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The MAGNET²



STONY BROKE!



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Mauly is Wanted!

"HOUTSIDE!"
Gosling, the school porter at Greyfriars, spoke emphatically. In fact, he snorted.

Standing by the door of his lodge, Gosling glared at a man who had come in at the gates.

That man, certainly, did not look like the usual run of visitors at Greyfriars School.

He was dingy, he was dusty; his trousers were patched, his coat in sore need of patching; he was in want of a shave, and, still more, a wash.

What such a character wanted at Greyfriars was rather a mystery—which Gosling was not inclined to solve. Gosling raised a commanding hand, pointed to the gateway, and snapped:

"Houtside!"

The dusty man did not get outside. He looked at the ancient porter of Greyfriars and inquired coolly:

"What's a-biting you, old 'un?"

Gosling did not answer that question. He frowned, and stepped from his lodge, with the intention of helping the dusty gentleman into the road.

"I've seen you afore, my man!" said Gosling. "You're the tramp what snatched Master Bunter's hat, you are! Now, hout you go!"

The dusty one pushed back his ragged cuffs and spat on his hands. These preparations hinted that he was not prepared to go.

"Where will you have it?" he inquired.

Gosling, not wanting it anywhere, halted. He backed away a pace and

looked round into the quad. Class was over at Greyfriars, and there were plenty of fellows in sight. Five juniors of the Remove were passing at a little distance, and Gosling called:

"Master Wharton!"

Harry Wharton glanced towards the gates. So did Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. And the Famous Five of the Remove recognised the dusty man at once. They had seen him before. They had, in fact, seen him many times. He was quite a familiar sight to their eyes.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That jolly old tramp again!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "The sportsman who grabbed Bunter's straw!"

"What the dickens does he want here?" exclaimed Harry. "We'll jolly soon shift him, anyhow!"

"What-ho!" said Johnny Bull.

"The shiftfulness will be terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

And the Famous Five trotted down to the gates at once.

"This 'ere tramp, sir—" began Gosling.

"Leave him to us," said Frank Nugent. "Now, Weary Willie, are you going on your feet or on your neck?"

"Take your choice, Tired Tim!" added Bob Cherry. "We don't mind which."

The dusty man eyed the Removites. He touched his rag of a cap.

"No offence, gents!" he said, with great civility. "Give a cove a chance to speak. I've called 'ere to see a young gent—"

"After Bunter's hat again?" asked Harry Wharton.

The dusty man grinned.

"That was only a lark, sir!" he answered. "You ducked me in the pond for a-doing of it, too. But 'Arold 'Inks don't bear no malice—not 'Arold 'Inks! I've found a book belonging to a young gentleman at this school, and I've called 'and it to him."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

"I got it in my pocket," continued Harold Hinks, "and if one of you young gents is named Mauleverer—that's the name wrote in the book—"

"Oh!" repeated Wharton, "Mauly's not here, but if you've picked up a book belonging to him you can hand it over."

"Well, sir," said Mr. Hinks confidentially, "I was thinkin' that the young gent might 'and me a bob, or p'r'aps even a 'arf-crown, for finding his book and bringing of it 'ere! What?"

Grunt, from Gosling.

"If you've got a book what belongs to one of the young gentlemen, you 'and it over and 'op it!" he said.

"You 'old your row, old 'un!" retorted Mr. Hinks. "I ain't 'anding that book to anybody but the young gentleman whose name is wrote in it. Why, I could 'ave sold it in Courtfield for a bob, if it wasn't that I was an honest man, very carefully brought up."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'll call Mauly," he said. "He's in the quad somewhere."

"Thank you, sir!" said Mr. Hinks. "I don't mind waitin'."

And Mr. Hinks leaned on the gate to wait. Gosling grunted again. It was not at all in accordance with the fitness of things for that dusty, dingy, tattered figure to be leaning on the gate of Greyfriars School. It was an

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undoubted fact that Mr. Hinks was a blot on the landscape.

Still, if he had found a book belonging to a Greyfriars junior, and honestly brought it along to return to the owner, even the aristocratic Gosling had to admit that he had a right to wait there till Lord Mauleverer came to take his property. Expressing his feelings with a snort, Gosling went back to his lodge. Undisturbed by Gosling's disgusted snort, Harold Hinks continued to wait.

Meanwhile, the chums of the Remove looked for Lord Mauleverer.

They found that noble youth strolling under the shady elms in the quad, gently fanning himself with his straw hat. The July afternoon was hot.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Mauly!" roared Bob Cherry, drawing his lordship's attention by smacking him on the back.

"Ow!" gasped Mauly.

He staggered. A friendly smack from Bob Cherry was rather like a hefty punch from any other fellow.

"You blitherin' idiot!" gasped Lord Mauleverer. "What the jolly old thump are you knockin' a fellow over for?"

"You're wanted," grinned Bob.

"Oh dear! Don't say it's Quelch!" groaned Mauleverer. "Go back to him and tell him the weather's too hot for doin' lines!"

"It isn't Quelch, fathead! It's a tramp!"

"A—a—a tramp?" ejaculated Mauly. "Pullin' my leg, you ass?"

"Honest Injun!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You remember that tramp who snatched off Bunter's hat? He says he's found a book with your name in it, and he's brought it here for you—"

"But I haven't lost a book," said Lord Mauleverer. "I never take books out for a walk. Loathe 'em!"

"Well, that's what he says, and he says your name's written in the book, so it must be yours. You'd better see him; he's waiting at the gates."

"Oh, all right! I don't mind seein' anybody but Quelch."

And Lord Mauleverer, having fanned himself once more with his straw hat, placed it on his noble head and ambled away to the gates.

He gazed rather curiously at the dusty man as he arrived there. He had seen him before. Quite a number of Greyfriars fellows had seen Harold Hinks. Tramps were not uncommon in the country lanes round Greyfriars School, but Hinks was a rather uncommon sort of a tramp, to judge by his conduct. For some reason, utterly mysterious to the Greyfriars fellows, he had dogged Billy Bunter whenever that fat youth left the school, and snatched his hat. Some of the fellows thought that he must be a more or less harmless lunatic. Others considered him an absolutely idiotic practical joker. On the latter theory the Famous Five had ducked him, as a warning not to be so funny. He had not been seen since—till now!

Mr. Hinks detached himself from the gate and scanned Lord Mauleverer as he came up. His eyes, under his shaggy brows, were very keen. He touched his ragged cap.

"Name of Mauleverer, sir?" he asked.

"Yaas."

Mr. Hinks put his hand into his pocket, as if with the intention of producing something therefrom, and stepped towards Mauleverer. What happened next was swift and surprising. Within reach of the schoolboy earl, the tramp made a sudden snatch at his hat, taking Mauly entirely by surprise. The hat was off Mauly's head in a twinkling

and Mr. Hinks was racing out of the gateway with it. And Lord Mauleverer, hatless and utterly amazed, ejaculated:

"Great gad!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mauly on his Mettle!

LORD MAULEVERER stood for a moment or two as if spell-bound.

Never had Mauly been taken so completely by surprise. Then he jumped out of the gateway and stared after the running tramp. The man was going up the road at great speed, with Lord Mauleverer's straw hat tightly clutched in a grubby hand. Nobody else was to be seen on the road. Mr. Hinks had a clear run, and he was running hard.

"Good gad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

And he started running in pursuit.

Mauly was wrathful.

He wanted his hat, naturally, and he also wanted to make the dusty man sorry that he had snatched it and run with it. He had been taken in—and so had the Famous Five, for that matter—for they had believed that Hinks had, as he stated, found a book belonging to a Greyfriars fellow, and come along to the school to return it. And that, it was clear now, was only a "yarn" to get in touch with Lord Mauleverer. Why he wanted to grab Mauly's hat more than any other fellow's hat was

Billy Bunter thought it a smart trick to sell somebody else's old straw hat for a shilling. But was it smart? For that old straw hat was actually worth a hundred pounds!

an amazing mystery. But it was clear that he did, and Mauly was not the man to let him get away with it if he could help it.

Mauly was called a slacker in the Remove, and undoubtedly he generally looked almost too lazy to live. But he could exert himself, and he did now. Hatless, heedless of the July sun, looking quite cool, in spite of the heat, Mauly sprinted up the road after the running tramp. Hinks was putting on great speed, and he had a start, and no doubt he fully expected to get clear with his plunder. But Mauly gained on him fast, running like a deer, and when the tramp looked round he was startled to see the Greyfriars junior only a few yards behind.

"Blow me pink!" gasped Hinks.

He jumped out of the road, into the coppice that bordered it, and ran among the trees.

Mauleverer was after him like a shot.

"Stop, you rascal!" shouted Mauly.

Hinks did not answer. He panted on desperately. Lord Mauleverer put on a spurt, gained on him, and his hand dropped on the thief's shoulder.

"Now stop— Oh gad!" yelled Mauleverer, as the tramp swung round and aimed a vicious blow at his face.

Mauly staggered back.

The blow landed on his nose and drew a spurt of crimson therefrom. He reeled against a tree, gasping. Hinks ran on again.

But it was only for a moment that Mauly was stopped. Heedless of the red stream from his nose, he leaped on again. His teeth were set and his eyes

glinting; the usually good-tempered face of the schoolboy earl was set as hard as iron. He ran faster than before, putting every ounce into it, and reached the panting tramp ahead. This time he did not catch Hinks by the shoulder and give him a chance for another vicious blow. He landed his boot on the patched trousers, and Harold Hinks, with a gasping yell, pitched forward on his hands and knees.

The captured hat flew from his hand as he fell. Lord Mauleverer picked it up and set it on his head.

"Now, you rascal!" he exclaimed.

Hinks scrambled up.

Lord Mauleverer took out his handkerchief and dabbed at his crimson nose. Hinks came towards him, both grubby fists clenched and his eyes gleaming.

He had done his best to escape with the stolen hat, but he had failed. It was on Lord Mauleverer's head again. But the tramp, though no athlete, had no doubt of being able to handle a junior schoolboy easily enough. That was his only chance now if he wanted to steal the hat—as, for some mysterious reason, he evidently did—and he came at the schoolboy earl, with clenched fists and jutting jaw.

Mauleverer dropped the handkerchief and put up his hands. He did not recede an inch. More than once his lazy lordship had surprised the Remove fellows with his boxing powers. Now he was going to surprise Harold Hinks. For once his good-tempered lordship was really angry, and Mr. Hinks was going to get the benefit of it.

Hinks came jumping at him, hitting out savagely as he came. Mauly promptly side-stepped, and his fist crashed home on a grubby ear.

"Urrrgh!" gurgled Hinks, as he went staggering sideways.

As he reeled, Mauly's left caught him on the side of the jaw, and he went down with a crash.

"Oh, my eye! Blow me pink and yell!" gasped Hinks, as he sprawled.

He stared up quite dizzily at Lord Mauleverer. He had never dreamed that there was so much beef as this in the elegant, slim schoolboy.

Mauleverer's eyes gleamed down at him.

"Get up, you rascal!" he snapped. "You're not thrashed yet! You're goin' to be thrashed, by gad!"

"Oooogh!" gasped Hinks.

He sat up dazedly.

"Get on your feet—"

"Blow yer!"

"Otherwise I shall kick you!" said Lord Mauleverer.

Hinks staggered to his feet. He came at Lord Mauleverer like a tiger. He wanted vengeance now.

Lord Mauleverer met him with right and left. His guard was impenetrable. Hinks' swinging fists were brushed away like flies, and the schoolboy's clenched fists beat a tattoo on his stubbly face. Again and again the tramp strove to clinch, when his size and weight would have given him the advantage. But Lord Mauleverer stilled him off with masterly coolness. Every now and then he changed his ground, backed or swerved, eluding the clawing hands of the tramp, and all the time he was hitting—and hitting hard!

Hinks' face was gradually getting like a lump of raw beef in aspect. One of his eyes was closed and rapidly blackening. Crimson streamed from his pug nose. His stubbly chin was a study in bruises. He panted and gasped for breath.

He backed away at last, and as he backed, the schoolboy earl followed him up, still hitting.

Faster and faster, the ruffian backed away. He was no longer thinking of "bashing" Lord Mauleverer and grabbing his hat. He was thinking of escape. The slim, elegant schoolboy was too much for him—much too much!

And at last Mr. Hinks fairly turned tail and ran, spluttering and gasping spasmodically as he went.

Lord Mauleverer breathed hard.

The rascal had had enough, that was certain. It was a wrecked and havoeked Mr. Hinks who went spluttering away at a staggering run. He disappeared in the direction of the river, and Lord Mauleverer was content to let him go.

"Oh gad!" murmured Mauly. He picked up his handkerchief, and dabbed his nose and wiped his forehead. "Oh gad! What a life!"

He walked back to the road and strolled gently in the direction of Greyfriars. Five juniors came in sight on the road.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Mauly!" shouted Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five ran up and joined Lord Mauleverer.

"My hat! Where did you pick up that nose, Mauly?" asked Nugent.

"Present from the dusty gent," answered Mauly. "But I've given him one, like it—and a little over!"

"Gosling told us he grabbed your hat," said Harry Wharton.

"Yaas."

"But you've got it."

"Yaas. He let me have it back," grinned Lord Mauleverer. "We had a bit of a scrap in the coppice yonder. He left rather suddenly."

"You whopped him?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Sort of!" agreed his lordship.

"Good old Mauly!" chuckled Bob.

"You must have surprised him, if he fancied he could handle you like Bunter. But what the dickens does it all mean? Is the man potty?"

"Can't make him out," said Lord Mauleverer. "Last week he was grabbing Bunter's hats. Now he's started grabbing mine. He never found any book—that was an excuse to get at me—why, goodness only knows! I shouldn't have supposed that he'd ever heard of me. He's not batty, and it's not a practical joke, either. But what the man's up to is a giddy mystery! Beats me hollow! I've barked my knuckles on his beastly face! Look!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it's not a laughin' matter!" said Mauly. "I've damaged my knuckles on the beast! Almost wish I hadn't punched him so hard now."

"I dare say he does, too!" grinned Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Remove walked back to the school with Mauly. They discussed the strange affair as they went. But discussion brought them no nearer a solution of the mystery. There was some motive—some unknown and mysterious motive—behind the amazing actions of Harold Hinks. But what it was they could not begin to guess.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Only a Boot for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"One for me!" said Vernon-Smith, taking down a letter from the rack.

"I say, you fellows, is there anything for me?"

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It was morning break the following day, and a number of fellows had gathered at the rack where the letters were placed. Billy Bunter was among them. Bunter blinked anxiously over the letters through his big spectacles. Bunter was expecting a postal order, but—as usual—it did not seem to have arrived.

"Nothing for you, old fat bean!" said Bob Cherry.

"It's jolly queer!" said Bunter discontentedly. "I told you fellows I was expecting a postal order, didn't I?"

"You did!" chuckled Bob.

"Lots of times!" said Nugent.

"It's from one of my titled relations, you know," explained Bunter. "It really ought to be here by now. I've been expecting it some time."

"Ever since you were in the Second Form!" remarked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Skinner! I say, you fellows, is there a letter for Mauly? If there is, I'll take it to him."

"None for Mauly," said Harry Wharton.

"Oh dear!" grunted Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Poor old Mauly's hard up till he gets a letter from his uncle," said Bunter. "He couldn't lend me half-a-crown yesterday when I asked him. I know what it's like; I've been short of money myself once or twice—"

"The once-or-twicefulness is terrific," remarked Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Inky! I say, Smithy"—Billy Bunter turned his big spectacles on the Bounder of Greyfriars, who was already reading his letter—"is that from your pater, old chap?"

"Find out!" was the Bounder's not very polite reply.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"And shut up!"

Billy Bunter snorted. His celebrated postal order had not come. There was no letter for Lord Mauleverer; and Mauly, who generally had more money than was good for him, was in an unusually stony state, which he did not seem to mind in the very least—but which Billy Bunter minded very much. Bunter, naturally, was interested in the letter from Smithy's father. Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith, the financier and millionaire, often sent big remittances to the Bounder of Greyfriars; if there was a remittance in that letter it had a deep interest for the impecunious Owl of the Remove.

"I say, Smithy—" murmured Bunter.

"Can't you shut up while a fellow's reading a letter?" snapped the Bounder. "I'm not lending you anything, if that's what you're after, you fat worm! So dry up!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter blinked round at the other fellows who had letters. Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, was reading one that had come with the New York postmark—evidently from his "popper," Mr. Hiram K. Fish. But Bunter's eyes and spectacles did not linger on Fishy. If there had been a billion dollars in that letter from New York, Fisher T. Fish would not have dreamed of lending any fellow one of them. The mere thought would have given him a pain. Ogilvy, the Scottish junior, seemed a more hopeful case, and Bunter rolled over to him.

"Any luck, Oggy?" asked Bunter.

"Tip from the pater—what?"

"Eh? Oh, yes!"

"Gratters, old chap! I say, if you could lend me—"

"Eh?" Ogilvy looked at him and grinned. "You can have it if you like, Bunter."

"I say, old chap, that's awfully decent of you!" gasped Bunter. "I'll let you have it back when—when my postal order comes, of course. Look here, come down to the shop and have some tarts. I'll stand them! I say, you mean it—I can have the tip?"

"Certainly!"

"Hand it over, old fellow—"

"Here you are!"

"Well, you must be an ass!" said Johnny Bull. "Mean to say you're going to let Bunter have your pater's tip?"

"He's welcome to it," said Ogilvy.

"You shut up, Bull!" exclaimed Bunter warmly. "Oggy can lend me his pater's tip if he likes. I say, Oggy—"

"Here it is," said Ogilvy. He did not, however, hand over anything in the shape of cash; he proceeded to read from the letter aloud: "Economy in expenditure is a lesson that cannot be learned too early. Avoidance of extravagance in youth lays the foundation of prosperity in later life."

"Wharrer you mean?" ejaculated Bunter. "Where's the tip?"

"That's the tip."

"Eh?"

"That's the tip from my pater—the only one in the letter," said Ogilvy. "Quite a useful tip—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors, quite entertained by the expression on Billy Bunter's fat face.

"You—you—you silly idiot!" gasped Bunter. "Think I want a sermon from your father, you blithering cuckoo?"

"My dear chap, it's quite a useful tip. Economy in expenditure—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!" snorted Bunter. Whether that "tip" was useful or not, it was not the sort of tip that Bunter had any use for.

"I say, Wharton, that's a letter from your Aunt Amy, isn't it?" asked the fat Owl. "I know the fist—"

"Yes, fathead!"

"Anything in it?"

"Lots!"

"I say, old chap, what's in it?"

"About a thousand words."

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "I say, Linley, that letter looks as if it's got a lot in it."

Mark Linley laughed. Linley was not one of the wealthy fellows, and it was rather unlikely that he had received a remittance such as often came to the Bounder or Lord Mauleverer or Monty Newland. Still, there was no doubt that the letter in his hand was a rather bulky one, and must have contained something more than mere correspondence.

"Some notes—" he said.

"Notes!" Bunter brightened up. "Your father's sent you notes?"

"Yes—some that I left at home last hols. I wrote for them."

"I say, old chap!" gasped Bunter. "I say, lend me— I say, don't walk away when a fellow's talking to you, old bean! I say, Linley, I've been jolly decent to you, you know—"

"Have you?" asked Mark in surprise.

"Well, I've always been civil, you know, though you're no class," said Bunter. "I'm no snob; really aristocratic fellows never are. Of course, you're not a fellow like me—"

"My hat! I hope not!" ejaculated Mark.

"Oh, really, you know! Considering the social difference between us, I think I've been pretty decent to you!" said Bunter warmly. "And I think you might lend a fellow—"

"Some of these notes?" asked Mark.

"Well, yes, old chap—say, one of them. I'll let you have it back when my postal order comes, of course—"

"I shall have left school by that time," said Mark, shaking his head; "I shan't have any more use for Latin notes then."

"L-L-L-Latin notes!" gasped Bunter.

"Yes—some notes on Livy that I did in the hols—"

"You—you—you—you—" gurgled Bunter. "Think I want any of your rotten swotting, you howling ass? Go and eat coke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled away in disgust. The "notes" from Linley's home were of no more use to him than the "tip" from Ogilvy's pater. Vernon-Smith had gone out into the quad with his letter, and Bunter rolled after him. Smithy

"Why not, you fat ass?" asked the Bounder, while Redwing stared at the excited Owl in astonishment.

"I mean, if your pater mentions the hundred-pound note in it—"

"Of course he does, ass, as that's what he's written about."

"Well, suppose Quelch saw it—"

"What the thump would it matter if he did?" demanded the Bounder.

"Oh, really, Smithy! Fellows ain't allowed to have money to that tune! Quelch would be down on you like a ton of bricks. He would make you send it back to your pater."

The Bounder stared at the fat Owl for a moment in amazement. Then he burst into a laugh, and Redwing grinned.

"You fat idiot—"

"You can't be too careful, Smithy,"

"So I could—if I liked! I'm not going to."

"Well, I think that's pretty mean when you've just got a hundred-pound note from your pater!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "Suppose Quelch knew what was in that letter—"

"Are you going to tell him?" chuckled the Bounder.

"Well, I'm no sneak," said Bunter. "But you're breaking the rules, and you know it. Quelch would be frightfully waxy. He would send that hundred-pound note back to your father with a jolly stiff letter along with it. I think you might lend me a pound if I keep it dark—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bounder and Redwing together.

"Look here, Smithy—"



His teeth set and his eyes glinting, Lord Mauleverer ran faster than he had ever done before, and reached the panting tramp ahead. He did not give Harold Hinks a chance for another vicious blow, but landed his boot on the patched trousers.

With a gasping yell, the tramp pitched forward on his hands and knees. "Urrrgh!" he gurgled.

seemed his only hope—and not a very hopeful one at that!

The Owl of the Remove blinked round for Smithy. He spotted him talking to his chum, Tom Redwing, and rolled across to join him. The Bounder was speaking as he came up.

"That hundred-pound note—"

Bunter jumped.

It was well known that Smithy had fivers and tenners from his millionaire father sometimes, but hundred-pound notes were quite unknown in the Greyfriars Remove. If there was a hundred-pound note in Smithy's letter, he was a fellow that Bunter wanted to know.

"I—I—I say, Smithy—" gasped Bunter.

The Bounder stared round.

"Roll away, barrel!" he said curtly.

"But—but, I say—" gasped Bunter.

"I say, old chap, you'd better keep it dark! Don't leave that letter about!"

urged Bunter. "A hundred pounds—my hat! Why, Mauly never has half as much as that! I don't myself!"

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

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Look here, Smithy, you know I've been disappointed about a postal order—"

"Ring off!"

"You can lend me a pound! Now, couldn't you?"

"Certainly I could."

Bunter extended a fat hand. The Bounder gazed at it.

"Wants washing!" he said.

"Eh?"

"Try soap and water."

"You silly idiot!" roared Bunter.

"Plenty of soap, and lots of hot water—"

"Look here, Smithy, you said you could lend me a pound—"

"You silly frabjous owl, there's no banknote in my letter—"

"Gammon! I heard what you said to Redwing! You've owned up that your pater's mentioned it in the letter. Look here, Smithy, you jolly well lend me a pound, see? It's only till to-morrow—I'll settle out of my postal order."

"Well, I think I ought to lend you something," said Herbert Vernon-Smith, thoughtfully.

"I should jolly well think so! What are you going to lend me?"

"My boot!"

"Eh! I say, yaroooooh!" roared Bunter, as the Bounder suddenly grasped him by his collar and spun him round. "I say, if you kick me, you beast, I'll—Whoooooop!"

The Bounder kicked—and kicked again. As Billy Bunter fled he kicked

once more; and Bunter's dulcet tones were heard all over the quad as he vanished. Whatever might or might not have been in the millionaire's letter, that was all that the Bounder was going to lend Bunter—and even Bunter did not want any more loans of that kind. He roared, and disappeared.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Quech Wants to Know!

BILLY BUNTER'S fat brow was wrinkled in a deep frown over his big spectacles as he sat in Form in third school that morning. Bunter was angry, and, like the prophet of old, he considered that he did well to be angry!

Certainly, it was no business of his what might be in Smithy's letter; but Bunter's attention never had been confined to his own business. Out of such a stupendous sum as a hundred pounds the Bounder might have lent a fellow one, at least, especially when the fellow was expecting a postal order by every post. Mr. Quelch, it was certain, would be very angry if he learned that a Lower Fourth fellow had such a sum in his possession. And Bunter could tell him if he liked! Bunter, of course, was no sneak! Still, the Bounder had kicked him—hard! If a fellow wanted a fellow to hold his tongue, a fellow shouldn't kick a fellow—that was how Bunter looked at it.

Bunter had a jolly good mind to give Smithy away to Quelch on the spot. Thinking it over, he forgot to give any attention to Mr. Quelch—who was a rather exacting master in such matters, and expected attention from his Form. Twice Mr. Quelch spoke to Bunter, without getting an answer, Bunter's fat thoughts being concentrated on Smithy and his supposed banknote. Then Peter Todd kindly kicked Bunter to draw his attention, and Bunter yelped.

"Ow!"

"Bunter!" rapped Mr. Quelch, for the third time.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"I have spoken to you twice already, Bunter!"

"Have you, sir? Thank you, sir!" stammered Bunter. "I—I mean——"

"Will you answer my question, Bunter?"

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

He blinked at Quelch. He was willing to answer the question that had been asked, only he hadn't happened to hear it. Bunter was not bright, but the brightest pupil in Quelch's Form could hardly have answered a question without knowing what it was.

"I am waiting, Bunter!"

"Oh! Yes, sir. I—I—I——"

"You were not listening, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch severely. "I will repeat my question. What was given to Hengist and Horsa for their assistance to King Vortigern?"

"A—a hundred pounds, sir!"

"What?" almost yelped Mr. Quelch.

"I—I mean——" stammered Bunter.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry, staring at the fat Owl, as did most of the Remove.

Bunter's answers to questions were often weird enough, but this was really remarkable, even for Bunter. No doubt Bunter was unaware that the Isle of Thanet was presented to the Saxons for their services to the British King. He was unaware of most of the happenings, real or imaginary, contained in history books. Still, even Bunter ought to have known that King Vortigern

hadn't handed Hengist and Horsa modern cash!

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch. He picked up a cane and came towards the fat Owl. "Bunter, how dare you make such an answer?"

"I—I—I mean, I—I was thinking of Smithy's hundred pounds, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"You were thinking of what?"

There was a general stir of interest in the Remove. Wealthy as the Bounder was, the son of a millionaire who was recklessly liberal with him, a hundred pounds was a startling sum. It made the Remove fellows jump, and almost made their Form master jump.

"I—I—I mean——" stammered Bunter. "I—I didn't mean to give Smithy away, sir—I never meant——"

Mr. Quelch turned to the Bounder. He was sitting in his place, calm and cool, with a grin on his face.

"Vernon-Smith!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Have you such a sum as Bunter stated in your possession?"

"No, sir!"

"On more than one occasion," said Mr. Quelch, "I have had to intervene when you have been found to have unduly large sums in your possession, Vernon-Smith."

TO READERS IN THE IRISH FREE STATE.

Readers in the Irish Free State are requested to note that when free gifts are offered with this publication, they can only be supplied when the article is of a non-dutiable character.

"Yes, sir—that was very kind of you," said the Bounder.

Smithy never could let slip a chance of being impertinent.

"What? What do you mean, Vernon-Smith? Is that answer intended for impertinence?" exclaimed the Remove master.

"Oh, no, sir! I am sure it was very kind of you——"

"That will do. You have no such sum now?"

"I've said so, sir!"

"I regret, Vernon-Smith, that I cannot regard your word as absolutely trustworthy," snapped Mr. Quelch.

The Bounder's eyes glistened. As a matter of fact, his word was not to be trusted by a master or prefect, though in his own Form he was straight enough. Still, he did not like Quelch putting it like that.

"In that case, sir, it's no use asking me," said Vernon-Smith. "Perhaps you'd like to search me, sir."

"Smithy!" breathed Redwing, touching his arm.

The Bounder, unheeding his chum, stared straight at his Form master.

Mr. Quelch's cheeks reddened with wrath.

"Vernon-Smith, if you utter one more word of impertinence, I will cane you!" he said. "Bunter——"

He turned back to the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh lor'!"

"You have made a statement, Bunter, whether you intended to do so or not. I must inquire into the matter."

"I—I didn't!"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I—I never meant——"

"For what reason, Bunter, did you

state that Vernon-Smith had a hundred pounds in his possession?"

Billy Bunter blinked dismally at Quelch. He blinked dismally round the Form. Really, he had not intended to give Smithy away—at all events, he had not made up his fat mind to do so. But there was no help for it now.

"I—I say, Smithy, I—I shall have to tell him——" stammered Bunter.

"Do not speak to Vernon-Smith, Bunter! Answer me!" barked Mr. Quelch. "And answer me immediately."

"Smithy got it in a letter this morning, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I ain't sneaking—I've got to answer——"

"Silence! Vernon-Smith, did you have a letter from your father this morning?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was there a banknote in it?"

"No, sir!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, blinking at the Bounder through his big spectacles. Evidently Bunter was astonished by Smithy having the nerve to make such an answer.

"Did you see the banknote, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Then why did you suppose——"

"I—I heard Smithy tell a fellow, sir——"

"You heard him speak of a hundred-pound note?"

"Oh dear! Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch turned to the Bounder again. The Remove were breathless now. Smithy met his Form master's gimlet eyes calmly.

"You hear what Bunter has said, Vernon-Smith? I can scarcely believe that your father has been so ill-advised as to send you such a sum of money. But if he has done so, it is my duty to return it to him without delay. I ask you once more whether you have such a sum?"

"No, sir!"

There was a moment's silence.

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch at last, "I shall say nothing further on the subject—at present! We will resume."

And the lesson was resumed. During that lesson, Mr. Quelch's eyes turned on Herbert Vernon-Smith several times, very keenly. Once the Bounder, catching his eye, smiled—quite a cheeky smile; and the Remove master coloured with vexation. He made up his mind very grimly that if Bunter's statement turned out to be correct, six of the best should be handed out to the scapegrace of the Remove.

When the Form was dismissed, Mr. Quelch remained behind in the Form-room. From the passage a fat voice floated in:

"I say, Smithy, I couldn't help telling him! You jolly well know I couldn't!"

"You fat idiot!"

"I say, old chap, you'll have to walk down to Courtfield to change it at the bank. I'll come with you, if you like. 'Taint safe to carry a lot of money about alone, you know—there's that tramp hanging about——"

"Still less safe with a fat cadger hanging about!"

"Oh, really, Smithy——?"

"Scat, you fat oyster!"

"Beast!"

The voices died away down the passage; and Mr. Quelch compressed his lips hard. He had very little doubt left now!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Just Like Smithy!

HARRY WHARTON looked for the Bounder after dinner. He found him in the quad with Tom Redwing. Redwing was looking serious, and rather worried; but the Bounder seemed very cheery,

He gave the captain of the Remove a nod as he came up.

"How much do you want?" he inquired.

"Eh?" Wharton stared. "I don't catch on, Smithy!"

The Bounder chuckled.

"I've had about a dozen kind inquiries after my hundred pounds since Bunter blabbed in the Form-room this morning. Fellows I hardly know by sight have been giving me the friendly eye and the glad hand. I haven't lent anybody anything, so far."

"You silly ass!" said Wharton. "Do you think I'm after your measly pounds? You frumpious fathead—"

"Keep your wool on," said the Bounder coolly. "You haven't come along just to gaze on my beautiful features, or to listen to the music of my voice, I suppose?"

"Oh, don't be an ass," said Harry gruffly. "I came to speak to you about that hundred-pound note; but if you offered it to me, I'd jam it down the back of your cheeky neck! That's how much I want of it."

"Well, I'm not offering to give it to you," chuckled the Bounder. "Is that the lot?"

"You pulled Quelch's leg this morning," said Harry quietly. "You needn't tell me that you think it fair play to tell lies to the beaks—I know you think so, and you know what I think of it. But Quelch is a downy bird—he knows how the matter stands; and if you're caught with that banknote, you'll get it hot and strong. The sooner you get shut of it, the safer it will be for you."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bounder.

Wharton reddened with annoyance.

"Well, I meant that as a friendly tip," he said. "You've asked for a licking, and you jolly well deserve it, too!"

"So kind of you to want to save me from what I deserve," grinned the Bounder.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Look here," began Redwing; but the Bounder interrupted him.

"Shut up, Reddy! This is my business."

"No reason why you shouldn't tell Wharton—"

"Shut up, I tell you!"

Harry Wharton walked away, leaving the Bounder laughing. Wharton, like most of the fellows, believed that Bunter had it right, and that Smithy was in possession of that amazing "tip" from his millionaire father. Certainly the Bounder seemed to be doing his best to make the fellows think so; though equally certain, he had not said so.

"Look here, Smithy—" said Redwing restively.

"You keep your head shut, old bean," grinned the Bounder. "Let the fellows think what they like. It's Bunter's doing, not mine."

"But what's the game?" grunted Redwing.

"Quelch is the game!" answered the Bounder coolly. "He as good as called me a liar before all the Form. I'm pulling his leg in return."

"That's all rot! You mean you're drawing Quelch because you can't keep from playing monkey tricks on the beaks!"

"All's fair in war," said the Bounder. "I'm up against the jolly old beaks; and if Quelch likes to make a fool of himself, I'm not the man to stop him. Hallo, there's the old bean—come this way."

Mr. Quelch was taking a walk in the quad after dinner. Vernon-Smith slipped his arm through Redwing's, and drew his reluctant chum in the direction of the Remove master. Passing within

All about this week's Free-Photo Plate. This interesting article will give you some idea of what it's like

IN A SKY-LINER'S CHART-HOUSE.

THE flying-man calls his cockpit, or chart-house, "the office." And if you can find a more interesting "office" in all the world—well, let us know about it! There sits the man who has supreme control of the aeroplane, whether it be a single-seater, or vast flying-boat or seaplane, or luxurious sky-liner—like the mighty Armstrong Whitworth Atalanta, which is the subject of this week's splendid photogravure gift plate.

You'll notice there are two seats and two sets of gadgets in the pilot's cockpit—which is entered through the wireless-room. For the Atalanta carries two pilots, with accommodation for seventeen passengers and their luggage, plus one ton of mail. And the loaded plane weighs eight tons!

1,360 Horse-Power!

The pilots can laugh at the weather so far as personal comfort is concerned, for their cockpit, in the nose of the giant machine, is completely enclosed with non-splinterable glass windows. There are sliding side panels and a sliding panel in the roof. Behind the wireless equipment at the back of them is a corridor leading to the stewards' pantry. Behind the pantry is the passengers' cabin, 17 feet 6 inches long, 6 feet 9 inches wide, and 6 feet 3 inches high.

The Atalanta, specially constructed for the Imperial Airways route to Cape Town, is 90 feet from wing-tip to wing-tip, 71 feet 6 inches long, and 15 feet high. Its four engines are each able to whack up 340 horse power—that's 1,360 horse-power between them—and its ordinary cruising speed is about 130 miles per hour.

On the route covered by this particular plane, some of the aerodromes touched at are 6,000 feet above

sea-level, so the plane needs to be a jolly good climber. It is! Even if one of the four engines stops it can climb 7,000 feet. And its flying range—without refuelling—is 400 miles. You can bet the pilots don't let their eyes roam for long from the bewildering array of gadgets confronting them and which are explained in the Free Gift Plate.

Fresh Air and Comfort!

There's not much risk of a forced landing with all that tremendous power at the pilot's control, even with one engine missing fire. In the latter event, the Atalanta's speed would, of course, be reduced, but even so, it wouldn't go below about 90 miles an hour! It carries 100 gallons of fuel in each of two tanks, one on each side of the fuselage, with a third tank, holding 124 gallons, in the middle of the wing—the Atalanta being a monoplane, of course. There is an oil tank of about 30 gallons for each of the four engines.

Just in case of need, there are two emergency exits for the passengers, and the glass windows could all be easily knocked out. There is electric lighting, and if the passengers should be feeling chilly at a great height, the air inside can be heated. There's no danger of stuffiness, for the stale air is all sucked away at the rear of the cabin, fresh air coming in through a hole in the plane's nose, the outlet for the air into the cabin being controllable over each passenger's seat.

Now, how do you think you would feel in one of those two seats in the "chart-house" of the Atalanta—with the lives of all those passengers, and the crew, and lots of baggage and Royal Mail, and the safety of a machine worth many thousands of pounds entirely at your own finger-tips?

car-shot of Mr. Quelch, and affecting not to see him, the Bounder said:

"A hundred pounds is a lot of money, Reddy! Of course, the pater can afford it easily enough, but it's a lot of money."

Mr. Quelch started, and his eyes turned sharply on the two juniors. They passed on, Redwing red and uncomfortable, the Bounder cool as a cucumber. Mr. Quelch looked after them fixedly. If he had doubted before, he could hardly doubt now. His face grew hard and grim.

"Oh, here you are!" Skinner and Snoop joined the Bounder in the quad, and Redwing left his chum. He had no fancy for Skinner's company.

"Here I am," assented the Bounder.

"Might let a chap see it," said Skinner. "I don't mind admitting that I've never seen a hundred-pound note, Smithy."

"Sorry I can't oblige!" Vernon-Smith shook his head with a gesture in the direction of the Form master in the distance.

"Tain't safe to take it out here," said Snoop. "But, look here, Smithy, 'tain't safe to keep it at all. Better change it into smaller notes—you can cut down to the bank on your bike before class."

"We'll come with you, if you like,"

said Skinner. "That tramp's hanging about—that queer customer who snatches fellows' hats. Two or three fellows saw him in the road this morning. He's got a black eye that Mauly gave him, I hear."

"I'm not going to the bank," answered Vernon-Smith.

"But, look here, Quelch will nail you," urged Skinner. "He's jolly suspicious after what Bunter said in third school. He won't let you keep that banknote if he finds that you've got it."

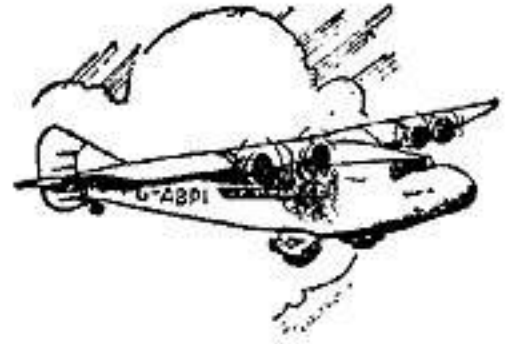
"Oh, I'm not afraid of Quelch!" drawled the Bounder carelessly. He strolled away after Redwing, leaving Skinner and Snoop deeply disappointed.

"Rotter!" said Skinner, when Smithy was out of hearing. "He's got lots of tin, but he's jolly close with it. I don't see why he can't come down to Court-field and stand a spread at the bunshop, with a hundred quid in his pocket."

"Oh, he'd rather swank about with it!" grunted Snoop. "Swank's his long suit. We can't all swank like Smithy—everybody's father ain't a dashed moneylender!"

"They're reeking with it," agreed Skinner. "Week before last old Vernon-Smith came down to see him, and I hear that he lost a hundred-pound

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,326.



note on Courtfield common — fancy that a tramp picked it up, or something! Now he's sent Smithy one! Rolling in hundred-pound notes! Well, they all go bankrupt in the long run!"

"Chokey, as often as not!" assented Snoop.

That happy prospect for the millionaire financier seemed to afford some satisfaction to Skinner and Snoop—though doubtless not so much as a "whack" in the banknote would have afforded!

When the Remove fellows gathered at the door of their Form-room that afternoon, Herbert Vernon-Smith was the cynosure of all eyes. Not a fellow doubted that he had a hundred-pound note in his pocket, and such a sum was dazzling to most of the juniors.

As if to intensify the general interest, Vernon-Smith took out his Russia-leather pocket-book, and proceeded to examine the contents—undoubtedly giving the impression that he was looking to see if that banknote was safe.

"Cave!" grinned Hazeldene. "Here comes Quelch!"

The Remove master's angular form appeared at the end of the corridor.

Smithy did not seem to hear. "Here comes Quelch, you ass!" whispered Lord Mauleverer.

Still the Bounder did not heed.

Not till Mr. Quelch was quite close at hand did the Bounder give a dramatic start, and shove the pocket-book hurriedly into his pocket—obviously dodging it out of sight of his Form master. It was not likely that that action would escape Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye.

That gimlet eye glinted at the Bounder. But Mr. Quelch, contrary to the expectations of his Form, said nothing. He opened the Form-room door, and the juniors went in and took their places. As he went to his desk the Remove master caught a fat whisper in class:

"I say, you fellows, he jolly nearly spotted Smithy!"

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Silence in the class, please!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

And his eye glittered for a moment at the Bounder.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

For It?

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH sauntered in the quad, after class that afternoon, with a cheery grin on his face.

The fame of his hundred-pound note—or supposed hundred-pound note—had spread far and wide by this time. The Upper School had heard of it, as well as the Lower. Smithy was made aware of that by the fact that Hilton and Price, of the Fifth Form, stopped him in the quad to give him a few pleasant, friendly words.

IMPORTANT NEWS!

Readers of the MAGNET who are about to visit the seaside for their holidays will be glad to learn that Messrs. Cadbury Bros., of Bournville, have contributed no fewer than **A QUARTER OF A MILLION BARS OF CHOCOLATE** for the consumption of readers buying their MAGNET from beach sellers, kiosks, and other such places at most of our popular seaside resorts. In addition to this, Cadbury Bros. are contributing pound boxes of their delicious assorted chocolates as prizes at our Concert Party, Cinema, and Gala Competitions. Be sure, then, and watch out for the MAGNET representatives when you are at the seaside this summer.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,326.

It was the first time that they had seemed to be aware of his existence; so, without being unduly suspicious, Smithy fancied that he could attribute their friendly greeting to the fame of his banknote. A little later three great men of the Sixth—Loder and Carne and Walker—nodded to him in a way that was really amazing, from Sixth Form men to a Remove junior.

Less agreeable, however, was the look of Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, when he came on Smithy. He stopped to speak to him, but without either nod or smile.

"What's this I've been hearing?" asked Wingate gruffly. "The fags all seem to be saying that you've got a hundred pounds about you, Vernon-Smith."

"Fags will say anythin', Wingate!" answered the Bounder meekly.

"Is it true?"

"Oh, no!"

The Bounder's denial was prompt; but he managed to make it in such a way that it gave rather an affirmative impression. Wingate eyed him very suspiciously.

"Well, if any of your people have been silly enough to give you such a tip, you'd better take it to your Form master at once," he said.

"Of course, I should," assented the Bounder, with a grin. "Quelch wouldn't let me keep it; and, of course, the chief aim of my existence is to please Quelch. I like him so much!"

"Don't be a young ass!" growled Wingate, and he left it at that.

The Bounder sauntered on, smiling.

Spotting Harry Wharton & Co. in a group near Masters' Windows, he came over to them. Perhaps, also, he spotted Mr. Quelch through the open window of his study.

Through the open window Mr. Quelch's eyes fell on him, and he frowned. Mr. Quelch was in a rather worried frame of mind. If it was true that a Lower Fourth boy had such a sum of money in his pockets, it was Mr. Quelch's duty to see that he did not keep it there. Such a "tip" had to be returned to the sender, with a very plain-spoken communication along with it.

It was almost unimaginable that any parent could have been so thoughtless as to give a schoolboy a hundred pounds in a lump. But the Remove master knew Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith—his wealth was almost unlimited, and his indulgence of his son almost equally without limit. It was improbable; but it was possible, and it worried the Remove master.

In view of Vernon-Smith's denial he could do nothing; but he was well aware that Smithy would have had no scruple about deceiving him in that matter, or any other matter. He was uneasy and perturbed and angry. And in that mood he heard the Bounder's voice clearly through the open window—without in the least guessing that he was intended to hear it.

"Can you fellows change a note for me?"

"Not a hundred pounds, old bean!" answered Bob Cherry, with a chuckle.

"Not unless you'll take a bob for it!"

"Will half-a-crown do?" asked Nugent, laughing.

"Well, you see, I want some change," said Vernon-Smith. "Perhaps if the lot of you clubbed together—"

"Fathead!" said Harry Wharton. "If all the Remove clubbed together they couldn't change a hundred-pound note. You'll have to take it to the bank."

"The bank's closed now," answered Smithy.

"Take it to Quelch!" suggested Johnny Bull. "He would jump at changing it for you—perhaps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The changefulness would probably not be terrific," grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The whopfulness would be more probable."

"Well, I don't want to bother Quelch with it—"

"Ha, ha! I fancy not."

"Better not talk about it here," said Harry. "We're rather too near Quelch's window—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Quelch!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Mr. Quelch had stepped to his window. He fixed his eyes on the group of juniors grimly.

"Vernon-Smith!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Come to my window."

"Oh, certainly!"

Smithy came over to his Form master's window. The Famous Five watched him in dismay. The fat was in the fire now.

"I heard what you said to these boys, Vernon-Smith! I can no longer doubt that you have deceived me."

"Oh, sir!" said Smithy.

"You have a hundred-pound note in your possession, Vernon-Smith."

"Oh, no, sir!"

"I heard you ask these boys to change it."

"I was speakin' of a pound note, sir! I've a pound note, and I wanted it changed," said the Bounder calmly.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"A fellow's allowed to have a pound note, sir!" said the Bounder meekly.

Mr. Quelch breathed hard.

"If you still deny that you have a hundred pounds, Vernon-Smith, I require you to show me the letter you received from Mr. Vernon-Smith this morning."

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. They had heard from Bunter that the hundred-pound note was mentioned in that letter. Smithy had admitted it. Indeed, the millionaire could hardly have sent his son such a tremendous tip without referring to it in the accompanying letter. The Bounder's game was up—if he had the hundred-pound note.

"You hear me, Vernon-Smith?" snapped Mr. Quelch, as Smithy did not reply.

"Yes, sir; but fellows aren't expected to show private letters from their people," said Vernon-Smith doggedly. "I don't think you'd ask Cherry to show a letter from Major Cherry."

"The case is quite different, Vernon-Smith. I can trust Cherry's word; but I cannot trust yours!" said the Remove-master curtly. "That letter passed through my hands this morning; but, as it was addressed to you in your father's hand, I did not, of course, examine it. In the circumstances, however, the letter must be shown, either to me or to your headmaster."

The Bounder's eyes glimmered. Fellows, as a rule, were rather keen not to come in contact with their headmaster. The Bounder, as it happened, was keen on just that—in the circumstances.

"I think Dr. Locke would take my word, sir," he answered. "I don't think he would make a fellow show a letter from his father."

"If you prefer the matter to go before the headmaster, Vernon-Smith, you shall certainly have your desire," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "You will receive a flogging if it should prove that you

have deceived me, or, rather, attempted to do so."

"I assure you, sir—"
"That will do, Vernon-Smith! Come into the House at once, and I shall take you to your headmaster!"

Mr. Quelch turned away from the window. The Bounder shrugged his shoulders, and turned away.

"Well, you're for it now, old bean," said Bob Cherry.

"Think so?" asked Smithy.
"Well, your pater must have mentioned the hundred-pound note in his letter—"

"Oh, yes, he mentioned it."
"Then you're done for."

"Perhaps not!" grinned the Bounder—and he walked away to the door of the House, whistling.

Many eyes were on the Bounder when he went in. The news quickly spread that Quelch was taking him to the Head. A crowd of fellows watched the Remove master heading for Dr. Locke's study, with the Bounder following demurely at his heels. Mr. Quelch's face was set and grim, but the Bounder glanced round at the other fellows and gave them a wink. There was a chuckle which caused Mr. Quelch to look round—with an expression that made the chuckle die away very quickly.

"Follow me, Vernon-Smith!" he snapped.

"Yes, sir!"
The Bounder followed on. He left quite a breathless crowd at the corner of Head's corridor.

"I say, you fellows, he's for it now!" grinned Billy Bunter. "Serve him jolly well right, too, if you ask me! Swanking about with a hundred-pound note!"

"You fat villain, it was you gave him away!" growled Johnny Bull. "Let's kick Bunter, you men!"

"Good egg!"
"Yaroooh!" roared Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows—whoop! Oh crumbs!"

Billy Bunter fled. The other fellows waited, curious to hear the result of the Bounder's interview with the Head. So far as they could see, the Bounder was "for it." But Smithy was perfectly cool as he followed his Form master into the Head's study.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not Nice for Quelch!

DR. LOCKE laid down his pen, adjusted his glasses and gave Mr. Quelch an inquiring look. He glanced at Vernon-Smith, and frowned slightly.

It was not the first time, by many a one, that the scapegrace of Greyfriars had been brought before his headmaster. And Smithy's careless coolness did not please the headmaster of Greyfriars. Juniors brought into that dreaded apartment were supposed to be rather awed, if not to enter it in fear and trembling. But the Bounder was cool as ice.

"What is it, Mr. Quelch?" asked the Head.

"A matter, sir, which I must place in your hands," said the Remove master. "I have reason to believe that this boy has in his possession a large sum of money—a sum far beyond the utmost limits allowed even to a Sixth Form boy in this school. It is, in fact, the talk of the lower Forms."

"Is that the case, Vernon-Smith?"

"No, sir."
"Vernon-Smith has denied it, but I am sorry to say that I cannot take his word," said Mr. Quelch bitterly. "And he has uttered words in my hearing
(Continued on page 10.)

Secure This Bargain Now, Boys!

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which, to my mind, leave no doubt in the matter. It is certainly the case that every boy in my Form believes that he has a hundred-pound note."

Dr. Locke started. "A hundred pounds!" he ejaculated. "Surely such a thing is impossible!"

"In the case of any other boy I should certainly say so, sir, but on more than one occasion, as you are aware, Mr. Vernon-Smith has been most culpably indulgent to his son in matters of money. You yourself have had to speak to him on the subject."

"That is certainly correct," said Dr. Locke. "Vernon-Smith, if you have such a sum of money, place it on my table at once."

"I have not, sir." "Vernon-Smith objects to showing the letter he received from his father this morning, sir. Obviously, it contains some reference to the banknote."

"That is a matter very easily decided," said Dr. Locke. "You will produce the letter, Vernon-Smith."

"It's a private letter from my father, sir," said the Bounder.

"Does it contain any reference to a hundred-pound note?" demanded the Head.

"Well, yes, sir!" "That is enough! Produce the letter at once!"

"If you order me to do so, sir—" The Bounder appeared to hesitate.

"I do," rapped the Head—"and at once!"

Vernon-Smith slipped his hand into his pocket. Slowly, with well-acted reluctance, he drew out an envelope and took a letter from it. That letter he laid on Dr. Locke's writing-table.

Mr. Quelch's eyes glinted. The matter was to be put to the proof now, and the

next step in the programme was a flogging for the Bounder—which, in his Form master's opinion, he thoroughly deserved for his impertinence.

Dr. Locke took the letter and fixed his eyes on it. He gazed at it, he stared at it, then in silence he passed it to Mr. Quelch. And the Remove master, looking at it, had the pleasure—or otherwise—of reading as follows:

"Dear Herbert,—I have no news so far of the hundred-pound note which I lost when I came down to see you a fortnight ago. You have not forgotten the incident, I presume. The banknote blew away while I was examining some papers on Courtfield Common, and my belief was that it was snatched by a tramp. As it was not found on him when he was seized by some of your schoolfellows, I had no doubt that he threw it away before he was caught. I learn from the Courtfield police that they have seen and questioned this man, whose name is given as Harold Hinks, but there is no actual evidence on which he can be detained.

"Now, Herbert, that hundred-pound note is blowing about somewhere on Courtfield Common. It is not, of course, a large sum to me; nevertheless, I do not desire to incur such a loss if it can be avoided. I suggest that you might very well spend some of your half-holidays in looking for it. If you find it you shall have a tennor for yourself.

*"Your affectionate father,
S. VERNON-SMITH."*

Mr. Quelch read that letter, he gazed at it, he blinked at it. Certainly a hundred-pound note was mentioned in that letter—the hundred-pound note

which Smithy's father had lost on his visit to Greyfriars a couple of weeks ago. And that was all!

Mr. Quelch's face reddened—the red deepened and deepened till it was a beautiful crimson. The Head coughed. Vernon-Smith winked at the bust of Socrates over the Head's bookcase.

There was a brief silence in the study—brief but deep. Dr. Locke broke it.

"That letter seems to explain the matter, Mr. Quelch. There is no reference to—'hem!—any remittance sent to Vernon-Smith—"

"Yes—no—um!" stammered Mr. Quelch.

"I told Mr. Quelch that there was no remittance in the letter, sir," said Smithy cheerfully. "Bunter started the story—he heard me speaking to Redwing about the hundred-pound note—I was going to ask him to come with me to look for it—and Bunter misunderstood, and—"

"That will do, Vernon-Smith! You may take your letter, and leave my study!" interrupted Dr. Locke sharply.

"Thank you, sir!"

Both the masters knew—at least, they had no doubt—that the cunning Bounder had taken advantage of Bunter's fatuous mistake to make the most of the matter, and "draw" his Form master. He had, in fact, been pulling Quelch's leg all along the line, and his object had been to make a fool of that unhappy gentleman. And he had succeeded perfectly. Mr. Quelch was wishing, at that moment, that the floor of the Head's study would open and let him drop through.

And it was impossible to punish the Bounder, much as he deserved it. He had denied all along that he had a hundred-pound note—he was, in fact, the aggrieved party—his word had not been taken when he was telling the truth! Mr. Quelch had been, as Shakespeare expresses it, tenderly led by the nose as asses are. And the fellow who had led him by the nose had to escape scot-free.

It was with quite a vaunting air that the Bounder left the Head's study and walked down the corridor, with his hands in his pockets.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Smithy!"

"What's the verdict?"

"Licked?"

"What did the Beak say?"

"What did he do?"

Everybody wanted to know at once. The Bounder laughed.

"I've had a pleasant little chat with the Head," he drawled. "Nice old bean. I quite like him!"

"Hasn't he made you give up the banknote?" exclaimed Skinner.

"What banknote?"

"Oh, don't be an ass! Everybody knows you've got a hundred-pound note."

"I wish I knew what everybody knows, then," grinned the Bounder. "There isn't any banknote, fathead! That fat idiot, Bunter, got it wrong when he heard me speaking to Redwing. My pater wrote to me about the one-hundred pound note he lost on Courtfield Common a fortnight ago—"

"Wh-a-at?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Is that all?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"That's the lot!" assented the Bounder.

"And why the thump couldn't you say so?" demanded the captain of the Remove.

The Bounder chuckled.

"Because I found it rather amusin' to pull Quelch's leg, old bean! You



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should have seen his face, in the Head's study!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Skinner. "I can fancy it!"

"Why, you spoofing sweep, you wanted him to take you to the Head all along!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"You wanted to make him look an ass!"

"Exactly! And he's lookin' it! His face is worth a guinea a box!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look out for Quelch, after this!" grinned Peter Todd.

"Oh, I'm always lookin' out for the dear old bean. It's one up to me this time," smiled the Bounder, and he

strolled away in great spirits. A score over a beak was meat and drink to the scapegrace of Greyfriars, and he was enjoying it hugely.

In the Head's study Mr. Quelch was feeling horrid. But the Head was a kind gentleman, and a tactful gentleman. He dismissed the subject of Vernon-Smith and the banknote that did not exist on the spot. He laid a slim, white forefinger on the open page of a Greek volume before him on his table. It was the "Epta epi Thebas" of that entrancing author, Aeschylus.

"If you have a few minutes to spare, my dear Quelch——"

"Oh! Ah! Certainly——"

"Perhaps you will give me your opinion on this passage. Both Hermann and Dindorf agree upon 'pelo-men,' but in my opinion——"

That was enough!

Two elderly heads were bent together over Aeschylus. And all was calm.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Bargain in Hats!

"MAULY!"
Groan!
"What's the matter, Mauly?"
"You!"

(Continued on next page.)



Our cricket specialist is absolutely in his element solving knotty cricket problems for "Magnetites." When in doubt write to "UMPIRE," c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Then watch out for his reply in this paper.

THIS week I am going to talk, by way of a start, about making the ball "turn"—that is about the bowling of off-breaks and leg-breaks. I know from my letter-bag that a lot of young cricketers will be interested to know how it is done. I have several letters on my desk at the moment asking for information about break bowling. Some lads want to know how to bowl off-breaks, and others how to bowl leg-breaks, while two or three ask for information on both sorts of break bowling.

There is very real delight in making the ball turn at will. That is obvious. But just before I begin to tell you how it is done, let me give a general note of warning.

Don't think that the secret of successful break bowling lies in the amount of "turn" which you can give to the ball.

Only the other day I met a young bowler who proudly stated that he could make the ball turn a yard. I thought this a bit of an exaggeration, but in any case, what is the good of making the ball turn a yard? Very little, I should say.

THE LEG-BREAK.

THE object of making the ball turn is merely to beat the bat, or sufficiently to get the batsman making what proves to be a miss-hit. A "turn" of a few inches is quite enough to accomplish this objective. To put it in another way, it is practically sufficient, for the purposes of most spin bowling, to be able to turn the ball the width of the stumps; that is, the ball dropped on the leg stump turning just so much that it will take the off stump if not played, or, in the case of an off-break, turning so that, pitched on or just outside the off stump, it will hit the leg stump.

I suppose you understand quite clearly what are leg-breaks and what are off-breaks. But perhaps I had better set down again just what these terms mean. The leg-break is the one which breaks from the batsman's legs towards the off. The off-break is the ball which breaks from the off towards the batsman's legs.

Now we will take the bowling of leg-breaks first—by the right-handed bowler, of course. First of all, bear in mind that

the ball must be held by the fingers, and not in the hand.

The ball for the leg-break is really held by the thumb and the first three fingers. Place the first finger along the edge of the seam of the ball, with the thumb-nail close up to the second joint of the first finger. The second finger comes naturally on the other side of the seam, and the third finger is almost underneath the ball. The spin is imparted, mostly by the first and third fingers. At the moment of delivery impart this spin and accentuate it by turning the wrist over from right to left.

I hope that is clear. Make the leg stump your aim in leg-break bowling.

THE OFF-BREAK.

FOR the off-break the grip is very similar, and again the spin is imparted by the first and third fingers. But the essential difference, of course, between the leg-break and the off-break is that at the moment of delivery of the off-break the wrist is turned over from left to right—that is, away from the body of the bowler. On, or just a little outside the off stump, is the point at which the off-break bowler should aim.

The spin bowlers who are dropping the ball outside the line of the stumps frequently find themselves up against a batsman who is covering up the wickets with his legs. He can do that to the ball which is not pitched on the wicket without being out leg before.

The bowler who finds a batsman doing this should lure the batsman to his doom in this fashion. Bowl a few with a decided break; then bowl one, with what seems the same action, pitched on the wicket. But don't spin this one at all.

In the course of every season Freeman, the leg-break bowler of Kent, gets dozens of "leg before wicket" victims with this ball which goes straight: that is, which doesn't turn at all. The batsmen cover up with their legs, play for the break, and find out too late that the

break isn't there. That's enough of break bowling for this week.

THE "DEAD BALL" RULE.

NOW for some more questions on the "laws" side of the game. A Norwood reader wants to know if the batsman can be given out—on appeal—if he plays with the wrong side of the bat. There are a lot of people who think this is an offence against the laws of cricket, but it isn't.

There is nothing in the rule book which lays it down how the bat shall be used. The batsman can play with the wrong side of the bat if he likes; he can play holding the blade, with the handle to the ground.

But the wise batsman remembers that the blade of the bat was made to hit the ball: not the rounded back.

There are a number of misconceptions as to how a batsman may be out. For instance, a reader, playing in a match the other day, snicked the ball with the bat, and it went into the tops of his pads, lodging there. The wicket-keeper immediately ran round, picked the ball out of the top of the pads, and claimed for out, as the ball, after hitting the bat, had not touched the ground. This player was not out. The rule-book lays it down very clearly that when the ball lodges in any part of the batsman's clothing it is automatically "dead."

On the other hand, the dead ball rule when the ball lodges in the clothing, does not apply to the fielders. If the ball, having been snicked by the batsman, hits the wicket-keeper on the higher part of the leg, and drops into the top of his pads, lodging there, then the batsman is out, caught behind the wicket.

In an earlier article I explained that the bowler can run out the batsman at his end who is backing up too energetically: that is, leaving his crease before the ball is delivered. Now there comes another question on this point. Suppose the bowler, seeing the batsman backing up thus, throws the ball at the wicket in the attempt to run the batsman out, misses the wicket, and runs are scored. How do those runs count? The answer is as no-balls.

There are also two questions concerning successive overs by the same bowler which can be answered in a few words.

It is not permissible, in any circumstances, for the same bowler to bowl two successive overs in one innings. But if a bowler finishes off his opponents' innings, and those opponents follow on, then the bowler who finished off the first innings can bowl the first over of the second innings.

By the way, if "P.M." (of Cosham) will send me his full name and address I shall be pleased to reply to him personally.

"UMPIRE."

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"Oh, really, you silly ass!" exclaimed Billy Bunter. He blinked into Study No. 12 from the doorway.

Lord Mauleverer was extended on his expensive and comfortable sofa. He had not yet done some lines he had on hand for Quelch, and he had gone to his study to write them. He had not started yet. Judging by appearances, he was not in a hurry to start. It was a warm day in July, and his lordship was, perhaps, feeling tired. Perhaps he was still feeling the effects of his exertions the day before, in thrashing Mr. Hinks.

"I say, Mauly——"

"Go away, Bunter!" said Lord Mauleverer plaintively. "Shut the door after you, there's a good porpoise."

"Will you lend me——"

"Stony!" grinned Mauly. "Absolutely pipped till I get a letter from nunky."

"Your Latin dictionary," continued Bunter.

"Eh?" Lord Mauleverer almost sat up in his surprise. "Did you say a Latin die?"

"Yes, old chap. Mine's got the covers off. I had to use them when I was cooking sosses the other day, and there's jam and ink on it, and——"

Mauleverer stared at the fat Owl. Even in the state Bunter described, there seemed no reason why he should not use his own Latin dictionary, if he wanted it for the usual use of a die.

"Yours is almost new, you know," said Bunter. "You had a new one this term. Lend it to me, will you?"

"Can't!"

"Why not, fathead!" demanded Bunter warmly. "I suppose you can trust me with a dictionary! I'll let you have it back to-morrow."

"I shall want it in prep this evenin', fathead."

"Well, this evening, then," said Bunter. "My postal order's pretty certain to come this afternoon——"

"What the dooce has your postal order to do with it?"

"Oh, nothing! Lend me the die, old chap."

"Can't, I tell you! It's under the cushion, under my head," explained Lord Mauleverer.

"I'll pull it out——"

"I shall kick you if you do!"

"Beast! I mean, look here, old chap, suppose you lend me that clock? That's a decent little bronze clock on the mantelpiece. Can I borrow it?"

"Good gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer. "Can you use a clock instead of a dictionary?"

"Oh, yes; that's all right. Fishy——"

"What about Fishy?"

"Oh, nothing! Will you lend me that clock, Mauly?"

"You fat brigand!" said Lord Mauleverer, sitting up. "I think I tumble now. Buzz off!"

Mauleverer was not a suspicious fellow. He was quite the reverse of suspicious. But he was acquainted with the manners and customs of William George Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish, the enterprising merchant of the Remove, was always ready to buy anything from anybody—on condition that he got it for about a tenth part of its value. Evidently Bunter wanted to raise the wind, and Fishy, keen business man as he was, certainly would not have looked at Bunter's Latin die, or Bunter's clock. A dictionary with the covers off and a clock that wouldn't go would not have appealed

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to Fishy at all. Hence Bunter's visit to Study No. 12.

"I say, Mauly, don't be a rotter, you know," urged Bunter. "I hope you don't think I was going to sell Fishy your die. Besides, I can get it back when my postal order comes. See?"

"Shut the door after you."

"Well, look here, old chap, what about this inkstand——"

"If I have to get up off this sofa," said Lord Mauleverer, "I shall jolly well kick you, Bunter! I shan't take all the trouble for nothin'!"

"I say, old chap, do lend me something," said Bunter. "I've offered Fishy my pocket-knife, and he says it's no good because both blades are broken and the handle chipped. He wouldn't look at a cricket-bat I offered him, because it's Toddy's——"

"Oh gad——"

"And he's refused to give sixpence for my 'Holiday Annual' because Wharton's name is written in it."

"Oh gad!"

"What about this straw hat, Mauly? You had a new straw sent down from Courtfield. You don't want two hats."

Lord Mauleverer grunted.

"You fat villain! That was a jolly good hat, but you borrowed it a fortnight ago, and I got it back dented and jammy. And then that tramp grabbed it yesterday and left grubby marks all over it. Between you you've ruined it. It's no good now."

"Well, it could be cleaned, and it's a jolly good hat, really," said Bunter. "Fishy will buy anything he can make a profit on. Some fellows might be jolly glad to have that hat and save ten-and-six, some day. Can I have it?"

"Oh, yaas!"

"Of course, I shall hand you what I get for it from Fishy, Mauly—I mean when my postal order comes. You won't mind waiting till then, will you?"

"I shall have forgotten all about it by the time I'm ninety."

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter took the straw hat from the table and rolled out of the study. Lord Mauleverer, glad to have got rid of him on such reasonable terms, sank back on the sofa and resumed thinking of doing his lines. That was as far as Mauly got with the lines that afternoon.

The Owl of the Remove rolled along the passage with the hat. He removed Mauleverer's name from it and rolled into Study No. 14. Fisher T. Fish was there deep in accounts. He waved an impatient pen at Bunter.

"Beat it!" said Fishy tersely. "Absquatulate! Hit the horizon!"

"I say, Fishy——"

"Nothing to lend! Vamoose!"

"I say, old chap, I thought you might like this hat," said Bunter. "You're too jolly mean to buy a straw hat for yourself——"

"Eh?"

"I mean this is a jolly good hat, and cost thirty shillings. I'm going to sell it for seven-and-six."

"Are you?" said Fisher T. Fish. "I surely hope you'll get it! Take it along to the galoot you're going to sell it to."

"I mean five bob——"

"You don't mean a shilling?"

"No," roared Bunter, "I don't!"

"Take it away and bury it, then!"

"Look here, Fishy——"

"I guess there's another side to that door, buddy! Get on the other side—and right smart!"

"Did you say eighteenpence, Fishy?"

"I guess I said a bob."

"Beast!"

Bunter laid the straw hat on the table. Fisher T. Fish handed over a shilling,

and the fat Owl rolled away. Fisher T. Fish took up the hat and examined it with a satisfied eye. There are straw hats, and straw hats, and Lord Mauleverer's headgear was rather good and expensive. Certainly the unclean paws of Harold Hinks had left traces on it—which had caused Mauly to order a new hat from Parkins, in Courtfield. But, as Bunter had said, it could be cleaned, and it was undoubtedly a very good hat.

Most of the Greyfriars fellows sported straw boaters in the summer, but to Fisher T. Fish that had seemed an unnecessary expenditure—it gave Fishy a pain to part with money, even for value received. So this was really a good stroke of business for Fishy. Until he could find some fellow in want of a straw hat, and willing to give anything up to ten shillings for it, he was going to wear it himself.

"I guess this is the bee's knee!" remarked Fisher T. Fish, and, with a satisfied grin on his bony face, he resumed his abstruse accounts.

Billy Bunter, in the school shop, proceeded to consume jam tarts to the exact value of one shilling. That was all Bunter had to tide him over till Lord Mauleverer should receive a remittance.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Nothing for Bunter!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH came out of the House on Wednesday afternoon with a rather discontented expression on his hard face. Tom Redwing, who was with him, looked cheery, as usual, but the Bounder was evidently dissatisfied.

Harry Wharton & Co. were talking in a group near the House steps, and they had cheery faces—as was natural on a bright summer's afternoon, which was also a half-holiday, with a cricket match to come.

Billy Bunter, leaning on the stone balustrade, was watching the doorway, a good deal like a terrier watching a rat-hole. Bunter also looked bright—though he was not thinking of cricket. Lord Mauleverer had had a letter from home that morning!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Time to change, Smithy, old bean!" called out Bob Cherry. The Famous Five were in flannels.

Vernon-Smith shook his head.

"You won't want me, Wharton," he said. "You can play the Fourth without me."

"Oh, right-ho?" answered the captain of the Remove. "I'll ask another man if you like. But it's ripping for cricket to-day, Smithy!"

"I know, but I've something else on."

"Quelch has an eye on you, Smithy," remarked Johnny Bull dryly. "The Cross Keys ain't a safe place for you just now."

"You silly ass, I'm going down Courtfield way——"

"You're jolly well not!" interjected Billy Bunter warmly.

The Bounder stared round at him.

"You blithering bloater, what the dickens do you mean?" he exclaimed.

"I mean what I jolly well say!" answered Bunter hotly. "Rotten, I call it—disgusting, in fact!" And the fat Owl of the Remove gave Smithy a scornful blink through his big spectacles.

"Is that fat idiot potty?" asked the Bounder.

"Think I don't know your game?" sneered Bunter. "I'm waiting here for Mauly myself."



Mr. Quelch peered out of the window and fixed his eyes on the Bounder. "Vernon-Smith!" he snapped. "You have a hundred-pound note in your possession, I heard you ask these boys to change it." "Oh, no, sir," said the Bounder, calmly. "I was speaking of a pound note, and I wanted it changed." "If you still deny it," said the Form master curtly, "I require you to show me the letter you received from Mr. Vernon-Smith."

"Mauly?" repeated the Bounder blankly.

"I'm going to the bank with Mauly," said Bunter with emphasis, "and you're not wanted, Smithy! Mauly prefers a friend to go with him. I'm going to take care that he doesn't lose the money. And I can tell you that I'm not going to see him sponged on! See?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Sickening, I call it, the way fellows stick on to Mauly for his money!" said Bunter. "I'm jolly well not going to see him plundered, I can tell you! I call it rotten! You can jolly well play cricket, Smithy! See? You're not going to Courtfield with Mauly! He doesn't want you!"

Vernon-Smith looked at Bunter. Evidently the fat Owl was hooking on to Lord Mauleverer that afternoon for his visit to the bank at Courtfield, and suspected that other fellows had the same object in view. Smithy really was not the man to "touch" any fellow for cash; generally he had rather too much of his own. But William George Bunter had a way of judging other fellows by himself, and he was very uneasy lest some rival in the field should capture the gilded youth.

"You fat, fozzling, frabjous freak!" said the Bounder. "I'm going down to Courtfield—"

"You're jolly well going to keep clear—"

"Because my father asked me to have a look over the common for that dashed banknote he lost a fortnight ago—"

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five.

"But before I go I'll jolly well bang your fat head for your check, you frabjous frump!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Hold on, Smithy!" exclaimed Redwing hastily, as the angry Bounder grasped Billy Bunter by the collar.

"Rats!"

"I say, you fellows— Yaroooooh! Leggo, beast!" roared Bunter, as the Bounder tapped his bullet-head on the hard, unsympathetic stone. "Whoop! Leggo! Yaroooooh!"

Bang, bang, bang!

The Bounder was already in an irritable temper at the prospect of cutting cricket to wander over Courtfield Common looking for the lost banknote—a task which was rather like that of hunting for a needle in a haystack. It was like the Bounder to carry out his father's request, but in a discontented temper. Bunter's fatuous suspicion that he was "after" Lord Mauleverer's remittance added to his irritation, and he banged the fat Owl's head without mercy. Bunter's roars rang far and wide, and Redwing and the Famous Five all started towards Vernon-Smith at once to intervene. Bunter was, no doubt, an annoying ass, but there was a limit, and when Smithy let his temper go he often let it go too far.

But before the juniors could intervene, a tall and angular figure appeared in the doorway, and a pair of gimlet-eyes fixed on the Bounder.

"Vernon-Smith!"

"Oh!" Smithy released Bunter, as if the fat Owl had become suddenly red-hot, at the sound of his Form master's voice. "Yes, sir?"

"Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter.

"I have before had occasion to speak

to you, Vernon-Smith, for this reckless and brutal indulgence of your temper," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Go to the Form-room! You are detained for this half-holiday."

The Bounder breathed hard and deep. The day before he had scored over Quelch, with his usual reckless disregard of consequences. Now he was getting the consequences. Really, scoring over beaks was not a safe game.

"Follow me!" said Mr. Quelch.

And the Bounder, with a brow like a thundercloud, followed him into the House.

"Poor old Smithy!" said Bob Cherry. "He's the man to ask for it, and no mistake! Quelch hasn't forgotten having his leg pulled."

"You'd better get into your flannels, Reddy, and help us beat the Fourth," said Harry Wharton.

And Redwing nodded and went in to change.

Billy Bunter sat on the balustrade rubbing his damaged head, and grunting. The hapless Bounder sat at a Latin task in the Form-room; and the other fellows went down to cricket. Bunter ceased to rub his head and to grunt when the elegant figure of Lord Mauleverer emerged from the House. He jumped up quite actively.

"Ready, old chap?" he asked.

"Eh?"

"I'm coming with you, old fellow."

"Oh dear!"

"You'll want a pal with you, old fellow, in case that tramp's hanging about," said Bunter. "Come on, Mauly, what are you looking so worried about? You were looking quite bright a minute ago."

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(Continued from page 13.)

Lord Mauleverer grinned faintly. Without replying, he walked away to the gates, and Billy Bunter rolled along by his side. Bunter, evidently, was sticking to him that afternoon—and nothing short of a kicking would have made Bunter come unstuck. Mauly was too good-natured to kick Bunter—or even to tell him to go and eat coke! With his usual long-suffering patience, he submitted to Bunter's fascinating society.

It was rather a long walk across the common to Courtfield, not a walk that Bunter would have willingly undertaken in any other circumstances. But when a fellow was going to the bank to cash a cheque, Bunter was the fellow to go with him, if his little fat legs almost dropped off. By the time they walked into Courtfield, Bunter was almost at his last gasp.

"Lucky the bank's just opposite the bun-shop, Mauly!" he gasped, as he grunted his way along the High Street by the side of the elegant youth.

"Eh, why?" asked Mauly.

"I'm hungry, old chap!"

"Oh!"

"We'll drop in at the bun-shop, as soon as you've got the money from the bank," said Bunter cheerfully. "Might have a bit of a spread, what? The fact is, I was going to ask you to a spread at the bun-shop, Mauly, if my postal order had come. Somehow, it hasn't! But you can ask me instead—it comes to the same thing, really—between pals, what?"

"Oh gad!" said Mauly.

They arrived at the door of the Courtfield Bank, and Mauleverer went in at the swing doors. While he was gone, Bunter crossed over to the bun-shop opposite and gazed in at the window. The sight of a youngster partaking of good things from a bag made Bunter feel more hungry than ever, and he turned out the linings of his pockets in search of coin. But, alas!—he was broke to the wide! He consoled himself, however, with the fact that Mauly would not be long, and gazed once more at the good things in the window—which he was soon going to sample.

It was worth while fagging across the common with that ass Mauly for such a spread as Bunter was going to have! And with pounds and pounds in his pocket, Mauly could hardly refuse to stand a taxi home. The thought of walking back across the common in the blaze of the July sun made Bunter shudder. But that was all right—once Mauly had cashed his uncle's cheque at the bank.

The swing doors swung again; Mauleverer emerged. He had been hardly a couple of minutes in the bank.

"Got it all right, old chap?" gasped Bunter.

"No!"

"Eh? Haven't you cashed the cheque?"

"No!"

"Why not?"

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"Forgot to bring it with me!"

"Wha-a-t?" stuttered Bunter.

"Left it in my study," explained Lord Mauleverer calmly. "You see, I changed my jacket before I came out—"

"You—you—"

"And the cheque was in the pocket—"

"Oh lor'!"

"So it was left behind—"

"Oh crikey!"

"I shall have to come along again on Saturday—"

"Oh scissors!"

"But we've had a nice walk—and we shall have a nice walk back! Lovely weather for walkin'," said Lord Mauleverer. "Come on, Bunter."

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

Lord Mauleverer sauntered down the street towards the road over the common. Billy Bunter did not "come on." Billy Bunter sat down on the bank steps and groaned.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Got Him!

"IT'S like this 'ero!" said Harold Hinks.

Mr. Hinks, dusty as ever, sat under a shady tree on Courtfield Common, sucking an empty pipe and occasionally caressing a black eye. Mr. Hinks' face, never attractive, looked less attractive than ever since his encounter with Lord Mauleverer a couple of days ago. One of his eyes was quite black. His nose, always red owing to Mr. Hinks' enthusiastic support of the drink traffic, was redder than was its wont, and badly swollen. Nobody, looking at Harold, would have considered him a thing of beauty or a joy for ever.

His companion was as dusty as Mr. Hinks, as patched, and as untidy. He thoughtfully chewed a blade of grass as he listened to Harold.

"Like this 'ere," said Harold. "About a couple of weeks ago, I spots a stout old toff walking on this 'ere common. He sits down and goes over papers, and lets a banknote blow away; and you know me well enough, George 'Arris, to guess what I done."

"You was on it like a bird!" said Mr. Harris.

"I cops it; and mizzles," said Harold, "and I'm telling you, George, that it was a 'undred-pound note!"

"Coo!" said George.

"It was jest 'orrible luck that I was copped by a gang of schoolboys," went on Hinks. "It turns out that the stout old toff was the father of a kid at Greyfriars School—name of Vernon-Smith, as I 'ear since. Five young fellers belonging to that school—I dunno their names, 'cept one was called Wharton—was coming along to meet 'im, as I figure it out. Anyhow, they got arter me on bikes, and what could a cove do? It was a three-months stretch if I was copped with the flimsy on me."

"You never throwed away a 'undred pounds!" exclaimed Mr. Harris.

"I'm telling you wot 'appened," said Harold. "I couldn't get away from them on their bikes; and I thought of 'iding the note in some oaks—and then I come on a fat young cove in barnacles, fast asleep under them trees. Name of Bunter, as I 'eard arter. Wot do you think I did?"

"Tell a bloke!" answered Mr. Harris.

"He had a straw 'at," said Mr. Hinks. "It had fallen off his 'ead while he was a-snoring! I stuck that banknote under the lining inside the 'at, and put it on his 'ead, 'im asleep all the time."

"Coo!" said Mr. Harris in great admiration. "That was good."

"Then I woke 'im up," resumed Mr.

Hinks, "and him being there with the 'at on his 'ead, they collared me, but they never thought of looking for that banknote where I put it. 'Ow could they?"

"Course they couldn't!" agreed Mr. Harris.

"Well, arter that, I thinks that all I got to do is to watch for that fat young cove in barnacles outside his school and grab his 'at!" said Mr. Hinks. "Course, he'd never find that note—he'd never be lookin' under the linin' of his 'at! All I had to do was to snaffle the 'at."

"Easy enough!" said Mr. Harris.

"Not so easy as you think, George 'Arris. Time after time, I got arter that cove and snatched his 'at," said Mr. Hinks, "and there was never any banknote in it—and at last I got him and made him jaw! And what do you think? It turned out that he'd been wearin' a borrowed 'at the day I stuck the banknote into it."

"Coo!" said Mr. Harris.

"I got the name from 'im," went on Mr. Hinks. "Name of Mauleverer—a blooming lord, accordin' to 'im. Well, I'd found out that the banknote wasn't in Bunter's 'at at all, but in Mauleverer's; but, of course, I never knowed which was Mauleverer among a 'undred young rips at the school. So I thinks it out, and I goes up to the school Monday with a yarn that I'd found a book with the name of Mauleverer in it. Mauleverer comes to the gate to speak to me, and I grabs his 'at and bolts."

"The right 'at at last?" said Mr. Harris.

"Jest that—but—" Mr. Hinks tapped his black eye sadly. "That young villain gets arter me, and I gives him a wipe—and instead of running away as a man would expect, he pitches into me, and gives me such a 'iding as I ain't 'ad since that farmer in Surrey ketches me pinchin' his chickens. Look at my eye!"

"Coo!" said Mr. Harris.

"Wust of it was, he got the 'at back," said Mr. Hinks. "Never knowin', of course, that there was a 'undred-pound note tucked under the linin', and that that was what a bloke wanted. I was on the right mark at last—and all I got was a 'orrible 'iding! That's why I'm taking you into this 'ero game, George 'Arris! I don't want another wallop from that fierce young cove. But the two of us can 'andle 'im, when we cops him outside his school. What?"

"Easy!" said Mr. Harris.

"It's a 'oliday at the school to-day, and I shouldn't wonder if we spots him somewhere about. I'd know him agin, of course, having once seen him. Likewise, I dessay he's still got my mark on his nose where I 'it him. The two of us will 'ave his 'at off of him, George 'Arris, if we cops him on his lonesome, what?"

"I know a cove in the racing line will take the note off'n our 'ands," said Mr. Harris thoughtfully. "We go halves, 'Auld."

"Blow me pink!" ejaculated Mr. Hinks, staring up the road towards Courtfield. A slim and elegant school-boy, in a straw hat, was sauntering down the road. "If that ain't 'im!"

Mr. Harris half-rose, and stared round.

"That young Mauleverer?"

"That very cove!" said Harold Hinks. "And blow me blue and yellow if he ain't got his straw 'at on! This, George 'Arris, is luck! Walkin' fair into our 'ands!"

The two dusty gentlemen stared curiously at Lord Mauleverer. Sauntering down the sunny road at a very leisurely pace, his lordship looked calm

and cheerful, and at peace with the world. He was not in the least disturbed by the fact that he had forgotten to take his cheque to the bank, and was still "stony"—though Billy Bunter was feeling it deeply. In fact, that little error of his lordship's had its agreeable side, for it had deprived him of Bunter's company on the walk home. Billy Bunter was still resting in Courtfield, unable yet to make up his fat mind to start on those weary miles.

Mauleverer did not notice the two tattered, dusty figures sprawling under the trees a little off the road. And, having spotted his lordship, Hinks and Harris squatted closer into cover to avoid his eye.

They waited eagerly for him to draw level.

Once or twice a car hummed by on the road, but there were no foot passengers near at hand. It was a really glorious opportunity for Mr. Hinks at last.

"Wait till he comes up, George," whispered Hinks, "and then foller me, and nab him sudden."

"Wot-ho!" said Mr. Harris.

"Get him behind these 'ere trees, and nobody will see anything from the road, if anybody comes along. It won't take two ticks!"

"I get you, Harold!"

They waited! The elegant figure of the schoolboy earl came slowly, very slowly, along the grassy belt by the side of the road. As if to aid the two watching rascals in their design, Lord Mauleverer paused, when he reached the clump of trees, and stepped under the shade. He was thinking of taking a little rest in that shady spot.

Hinks and Harris exchanged a blissful glance. They could not have asked for anything easier than this.

Standing under the trees, Lord Mauleverer gently fanned himself with his new straw hat. Behind him, the two tramps crept from cover.

They made no sound. They stole on Mauleverer from behind, as cautiously as they were wont to steal upon a hen-roost.

With a sudden spring, they jumped on him, grabbed him by either arm, and yanked him backwards.

"Great gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer, taken completely by surprise.

He went down with a bump on his back in the grass. But he did not remain there. Almost in a twinkling, he was dragged along through the trees, out of sight of the road.

"Pin' him, George!" gasped Hinks.

"I got 'im!" answered Mr. Harris, planting a dusty and patched knee on Lord Mauleverer's chest.

His eyes blazing with greed and excitement, Harold Hinks grasped the straw hat. He tore out the interior lining. And then he gave an infuriated howl. There was nothing under the lining!

struggle, unless a struggle was absolutely essential. And—owing to his little error about the cheque—he had no money on him, and that, he supposed, naturally, was what the two rascals were after.

"You keep still—see?" grunted Harris, displaying a set of grubby knuckles over Mauly's upturned face.

"Certainly, dear man," answered his lordship amiably. "May I ask you to go easy with that knee of yours—it's rather bony, and you're rumplin' my waistcoat."

"Blow me pink!" said Harold Hinks. "Blow me pink and yaller! This ain't the 'at!"

"Not the 'at!" exclaimed Harris.

"No—this is a blooming noo 'at!"

Lord Mauleverer gazed at Hinks. He recognised him as the man who had snatched Bunter's hats, and snatched his hat. Hinks, apparently, was at his hat-snatching game again. It was really mysterious to a fellow who had not the faintest idea that a stolen banknote was hidden under the lining of the hat Bunter had worn on the day of Mr. Vernon-Smith's visit.

"Mind how you handle that hat, my good fellow!" murmured his lordship. "I've got to wear it, you know. You've spoiled one for me already!"

"Spoiled one for you, blow you?" said Mr. Hinks, staring down at him with a very ugly expression on his stubbly face.

"Yaas! You grabbed my hat on Monday, you know, and left the marks of your paws on it. I had to get a new one."

(Continued on next page.)

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Mauly is Mystified!

LORD MAULEVERER blinked up at the two tramps.

He made one effort to remove George Harris' knee from his waistcoat, and failed. Then he took it calmly. It was really too hot to

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"Oh, my eye!" groaned Hinks. He understood now why Mauly was not wearing the hundred-pound hat.

He flung down Mauly's new straw savagely. It was a new and handsome hat, but Mr. Hinks had no use for it.

"Look 'ere—" he began.

"I'm lookin', dear man," said Lord Mauleverer placidly. "I shall know you again, Mr. Pinks—I think your name is Pinks—or is it Winks? I suppose you know that you can be locked up for this?"

Hinks eyed him savagely.

He did not want Mauly's new hat! He wanted Mauly's old hat! He wanted to know where that old hat was—and at the same time it was strictly necessary not to let Mauly guess why. It was a delicate situation that required all Harold's diplomacy.

"Now, look 'ere, sir!" he said. "This 'ere is a noo 'at, and I don't want it! A old 'at will do for me! Where's your 'old 'at?"

Lord Mauleverer gazed at him. He could hardly believe that the explanation of Hinks' extraordinary proceedings was, that he wanted a straw hat for his own use. Boater straws, once quite out of fashion, had come back into fashion again, it was true; but it seemed improbable that a man like Hinks was much concerned about fashions.

Moreover, a schoolboy's hat was hardly roomy enough for Hinks' tousled head. It was really difficult to understand Mr. Hinks at all. The easiest theory was that he was a lunatic with a mania for hat-snatching. But that was not the case. Moreover, there were two of them in the game now, and it was really impossible to suppose that there were two lunatics with the same mania! The whole thing was a problem.

"Where's your old 'at?" repeated Hinks.

"My dear man—"

"I'll tell you what, sir!" said Mr. Hinks. "I dessay a rich young cove like you has thrown away his old 'at, buying a noo one! Well, jest give a bloke the tip, and you tell me where to pick up that old 'at, and you can 'ave your noo one back, and welcome!"

"That," said Lord Mauleverer, "is a good offer, and I'd be glad to accept it; but—I didn't throw the old hat away! I gave it away!"

Harold Hinks could have groaned. First he had chased Bunter for the hundred-pound hat, only to learn, at long last, that it belonged to Lord Mauleverer. Now he had got hold of Mauleverer, only to learn that the wretched hat had passed into possession of a third party! That third party was now Hinks' game—and he did not even know who it was! He had to learn! It began to seem to the worried Mr. Hinks that he was fated to chase that unattainable hat like a will-o'-the-wisp, or like a rainbow on the horizon.

"You give it away?" he repeated. "I—I—I sees! Some other bloke has got it now?"

"As you observe, some other bloke has got it!" assented Lord Mauleverer politely.

"And 'oo did you give it to?"

"Chap named Bunter."

"Fat young cove in barnacles?" asked Mr. Hinks eagerly.

Lord Mauleverer grinned.

"An exact, if not elegant, description," he answered. "Sorry there's nothin' doin', Mr. Tinks, if you wanted my old hat! May a fellow inquire what on earth you wanted it for?"

Mr. Hinks had no intention of answering that question. He was done with Lord Mauleverer. It was Bunter once more, that he had to chase for the hundred-pound hat! He regarded

Mauly with a sour and calculating eye, considering whether to go through his pockets while he had the opportunity. But that meant that the local police would soon be hunting for Mr. Hinks, and he did not want trouble with the local police while he was tied down to the neighbourhood by his search for the hundred-pound hat.

He made a sign to Mr. Harris, who removed his knee from Lord Mauleverer's waistcoat.

Mauly rose to his feet and dusted his clothes. He was rather ruffled and dusty.

"If you've done with my hat—" he murmured politely.

Mr. Hinks, without a word, but with an evil eye, handed him the new straw boater. Lord Mauleverer sighed as he noted that there were grubby marks of Hinks' unwashed paws on the brim.

"No 'arm done, sir!" said Mr. Harris apologetically.

"Not at all!" said Mauly.

"Oh, 'ook it!" growled Mr. Hinks.

"I shall 'ook it, as you express it, with pleasure," answered Lord Mauleverer. "But if you'll excuse my curiosity, I'm really interested to know why you want my old hat."

"'Ook it, afore you get a wipe!" grunted Mr. Hinks threateningly.

"You give me this 'ere black eye, and I'd give you one to take 'ome with you, only I don't want no trouble with the coppers. But you'd better 'ook it!"

"Good-afternoon, gentlemen!" said Lord Mauleverer, with undiminished politeness, and he walked out of the clump of trees and sauntered on his way to Greyfriars School.

"Sold!" said Mr. Harris, with a whistle. "Lucky he don't guess what you wanted the old 'at for, 'Arold!"

"'Ow could he guess?" grunted Hinks. "I dessay he can't make 'ead or tail of it. But he'll never guess what the game is. This 'ere is crool luck—jest crool luck! For the love of Mike, let's get along to Courtfield and 'ave a drink at the Red Cow."

"I could push one back," agreed Harris.

The two dusty and discontented rascals loafed along the sunny road towards Courtfield, only comforted by the prospect of quenching their thirst at the Red Cow. But all of a sudden Mr. Hinks grasped his companion's arm, with a startled gasp.

"It's 'im!"

"Eh?"

"Look!"

By the roadside ahead, a fat schoolboy, in spectacles that flashed back the rays of the sun, was stopping at one of the wooden seats on the Courtfield road.

"The fat cove in barnacles!" hissed Mr. Hinks.

"Cool! Wot Luck!" said Mr. Harris. They broke into a run.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

On the Track!

BILLY BUNTER sank down on the wayside seat with a grunt of relief.

He was hot, and he was tired, and he was cross—very cross. He had walked to the bank in Courtfield—for nothing! There was no spread at the bunshop, there was no taxi back. There was nothing but a long, long trail for Bunter! Billy Bunter took that long trail on the instalment system, with frequent intervals for resting. He was taking his sixth or seventh rest when

Hinks and Harris spotted him and came running up.

Bunter, fanning himself with his hat, became suddenly aware of the two tramps. They sat down on either side of him.

He gave them one startled blink each and jumped up. A grasp on his fat arm sat him down again.

"Don't go!" grinned Harold Hinks. "Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He recognised the vagrant who had seemed to have a mania for snatching his hat. He had no doubt that Hinks was up to the same game again, though he could not begin to guess the man's motive.

"I—I—I say—" stammered Bunter.

"Shut it!" said Hinks, and he hooked away Bunter's straw hat. "'Old him, George!"

"You don't want 'im, 'Arold; it's his 'at you want," said George.

"'Ow do I know it's the right 'at? I've 'ad 'at after 'at off of that fat cove, and it wasn't never the right 'at! 'Old 'im while I squint at this 'ere goffer!"

"Orlright!" said Mr. Harris, and he held Bunter by a podgy arm. "You sit still, young 'un! Nobody's going to urteher, unless you kick!"

Mr. Hinks turned his back to Bunter and examined the lining of the fat Owl's hat. But he had had so many disappointments that he was hardly surprised to find nothing in this hat. It was not the one he wanted. Evidently, it was a new hat Bunter had obtained to replace the last one that Mr. Hinks had stolen and stamped on.

He turned back, and, to Bunter's relief and surprise, handed the straw boater back to him.

"That ain't it, George," he said. "Now, look here, young cove—your name's Bunter, ain't it? I 'ear the other coves a'calling of you Bunter."

"Y-yes," stammered Bunter.

"I ain't taking that 'at off of you," said Mr. Hinks. "Fact is, I'm looking for an old 'at. Almost any old 'at would do for me. You 'appen to 'ave one you don't want?"

"Eh? No?"

"Nobody give you an old 'at lately?" asked Mr. Hinks, leaning towards the scared Owl with jutting jaw and threatening eyes. "What?"

"Eh? No—yes. Mauly gave me his old hat yesterday!" gasped Bunter, amazed by Mr. Hinks' knowledge, and still more by his inquiry.

"Well, you ain't got it on," said Hinks. "What might you 'appen to 'ave done with that old 'at?"

"I—I sold it!" stammered Bunter.

"Well, blow me pink! 'Oo did you sell it too, if you come to that?"

"A—a fellow in my school—chap named Fish—"

"Fish? Bloke anything like you?"

"Eh? No; he's not good-looking."

"My eye!" gasped Mr. Hinks. "Well, if he was he wouldn't be much like you, and chance it! What's the covey like?"

Bunter blinked at the tramp. He could not help thinking that the mysterious hat-snatcher must be a little "batty." A man who snatched hats might be expected to snatch new ones, by choice. Mr. Hinks' interest, however, seemed to be concentrated on an old hat!

The Owl of the Remove was not quick on the uptake. But he understood that Hinks wanted that old hat of Mauly's, and no other hat! And he grinned at the idea of Fisher T. Fish having his hat snatched! That, Bunter thought, would serve Fishy jolly well right for



"Like some jam-tarts?" asked Vernon-Smith. "Yes, rather, old chap!" said Bunter joyfully. "Here you are, then!" Whiz! "Urrgh!" gasped the fat junior, as a juicy, jammy tart squashed on his fat little nose. "Ow! Groooh!"

his meanness, in giving only a "bob" for it. Certainly, Billy Bunter had no objection to Fishy's bargain in hats being snatched!

"Ow'd I know 'im?" demanded Hinks.

"Well, he's an American," said Bunter. "Talks through his nose—long, sharp nose, like a knife! Bony all over! Frightfully bony!"

Hinks and Harris exchanged a hopeful glance. There could not be many Americans at Greyfriars. It ought to be easy to pick out the man!

"Oh, he's an American, is he?" said Mr. Hinks. "Ow many Americans at your school?"

"Only Fishy."

Hinks and Harris exchanged another glance.

"I s'pose, being a 'arf'-oliday, that American gent might be out for a walk this artemoon?" said Mr. Hinks casually.

Billy Bunter grinned. He was not too obtuse to see that Mr. Hinks was after information, with a view to getting on the track of Fisher T. Fish. Bunter had no objection to giving that information. For one thing, he was anxious to get away from the tramps; for another, he thought it rather a jest for Fishy to have that hat snatched, if Hinks was going to snatch it. Losing an article for which he had given a shilling would cause Fisher T. Fish deep pangs in his transatlantic heart, and Billy Bunter considered that rather amusing!

"He's gone to Redclyffe," he answered. "You see, he's gone to the pictures. He got a ticket at half price off a chap who was hard up."

"Then mebbe he'll be coming back by the motor-bus?"

"No fear! He would have to pay his fare! He'll walk."

"And what time might he be coming back?"

"Well, there's a call-over at six for the Lower School. He will have to be back by then."

Hinks gave Harris a look, and the latter released Bunter's fat arm. The Owl of the Remove jumped up. He forgot that he was tired, in his anxiety to get clear of Messrs. Harris and Hinks.

"Ook it!" said Mr. Hinks briefly.

Bunter did not need telling. He started at a run, and his run did not slacken to a walk till he was out of sight of the tramps.

Mr. Hinks sucked thoughtfully at his empty pipe.

"We ain't getting that drink at the Red Cow yet, George," he said. "We got to cut across to Redclyffe."

"I could push one back!" sighed Mr. Harris. "But mebbe we'll 'ave time for one at Redclyffe," he added hopefully.

"Looks as if we're on the right mark at last," said Mr. Hinks. "We'll pick up that American cove at Redclyffe, and get his 'at off him. We'll spot 'im all right, and foller 'im to a safe place, and 'ave that 'at! And I tell you, George, this 'ere may be the last chance! They'll never guess what's in that 'at; but knowing that a bloke's arter that 'at special, they may get kind of curious about it, and if they 'appened to look under the lining inside—"

"Come on!" said Mr. Harris. Taking a short cut across the common

the two rascals slouched away, heading for the Redclyffe road.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter rolled on to Greyfriars. Still uneasy on the score of Mr. Hinks, he took no more rests en route. He rolled in tired and weary at the school gates, and plodded on to the House, where he came on a cheery group of fellows in flannels.

"I say, you fellows—"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Melting, old fat man?" chuckled Bob Cherry. "We've beaten the Fourth, if you're fearfully keen to know about it—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"
"By an innings and any number of runs," said Bob. "Duck's eggs have been cheap! Inky put up a double hat-trick."

"Well, of course, I knew you'd beat 'em, you fellows being such splendid cricketers!" said Bunter. "What about tea?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! If you fellows haven't had tea—"

Bunter blinked hopefully at the Famous Five.

"But we have!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Oh, I'm rather surprised at you beating the Fourth, a set of duds like you fellows! They must have played pretty rottenly."

"He, ha, ha!"
"Yah!"

Bunter rolled into the House and went up to Study No. 7. It was past tea-time, and Bunter had an aching void. Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were in the study—finishing tea! Bunter blinked at the table; it was bare.

"Anything in the cupboard, Toddy?" he asked hopefully.

"Lots of things!"

"Oh, good!"

Bunter rolled to the study cupboard. He blinked into it. He could discern nothing there of an edible nature.

"I say, Toddy, where's the grub?" he asked.

"Eh! There isn't any grub," answered Toddy.

"You—you—you beast!" roared Bunter. "You said there were lots of things in the cupboard."

"So there are. There's my tennis racket and a pair of shoes, and a bottle of gum, and—"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter was fearfully hungry. But even Bunter could not eat a tennis racket, a pair of shoes, or a bottle of gum!

He rolled out of Study No. 7. There was still time for tea in Hall; but tea in Hall was a last resource. The door of Study No. 4 was open, and from that open doorway the Bouncer's voice floated.

"Pass the jam, Reddy!"

Bunter rolled along to Study No. 4. Smithy and Redwing were at tea there—Redwing very cheery after the cricket, Smithy in a scowling state after detention. There were good things galore on the table, as there generally were in the Bouncer's study.

"I say, you fellows—"

Smithy turned a deadly eye on him. He owed a half-holiday's detention to Bunter! Billy Bunter had already forgotten that unimportant, trifling circumstance. The Bouncer hadn't!

"I haven't had my tea, you fellows!" said Bunter, blinking at the chums of Study No. 4 through his big spectacles.

"Like some jam tarts?" asked Smithy.

"Yes, rather, old chap!" said Bunter joyfully.

"Here you are!"

Whiz!

"Urrrh!" gasped Bunter, as a juicy, jammy tart squashed on his fat, little nose. "Ow! Grooogh!"

"And here's another!"

Whiz!

The second one landed in Bunter's ear.

Smithy was picking up a third! Bunter did not wait for the third. He bolted.

It was a dusty and rather sticky Bunter that limped into Hall to tea.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Fierce for Fishy!

FISHER T. FISH came out of the picture-house at Redclyffe, with a cheery and satisfied expression on his bony face.

Fishy was enjoying life in his own way.

He had had a nice, comfortable, reserved seat, and had seen an American crook film, packed with gangsters and guns, which reminded him pleasantly of his happy native land.

But his chief enjoyment had been derived from the fact that he had seen the show for next to nothing.

A fellow had booked that seat in advance, and, being in a hard-up state, had sold the ticket to Fishy—on Fishy's usual terms. It was pleasant to get an expensive seat at a very low price; and still more pleasant, to Fishy, to reflect that the fellow he had bought the ticket from must be feeling rather sore about it. That reflection gave his enjoyment a zest. Fishy would not have enjoyed his business bargains half so much if

he could not have left the other fellow feeling sore.

Fishy had another cause for satisfaction. He was wearing his new straw hat! It was as expensive a hat as any at Greyfriars; and, having been cleaned carefully, it looked almost as good as new. And it had cost Fishy only a bob, and Bunter was left feeling sore about it! It fitted to a hair—it was really a bargain in hats!

Altogether, Fisher T. Fish was feeling that life was worth living that sunny July afternoon.

A number of people were coming out of the picture-house—there was only one at Redclyffe—and among the idlers standing about were two rather dusty men, who watched the departing "fans" with keen eyes.

Fisher T. Fish did not notice them. But they noticed Fisher T. Fish. They were on the watch for a schoolboy wearing the Greyfriars colours; and Fishy was the only Greyfriars junior they had seen come out. His long, sharp nose and bony face bore out Bunter's description.

Mr. Hinks gave Mr. Harris a look, and came up to Fishy, touching his rag of a cap! He wanted to hear Fishy speak—to make sure!

"Call you a keb, sir?" asked Hinks.

"I guess not!" answered Fisher T. Fish, smiling at the idea.

He was going to walk back to Greyfriars, to save sixpence on the bus. He was not likely to spend money on taxicabs.

"Skuse me, sir, there's a keb just 'andy—"

"Nope!" answered Fisher T. Fish.

"P'raps you could 'elp a cove on his way, sir!" suggested Mr. Hinks.

"Aw, can it!" said Fisher T. Fish, staring at him, and then turning his back and walking away.

"It's 'im!" breathed Harold Hinks, in Mr. Harris' ear. "Talks through his blooming nose, just like the fat cove in barnacles let on. That's our bird."

"Coo!" murmured Mr. Harris.

The two tramps slouched down the street after Fisher T. Fish. Had he headed for the stopping-place of the motor-bus, Mr. Hinks would have taken the risk of snatching his hat—the hundred-pound hat—in Redclyffe High Street.

But Fisher T. Fish had no intention of spending money on bus fares. He walked out of the town, and after him slouched the two tramps. They knew that he was heading for Greyfriars, several miles distant, and there were plenty of solitary spots on the way, where it would be perfectly safe to close in on Fishy and annex his hat.

"I s'pose that's recly the 'at this time!" murmured Mr. Harris.

"Well, what would a cove buy a 'at for, except to stick it on his 'ead?" said Mr. Hinks. "And it looks like the 'at I got off young Mauleverer Monday. I fancy we're all right this time."

Fisher T. Fish walked on by the country road, and turned into the footpath through Redclyffe Wood. That footpath saved half the distance home—which suited Fisher T. Fish. It was a very lonely footpath—which suited Messrs. Hinks & Harris.

"Fair asking for it—what?" chuckled Mr. Hinks.

"I believe you!" grinned Mr. Harris.

And they slouched into the footpath in their turn. Ahead of them the bony figure of Fisher T. Fish was visible, walking quickly with jerky steps. Out of sight of the road the tramps quickened to a run. There was no need to waste more time; they had Fisher T. Fish where they wanted him now.

The American junior glanced back, at the sound of running feet. He gave a jump at the sight of the two dusty vagrants running him down.

"Jerusalem crickets!" ejaculated Fishy.

He remembered having seen those two in Redclyffe. Evidently they had followed him. Fisher T. Fish did not need telling why! Certainly it never crossed his mind, keen as it was, that they were after his bargain in hats! The thought of being robbed almost made Fishy turn cold.

Fisher T. Fish gave the tramps one startled stare and broke into a run. His long, bony legs covered the ground in good style, but Hinks and Harris had a good turn of speed also.

"Arter him!" panted Harold Hinks.

"We've got 'im!" breathed Harris.

They fairly raced.

"Oh, wake snakes and walk chalks!" groaned Fisher T. Fish, as the pounding feet on the grassy footpath drew closer and closer. "Great gophers! They'll get me—they'll sure get me! I'll say this is the elephant's side whiskers! Oh, great jumping frogs!"

He bolted on.

Glancing back over a bony shoulder, he saw Hinks and Harris running side by side quite near at hand, overhauling him hand-over-fist.

"Old on!" shouted Harris.

"Stop—blow yer!" panted Hinks.

Fisher T. Fish flew on. He had several pounds in his pockets, and his transatlantic heart would have been broken if he had lost it. Perspiration streamed down his bony face as he tore onward.

He looked back again. The running tramps were not three yards off. In the footpath ahead of Fishy an old man in gaiters appeared, standing and staring at him. It was old Mr. Joyce, the woodcutter. Mr. Joyce was on business in Redclyffe Woods, selecting trees for cutting during the following days; but he forgot business as he sighted Fisher T. Fish in frantic flight, with the tramps behind him. He stared.

It was rather unlucky that Fishy was looking back at the moment. He crashed into Mr. Joyce without seeing him and spun the old woodcutter over headlong.

"Oooogh!" gasped Joyce.

"Wake snakes!" gasped Fisher T. Fish, reeling from the shock.

But he bounded on again. The ancient gentleman sprawling on the ground was not much use for help in a scrap with the tramps, even if Fishy had been thinking of a scrap—which he certainly was not. He jumped over the sprawling woodcutter and ran on.

"Ooogh!" repeated Mr. Joyce dizzily.

He struggled up as Harris and Hinks came racing on. Both of them crashed into him together.

Once more Mr. Joyce sprawled, this time with all the breath knocked out of his ancient body. He sprawled and gurgled.

"Oh, my eye!" gasped Mr. Hinks, as he tottered over and landed. "Blow me pink! You hold himage you! Wow!"

"Coo!" gasped Mr. Harris, staggering against a tree.

"Urrrrugh!" came faintly from the old woodcutter.

"Kim on!" spluttered Hinks.

"I'm arter you!" gurgled Harris.

They staggered up and resumed the chase.

But Fisher T. Fish had gained a few moments. He had vanished ahead round a curve of the shady path.

(Continued on page 22.)

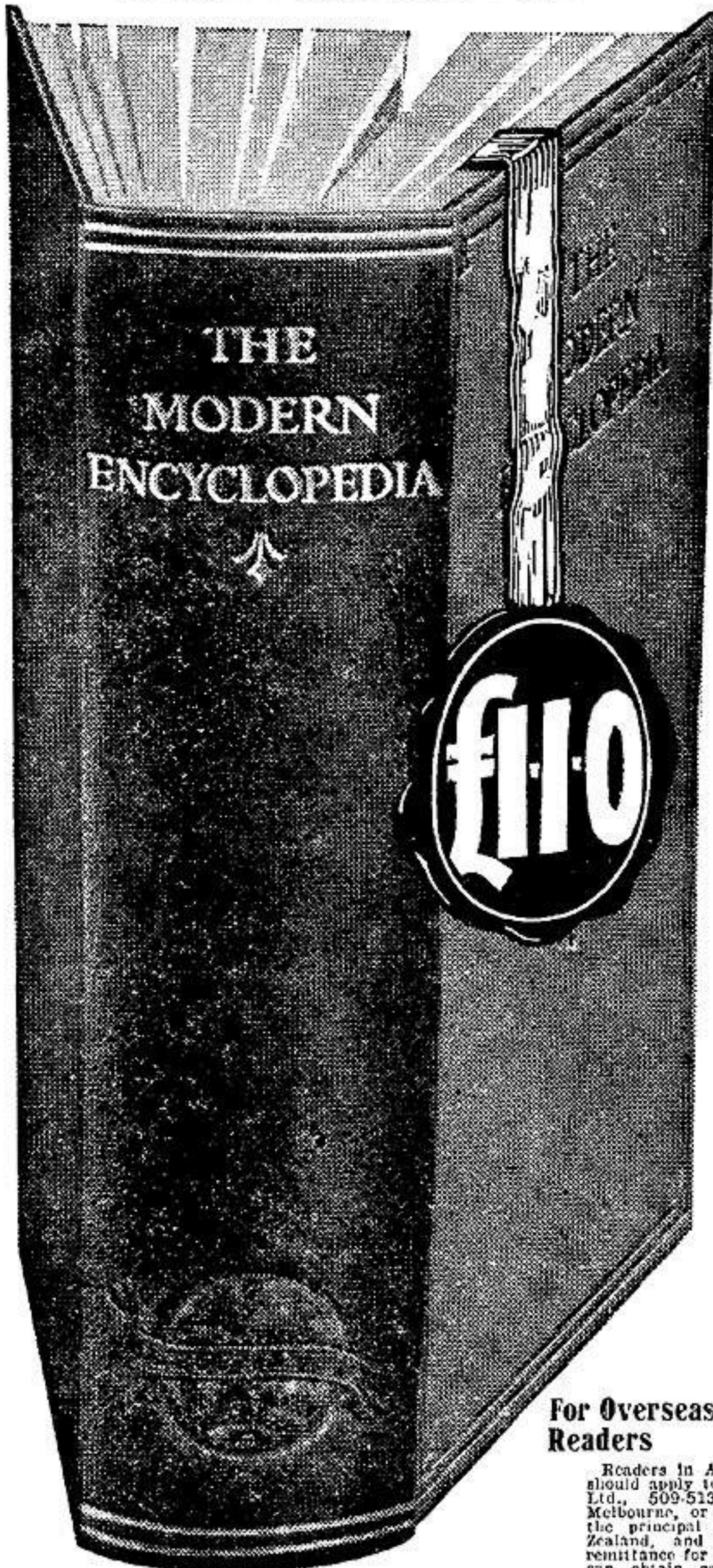
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BILLY BUNTER'S "HAT TRICK"!

(Continued from page 20.)

He looked back; for the moment the tramps were out of sight. Fishy had no hope now of outrunning them; he knew that if he kept on they would get him; there was a mile to run yet to get out of the wood. Leaving the footpath, Fishy dashed among the old oaks and beeches.

A minute later he heard the running feet go racing by. Harris and Hinks had passed on without being aware that he had quitted the path.

Fisher T. Fish pushed back his new straw hat and mopped his streaming brow. His face was crimson, his breath came in gurgles.

"Jerusalem crickets!" he groaned. "This is fierce—this is sure fierce! I'll say this is the grasshopper's moustache! Wow!"

He leaned on a tree a dozen feet from the footpath, gasping for breath. Ringing through the wood, a shout came to his ears.

"Old on, George! We've passed that cove!"

"Ow'd we pass him, Harold?"

"He's took to the trees! He ain't in sight ahead! Blow him pink, he's a dodging of us!"

"Coo!"

Tramping feet came back.

"Great gophers!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "This sure is fierce!"

He resumed his flight, threading his way among the trees. A yell from the rear announced that he was spotted.

"There's the cove, George! Put it on!"

"I'm arter you, 'Arold!"

Fisher T. Fish tore on desperately. He had gained a few minutes' rest, that was all. They were after him again, and gaining on him, their eyes fixed on the bony figure ahead flitting among the trees.

But deeper in the wood the trees grew more thickly, interspersed with brambles and hawthorn-bushes. Fisher T. Fish plunged recklessly into the thickets. He did not care for a few scratches so long as he dodged the footpads.

They lost sight of him now, but the rustling and brushing in the thickets guided them; they were chasing by ear now, instead of by eye, but they were sticking close and fast to the trail.

Gasping, panting, swimming in perspiration, Fisher T. Fish tore and stumbled and scrambled through clinging bushes. A hawthorn-branch caught his straw hat and jerked it from his head. He did not stop for it; he tore on regardless.

The hat dropped among the thickets, and Fisher T. Fish raced on hatless. It was the cash—the precious cash—in his pockets that Fishy was thinking of. Cash to Fishy was the beginning and end of all things—all that made life worth living. The loss of his hat was a mere trifle in comparison.

Hatless, panting, gurgling, Fisher T. Fish tore on. After him came tramping, rustling, brushing; slowly but surely the tramps were gaining on him. Little dreaming that he was hatless, and that they were leaving the hundred-pound hat behind them, Messrs. Harris and Hinks put all their beef into it.

But Fishy was game. No fellow would have liked to be robbed. But Fisher T. Fish would almost as soon have been knocked on the head. With an ache in every bone in his bony person, Fishy ran and ran and ran, scratched and torn, regardless of scratches and fears. No Greyfriars fellow would ever have

believed that Fisher Tarleton Fish was such a sprinter.

But there was a limit, and Fisher T. Fish reached the limit at last—though it was more than a quarter of a mile from the spot where he had lost his hat.

Reeling with fatigue, he heard the pursuing footsteps close behind. A hand grabbed his shoulder.

"Got 'im!"

"I believe you, 'Arold!"

Fishy was dragged to a halt. He was at his last gasp; he would have fallen but for the grasp of Harris and Hinks on his bony arms. He blinked at the two rascals through a mist of perspiration. And as they grasped him there was a simultaneous yell from both.

"Where's your 'at?"

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Foiled Again!

HAROLD HINKS glared at Fishy as if he could have bitten him. He grasped the American junior's arm till the bones almost cracked. His eyes glinted, and his jaw jutted.

"Where's your 'at?" he yelled.

"Eh?" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"What you done with that stror 'at?" shrieked Harris.

"Wha-a-at?"

Messrs. Harris and Hinks had naturally expected that when they bagged Fisher T. Fish they would find him hatted, as they had last seen him. It was quite a natural expectation, but there was nothing in it. He was hatless!

"Look 'ere—" panted Mr. Hinks.

"Ow! Leggo!" gasped Fishy. "You're twisting my arm, you piccan! Leggo!"

"I'll twist your neck if you don't let on what you done with that 'at!" roared Hinks.

Fisher T. Fish gazed at him blankly. The tramps were not going through his pockets; they did not seem to care what was in his pockets, or whether he had anything there or not. It was his hat they wanted—the hat that had flown off in the thickets a quarter of a mile back.

"Where's that 'at?"

"It—it blew off—it fell off! I've lost it!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "You—you can have it if you want it. It's somewhere—"

"Where?" shrieked Hinks.

"I dunno. Somewhere behind. It went off in the bushes somewhere—" spluttered Fishy.

"Blow me pink!"

"Coo!" gasped Harris.

A light was dawning on Fisher T. Fish now. He had never seen Mr. Hinks before, but he had, of course, heard of the mysterious hat-snatcher. All Greyfriars had wondered at the weird proceedings of the tramp who had a mania for snatching hats. That excited inquiry after his lost hat showed Fishy with whom he had to deal.

This was the man who had snatched Bunter's hats, and after that had snatched Lord Mauleverer's hat; and now he was, for some inexplicable reason, bent on snaffling Fishy's hat. It was quite a relief to Fishy. His precious cash, after all, was not what the tramps wanted. He was more than willing to let them have the hat if they left him his cash.

"I guess you're Hinks?" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Wake snakes! If I'd known it was the hat you wanted, I guess I'd have made you a present of it! What the Moses do you want the hat for, say?"

"Blow you!" said Mr. Hinks. "Bother you! Lost your 'at, 'ave you? Jost you tell a bloke where you lost that 'at?"

"I guess I'll put you wise!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "You can have the dog-goned hat!"

"Well, where did you drop it?" demanded Mr. Hinks, eyeing him wolfishly.

Fisher T. Fish reflected. The hat having cost him a "bob," and Fishy being in hopes of selling it for ten times as much, he really did not want to lose it. But he was desperately anxious to get away from the tramps. In such company his pound notes did not feel safe in his pocket.

"I guess it was about a quarter of a mile back," he said. "It was in a bunch of hawthorns—a branch hooked it off my cabeza—"

"We only got to go back, 'Arold!" said Mr. Harris.

"We'll make sure first," grunted Mr. Hinks. "Look 'ere, your name's Fish, eh?"

"Yep!"

"You got that 'at from a fat young cove in barnacles, name of Bunter?"

Fishy stared. How Mr. Hinks knew all that was a mystery to him. But he nodded.

"Sure!" he answered.

"And that cove Bunter got it from a bloke named Mauleverer?"

"I guess so! Mauly let him have it, and I gave him a bob for it," answered Fisher T. Fish.

"And you're sure it's the same 'at?"

"Sure! I guess I hadn't another straw."

"That fixes it, 'Arold!" said Mr. Harris. "No good wasting time—let's get back arter that 'at!"

Mr. Hinks nodded; and to Fisher T. Fish's infinite relief, they left him where he was—his pockets unpicked—and started on the backward track. He stared after them blankly.

"Waal, I guess this is the elephant's hind-leg!" said Fishy. "This sure is the bee's knee and the grasshopper's whiskers! What the Jehosopha do they want Mauly's old hat for? They can't both be mad—two of 'em! I surely calculate that this beats me to a frazzle!"

And Fisher T. Fish—hatless, but greatly relieved—started on his way to Greyfriars. He went at a trot—dreading that the tramps might change their minds and come back for his precious cash. Not till he reached the Friardale road did Fisher T. Fish drop into a walk.

But Messrs. Harris and Hinks were not thinking of him now. They were thinking solely of the lost straw hat.

"We're all right this time, 'Arold," remarked Mr. Harris, as they tramped back the way they had come. "There ain't any doubt now that it's the right 'at."

"That's a cert, George!" assented Hinks.

"All we got to do is to pick it up, soon as we spots it!" said George. "And I know a cove at Wapshot Races who'll change that 'undred-pound note—like a bird! We're all right."

"Right as a trivet!" said Mr. Hinks. "I don't care 'ow long it takes us to find that 'at—we'll find it."

"I believe you, 'Arold."

But Mr. Harris' belief was unfounded! The two dingy rascals did not find the hat! They hunted for it—they searched for it—they rooted through every bush, every thicket, that Fisher T. Fish had traversed in his flight! They peered into hawthorns, they shook and scanned brambles and briars. They grew tired, and ill-tempered, and hot, and abusive—



Harry Wharton & Co. up-ended Fisher T. Fish and tapped his bony head on the study floor. Then they bumped him and poured ink down his bony neck. "Let up!" shrieked the American junior. "Can it! I guess—Wow!" The ragers "let up" at last, and departed from the study, leaving Fisher T. Fish sprawling on the floor and gasping as if he could never leave off gasping.

but they did not find the hat! The shades of night were falling fast, as a poet has already expressed it, when they gave up the search at last; and gazed at one another in the deepening dusk, with feelings that could hardly have been expressed in words—even in the potent language to which Messrs. Harris and Hinks were accustomed.

Mr. Hinks leaned wearily on a tree. "Wot's become of that 'at, George?" he moaned.

"Ask me another!" moaned the fatigued Mr. Harris. "Vanished into blooming hair, it looks like!"

"Ho dropped it all right—he hadn't any 'at about 'im! But we've been over every hinch."

"Somebody's been along and pinched that 'at!" suggested Harris.

"'Oo—in a blooming lonely place like this 'ere?"

"Ask me another!"

Mr. Hinks groaned.

"I'm that dry!" he murmured pathetically. "I'm that dry, George!"

"I could push one back!" sighed Mr. Harris.

"But who's got that 'at? That old cove we fell over, p'r'aps—wood-cutting bloke he looked like—"

"Mebbe! Somebody's got it—'cause why, it's gorn!"

"It's gorn!" agreed Mr. Hinks dispiritedly. "Days and days and days I been arter that 'at—and now—"

Mr. Hinks' voice almost broke! The hat was gone—gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream! Wearily the two dusty rascals tramped away, heading for the nearest establishment where liquid refreshment was to be obtained. Harold's hope of ever snaffling the hundred-pound hat had sunk to zero.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Maully Thinks It Out!

"PENNY for 'em, Maully!" Lord Mauleverer started. His lordship was leaning on one of the ancient elms of Greyfriars, after tea, with a deeply thoughtful expression on his noble face.

Maully was thinking. He was thinking so deeply, that he did not observe the Famous Five coming along; and he looked up with a start as Bob Cherry playfully offered him a penny for his thoughts.

"Eh?" he ejaculated. "What's the jolly old problem?" asked Bob, grinning. "Tell your Uncle Robert! Don't fag your poor old brain thinking it out! It's not used to such jobs."

Lord Mauleverer grinned. "I was thinkin'—" he remarked. "We guessed that one!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Anything up?"

"Not exactly! But—"

"Pile in," said Bob encouragingly. "Six heads are thicker than one."

"You men remember that man Tinks—or Winks—or—or Pinks—"

"Hinks?" said Nugent.

"Yaas, that's it! Queer sort of customer," said Lord Mauleverer. "Have you worked it out what he was playin' that hat-snatchin' game for?"

"Can't begin to guess," said Harry. "We thought the fellow must be off his chump—but it's not that! If it was a mania, he'd snatch anybody's hat—but it was only Bunter's hat he wanted—till he started on yours."

"I met him this afternoon," explained Lord Mauleverer, "Another sportsman of the same sort with him. They grabbed my hat—"

"My hat!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "No—my hat—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But they let me have it back," went on Maully. "It wasn't a new hat they wanted—it was my old hat! I told them I'd given it to Bunter—and they lost interest in me. Now, what the merry dooce did they want my old hat for?"

"Beats Euclid hollow."

"'Nother thing occurs to me," said Maully. "It was after that day that Bunter borrowed my hat, that Winks—I mean Hinks—started his hat-snatchin' game. Of course, he couldn't have known that Bunter was wearin' my hat! He thought it was Bunter's. Somehow he's found out since that it was mine, and started on me. It was my hat he wanted all the time."

The Famous Five stared at Lord Mauleverer. They had wondered a good deal about the matter; but had not thought it out on these lines. Evidently Maully had been putting in some deep cogitation.

"Looks like it!" agreed Wharton, after a pause. "But it's as jolly mysterious as ever. Why does he want your hat—your old hat?"

"That, as jolly old Shakespeare remarks, is the question," said Lord Mauleverer. "But he must have a jolly strong reason. You fellows ducked him once for his japin'. But it didn't stop him. He might be run in for playin' such tricks—and he's riskin' it. He's got some powerful reason for wantin' that old straw of mine."

"Looks like it!" said Bob Cherry, with a nod. "But why—"

"It started the day Bunter borrowed the hat! That was the day Smithy's

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father lost his hundred-pound note on Courtfield Common."

"What on earth's that got to do with it?"

"Nothin', perhaps!" said Lord Mauleverer placidly. "That hundred-pound note has never been found."

"It's blowing about on the common somewhere. May never be found."

"Is it?" asked Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully.

"Well, Mr. Vernon-Smith thought that Hinks picked it up and bolted with it. If he did, he threw it away before we collared him; if he didn't, it blew away! In either case—"

"The blowfulness was terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"I've been thinkin'—"

"Bravo!"

"If there was a big banknote flutterin' about on the common I should rather expect Pinks—I mean Binks—to go rootin' around the common instead of wastin' time snatchin' hats!"

"Something in that," agreed Wharton. "You'll wear out your jolly old intellect, Mauly, if you keep it going like that!"

"But he threw away the banknote, if he had it," argued Johnny Bull. "We ran him down and collared him, and it wasn't on him."

"Might have hidden it—"

"We rooted all over the place where we bagged him! Besides, that's all rot!" said Johnny Bull, shaking his head. "If he hid it somewhere where we couldn't find it, he would have gone back for it afterwards. And he doesn't look as if he's recently come into a hundred pounds."

The juniors chuckled. It was an undoubted fact that Harold Hinks showed no signs of recently acquired wealth.

"No," assented Mauleverer. "He's not got the note! But if he knew for a fact that it was blowin' about the common, I fancy he'd spend a lot of time rootin' round that locality after it. But if he hid it—"

"He would have got it later, in that case, ass!"

"Might have hidden it in some place he couldn't get at afterwards."

"How, fathead?"

"Bunter was there—"

"What about that?"

"He was wearin' my hat—"

"What on earth—"

"And ever since Dinks has been after that hat—"

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"Not any other hat, you know—that hat! He snaffled hat after hat from Bunter, but not one of them would do. He could have had my new hat to-day, but he didn't want it. He wanted the old hat—the one Bunter was wearing the day he grabbed Mr. Vernon-Smith's hundred-pound note!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared blankly at Lord Mauleverer. Mauly was popularly supposed in the Remove to be rather an ass, but on many an occasion his lordship had shown that his aristocratic brain was equal to a man's job. It began to look as if Mauly had hit upon something which had escaped the general attention.

"Well, I'm blowed!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You—you—you think—"

"Sort of!" said Mauly.

"Great pip!" roared Johnny Bull. "Mauly's got it! You remember that fat idiot Bunter was asleep when the tramp came on him in that clump of oaks. He told us the man had woke him up—"

"Yaas, I remember that was mentioned," said Lord Mauleverer. "Takin' it that the man had the banknote, and couldn't get away with it, and was afraid of havin' it found on him—and he came on a fat duffer fast asleep with a straw hat on—"

"And he hid it in Bunter's hat!" gasped Wharton. "But—but—"

"Couldn't have found a safer place," argued Lord Mauleverer. "You fellows searched for the banknote, but I suppose you never thought of lookin' in Bunter's hat!"

"How could we think of it, fathead?"

"Of course you couldn't! And it was because you couldn't possibly think of such a thing that he put it there," said Lord Mauleverer, placidly.

"Oh crikey!" said Bob.

"But—but—but—" said Frank Nugent.

"You see, the man must have a jolly good reason for bein' so desperately keen after the hat Bunter was wearin' that day—only that jolly old hat, and no other hat," said Lord Mauleverer. "I've been thinkin' it over ever since they grabbed me this afternoon. It all sort of fits together."

"But—but how could he hide a banknote in a hat?"

"Easy—under the linin'. Fellows often put a slip of paper under the linin' of a hat if it's a trifle too roomy. A banknote wouldn't be noticed by the wearer, unless he looked under the linin'—which nobody would be likely to do without a reason."

"Well," said Harry Wharton, with a deep breath, "when you set your jolly old thinker going, Mauly, it leaves us all standing. If you're right, Smithy's pater's banknote is stuck in that old hat of yours all the time."

"Sort of seems probable," said Mauleverer. "Can't imagine any other reason why Ginks wants the hat so bad."

Lord Mauleverer yawned. His deep thinking seemed to have tired him.

"Easy to settle it," he remarked. "I gave Bunter the hat—he wanted my Latin dictionary, or my clock—and I got rid of him with the old hat. Let's ask Bunter for it, and see!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter was in the offing, and the juniors were extremely keen to see whether there was anything in Lord Mauleverer's remarkable theory.

The fat Owl blinked round through his big spectacles. Then he came rolling over to the group under the elms.

"I say, you fellows! Is it a feed?"

"Fathead!"

"I've had hardly any tea," said Bunter sorrowfully. "You know what it's like in Hall—doorsteps and dishwater! And Ogilvy made a fuss because I borrowed his jam. I say, you fellows—"

"Where's Mauly's hat?"

"Eh! On his head," answered Bunter. "Haven't you eyes?"

"Ass! I mean his old hat—"

"Oh! I sold that to Fishy," answered Bunter. "The rotter only gave me a bob for it! Mean beast, you know!"

"Where's Fishy?"

"Gone to the pictures at Redclyffe! I say, you fellows, there's lots of time for a feed before prep—"

"Bow-wow!"

"Mrs. Mimble has got in some of those topping plum cakes—"

"Scat!"

"That idiot Mauly forgot to take his cheque with him this afternoon—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But you fellows can lend him some money. If you can't trust me with a small loan till my postal order comes, I suppose you can trust Mauly," said Bunter, with dignity. "If Mauly wants to stand a spread, I think it's up to you fellows to lend him—"

"I don't!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled away again. Lord Mauleverer yawned, and detached himself from the elm.

"I'll get that hat back from Fishy when he comes in," he said. "Leave it till then! 'Tain't long now to lock up."

And, putting his lordship's remarkable theory to the proof, had to stand over till Fisher T. Fish came in.

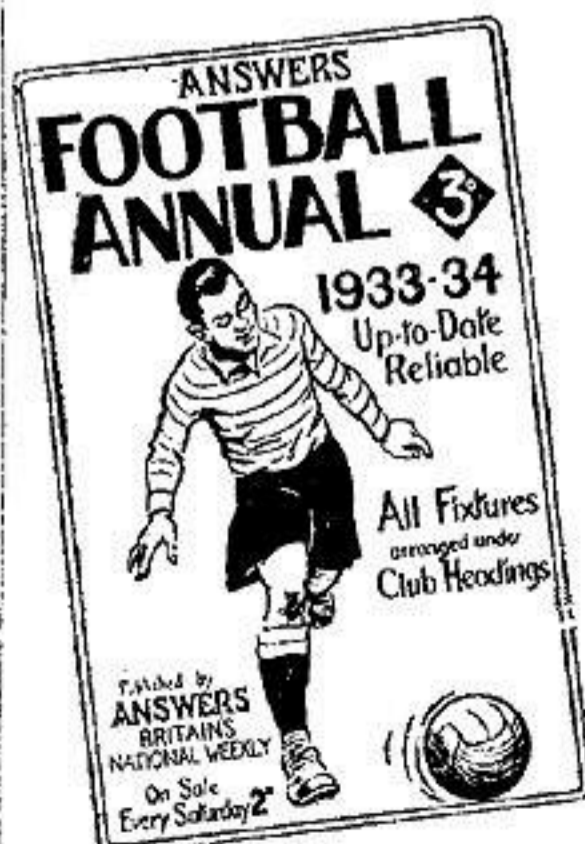
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THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Sold!

"FIERCE!"

Fisher T. Fish was murmuring that remark aloud in Study No. 14 in the Remove. It was nearly time for prep, but Fishy was not thinking of prep. He was moving restlessly about the study, in a worried mood. There was a weight on the mind of Fisher Tarleton Fish, and a weight on his heart.

A little crowd of fellows came along the passage—the Famous Five, and Lord Mauleverer, and Herbert Vernon-Smith. Smithy had been told of Mauly's theory regarding his father's banknote, and after a minute of blank astonishment the Bouncer had jumped to it at once. He had little doubt that Mauly had hit on the explanation of Mr. Hink's strange proceedings in the hat-snatching line, and he came along with the other fellows to see the latest owner of the celebrated hat. Fisher T. Fish stared at them as they appeared in his doorway, with a frowning brow. He did not want to be worried by a bunch of guys—he was worried enough already.

At first Fishy had been elated at getting clear of Messrs. Hinks and Harris with no loss but that of his new hat. But, though he had netted only a small loss where there might have been a big loss, it weighed more and more on Fishy's mind as he thought of it. And he could not help thinking of it.

It was true that Mauly's old hat had cost him only a bob—still, a bob was a bob! That was not the worst! Sooner or later, he could have sold that hat at a profit! Now the profit would never be his. That hit Fishy where he lived, as he would have expressed it. It sure was fierce! Fishy guessed and reckoned and calculated that, as he had given Bunter a bob for a hat that a lawless galoot was chasing, it was up to Bunter to hand back the bob now that the hat was gone. That, at least, was Fishy's due.

But it was useless to think of that. That shilling was a gone coon. There was not the slightest doubt that it was "fierce."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Fishy!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, vamoose the ranch, do!" snapped Fisher T. Fish, crossly. "What the heck do all you guys want?"

"Not the pleasure of your company, old bony bean," grinned Bob. "What's worrying you? Lost a bad farthing?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Aw, can it!" grunted Fisher T. Fish.

"I hear that Bunter sold you my old hat, Fishy," drawled Lord Mauleverer. "I'd like it back, if you're willin' to part with it."

Fisher T. Fish stared at him. He had already parted with the hat—not willingly! He had no doubt that Hinks and Harris had picked it up and made off with it before he got back to Greyfriars. But a cunning gleam came into Fishy's cold, sly eyes. If Mauly wanted that hat back, there was yet a chance of avoiding that harrowing loss that preyed on his mind and his spirits.

"Somebody lend me a shillin'," added Lord Mauleverer. "I understand that you gave Bunter a shillin' for it, Fishy."

"I guess, in the circs, I'll take half-a-crown, if you want to buy," said Fisher T. Fish. "Only, let's have it clear. I haven't got the hat here now, and you'll have to fetch it yourself."

"Well, I suppose it's not far off, is it?" said Harry Wharton.

"Nope. Not a whole lot."

"Well, that's all right," said Mauleverer. "I'm stony, you men, unless Fishy can change a cheque for twenty pounds—"

"Forget it!" said Fishy.

"One of you lend me half-a-crown," said Mauly.

A half-crown was produced and handed to Mauly, who dropped it on the study table. Fisher T. Fish eyed it, but did not immediately pick it up.

Even Fisher T. Fish realised that this was a rather delicate transaction—selling an article which was lost, in all probability beyond recovery.

"Now, look byer," said Fisher T. Fish. "Let's have this plain! I dropped that hat, and never picked it up again. I guess if Mauly wants it back he will have to go after it and pick it up for himself. That's the terms I'm selling that hat on—and that's got to be understood. Is that O. K., Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"Then the roof's yourn!" said Fisher T. Fish, and he picked up the half-crown and dropped it into his pocket. "I don't want any grousing afterwards, I calculate."

"Well, where did you drop the hat?" asked Mauly. "In the passage?"

"Nope!"

"In the quad?"

"Nope!"

"Where, then?" demanded the Bouncer. He was getting impatient.

"In Redclyffe Wood," answered Fishy coolly.

"What?"

Seven juniors uttered that exclamation at once. Fisher T. Fish moved rather hastily round the study table.

"I guess I told you, fair and square, that Mauly would have to go and fetch it himself," he said. "I was done over that hat. Bunter never told me that there was a mad guy after that hat. How'd I know?"

"If you dropped it in Redclyffe Wood why didn't you pick it up again?" demanded Bob.

"I guess I was hitting the horizon all I knew how, with two hoboos on my trail," answered Fisher T. Fish coolly. "I kinder hadn't time to stop for any old hat."

"Hinks!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I guess one of them was Hinks, that pesky guy that snatched Bunter's hats. I lost the hat running—I mean, I dropped it. Sort of hooked off my cabeza. But I reckon Mauly will find it if he looks long enough," added Fisher T. Fish encouragingly.

The juniors gazed at Fishy across the table.

"Then Hinks has got the hat, after all?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Waal, I guess he'd be looking for it!" admitted Fisher T. Fish. "Can't make out why he wanted it, but he seemed to. Still, he mayn't have found it. I reckon it's a bit of a gamble, Mauly. That's why I've sold it to you cheap."

"Oh gad!" said Lord Mauleverer, gazing at Fishy as if that business-like youth's bony face fascinated him.

"You dashed swindler!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Aw! Come off!" jeered Fisher T. Fish. "Did I undertake to hand over that hat? Didn't I allow, plain and square, that I'd dropped it? You figure that I'd sell a hat worth ten-and-six for half-a-crown if I had it here to hand over? Nope! No, sir! Not so's you'd notice it!"

"You—you—you toad!" gasped

Harry Wharton. "That tramp's got the hat, of course! He's snaffled it at last. Hand back that half-crown to Mauly!"

"I guess not!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish indignantly. "I guess—"

"Hold on, you men!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer hastily. "Draw it mild! You keep that half-crown, Fishy!"

"I'll say so!"

"Couldn't possibly touch it, after Fishy's touched it!" explained Lord Mauleverer placidly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you pic-faced piccan!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish, glad to keep the half-crown, but much incensed by Mauly's reason for not wanting it back.

"Bump him!" said Johnny Bull. "The bumpfulness is the proper caper!"

"Rag him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Snatch him bald-headed!"

The hundred-pound hat—if it was indeed a hundred-pound hat—was gone! That seemed certain now! Fisher T. Fish had sold Lord Mauleverer a hat that he was never likely to see. He had, after all, avoided a loss—the weight was lifted from his mind and his heart! But now he had to reckon with a set of jays who did not understand business as understood in Noo York! They came round the table and collared Fishy; they up-ended him, they tapped his bony head on the study floor, they bumped him, and they poured his own ink down his bony neck!

"Let up!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish. "Can it! I guess—wow—I kinder reckon—yaroooh—I'll sure make potato-scrappings of you—yow-ow! Oh, Jerusalem crickets! This sure is fierce! Will you let up?"

Harry Wharton & Co. "let up" at last. They departed from the study leaving Fisher T. Fish sprawling on the floor in a dusty, inky, dishevelled state, gasping and gasping as if he never would leave off gasping. It was undoubtedly fierce—and it was quite a long time before the reflection that he had Mauly's half-crown safe in his pocket brought any comfort to Fisher T. Fish.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

At Last!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, sir!"

Prep was over, and Harry Wharton was on his way to the Rag when Mr. Quelch called to him. The captain of the Remove stopped. To his surprise, he noticed that the Remove master had a straw hat in his hand.

"Are you aware, Wharton, whether any Remove boy has lost his hat to-day?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Harry.

"Joyce, the wood-cutter, called here a short time ago," explained Mr. Quelch. "He brought this hat—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Your hat, Wharton?"

"Oh! No! I—I mean—"

"Joyce informed me that he saw a Greyfriars boy in Redclyffe Wood, apparently running from some rough characters," said Mr. Quelch. "He followed them for some distance, but lost sight of them. But he picked up this straw hat—and, of course, knew that it belonged to a Greyfriars boy by the colours. He does not know the name of the junior he saw in the wood, but he says he thinks it was a Remove boy."

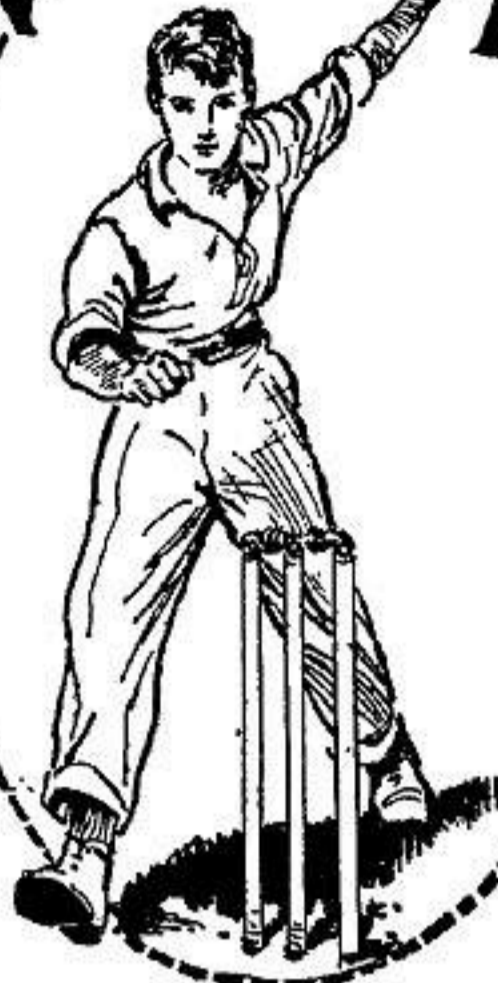
(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,326.

OUR FULL-OF-THRILLS CRICKET STORY, introducing Smiling Bill Allison—England's Youngest Pro.

ALLISON OF AVONSHIRE!

By JOHN BREARLEY!



WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

Simon Allison, once part-owner of the great Allison Motor Works, invents a powerful supercharger that promises to revolutionise the small car industry. Spurred on by his new partner, a thug named Valetti, Len Allison, the old man's nephew—"boss" of the works and a "big noise" in the county cricket team—determines to steal the plans. Following an important cricket match in which Bill Allison, Simon's son, brings about a victory for his school against Avonshire Club and Ground, Len enlists the services of a hunchback to raid old Simon's workshop. The raid is carried out and old Simon is badly battered. The "plans" the hunchback takes away, however, are fakes! Realising he will now have to support his father, Bill decides to call at the County ground and apply for a job as a pro.

(Now read on.)

Shocks for Len!

AT that precise moment, in the ornate mansion which Len Allison had inherited from his father, the former and Valetti were holding a conference. Or, rather, it was less of a conference than a heated wrangle between two bitterly chagrined and puzzled crooks.

Len Allison, in addition to being disappointed and bewildered, was also frightened—scared stiff by all that had happened in the last few hours. More than ever he was regretting ever having joined forces with the swarthy, tawny-eyed Corsica Phil Valetti. He felt like a man who, diving into a still pool, had been suddenly caught up by a treacherous undercurrent, and swept into deep and stormy waters.

"You boasting fool, I tell you you've made a mess of everything from start to finish!"

The young boss of the Allison Motor Works flung out the words savagely. His weak, handsome face was livid as he strode up and down the study, a small, well-appointed room at the back of the house, which his late father, for reasons of his own, had made practically sound-proof.

"First you employ this mysterious crackman partner of yours, Joe the Hump—and what happens? All you got was a roll of wastepaper, and to get that your man had to cripple my uncle for life. Not that I care tuppence

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about that, but the whole thing was a frost. Also you boasted that you'd cover our tracks, and, confound it, within a few hours of the crime that old fool, Superintendent Dickens, had us on the carpet for inquiries! Lucky for you that I'm Len Allison, and well-known here, otherwise, my friend, our alibis might not have satisfied the police so easily!"

Corsica Phil yawned, wedged his big body deeper into his saddlebag arm-chair, and then lit one of his favourite Turkish cigarettes.

Older, more case-hardened than Len, he was better able to conceal his feelings, though if Len could have gauged the true strength and depth of those feelings, he would have been considerably more frightened than he was.

"Finished?" drawled the Corsican, after an ugly pause. "Cos if you haven't, for Pete's sake, switch on a new record. You've been yapping the same words since early morning, Leonard dear."

His voice was quiet, steady. But there was an acid note in it, too, that would have cowed Len in the ordinary way. At the present moment, however, fear and worry had made the younger man reckless.

"And I'll keep yapping about it!" he gritted defiantly. "You and your precious Joe the Hump. What'll happen to us if the police catch him? Where is he hiding out now, anyway?"

"Mind your own business! Joe the Hump is my concern!" Valetti snarled; then suddenly laughed for the first time. "Your police catch him? Shucks! Believe me, they're welcome to pull England apart if they like, and still they won't find hair or hide of Joe!"

Valetti's curious eyes gleamed with cynical amusement, as though he was enjoying some secret joke. But again his mood changed with typical swiftness. He sat up jerkily, blowing out a thick cloud of smoke.

"Aw, now, come on an' brace yourself, Len!" he advised persuasively. "Our tracks are covered all right, and our plans were O.K. Someone threw a sudden spanner into the works, that's all. And—"

Beneath his full, red lips white, teeth glimmered viciously,

"That someone was Cannonball Mike Doyle, I'll bet a million!" he affirmed. "That guy knew me in the States, and I knew him. He twisted those plans on us, that's a cinch!"

The baleful eyes narrowed pensively.

"An' still I just can't figger out that tricky bozo's game," he confessed slowly. "Either Doyle's plannin' some slick, deep stunt on his own, or else—Bah!"

Valetti snapped his fingers and smiled in a way that made Len shiver.

"Whatever his game is, it doesn't matter!" he purred. "Doyle's for it, now, the same as that cub cousin o' yours!"

"Meaning what?" Len stiffened abruptly, trying to control his jumpy nerves.

The harsh question made Valetti look up in elaborate surprise.

"Why, meaning that Joe the Hump's goin' after those plans again—the right ones!" he answered deliberately. "Only this time Doyle and the boy are going to be got out of the way first. I'll see to that, don't worry!"

"Oh, no! No, you don't!"

Len's face had gone whiter still, as the sinister meaning of Valetti's words sank home. He had to grip the table to keep himself upright.

"No—no, you don't!" he repeated, in fear-husky tones. "I've had one sample of your methods, Phil, and they're too—too rough for England, anyway. Besides, listen!" His manner became earnest—almost imploring. "Can't you see that there's no need for any more rough stuff now old Allison's finished? Young Bill's all on his own, except for a broken-down racer. A schoolboy, and with a crippled father to support! He'll have to work, of course; but clerking at a pound a week's about all he'll be good for—that, or garage hand. Suppose, then, I go and offer him, say, fifty quid for the plans—man, he'd jump at it! I'll bet he's never seen fifty pounds cold cash in his life. I'll do some sympathetic stuff, too; tell him the money will come in useful for the old man's convalescence; butter him up generally, and—"

"And nothing!"

Phil Valetti's patience was exhausted. With a curse he caught the young

coward by the coat lapels, and jammed him down in a chair.

"You butter him up—you couldn't butter hot toast!" he went on cuttingly. "Look here, Len, for the love of Pete, get wise! Haven't you savvy enough to know by now that your cousin Bill's a fighter from the toes up? Broke or not, he wouldn't let you have the Allison plans for fifty thousand quid!"

"But—"

"Aw, rats! I tell you that young blighter will fight you in the same bull-head way he piled into Joe the Hump!" rasped Valetti. "And Mike Doyle'll help him, if only to get even with me. Your money's no good, Len, even if you had much! What young Bill will do is to try to get enough money to market the invention on his own, mark my words!"

The shrewd rogue made a brutally impressive gesture.

"And to beat him and Doyle we've got to act rough. And we will!"

But Len, who could be obstinate like most weaklings, still refused to give up his own safer scheme, and the wrangle continued. As for Bill earning sufficient money to launch the Allison super-charger, he laughed the idea to scorn. Despising his young cousin as he did, it seemed impossible to him that the lad could get any job better than a humble post at an office desk or work-bench.

The violent shock Len received exactly twenty-four hours later, however, nearly reduced him to a state of gibbering lunacy.

It was Valetti, his evil genius, of course, who first broke the news.

Sauntering into Len's office at the works, late on the following afternoon, he tossed a copy of the local evening paper on to Len's desk, and, without a word, stabbed his finger down on a front-page paragraph.

Len's heart leapt to his throat as he glared at the bold headlines.

**"AVONSHIRE'S NEW BOWLER.
GRAMMAR SCHOOL BOY TO
PLAY FOR COUNTY.
SEQUEL TO THE KELSEY
OUTRAGE.**

"The 'Avonshire Standard' is informed by Mr. J. R. Tempest, hon. sec. of Avonshire C.C.C., that W. Allison, the brilliant young left-hander, who on Saturday secured nine wickets for 12 runs against a Club v. Ground side, will make his debut as a county professional against Somerset next Saturday. His clever bowling so impressed Mr. 'Jerry' Tempest, that on his recommendation the County Committee secured Allison's services after a brief meeting this morning.

"Young Allison, whose father, Simon Allison, the well-known motor expert, was the victim of a dastardly outrage yesterday, is . . ."

Len could read no more. The words danced maddeningly before his eyes. He looked up haggardly, and, as through a mist, saw Valetti sneering down at him.

The Corsican's first pointed question brought him to his feet.

"Do cricket professionals earn good money?" asked Valetti, in a silky voice. Len nodded dumbly.

"That's the answer, then," granted Valetti. "Now, who's right, eh? That's the way Bill Allison means to earn enough dough for his old man's blower—by turning pro. He's pretty good at

the game, too, ain't he, judging from what he did to your lot on Saturday?"

Len moistened his lips.

"Good! The young hound's more than good—he's great!"

The reluctant admission cost him an effort, but this was no time for further self-deception. Facts had to be faced.

"Gosh, I never thought of his cricket," Len exploded. "But, dash it, I'll soon put a stop to that, though. I'm someone in the County Club, too, and if they don't sack the pup at once I'll raise Cain! Phil, if my cousin plays up to form in first-class cricket, he'll be a—"

"A winner, and earn plenty of cash!" nodded Valetti meaningly. "We-ell, what about your measly fifty quid now? And what sort of a figure will you cut, trying to stop your own cousin earning a living, now that his father's crippled? Cut that idea out, Len! Even if you pulled it off you might raise suspicions in the wrong quarters at once."

Len gulped, knowing what was coming. For a long minute the confederates stared deep into each other's eyes. Then suddenly Valetti leaned forward across the desk.

"Len," he whispered savagely, "if you still want the Allison blower to save your own firm, your cousin's cricket career has got to be stopped. But stopped by accident—savvy? And as soon as the fuss about his old man dies down I'm the man who'll arrange that accident."

A POCKET KNIFE

is always useful. Why not set to work and win one like T. A. Evans, of Westeria Cottage, Liverpool Road, Mayhull, Liverpool, who has sent in the following amusing joke?

"Percy," said the fond parent sorrowfully, "every time you are naughty I get another grey hair."

"Gee!" retorted Percy. "You must have been a terror—look at poor grandpa!"

A mere tool in the hands of a stronger, more ruthless character, Len shrugged hopelessly. It was a gesture of defeat—and agreement.

Bill, as a first-class cricketer, was a greater menace than ever to his schemes.

As Valetti said, his well-paid cricket career must be stopped!

Allison of Avonshire!

"SCORE-CARDS!"
"Chocolates! Cigarettes!"
"Score-caards!"

It was Saturday morning. A thin, summery haze, through which the sun was steadily breaking, covered the Avonshire County ground, and a gentle breeze made the old green flag in front of the pavilion flap lazily. On all sides rose the subdued, but cheerful hubbub of an English cricket crowd, settling down for a good day's play.

Already the ground was half full, for, in addition to this being Avonshire's first home match, many of the crowd, who were only part-time cricket enthusiasts, had turned up to see the County's new "discovery," young Allison.

Bill's somewhat dramatic appearance as an Avonshire professional, coming immediately on top of the mysterious, sensational attack on his father, had made him the talk of Avonport.

"'Fraid I've never seen t' lad play myself!" admitted one spectator, a

genial sporting farmer, who had driven twenty miles to see the match. "But he must be good to get into t' team so quick. Youngest pro in England, so t' paper says. I always thought they gave these youngers summat of a trial first before puttin' em into t' County!"

"No need for it with young Bill!" replied the man next to him, lighting his pipe. "He's first-class all right. Saw him skittle out the Club and Ground myself last week, with eight county men playing. Never thought to see him a pro within a week, though. Trust old Jerry Tempest to know a good 'un when he meets one."

"Well, let's hope the lad keeps it up. Avonshire can do with new blood, goodness knows!" struck in a third neighbour. "Proper tanning they got in their first match at the Oval yesterday—eh? I suppose young Allison had to get some sort of work quickly now that his father— Ay, you're right—terrible affair! Old man's still in a bad way, I hear. And the police haven't found this Hunchback yet, as the papers call the brute!"

"No, and not likely to, I'll bet!" grunted the second speaker, and glanced idly at two names on his score-card: Mr. L. R. Allison and—last on the list—Allison (W). "Seems funny, two cousins in the old team—one an amateur, t' other a pro. Wonder what Mister Len thinks about it—eh?" He winked slyly. "Not much, if I know the young gent. Len's a good cricketer all right, but, somehow, I never did like the looks of him, and— Ah! Here they come!"

Abruptly the discussion ceased, and three thousand voices uttered the same eager exclamation together. There followed a welcoming burst of clapping as, led by Jerry Tempest, the Avonshire team filed out on to the sunny green field.

All eyes were on Bill Allison at once. Bill, in fact, could almost feel that concentrated stare of interest. To him it seemed as though not only the County ground, but the whole world was full of eyes, peering at him, weighing him up.

That he was dead nervous, of course, went without saying. He was, in his own phrase, "as windy as a cat in a dog's home."

Since the previous Monday morning he had been living in a sort of daze. Everyone he had met had acted so decently—all save Len, who didn't count!

His late headmaster at the Grammar School, a stern old bird, had cordially wished him luck. Mike Doyle had quickly settled down to his share of the queer partnership, and the hospital surgeon in charge of Simon Allison had assured the lad that there was no longer any danger of his father dying.

But to Bill, a modest youth, most bewildering of all was the alacrity with which kindly Jerry Tempest had signed him on as an Avonshire player—and then shoved him straight into the county team! The most Bill had expected at first was a job on the bowling staff, with a chance to earn extra pay by playing in Club and Ground matches.

Yet here he was a full-blown, first-class cricketer, going out to play against Somerset, with men whose names were household words in the county.

Bill's knees went a bit wobbly at the thought. Then he fairly jumped as Dick Hayes, the Avonshire 'keeper and an old friend, suddenly pinched his elbow.

"Don't look as though you're going to borrow the rent from the landlord, Willyum—nothing to be scared about!"

chuckled the humorous little stumper, with a sympathetic grimace. "You'll be all right once we start. And don't forget, you've got nine good pals out here to back you up!"

Somewhat sarcastically Hayes emphasised the "nine," and turned a scornful eye on Len, strolling ahead on his own, as usual.

Looking round, Bill caught the friendly grips of the other professionals, and gave a shy smile of gratitude in return.

As for Len, he could go and eat coke! The cricketing Allisons had only encountered each other for a short moment that morning, behind the pavilion. Mindful of Mike's instructions not to let Len see that he was suspected of engineering the raid on Simon Allison's workshop, Bill had given his cousin a casual nod, to which Len had replied with the blankest of blank stares. And that was that. Each had passed on his way.

"But if the poor fish thinks he can rattle me by giving me the marble eye," thought Bill disdainfully, as he watched Jack and Frank Lee, the Somerset openers, walking to the wicket, "he's backing a loser. I'm quite rattled enough already without him!" he added wryly.

"Take second slip, please, Bill!" At that moment, Jerry Tempest came up to the young recruit and gave him an encouraging pat.

"Len's starting from the pavilion end, so stand well back. Keep your eye on me after every ball, and you'll get on fine!"

"Right, sir!" With a forced air of briskness Bill trotted over to his place between Forbes and Conway, two old hands, who received him with genial winks. Then Jack Lee took guard, the umpire called "Play," and Len Allison dashed forward on his twenty-yard run up to the crease.

Bill's first county match had commenced.

(Get ready to give smiling Bill Allison, the young recruit, a rousing reception in next week's chapters of this popular sporting story, chums!)

BILLY BUNTER'S "HAT-TRICK"!

(Continued from page 25.)

"That's right, sir!" gasped Wharton. "It is a rule for the owner's name to be written in a hat," said Mr. Quelch severely. "But there is no name in this hat, or it would be very easy to find the owner. Apparently it has been taken out. But if you are aware who is the owner of this straw hat, Wharton—"

"Oh, yes, sir! It's Mauly's—I mean Mauleverer's."

"In that case, Wharton, you may take it to him, and tell him that his name should be written in it."

"Very well, sir!"

Mr. Quelch handed the hat to his head boy and rustled away. Harry Wharton, hat in hand, fairly bolted into the Rag, where most of the Remove were gathered after prep.

"Mauly!" he roared, waving the hat wildly.

"Yaas!"

"Here's your hat!"

"By gad!"

Lord Mauleverer's elegant figure rose from an armchair. He stared at the straw hat.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Is that the hat? How—"

"Old Joyce picked it up in the wood and brought it in," gasped Wharton.

"Smithy—where's Smithy—"

"Here!" The Bounder ran forward.

"If the jolly old banknote's in that hat, you'll have to stand old Joyce something," said Harry.

"What ho!" said Smithy. "Let's see: Here you are, Mauly—it's your hat!"

"Great gophers!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish. "I guess that's the hat. If I'd figured that that old mugwump had picked it up, I guess you wouldn't have had it off me for half-a-crown!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shuf up, Bunter! Look in it, Mauly!"

"Yaas!"

Lord Mauleverer took the hat, and proceeded to examine it with his usual leisureliness—which seemed rather out of place to the eager juniors at the moment. Harry Wharton & Co. fairly glued their eyes on him. Other fellows

gathered round, wondering what the excitement was about.

"Buck up, Mauly!"

"Yaas!"

Lord Mauleverer's slim fingers turned back the interior lining of the hat. A flimsy slip of paper that had been laid between the lining and the straw, came to light. Lord Mauleverer held it up between finger and thumb. There was a buzz of amazement. All eyes could read the figures on it.

£100!

"I say, you fellows, that's a bank-note," shrieked Billy Bunter. "I say, that's my hat! I'll give Fish his bob back—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, by gum!" exclaimed the Bounder. "Hand me that note, Mauly—I've got the number of the pater's note here—make sure it's right! Yes—that's it—000014682. That's the banknote my father lost!"

"And Mauly's found it!" yelled Bob.

"Good old Mauly!"

"Yaas," drawled Lord Mauleverer, sinking gracefully into his armchair again. "You can have the hat, Bunter, dear old fat man! You can sell it to Fishy again. Make him give you more than a bob for it next time, though! He says it's worth ten-and-six!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith was greatly delighted when he received his hundred-pound note back. The Bounder was equally pleased when a tenner came from his pater in return. Properly speaking, that reward was due to Mauly—for it was certain that but for Mauly, the banknote would never have been found in the hat. However, the Bounder "blew" most of it on a celebration in the Rag, at which Mauly was the guest of honour—though Billy Bunter's performance at that glorious spread quite put Mauly's in the shade.

— THE END.

(Now look out for next Saturday's MAGNET and another sparkling yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "THE SHYLOCK OF GREYFRIARS!" It's a winner all the way!)

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No. 41 (New Series).

THE NEW Greysfriars Herald

EXTRA
 GOOD
 EDITION

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

July 15th, 1933.

HEAT WAVE S.O.S.
 LORD MAULREVERER requires two experienced punchwhalms to keep the dashed study cool while he snoozes. Wages: Six jam tarts and two bottles of ginger-pop per hour.
 N.B. Bring your own fans, begad!

WANTED!
 Pair of second-hand Knitting Needles in good condition. Some silly ass has pinched Wun Lung's chopsticks!—K. CHERRY, Study No. 13, Removo.

PUNCH AND JUDY NEW STYLE!



Phonickers on the Greyfriars bank of the Bark last Wednesday were treated to one of the funniest alfresco shows ever produced by a Removite. The Removite in question was William Wibley, whose theatrical genius, often displayed during the winter in junior stage shows, was on this occasion seen in a really first-class punch-and-judy set.

With his customary originality, Wibley dispensed with the conventional characters usually seen in the puppet show and replaced them with characters from Greyfriars. The dolls, which he had had made to his own designs in London, were easily-recognisable caricatures of people we all know, and if you imagine they were flatter- ing likenesses we may as well tell you at once that you're dead wrong. All told there were ten of them, and they contained a good solid basis for exactly ten libel actions!

Promoters and boating parties fairly crowded round when Wibley set up his show. Once he got going, the fun was fast and furious.

The chief villain of the piece was Mr. Quelch, whose appearance in miniature drew howls of laughter from the crowd. Other subsidiary villains of a rather different kind were Lord and Bunter. Matter of fact,

they seemed to be all villains with the exception of Tom Brown, who, we heard afterwards, had provided the necessary financial backing for the enterprise!

The plot of the puppet play was simple almost to crudity. It centred round a cake which, and which was stolen in turn by nearly all the other characters. The function of Mr. Quelch seemed to be to butt in at frequent intervals and lash out all round with a big stick! The dialogue brushed with topical allusions and got frequent applause and almost unbroken laughter from the spectators.

At least, it was almost unbroken up to the last minute of the show—and then, with startling suddenness, it stopped altogether. Tucked away behind the curtains, Wibley must have wondered why everything was falling flat all of a sudden, for the show was funnier than ever; the puppets had got into a glorious tangle and Mr. Quelch was wielding his stick with violent enthusiasm.

Unfortunately, Wibley couldn't see what was going on.

The fact was that Mr. Quelch himself had rolled up on the scene and stopped to watch the show!

Mr. Quelch's face, when he realised that he was being punished in a punch-and-judy show and made the villain of the piece at that, can be better imagined than described. Those of us who were out of his range of vision silently and reverently

smoked away. The rest had to sit there looking like greven images till the curtain fell.

Then Wibley came out. He gave one look at Mr. Quelch, blinked and rubbed his eyes, then collapsed against the side of his show. The shock had overwhelmed him!

Half an hour later, yells were echoing out of the open window of Mr. Quelch's study at Greyfriars. They were from Wibley—and they were NOT yells of laughter!

RAIL DISASTER AT GREYFRIARS

Tired Driver Falls Asleep

Lord Maulreverer promised Greyfriars a thrill this week when, with Mr. Quelch's permission, he had a section of his miniature railway brought from Maulreverer Towers and set up behind the chapel. It turned out to be a bigger thrill than Manly himself had imagined! We spent several days in laying the track, and there was great enthusiasm when Manly sat astride the model engine and invited half a dozen of us to take seats in the trucks at the rear.

When the lucky half-dozen had duly taken their places, Manly got busy on the engine, and with a shrill whistle "fret" while they're away.—R. RAKE, Study No. 6.

How many doughnuts make a cricketer?

This question was discussed quite seriously last Saturday when the Greyfriars Removite played Tom Merry's Eleven from St. Jim's. As most of you chaps know, doughnuts have long been favoured by certain hungry cricketers as the ideal standby in case of emergency. Spectators also feel the call of these cunningly cooked comestibles, and Mrs. Mumble usually lays in plentiful supplies when there's a match on.

There are, however, sportsmen who look with dis- favour on the tasty trifles. These critics maintain that the undispensed merits of doughnuts are not adapted to the peculiar requirements of a game of cricket. They argue that after a fellow has eaten about fifteen doughnuts he has altogether different ideas.

Hurree Singh, of Greyfriars, has altogether different ideas. He would be quite well satisfied with an ounce of rice and a couple of caraway seeds per day. Doughnuts make no appeal whatever to him.

It was these two who brought the argument down the law on the beneficial influence of doughnuts on cricket. Inky retorted that he couldn't conjecture how any man could excel playfully after eating the esteemed and disgusting doughnut.

"Right, old bean!" was Fatty Wynn's prompt response. "Then I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll polish off a dozen doughnuts before we start, and I'll bet you a bottle of ginger-pop that I score more runs and take more wickets than you!"

DO DOUGHNUTS HELP CRICKETERS?

Inky—Wynn Controversy Settled

"Acceptfully agreed, my esteemed and indolent friend!" grinned Inky.

It was quite a fair bargain, for Inky and Fatty are much of a muchness on the cricket field, and the pact was sealed with enthusiasm.

The result was positively astounding.

Fatty duly swiped his dozen doughnuts and the game began. It was a rattling good game, and a close one at that; the Friars won, but they had only one wicket in hand when they passed the St. Jim's total of 158 and gained the day.

The result of Fatty's wager, however, was even closer.

Both Fatty and Inky scored exactly 20 runs and took 6 wickets for 35. THEIR PERFORMANCES HAD BEEN ABSOLUTELY IDENTICAL!

So Fatty lost his wager. But the moral victory was undoubtedly his. If a chap can eat a dozen doughnuts, then play a good all-round game of cricket, doughnuts can't be the muscle-deadening, soul-destroying force their opponents pretend they are.

All the same, we don't think Inky will be adopting a doughnut diet yet—however much they're likely to improve his play!

AS OTHERS SEE THEM

What I Think of Aubrey Angel

By Marjorie Hazeldene

If I don't like a person, I usually say nothing about it. But in regard to Aubrey Angel I don't mind if everybody knows that I consider him the most howid boy I have ever met!

It is only necessary to read his remarks in last week's "Greyfriars Herald" to realise what an unpleasant young man he is. He boasts and about interpreting the letter I wrote my brother and about turning up in Peter's place at Cliff House, and seems to think he was awfully clever in telling me what a great sportsman he was.

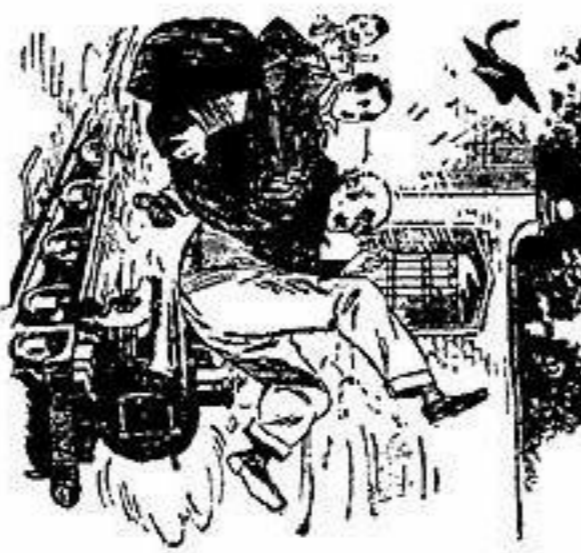
The fact is that if Angel had deliberately set out to make me thoroughly dislike him, he could not have done it better. But, strangely enough, he seemed surprised that his caustic behaviour didn't make a most favourable impression on me. The mentality of such a boy is beyond me altogether!

I can only say I am very sorry indeed I have had the misfortune to meet such an unpleasant individual—and I sincerely hope it will be a long, long time before I meet him again!

(This is the first time we've ever heard Miss Hazeldene say a rank outsider. Angel deserves it! Now look out for next week's Uncensored Opinion, when Blundell, of the Fifth, will tell you what he thinks of Potter and Greene!—Ed.)

Then came disaster! About the fourth time round the passengers noticed Dr. Locke himself standing right in the middle of the track gazing reflectively across towards the gates.

It was obvious at a glance that the Head was unaware that a train was bearing down on him, and the



(Continued from previous column.)

passengers yelled out to Manly to apply the brakes.

But Manly made no reply. Overcome by his unwonted exertions, he had fallen into a peevish doze!

The result was that there was no time to avert the calamity, and Dr. Locke, to his intense surprise, found his feet lifted from under him and felt himself travelling along dizzily on a totally unexpected model train.

It was lucky for Manly that Dr. Locke happened to land comparatively comfortably on Manly himself, for that circumstance probably saved the Head a nasty accident and Manly a flogging!

As it is, the railway has had to be taken up and sent back to Maulreverer Towers. All of which goes to prove that Manly is the prize fathered of the Form. If you're in agreement, turn up in the Rag next Monday evening and help us to give the fooling old trump a record scrapping!

Dear Editor,—In the consciousness of your unflinching benevolence I expostulate it as unbecomingly self-assertiveness if I solicit your assistance in the recovery of a calligraphical instrument in the shape of a fountain pen.

I must confess, appears to possess dubious characteristics, since there are recurring intonations in which it disappears from my person, vanished in the course of a pedant, penumbulatory, quadrangular divergence, which phrase will not, I trust, convey to you any tautologous impression.

The early restoration of my invaluable literary aid is my contemporaneous desideratum, and I am assured that I can rely on your collaborative co-operation.

Anticipatorily appreciative yours,
 ALONZO TODD.

P.S.—Since inditing the foregoing epistolary effusion, I am felicitously able to record that I have discovered the calligraphical instrument of whose use I had imagined myself to have suffered the deprivation.

(Lonzy asks us if we'll help him to find his fountain pen, then adds a P.S. to tell us he has found it. What we want to know is, WHY THE THUMP DID IT?—Ed.)

'Lonzy's Little Letters

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Dicky Nugent's Weekly Wisdom

Several chaps are asking what charge that old fogey Coker will face in connection with his latest motor-bike accident in which he necked down a sailor and smashed someone's akkhaminator.

The answer should be obvious. A "sail" and "battery," of course!

TRICK CYCLING

Open-air gymnastics are a feature of the curriculum at Greyfriars. Everybody is keen, excepting slackers like Bunter and Snop. Even Alonzo Todd did a three-foot jump last week!



GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

Anthony Treace was made to run the gauntlet between two lines of angry Removites for giving Bunter away in class. Even Bunter is entitled to be protected from a sneak!



Donald Ogilvy, the Scots junior, has no use for an English breakfast of eggs and bacon. He believes in quantities and quantities of Scotch porridge.

Potter is sometimes picked to play for the First XI—and on such occasions Coker stands by his topes, encouraging his champion with one breath and then pointing out how much better he would have done himself!

To the correspondent who asks this question we reply without hesitation "Yes."

The poet Gawper defined a gentleman as one who would not needlessly set foot upon a worm.

Well, we can only say we saw Trevor deliberately refrain from setting foot upon Snop when the latter fell off his bike in the quad.

That proves it!

Horace J. Coker will give an exhibition of Trick Cycling (Pedal and Motor) on Big Side on Monday next at 5.45 p.m.

N.B.—Subscriptions towards the wreath may be forwarded to Messrs. Potter & Greene, Joint Secretaries, Fifth Form.