junior would follow as certainly as night followed day. There was no doubt about that. The schemer's game was won. Harry Wharton would have broken the condition upon which he was to inherit a fortune—and that fortune went to the next heir, Captain Marker. All had depended upon the schoolboy keeping this appointment—and he had kept it!

There was not a flaw in the scheme—and but for the intervention of Harry Wharton & Co., now close at hand, it was certain, at least, that the schemer would have succeeded in getting Billy Bunter expelled from Greyfriars!

But the chums of the Remove were on the scene now. The Famous Five and Arthur da Costa made a sudden rush from the trees, and in a moment or little more they had surrounded Bunter and the captain.

Captain Marker gave a violent start at the sight of them. He recognised at once the party of juniors who had pelted him a few days before in Redclyffe woods. His brow grew black as midnight, and his deep-set, narrow eyes glinted at the Greyfriars crowd. Billy Bunter stared at them through his big spectacles in surprise and indignation.

"I—I say, you fellows—" he stammered.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "Just off to the races, what? You rorty dog!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, you sheer off!" exclaimed Bunter, in alarm. "No bizney of yours, you know! You clear off!"

"The clearfulness off will not be terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!" chuckled Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"What do you want here?" said Captain Marker between his teeth. "I am taking my old friend's nephew for a drive in my car. How dare you come rushing up here like a gang of hooligans!"

Wharton's lip curled contemptuously. "We know all about that drive," he answered quietly. "Bunter has let out to half the Form that he's going to the races this afternoon."

"Bunter?" repeated the captain blankly.

"Yes."

"I—I say, you fellows—" stammered the hapless Owl of the Remove, in dismay. He backed a little away from his sporting friend. It was evident that the truth was coming out now, and Billy Bunter did not want to be too near Captain Marker when it came out.

"You scoundrel!" went on Harry Wharton, in cold, cutting tones. "I know what your game is with me—we all know your rotten game! But why you're making a fool of Bunter and leading him into getting the sack, I don't know and can't guess. But you're going to stop it—and we're here to see that you stop it!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

The expression on the captain's hard, dark face was extraordinary. He stared at Wharton, stared at Bunter, and stared at Wharton again.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed, at last, in a gasping voice. "What are you driving at, you young fool? I do not know anyone of the name of Bunter!

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The Famous Five walked into the Cloisters and discovered Billy Bunter leaning on a buttress, smoking. "I say, you fellows, have a fag?" asked the Owl of the Remove, grinning at Wharton & Co. through a cloud of smoke. "Be men, you know. They're jolly good smokes, I can tell you." (See Chapter 12.)

"Wha-a-t?"

"Oh, my hat!"

It was the turn of the Removites to be astonished.

"You don't know anyone of the name of Bunter—when you were just going to take the fat, blithering idiot to the races in your car!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

The captain started almost convulsively. His glance turned on the Owl of the Remove again, and Bunter backed farther off.

"That boy is not named Bunter," said Captain Marker hoarsely. "That boy is named Wharton—Harry Wharton."

"Oh, great pip!"

"Bunter, you fat, spoofing villain—"

"Oh, my only hat!"

Harry Wharton & Co. understood now. They could not even imagine why the captain took Bunter for Wharton: but now that they were aware of his mistake, they understood his motives.

"You took Bunter for me!" exclaimed Harry Wharton blankly.

"You!" breathed Marker.

He stared at the captain of the Remove with burning eyes.

"Bunter, you spoofing porpoise, have you been using my name?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Wharton!" repeated Captain Marker huskily. He was utterly taken aback and dismayed. "Wharton! You are Wharton?"

"You should not have told him," muttered Da Costa. "He knows you now."

Wharton laughed scornfully.

"Let him know me—I'm not afraid of the rotter! You cur!" His eyes

flashed at the discomfited captain. "You miserable worm! So that's why you've been making a fool of Bunter—you thought you had got hold of me. And he let you think so, I suppose, to make something out of you!"

"That accounts for the milk in the giddy cocoanut!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

Captain Marker stood rooted to the ground. The sudden discovery that he had been deceived—or rather, that he had deceived himself—that all his scheming, so near to success as it had seemed, had gone for nothing, had overwhelmed him. He knew Wharton now—and one look at him showed that the game he had played with Bunter would be futile with the captain of the Greyfriars Remove. He was not, as he had supposed, at the end of his task—he was only at the beginning. He stood breathing hard, staring at Wharton with burning eyes, utterly thrown off his balance.

"But how did the silly ass come to make such a mistake?" said Bob Cherry in wonder. "How did you spoof him to that extent, Bunter?"

"I—I didn't!" gasped Bunter. "He saw the name in the hat, and thought I was Wharton! He would have pitched into me if I'd told him I wasn't."

"My hat—that you borrowed last half-holiday?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes; you see—I say, you fellows, keep him off!" yelled Bunter in terror.

Captain Marker had been standing like a man in a trance. But he woke up suddenly, as it were; and with a face disfigured by fury, made a spring at Billy Bunter.

"Yarooogh! Help! Help!" roared Bunter.

Bunter was in need of help. The captain's grasp had closed on him, and he was thumping the fat junior right and left. So sudden had been his action that the Co. had had no time to intervene. Billy Bunter roared and yelled and struggled frantically under a shower of savage blows.

"Rescue!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Collar him!"

Captain Marker seemed beside himself with fury: and Bunter certainly would have been seriously damaged, had not help been at hand. But there was plenty of help for Bunter. Six juniors rushed at the infuriated captain, and dragged him away from his victim by main force.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" gasped Bunter, collapsing in the grass. "Yow-wow! I say, you fellows—bump him—rag him—yarooogh—ow—wow!"

"Give him jip!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton & Co. had come there to make an example of Bunter's sporting friend. They made an example of him. Certainly, Captain Marker no longer needed warning off, so far as Bunter was concerned: now that he knew the Owl's real identity, it was certain that he would be fed up with Bunter, and would have nothing more to do with him. But the cheery juniors made an example of him all the same.

For some minutes, they had their hands full with the captain, who struggled and fought like a tiger. But the odds were too heavy for him: and in a few minutes Captain Marker was getting the ragging of his life. When

(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,066.

Somewhere in the Pacific is the pirate stronghold of Black Michael, the modern Captain Kidd. Somewhere . . . but Ferrers Locke and his boy pardner are mighty certain that they'll root it out!

The LORD of LOST ISLAND



Featuring **FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE,** and his Boy Assistant, **JACK DRAKE.**

Introduction on next page.

The Interruption!

THE card-sharper stiffened. He made as though to turn his head towards the near-by table, at which Drake was sitting.

"No, don't turn!" The boy's voice was crisp. "Just drop your gun! I'll give you three seconds!"

Slowly the man lowered his gun-hand to the table; then he slowly raised it again, but this time the gun lay on the table.

"If your friends are thinking of pulling any rough stuff," warned Jack, "you'd better tell 'em that you'll die mighty sudden!"

Then sharply to the American:

"Pick up that gun and collect your own weapon!"

The American shot him a quick, half-fearful glance and obeyed. He picked up the gun from the table and retrieved his own from the pocket in the man's reefer jacket.

"Now get out! And don't come back!" said Jack curtly.

"But—but what about you?"

"I'm all right! Don't you worry about me! Get out and stop out!"

"But—"

"Get out, man!"

The American went. He moved to the door, his guns in his hands; and not a man made an effort to stop him. As for Jack, he felt a dryness in his mouth. His heart was thumping horribly. He'd been successful so far. He'd saved a man from standing up unarmed and taking a bullet from a bully's gun. But what now?

He'd seen Ferrers Locke handle situations as tense as this, but he'd never been called upon to handle one himself. Still, a bold face and his villainous make-up might see him through.

"You!" He jabbed his gun towards the man who was still seated immobile at the table. "Quit—pronto!"

The man turned slowly in his chair and faced him. His grey eyes were blazing.

"Stranger," he said, "I don't know who yuh are! I don't care, neither! But Sunday I'll kill yuh for this!"

"Go on—quit!"

Jack's gun was covering the man unwaveringly. He watched as the fellow rose to his feet, fearful lest his thumping heart should betray him.

Then came interruption. A curtain at the far end of the room parted, and a shrill voice cried:

"What's this? What'n cripes is this blamed gun-play in a house for honest sailormen?"

"Frisco Sam!" muttered a voice hoarsely.

Dearly as Jack would have liked to have looked, he dared not take his eyes from the man in front of him. But he was conscious that someone was approaching shufflingly; then a thin, sparse body, clad in a dingy dressing-gown, was inserted between his gun and the man with the cheroot.

Looking up, he found himself gazing into as villainous and shrivelled a countenance as he had ever seen on man. Two bloodshot eyes glared down at him, set in a wrinkled, jaundiced face.

"What's the gun-play for, stranger?" demanded the newcomer angrily. "D'you want to bring the cops around here?"

"No!" replied Jack, rising to his feet, his gun still in his hand.

Then a hand clapped him on the shoulder, and a voice cried heartily:

"Well, if it ain't my old pal Jake! How are you, shipmate?"

Wheeling, Jack found himself face to face with Ferrers Locke in the guise of Hank Peters. His first feeling was one of unutterable relief. His gun was here.

"You know this fellow, hey?" questioned the shrivelled 'Frisco Sam shrilly.

"Know him?" echoed Ferrers Locke.

"Ay, I knows him! As tough a nut as ever sailed the seas. Put up your gun, Jake; there ain't going to be no more fighting!"

"Sure?" demanded Jack, playing up to his gun'nor.

"Course he's sure!" shrilled 'Frisco Sam angrily. "You, Schuller"—he wheeled on the man with the cheroot—

"sit down and don't try no funny business here! I've told you before I've gotta be careful!"

With a scowl, Schuller slumped into

his chair; and Jack slipped his gun into his pocket.

"We're well met, shipmate!" cried Ferrers Locke. "Come on! 'Frisco Sam and me was just having a cosy little chinwag when your gun-play interrupted us! Sam, can I bring him along?"

"Is he the fellow you was telling me about?"

"Yes, this is him."

"Then bring him along! Us has got to get this business settled!"

Ferrers Locke took Jack by the arm; and wonderingly the boy accompanied him in the wake of 'Frisco Sam, who was shuffling towards the curtain.

Working th' Oracle!

BEHIND the curtain was a small cubby-hole of a room, furnished with a small table and chairs.

'Frisco Sam seated himself at the table, and Ferrers Locke motioned to Jack Drake to do the same.

"Now, then," said 'Frisco Sam, peering at Jack like some elderly bird of prey. "Let's get down to brass tacks, Mister Hank Peters! This hyar mate of your'n has sure got a plumb cold nerve; I savvy that, by cripes!"

"Yes—well, I told you he had!" drawled Ferrers Locke. "He ships along wi' me! Don't you mate?"

"Sure thing!" replied Jack.

He was following his gun'nor's lead all along the line. It was all he could do. Explanations would follow.

"Don't know as how he'll aim to ship along wi' you when he knows the facts!" mumbled 'Frisco Sam. "'Tain't everybody's meat! Best tell him the facts."

"Yes." Ferrers Locke nodded his agreement, and turned to Jack. "See here, mate," he said. "Sam says as how he knows of a billet what might suit two honest, hard-workin' sailormen like you an' me! But this ain't no straightforward 'sign your articles and get your kit aboard' business. Nossir, not by a long chalk. Sam knows a certain party what wants men to sail wi' him somewhere amongst the islands—men what'll work hard an' keep

their mouths shut in exchange for good red gold. See?"

Jack Drake nodded, and the detective went on:

"Tain't everybody what Sam'll put on to this here job, 'cos Sam has gotta pick his men careful. But I was able to put Sam wise to a li'l frame-up what a guy was aimin' to stage around this here s'loon. And Sam and me's friends. See?"

Again Jack nodded. By some means or other Ferrers Locke had scraped acquaintance with the shrivelled old scamp.

"Now," went on the detective, "you ain't gotta have no squeamish stomach if you want to ship aboard the craft I'm indicatin'! Nossir, you've jest gotta do your job, hold your tongue, and draw your pay! That's all there is to it!"

"Tain't all!" cut in 'Frisco Sam. "Not by a long sight, it ain't! A feller what ships aboard th' craft indicated has gotta be prepared to fight like a blamed rat if needs be!"

Ferrers Locke smiled indulgently. "Aw, I reckon Jake guessed that much, Sam!" he said. "Jake ain't no fool, and he can see how the land lies! Can't you, shipmate?"

"Sure I can!" replied Drake. "I figger it out this way, Hank. A feller wants a few hands to sail wi' him amongst the islands. That same feller ain't wanting a brass band and banners to tell the world that he's afloat. Nossir, he just wants to snoop quietly around doing some mighty private business, an' he wants men wi' him what'll keep their traps shut!"

Ferrers Locke slapped him on the shoulder.

"You've said it, Jake!" he chuckled, and turned grinningly to Sam. "Mighty quick in the uptake, is Jake! He's got sense an' he's got pluck! Now, Jake, I can't tell you no more, 'cos Sam won't tell me no more. All I knows is that there's a job for you an' me, with good pay, if we cares to take it on th' aforementioned lines! You game?"

"Sure!" replied Jack laconically.

'Frisco Sam nodded. "Then both of you had better git your kit aboard th' Seagull afore mornin'. She sails on the dawn tide. Give this to th' skipper."

He produced a pencil from a pocket in his dressing-gown, and wrote a few words on a scrap of paper torn from a dirty notebook.

"That'll see you fair and square an' dandy," he said. "If ever you're passin' this way when th' v'yage is over I'll sure be glad to see you. That is, if you live to come back."

'Frisco Sam handed the scrap of paper to Ferrers Locke and rose to his feet. The Baker Street detective and Jack Drake pushed back their chairs and also rose.

'Frisco Sam's little bloodshot eyes dwelt twinkling on Jack.

"I guess I'm mighty sorry I can't be on th' Seagull when you steps aboard!" he said, and his skinny body shook with silent laughter.

"How so?" demanded Drake, staring at him.

"It would be mighty int'restin'! You see, Schuller, that guy what you pulled a gun on, is skipper of that there ship!"

On Chalmers' Trail!

"I T took me three days to even get on nodding terms with 'Frisco Sam," said Ferrers Locke, as he and Jack Drake slouched along Pleasant Alley a few minutes later, en-

route to the boy's lodgings. "As you will observe, our acquaintance was progressing by no means rapidly, and it was essential that I hit on a means of obtaining the old rascal's confidence!"

"You've done that all right, guv'nor," said Jack grimly. "How did you manage it?"

"As you know, the saloon is a sort of mecca for all the scum who drift into Valparaiso docks. It houses probably more criminals than any other dive in the city. I enlisted the aid of the police, taking the chief of police into my confidence. We arranged to raid the place last night, and it was agreed that at the last moment I should give Sam warning of what was to happen. I did so, and Sam cleared all the doubtful characters out of his saloon in double-quick time. When the police arrived there wasn't a criminal in the place, and everything was ship-shape. Old Sam was strutting about like a kindly and virtuous old gentleman. His indignation at the arrival of the police on his premises was one of the finest bits of character acting I've ever had the pleasure of witnessing."

"I bet it was!" grinned Jack Drake. "The rotten old hypocrite!"

"However, to cut a long story short, he was fairly eating out of my hand to-day," continued Ferrers Locke. "I pointed out to him that the police would probably trace the source of the warning to me, and that my one and only desire was to get out of Valparaiso as soon as possible. I informed him also that I had a pal—that was you—whom I was waiting to meet, and when I hitched up with this same pal I would go, if I could find a ship. I stressed the fact that I was a fellow who wanted some excitement on his voyages; a fellow who didn't care where money came from as long as it came easy and in plentiful quantities!"

Ferrers Locke paused, then said earnestly:

"I was taking a chance on Sam being Chalmers' agent. I am still taking a chance, but I'm convinced I'm not wrong. The man who tried to assassinate me on behalf of Chalmers was hired by Sam. The connection is obvious. Sam hesitated a little to-day then came across with this mysterious yarn about easy money on board a certain craft cruising amongst the Islands. I jumped at it. Sam wouldn't go into any details, but if the Seagull doesn't have some connection with

INTRODUCTION.

Ferrers Locke, the famous Baker Street detective, is called in to investigate the disappearance of several large vessels lost with all hands under mysterious circumstances in the South Pacific. Answering in every way to the description of Black Michael, a pirate who has been terrorising the western seaboard of South America, Ferrers Locke suspects a man known as Professor Chalmers. That his suspicions are well founded is proved later when Chalmers' shadow is found dead with a scrawled note in his pocket threatening Ferrers Locke with a similar fate. Realising the chances are that Chalmers has escaped on the high seas Ferrers Locke, accompanied by Jack Drake, his boy assistant, sets sail for Buenos Ayres. Shortly after reaching their destination an attempt is made on the life of the Baker Street detective by an agent of 'Frisco Sam, proprietor of the Bucket of Blood Saloon, who, to save his own neck, tells Ferrers Locke all he knows. With a view to scraping an acquaintance with 'Frisco Sam and to deceive Chalmers at the same time Ferrers Locke suggests that both he and Drake separate, disguise themselves accordingly, and meet again at the Bucket of Blood in a week's time. Drake arrives at the appointed place just in time to save a youngster clad in the uniform of a second officer of the American merchant service from being shot by a rascally card-sharper.

(Now read on.)

Chalmers then I'm on an entirely wrong trail of inquiry!"

"I don't think you are!" said Jack Drake, emphatically.

"I'm convinced I'm on the right track, lad!" replied Ferrers Locke. "Everything points to it! It is seven years ago since Sam took over the Bucket of Blood Saloon. I looked up the records. You will remember the letter I read you in the flat. It is seven years since Black Michael—the man I believe Chalmers to be—held up the saloon, and cleaned up every man jack in the place. There was heavy gambling going on, and he got away with over ten thousand pounds. Well, that incident happened during Sam's first week of proprietorship, and my theory is that Sam and Black Michael were working together, although Sam, himself, professed to have been robbed!"

"You mean that Sam and Black Michael split the proceeds of the robbery?"

"Exactly! I'm convinced Sam is an agent of Chalmers! The note Sam gave me to give to Schuller reads: 'Give these fellows berths on board your vessel! That is all. It proves that Schuller, skipper of the Seagull, takes orders from 'Frisco Sam!'"

"And you think the Seagull belongs to Chalmers or is working in conjunction with him?"

"Yes, because I led up to my request for a job by talking about the shipping which has been reported missing of late in the Southern Pacific. I expressed a strong desire to be in on that job, and you can take it from me, Jack, 'Frisco Sam was weighing me up the whole time I was talking. Hard on the heels of my remarks about the rich pickings these pirates were getting, came his offer of a job aboard the Seagull! I don't want to embark on a discussion of the ethics of physiology, but I'll stake my reputation that I've read Sam and his offer aright!"

"It certainly looks like it, guv'nor! But it seems to me that complications are going to set in. I've got Schuller's back up. In fact, the brute has threatened to kill me! If he's skipper of the Seagull, I'm in for a warm time!"

"We can manage Schuller!" replied Ferrers Locke grimly. He laid his hand on Jack's arm. "I've often been proud of you, lad," he said earnestly, "but never as much as I was to-night. I was watching from behind that curtain, and your courage was magnificent! You handled that bully as though he didn't know enough to come in out of the wet!"

"But—but, dash it all, guv'nor, I was most frightfully scared!" blurted out Jack.

"It is when you're scared, yet can still keep going, that the proof of real courage comes, Jack!" replied the detective quietly. "You were great!"

Ferrers Locke's boy assistant grunted to cover his embarrassment.

"Here's my digs, guv'nor!" he said.

"I'll just nip in and get my kit!"

Aboard the Seagull!

IT was an hour before dawn, when Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake reached the Lower Main Wharf of the docks. Their kit bags were upon their backs and their reefers jackets buttoned up about their necks.

A ferryman, lounging sleepily against a capstan, straightened up as they approached.

"Goin' out, mates?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the detective. "Put us aboard the Seagull, pard! I reckons she's lyin' out there sunwheers!"

He indicated the dark mass of shipping silhouetted against the grey background of water.

The ferryman peered at him in the darkness, shifted a quid of tobacco from one side of his mouth to the other, then peered again at the detective.

"Ain't skinned, are you, mate?" he inquired casually.

"Skinned?" replied Ferrers Locke. "No, I don't reckon I am! I kin pay you, pard!"

"Funny, but I warn't thinkin' 'bout my pay!" drawled the ferryman. "Th' Seagull, you said? Kim on, then!"

He crossed the wharf and dropped into his boat, which was moored against the side.

Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake followed him, and seated themselves in the stern sheets.

Propelled by lusty strokes the boat shot out across the water.

Suddenly the ferryman rested on his oars.

"Naw, I can't do it!" he drawled. "I've allus run straight, an' I've got a missus at home thinks th' world o' me!"

"Yeah! I b'lieves you, pard!" grunted Ferrers Locke affably. "But say, this ain't neither the time nor the place for a high-falutin' chin-wag 'bout your domestic arrangements!"

"Us might discuss subjects a blamed sight worse'n that!" was the reply. "Us might, f'rinstance, discuss th' Seagull!"

"Ah," Ferrers Locke nodded his head, "now you're talkin', pard! Yessir, and I'm all set to listen!"

The ferryman released his grip on one oar, allowing it to swing on the rowlock. He leant forward and tapped the detective on the knee.

"Don't go!" he said. "Lemme take you an' your mate back to shore. Thassal I gotta say! Jest, don't go!"

"Us has gotta go, pard! Beggars can't be choosers!"

"Say, listen!" An earnest note had crept into the ferryman's voice. "I'd a blamed sight sooner iron clothes in a Chink laundry than sail aboard th' Seagull! Gee, I'd rather eat dirt than eat th' grub what they sarve aboard that vessel and, ding-bust my hide, but I'd sooner ship under a drunken hog of a Russian skipper than ship under Schuller!"

"You've spoke fair, pard!" replied Ferrers Locke. "And I thank you for it. Yessir, you're a white man. Mebbe you knows the shipping in these waters better'n my mate and me, and you've put us wise. But I ain't the man to turn back, so us'll just go on!"

"As you say!" grunted the ferryman, and dug his oars into the water. "But there ain't a wind-jammer outa Frisco has gotten a pair of officers like the skipper and the mate of th' Seagull! Jumpin' sea-hosses, but they kill men aboard that ship, an' there ain't a port authority th' whole blamed length o' th' coast what dare sling 'em into chokey for it!"

There loomed up in front of the boat, a few minutes later, the black bulk of an iron-hulled freighter. She was of some ten thousand tons burden, as far as Ferrers Locke could guess in the darkness.

"Seagull, ahoy!" roared the ferryman. "Two hands to come aboard!"

"All right, we're not deaf, dang

you!" bellowed a voice from the deck of the freighter; and a rope ladder splashed downwards.

Ferrers Locke stood up in the boat and grabbed it.

"S'long, pard!" he said to the ferryman. "I ain't forgettin' what you've said!"

He thrust a five-dollar bill into the man's hand, and went up the ladder, Jack at his heels.

A big, hefty fellow, clad in blue jersey and blue serge trousers, was standing at the top of the ladder.

"What d'you want aboard this craft, you weevils?" was his greeting.

"Frisco Sam sent us aboard," replied Ferrers Locke. "We've got to report to Captain Schuller."

"All right!" grumbled the fellow. "Stow your kit in the fo'c'sle, then come back here! You'll have to doss on the floor. All the bunks is taken."

Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake moved for'ard and entered the fo'c'sle. The place seemed full of men and rank tobacco smoke. At a rough estimate, Drake figured that there were fully eighty men, some lying on their bunks, others seated on the floor. The fo'c'sle was roomy; but, despite the haze of tobacco smoke, it smelt foul and fetid, as though gallons of bilge were slopping about somewhere beneath the flooring.

"Anywhere a feller can doss down?" inquired Ferrers Locke good-naturedly.

"There's a corner over there!" grunted a tall, sinewy fellow who looked like either a Dane or a Swede. "We're kinda cramped!"

The detective nodded and slung his and Drake's kit on to the floor at the spot indicated.

"Now," he said, as they stepped out again to the clean, pure air which swept the deck, "we'll interview your friend Schuller."

The First Officer of the Seagull!

THE man who had ordered the Baker Street detective and his boy assistant to the fo'c'sle was waiting, and he led the way down the saloon hatchway to the door of the captain's cabin. He knocked, and the harsh voice of Schuller bade him enter.

Throwing open the door, he strode into the cabin, Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake at his heels. Schuller was seated at the table, a black bottle by his elbow and an unlighted cheroot between his teeth. By his side sat a huge, coal-black negro, clad in a blue jersey, serge trousers, and sea-boots. Two heavy gold earrings dangled from the lobes of the negro's ears. A cruel, disfiguring scar ran the full length of his right cheek, from temple to the corner of his ugly, thick-lipped mouth.

Spread on the table in front of the two men was a chart of the Southern Pacific.

"What'n cripes d'yuh want, bo'sun—" began Schuller, then broke off abruptly as his eyes took in Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake.

He half rose to his feet, his hands gripping the table in front of him till the knuckles showed white through the skin.

"You?" he snarled, staring at Drake with cold eyes. "What're yuh doin' aboard this craft?"

It was Ferrers Locke who answered.

"Frisco Sam sent us. He told me to give you this."

He handed the scrap of paper which Sam had given him to Schuller. The man glanced at it, then threw it on to the table in front of him.

"I've had a note 'bout you from Sam!" he said harshly, then turned to the staring negro seated by his side. "That dog there"—and he indicated Jack—"is th' one what pulled a gun on me way back in th' s'long!"

The negro launched himself to his feet.

"By jiminy, yo' don't say?" he ejaculated. "An' he comes for to sail on dis ship, hey?"

"You've said it!" snapped Schuller. "Luck's sure standin' in wi' me!"

The negro grinned nastily.

"Yo' bet she shore is!" he rumbled. "Yes, suh! By jiminy, but me will smash dat dog fo' yo'!"

He shoved back his chair, and his great black fingers curling suggestively, advanced round the table towards Jack.

"Don't be a blamed fool!" snarled Schuller. "Ain't yuh got no sense! Sam's marked these dogs as Class A men. We don't want 'em smashed none till th' boss has seen 'em! Wait, yuh boneheaded nigger!" If yuh damage 'em now, yuh don't know what line of talk they'll shoot off when they meet th' boss!"

The negro hesitated, then, turning on his heel, slouched back to his chair.

Schuller turned to Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake. His eyes dwelt on them, coldly, calculatingly, but when he spoke, it was to Drake he addressed himself.

"For reason's what'll soon be mighty clear to yuh," he snarled. "I ain't ainin' to pay back what I owes yuh yet awhile. This hyar ship is bound for Lost Island, an' afore we reaches it, I'll make yuh blamed sorry yuh ever was born! Yuh pulled a gun on me t'night, an' I'll break yuh for that!"

He paused, then went on, sneeringly:

"I don't know, and I ain't inquiring none, whether either of yuh ever sailed under a coloured first officer. This nigger"—and he laid his hand on the negro's shoulder—"is first officer aboard this ship. He ain't got no soul. He's jest plain black right through an' mighty proud of it! He hates wharf rats like you worse'n p'ison. When he says 'jump,' by heck, yuh'll be blamed wal jump!"

The negro leered. He and Schuller were obviously good friends.

"Now git for'ard!" snarled Schuller. "I'm keepin' my hands off'n yuh for a few hours. But after that I'm gonna come right after yuh! Get out of this!"

Ferrers Locke touched his boy assistant on the arm and they withdrew from the cabin.

Up on deck, as they walked slowly for'ard, Jack said quietly:

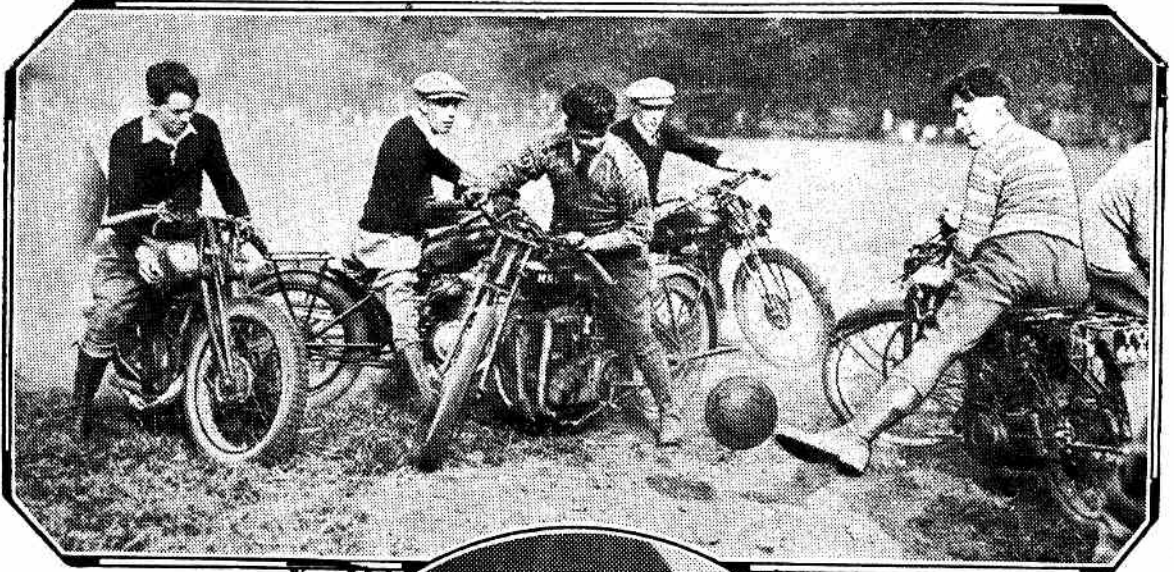
"I suppose if one lifts a hand against Schuller, it's mutiny?"

"Yes!" replied the Baker Street detective. "There's trouble ahead, lad, serious trouble—for someone! But at the moment I'm rather curious to see—"

"Yes, guv'nor?" said Jack, as Ferrers Locke paused.

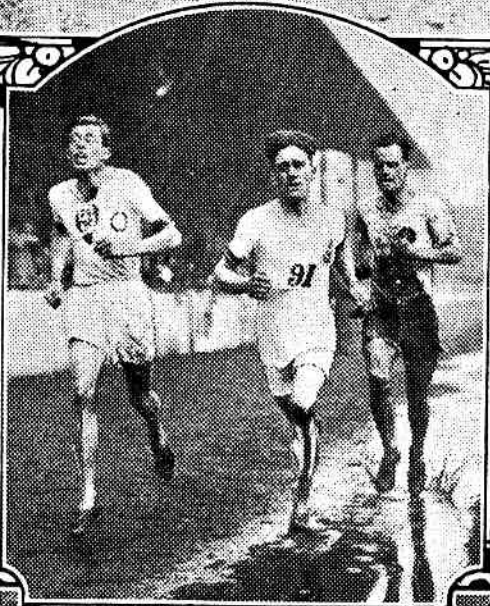
"I'm rather curious to see this fellow whom Schuller referred to as the Boss!"

(It looks as if Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake are booked for a warm time aboard the Seagull, doesn't it, chums? Exactly what happens will be told in next week's thrilling instalment. Don't miss it, whatever you do.)



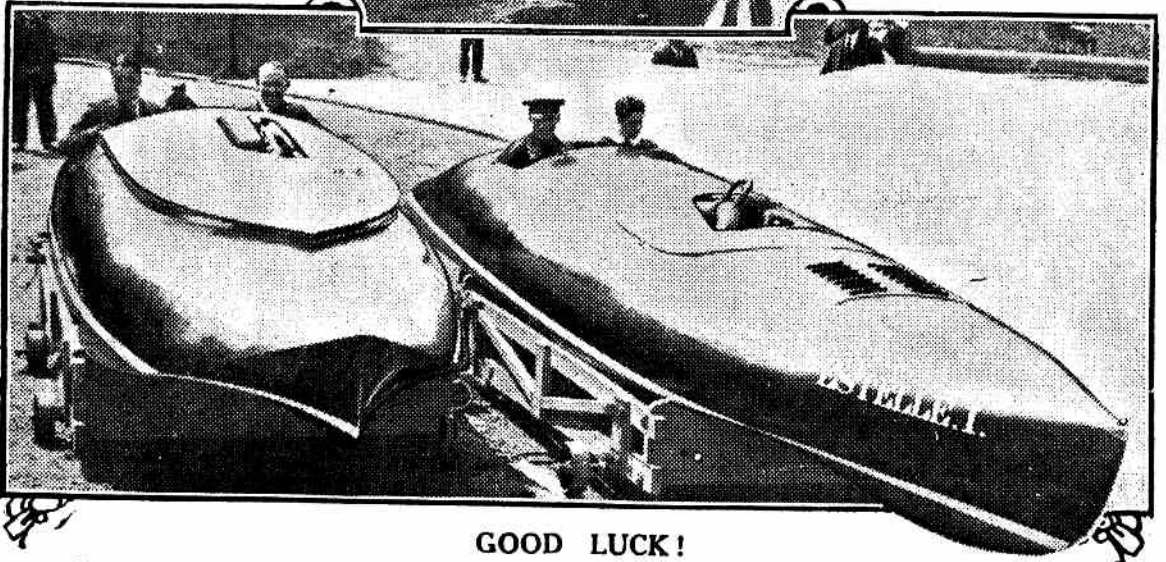
ON THE BALL!

Motor-cycle footer must be an exciting sport to watch, and more exciting still to take part in, but the footwork of Charlie Buchan, Andy Wilson, and other first-class exponents of the real winter game would be wasted in it. Photograph shows an incident near goal in the annual motor-cycle footer match between South Oxon M.C. and Botley M.C. at the Motor Gymkhana held recently at Oxford.



A STUDY IN EXPRESSIONS!

Mud, of course, has its uses; beauty specialists prescribe it for their patients, but mud on the track at Stamford Bridge is not appreciated by those engaged in athletic tussles there. Our picture shows three competitors going all out in the three miles race. Note the varying expressions on their faces as, regardless of mud and rain, they forge on to the tape that marks the winning post.



GOOD LUCK!

Zzzzzzzzzzz—zzzzzz! That, no doubt, is something like the noise these monster racing motor-boats make when they whiz through the water at umpteen miles an hour. Both the craft shown in the photograph belong to Miss Carstairs, and with the bigger one—Estelle I.—she hopes to attain a speed of 100 m.p.h. and thus break all world's records. This sporting Englishwoman has entered both boats in the British International Trophy races, which will take place at Detroit, U.S.A., during September. We, all of us, wish Miss Carstairs the very best of luck.

"OTTEN!"
Thus, Jack Jolly, late kap-
tin of the Fourth Form at
St. Sam's.

Our hero was tramping along the lane leading from St. Sam's to Muggleton. Above him the sun shone merrily from out of a cloudless sky. Around him the trees rustled, and the birds twittered cheerily. Nature was in its happiest mood.

Jack Jolly's mood, however, was the reverse of happy. He was leaving the school where he had spent the happiest days of his life—and he was leaving it in disgrace!

If anybody had told Jack Jolly at this time he would have been eggspelled, Jack would have laughed him to scorn.

Nevertheless, that was exactly what had happened. Dr. Alfred Birchmell, the cool and tyrannical headmaster of St. Sam's, on the flimsy pretext that Jack had been pulling his shabby legs, had given our hero the Order of the Boot.

And now Jack Jolly, fallen from his high estate as captain of the Fourth at a great public school, was on his way to Muggleton Station, on foot for Home Sweet Home.

Bought down with sorrow, shaken with sobs that he did not even try to conceal, our hero walked along the lane. But hope had not altogether departed from him yet. Even as he sobbed and groaned, a cheery grin still illuminated his countenance.

"Eggspose me, young man—"
Jack Jolly looked up with a start. He had just reached the Muggleton High Street when his gloomy thoughts were interrupted by that apologetic phrase.

"Can you tell me the way to St. Sam's?" asked the stranger.

Jack Jolly looked at his questioner with great interest. He was an under-sized, seedy-looking young man, with a laundry eggspression on his face. His boots were worn to rags, and the only part left of his hat, was the brim. However, from the fact that his clothes, though eggspremely old, were nearly patched, Jack Jolly judged that he came from honest, though poor, parents.

"I certainly can tell you the way to St. Sam's!" said Jack, with a bitter heart. "As a matter of fact, I have just come from that very place myself!"

"You don't say so!" ejaculated the stranger, looking interested himself. "Well now, ain't that funny? I'm the new master!"

"The—the new master!" ekkoed Jack in surprise. "Then you're taking the Fourth while Mr. Lickham is away!"

"Eggspactly! They've just sent me along from the Labour Exchange, and I understand that I shall be taking the Fourth. But what do you know about it, young shaver?"

Jack Jolly did not answer (the new master's question for a minute. He was too busy with his own thoughts just then. For as soon as he heard that the stranger was Mr. Lickham's deputy, an idea had entered his brain—an idea so daring and original, that it almost took his breath away.

Nobody at St. Sam's knew what sort of a master the Labour Exchange was sending along, to take Mr. Lickham's place. Not even Dr. Birchmell knew whether the new master would be young or old, thin, fat, tall, short, dark, or fair.

Supposing this gentleman, for some reason, did not turn up? Supposing Jack Jolly himself, disguised in a seaworthy manner, went along instead? Nobody would know that there was anything wrong!

Our hero's eyes began to gleam with excitement. If only he could get back to St. Sam's as master of the Fourth, he would soon find a way of getting the Head under his thumb, so that he could The MASTER LIBRARY—No. 1,066.

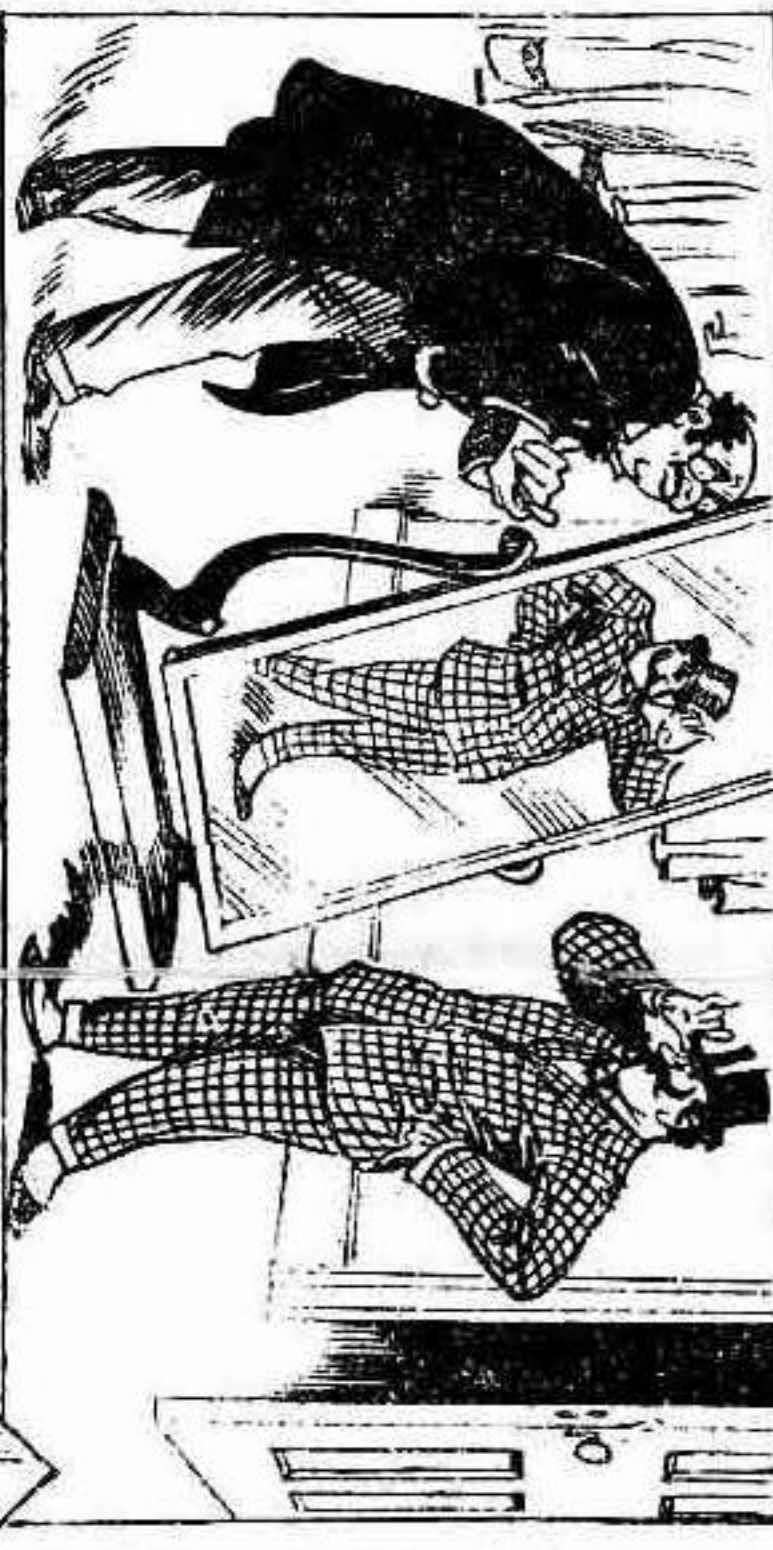
JACK JOLLY'S ROUSE!

DICKY DWIGHT

Getting the sack from St. Sam's doesn't worry Jack Jolly any, for no sooner is he clear of the school than he strikes a business for getting back. And the business is first class, eighteen carat and jettled in every movement!



"Oh, cutney!"
"And, finally, they are broodily ill-treated by the fierce and tyrannical Head, Dr. Birchmell!" ekkoed Jack.
"Of course, sir, I haven't told you everything—"
"M—my giddy aunt!" gasped the new master. "But you've told me quite enuff, my lad! If that's what St. Sam's is like, then I'm very thankful I didn't get there." "Then you're not going to take up the appointment?" asked Jack eggspetly.



"How dare you refer to me as a conelant, you insignificant little pup?" said the new master. "My name is Mr. Nollidge, and I am the new master! Kindly conduct me to Dr. Birchmell at once!"
"My boyo! Wot I say is this 'ere: I'm sorry, sir, 'oller me, sir!"
Jack Jolly—for Mr. Nollidge, of course, was none other than he—grinned, as he followed the old school porter. If Fossil could, I penny-ratio has disguise, then nobody else would!

"Do you mean to say that you, at your time of life, haven't heard what a horrible time the masters have up at the school?"
"Blowed if I have!" answered the new master in surprise. "I've been out of work for several years, and I thought I was on a good egg when they offered me this here job."
"You'd better have another think, then!" said Jack Jolly. "Let me tell you this, sir. The horrors of life at St. Sam's, for the masters, are beyond description. They toll from early morn till midnite, or even after. Apart from taking classes all day long, they have to perform housework—"
"Housework?" gasped the new master. "Certainly! Scrubbing floors, and cleaning windows, et setera, you know. Then they do all the cooking—"
"Cooking?" stutered the seedy gentleman.
"Rather! And the gardening—"
"Gardening?"
"And plumbing and decorating. Apart from that, they take it in turns to clean the boys' boots. Three hundred pairs a night, there are! Oh, and I forgot the washing—"
"W—w—washing?"
"Oh, rather! Three or four hours at the wash-tub every nite, you know, sir! As to the conditions they're kept in, I'll spare you the dreadful details. But it may interest you to know that they sleep in the dog-kennels—"
"Grate pip!"
"And they are practically starved—a couple of doocuts every day is all the food they get—"

"Certainly not! I see there's a notice: 'Boy Wanted, outside that grocer's shop over the road. I'm going to have a try for that insted. Ta-ta, young shaver! And thanks for warning me!'"
"It's a pleasure!" grinned Jack Jolly. "Cloanto, sir!"
When the stranger had disappeared into the grocer's shop, the eggspelled junior did a Charleston on the pavement, in his delight. His tactics had succeeded beyond all eggspetations. The new master had fallen for his story like a lamb.
Now came the next part of Jack's program—disguising himself so that all traces of Jack Jolly should be obliterated, and a more elderly and learned-looking individual take his place.
Grinning all over his face, Jack Jolly hurried down the High Street to the little shop where they Moses combined the business of costewmner with that of money-lender, frewteror, and other things.

"My boyo!"
Fossil, the aged porter at St. Sam's, gasped.
Sixty years or so at a great public school had accustomed Fossil to a good many strange sights. But the eggspetationary individual who had just walked throo the gates drew an eggspression of surprise even from Fossil.
The individual in question was apparently a middle-aged man, altho as a matter of fact, he was no taller than a Fourth Form junior. His face was somewhat

Inside the school, Fossil heard Mr. Nollidge over to Binling, the page, who led the way to Dr. Birchmell's study. Jack's heart beat faster as he drew near the dreaded sanctum which held so many painful memories for him. Even on the rest of the stool he felt him to him, he couldn't help fearing that the Head's red eyes would discover his true identity.
"Come in, fether!" yelled a shrill voice from within the Head's study, in response to Binling's rap on the door.
The page opened the door, and screwing up all his courage, Jack Jolly hopped in, to find himself in the majestic presence of Dr. Alfred Birchmell.
"Good-morning, sir!" said Jack, with a courtly bow. "Name of Nollidge. I'm the new temporary master."
"Good egg! I've been eggspecting you!" said Dr. Birchmell, with satirical facetion. "Buzz off, Binling! Or, to put it in the vernacular, you may go!"
"Certainly, sir!" grinned Binling, buzzing off.
"Now, Mr. Nollidge, squinty-voo, and make yourself at home," said the Head cordially. "So you're the man the Labour Exchange sent along, eh?"
"Eggspactly!" murmured Jack, beginning to breathe freely again, as he perceived that there was no sign of recognition in the Head's face.
"Well, if you'll eggspose my saying so, you don't look much like a master," said Dr. Birchmell, with a glance at Jack Jolly's clock-sewt and opera hat. "You're sure you haven't made a mistake, I suppose?"
"Oh, no, sir! Don't take any notice of my clothor, sir. It's the best they Moses could make up—"
"Heey Moses?" ekkoed the Head, staring.
"I—I mean, these are just some old togs I'm wearing out!" said Jack hastily.
"Oh, I see!" murmured the Head, rather dewbously. "However, as you are here for only a fortnite, I suppose it makes no odds. Now Mr. Nollidge, I don't know whether you've had any eggsperience in the teaching line before—"
"Oh, lots, sir!" said Jack cheerfully.
"You are familiar, I trust, with the most up-to-date methods of torcher—the twisting of arms, and the pulling of ears, and the twacking of noses, in addition to the use of the cane, and the birch?"
"I have had a vast eggsperience of all those methods, sir!" replied Jack Jolly, feastly.
"Well, that's the maine thing, anyway!" said the Head, with a nod. "As to lessons—well, I suppose you're prepared with some kind of gift to pun into the wooden nothles of the boys in your charge? Any old thing will do, of course!"
"Don't worry about that, sir! I'm a

tab at jaggedly, and I once got a medal for history!"
"Did you really?" said the Head with interest. "Well, don't go and over-do it, of course. I don't believe in crammng youngsters' heads with too much thrasings—that's my method, too!"
"And an eggspellent method, too!" agreed Jack, tho inwardly he was longing to chuck the inspot at the file of the harr-harr'd old head of St. Sam's.
"As to wages," said the Head, with a cunning look at the temporary master, "I presume that as you get your board and keep, you won't eggspost anything much in the way of spoudructs. Suppose we say sixpence a week pocket-money? That'll make it a bob for your fortnite's engagement."
"Oh crums!" murmured Jack. "But I always understood that the masters at a grite school like St. Sam's received quite handsome remuneration—never less than half-a-crown a week and all found!"
"Tut-tut! You have evidently been reading newspaper fairy tales," said Dr. Birchmell, with an impatient posture. "I can assure you that no master here gets such a fabulous salary as that. Mr. Nollidge, please dismiss such false ideas from your head."
"Well, if that's the case, I suppose I'd better accept your terms, sir," said Jack Jolly, tho he knew very well that Dr. Birchmell was going to pocket some of the Governors' money out of the transaction. "I'll take the job at a tanner a week then."
"Done!" said the Head. "You will start your dooties at once, then, Mr. Nollidge, and your salary will be paid to you, subject to good conduct and hard work, at the end of the fortnite."
"Thanks very much!" grinned Jack Jolly.
"Now, as to the Form you are to take, I should like to warn you that the Fourth are a pretty buff lot of nuts to crack!"
"I've contineved Dr. Birchmell. "Only this morning they had the dashed nerve to make a fool of me!"
"Impossible, sir!" murmured Jack Jolly.
"What?"
"Impossible! They couldn't very well make you what you already were, could they?" asked Jack, with an eggspression of child-like innocence on his disguised face. Dr. Birchmell stared hard at the new master.
"If I thought you were trying to be funny—" he began.
"Funny, sir?" repeated Jack, in well-fained tones of surprise.
"I'd give you a dot on the hoko—and without the option!" finished the Head, severely. "However, you look intonsent enough, so I'll let it pass this time."
(Continued on p. 23.)



With arms linked, and grinning all over their faces, Dr. Birchmell and the pseudo master descended to the dining-hall.