

**"DOWN ON THE FARM!"** Amazing Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. on Holiday.

# The **MAGNET** 2<sup>D</sup>





By FRANK RICHARDS.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**

**Billy Bunter Surprises the Hikers!**

“MY turn!” said Billy Bunter.  
“Eh?”  
“What?”

“Hand it over!” said Billy Bunter.

Six juniors of the Greyfriars Remove stopped and stared at Billy Bunter as if they could not believe their ears—as indeed they hardly could!

Bunter had astonished the Greyfriars hikers.

It was hot that morning. The Sussex lanes seemed to be baking. Even Hurree Janset Ram Singh admitted it was a little warm. Even Lord Mauleverer did not look quite so cool and fresh as was his wont. Harry Wharton & Co. were quite pink—Bob Cherry, in fact, almost as red as a beetroot. Billy Bunter, of course, was crimson, perspiring, and panting. Twenty times at least he had told the hikers that he was tired. Twenty times they had replied that he could take a rest if he liked—while they went on hiking! It really seemed as if the chums of the Remove would not have minded had Billy Bunter dropped behind and stayed there! Bob Cherry had the packed tent on his back, the heaviest article that the schoolboy hikers had to carry. It was not really very heavy, and it folded into quite manageable proportions. But on a hot morning there was quite enough of it.

Billy Bunter carried nothing except his own considerable weight. That was Bunter's little way which did not endear him to the other hikers. Bunter had reduced work-dodging almost to a science.

So when Bunter announced that it was his turn to carry the tent, and demanded that the same should be handed over to

him, the Greyfriars fellows had to doubt the evidence of their ears.

They just blinked at Bunter!  
“Is that a joke?” inquired Bob Cherry at last.

“Oh, really, Cherry—”

“It's your turn,” said Johnny Bull.  
“It's been your turn for a good many days, you fat spoofer! But you've never taken your turn, and you never will! What are you getting at?”

“Oh, really, Bull—”

“Come on!” said Harry Wharton.  
“We're hiking, you know—no time to stand round listening to Bunter's jokes!”

“I'm not joking!” hooted Bunter.  
“You fellows keep on saying that I never take my turn with the baggage! You said so only five minutes ago, Nugent! You needn't deny it.”

“I jolly well did!” grinned Frank Nugent. “And I'll say it again if you like! You never take your turn, you fat, spoofing slacker.”

“The neverfulness is terrific!” remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

“Well, now I'm offering to take my turn!” said Bunter, blinking at the hikers through his big spectacles.  
“Hand it over, Cherry! It's nothing, really, to an athletic fellow like me.”

“Oh crumbs!” gasped Bob.  
“The fact is, it's rather sickening to see you gasping and grunting along under a pack that would be as light as a feather to me!” said Bunter. “Hand it over, for goodness' sake!”

Bob Cherry glared at the fat Owl of the Remove. He was warm, and he was feeling the pack unusually heavy. But he was not gasping or grunting. Bunter had been doing all the gasping and grunting since the Greyfriars hikers had broken camp that morning. Bunter did enough for seven.

“He doesn't mean it,” said Bob.

“He's trying to pull our leg somehow. But he's jolly well going to carry it now! I'll kick him if he doesn't! It's time the fat slacker did his bit, and he's jolly well going to!”

“Hear, hear!”

“Oh, really, Cherry! I've asked you twice to hand it over! You won't see me staggering under it!” added Bunter scornfully.

“Who's staggering under it?” roared Bob.

“You are, old chap. You look as if you were trying to shut yourself up like a penknife!” said Bunter agreeably. “Every minute I expect to see you nose dive! You're not strong, poor old chap!”

Bob Cherry breathed hard and deep. He was the heftiest member of the Famous Five of Greyfriars—all sturdy and fit. Bunter was not exactly hefty; and he was incurably lazy and slack. So this sort of talk from Bunter was rather hard to bear with patience.

However, Bob restrained his natural desire to kick that agreeable member of the Greyfriars hiking party. He unslung his pack. He did not believe, any more than the other fellows did, that Billy Bunter really intended to carry it. There was a catch in it somewhere! But he had a deadly determination that the fat Owl should make his words good!

“Well, here you are,” said Bob.  
“Mind, you don't mean it, but I mean it! You drop this pack, and I'll kick you till you sling it on again! You're going to carry it now till we halt!”

“That's what I want!” said Bunter calmly. “Nothing to me, old chap. What you want is a little muscle.”

“Oh gad!” murmured Lord Mauleverer, gazing at the fat Owl in wonder. His lordship was undoubtedly lazy, but

he never dreamed of dodging his share of the baggage. Bunter, on the other hand, objected to carrying so much as a tin cup. "Looks to me, dear old fat bean, as if this little joke of yours is goin' to turn out seriously! You've got to carry it now!"

"It's not a joke, you ass! I mean it!"

"Well, I mean it, anyhow!" said Bob Cherry grimly. "Stack it on!"

Harry Wharton & Co. watched Bunter stack it on.

Apparently the fat junior, for some unknown and inexplicable reason, was in earnest.

They fully expected him to make some excuse, at the last moment, for not making his words good. Instead of which, Billy Bunter slung on the pack in the most business-like manner.

It is said that a leopard cannot change its spots, nor an Ethiopian his skin! But it was a still more startling change if William George Bunter was playing up and taking his share of the work.

And it looked like it! With Bob's pack on his fat back, Bunter re-started after the interval. He plugged along perspiring.

"We're dreaming this, I think!" said Harry Wharton, at last.

"The dreamfulness certainly seems terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Like some more to carry, Bunter?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

Bunter blinked at him.

"I don't mind, he answered. "You look as if you're going to drop, poor old fellow! Give me your pack, too, if you like."

"Wha-a-t?" gasped Johnny.

"Stick it on," said Bunter cheerfully. "The fact is, I hate to see you fellows staggering along under a few things. I'd rather carry the lot myself. Stick it on."

"Who's staggering along?" shrieked Johnny.

"The lot of you! Never see such a staggering crew! Look here, stick your bag on my bag; I shan't notice its weight! I'm not feeble!"

"Well, my only hat!" said Harry Wharton blankly.

Bunter was astonishing the hikers more and more. Now that he had changed, he seemed to have changed with a vengeance! Unless he was doing it for the sheer pleasure of jeering at the other fellows, it was difficult to guess what he was doing it for.

Johnny Bull, with a quite ferocious expression, unslung his pack. He was carrying the oil-stove and the cooking utensils, not a great weight, but enough to make a fellow pleased to part with it. Bunter was not going to jeer for nothing. Like Bob, Johnny was determined to make the fat Owl make his words good.

He stacked it on the pack already on Bunter's fat back, and fastened it there. Bunter made no objection. He seemed glad to get it.

"Is it on?" he asked.

"Yes!" snorted Johnny.

"I don't feel the weight."

"You will!" grinned Nugent.

"Hardly, old fellow! Nothing to me! Now put it on a bit," said Bunter cheerfully. "Hiking doesn't mean crawling along like a lot of slugs! Make a bit of an effort! You can't walk much, but you can walk faster than a set of snails, I suppose. It makes me tired to see you crawl!"

It was the climax of astonishment! Not only had Billy Bunter claimed twice as much baggage as any other fellow in the hiking party, but he urged speed also. Hitherto, the hikers had had to

accommodate their pace to Bunter's weary crawl. They were quite pleased to put it on a little. And they did. Taking Bunter at his word once more, the Famous Five and Lord Mauleverer swung onward, with the natural consequence that the burdened Bunter dropped behind.

As they swung round the corner of a lane, Bunter halted.

He grinned.

No doubt the hikers expected Bunter to come rolling round that corner after them. If so, that expectation was doomed to disappointment.

Bunter stood still, mopping his fat brow, and listened to the footsteps that died away past the corner.

Then he turned from the road and made for a gap in the hedge.

There was a field on the other side, with a haystack in it. Bunter rolled on round the haystack. It was an unfinished stack, and there were gaps in it on the farther side. In one of them Bunter settled down comfortably on a bed of hay, with hay screening him and his discarded burden from sight.

He grinned cheerfully as he settled down. He was getting, at last, the rest he so sorely needed. The hikers might have hiked on, and left the lazy fat Owl to his own devices. But they were not likely to hike on and leave the tent and the stove and the cooking outfit.

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**"We're happy when we're hiking—"** With never a care in the world, Harry Wharton & Co. are swinging along the peaceful highway when suddenly they find themselves in the thick of a battle on the Little Puddleton front!

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They wanted them, if they did not want Bunter. Which was the explanation of Billy Bunter's astonishing offer to carry his share of the baggage for once.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Snatched!

**H**ARRY WHARTON & CO. swung on cheerily.

It was quite a relief to lose the company of Billy Bunter, and to hear no longer his incessant grouching about the heat and the flies, and the fatigue that worried his little fat legs. Bob Cherry remarked that all that a hike needed to make it a success was for Billy Bunter to be left out of it—a sentiment to which his comrades heartily subscribed.

Grassy meadow and rolling down, bright blue sky and shady woods, were pleasant to look upon. For a good many days now, the Greyfriars fellows had been hiking, and they had enjoyed every day, in one way or another, taking the rough with the smooth, as a true hiker should do.

There was really only one fly in the ointment—a very fat fly. But for the moment, at least, they enjoyed Billy Bunter's absence. As he knew the route of the morning's march, and knew that they were to camp for noon at Little Puddleton, there was no danger of his missing them when he followed on, and it had not yet occurred to them that he was not following on. They supposed

that the fat Owl was plugging along behind, and so far did not suspect that he was fast asleep on the shady side of a haystack.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob suddenly.

There was a zip of a car in the lane behind, and glancing round at it, Bob recognised a green Austin. It was driven by a chauffeur, and three school-boys sat in it—Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson, of Highcliffe School.

"Those rotters again!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"They've found us once more!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

Ponsonby, in the car, pointed out the hikers ahead to his friends, and Gadsby and Monson stared round at them. The lane was rather narrow, and Harry Wharton & Co. drew to the grass at the side to let the car pass. It was some days since they had seen Pon & Co.; they had followed the winding ways across country, and the Highcliffians had probably lost their track. But here they were again; evidently sticking to the trail of the Greyfriars hikers. The six juniors smiled as the car came up. Bob Cherry opened his rucksack, took out a rather battered copy of the Holiday Annual, and waved it to Ponsonby. And his comrades chuckled.

Pon spoke a word to his driver, and the car slowed down. It stopped close by the group of hikers.

"Are you the Greyfriars lot?" asked Ponsonby, staring at them.

"Don't you know us again?" grunted Johnny Bull.

"How's a fellow to know you unless you wash?" asked Pon. Whereat Gadsby and Monson chuckled.

"You cheeky ass!" roared Johnny Bull.

"The cheekfulness of the esteemed ass is terrific."

"Oh, there's the nigger," said Pon. "It's the Greyfriars lot all right, though a fellow could hardly pick them out from any other set of tramps!"

"Do you want to be hooked out of that car and bumped in the road, Ponsonby?" asked Harry Wharton. "If not, you'd better get on your way."

The hikers were dusty, as was natural after a march in the country lanes. But Pon's remarks were really quite uncalled for. It was like Pon to make himself as unpleasant as possible.

"Are you still after this Holiday Annual?" asked Bob, holding it up to view. "Looking for a chance to pinch it, as you did before? Does it interest you to know that we've found out why you're after it?"

Ponsonby started.

"What do you mean?" he snapped.

Ponsonby's eyes glistened eagerly at the Holiday Annual. He had reasons—strong reasons—for wanting to lay his hands on that book. But he had not been aware, so far, that the Greyfriars fellows had "tumbled" to his reasons. His look was very startled.

"Oh, we know all about it now!" grinned Bob. "We know why you bagged it from Bunter, that day on Courtfield Common before the hols; and why you tried to keep it, you rotter! You know that that smash-and-grab man, Micky the Sprat, had hold of it, and think that he put a message in it for his pal Smith. Isn't that it?"

"Oh gum!" exclaimed Gadsby.

"They know!"

"The knowfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Shut up, Gaddy, you fool!" breathed Pon.

"Well, they know!" said Monson.

"They were bound to tumble sooner or later. May as well chuck it, Pon."

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"Shut up, fathead!"

Ponsonby's eyes glinted at Bob Cherry. He seemed hardly able to restrain himself from snatching at the Holiday Annual, which Bob held temptingly almost within reach.

"What do you mean, Cherry?" asked Ponsonby, through his set lips. "I know nothin' of any message written in the book."

"You weren't spying when Bunter met that smash-and-grab man in the wood near Greyfriars, at the end of the term?" grinned Bob. "You didn't hear him bamboozling that fat duffer into taking a message to his pal at Lantham? You didn't guess that he'd sneaked a message into this book without Bunter knowing, telling the other rogue where to find the loot he'd hidden somewhere?"

Ponsonby gritted his teeth.

"That isn't why you snaffled the book from Bunter and took it to Highcliffe, and held the pages to the fire in your study?" continued Bob, in the same bantering tone. "You weren't trying to spot invisible ink?"

Pon made no reply to that. His face was almost pale with rage as he realised that the Greyfriars juniors knew his whole game.

"And you haven't been trying to pinch the book since, to get hold of the message you fancy is in it?" grinned Bob. "Not much good telling lies about it, old bean; you see, we've tumbled to the whole thing. And we know what you're after, too—we've seen in the papers that there's a reward of fifty pounds offered for finding the stuff that smash-and-grab man got away from old Lazarus' shop in Courtfield. That's what you're after."

"What a sell!" said Gadsby, with a whistle. "Lot of good trackin' those rotters for nearly a week, Pon, to find this out at the finish."

"Fat lot of good!" grunted Monson. "I said they'd tumble to it sooner or later, Pon! You know I did!"

"Only," chuckled Bob Cherry, "there isn't any invisible ink writing in the jolly old book at all, Pon! We've held every jolly old page to the stove, one time or another, and there isn't a sign of it! You were on the wrong scent, old bean, all the time! Nothing doing."

Ponsonby started again.

"You haven't found the smash-and-grab man's message in it?" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "So you admit that that was what you were after? No! We haven't found it—it's not there! You were just a little bit too jolly clever!"

"You've looked for it?" said Pon, unheeding.

"Every jolly old page. You've had all your trouble for nothing, and you may as well chuck following us up hill and down dale!" chuckled Bob.

The hikers laughed. They knew that Ponsonby believed that that Holiday Annual contained a hidden message from Micky the Sprat, who had robbed Mr. Lazarus' shop at Courtfield. They knew he believed that the message told where he had hidden his plunder before he was arrested. They knew that he hoped to spot that message and get hold of the hidden plunder, and claim the £50 reward for finding it. They knew, too, that as no writing was to be found in the book, he believed that Micky the Sprat had used invisible ink; he had scorched many pages, holding them to the fire to bring the ink to light. And they had taken that tip from Pon, and subjected every page in the book to the same test, discovering nothing! It was quite amusing to tell Pon that they

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knew all about it, and that there was nothing in it.

Pon sat silent in the car, biting his lips. Evidently he had not expected the Greyfriars fellows to "tumble," and he was disconcerted to find that they knew it all. Gadsby and Monson were shrugging their shoulders.

Pon spoke at last.

"Well, you seem to know all about it," he said. "You've tested the whole book for invisible writing, and found nothing?"

"Nothing!" grinned Bob.

"Well, in that case, keep the book and be jiggered!" said the dandy of Highcliffe. "If I was on the wrong track, it's no use to me. Get on, Jervis."

"Yes, sir!" said the chauffeur.

The car started.

As it started, Pon leaned out suddenly and made a sudden, swift snatch at the volume in Bob's hand.

His last words had been intended to put Bob off his guard; and they had effected their object. Pon's snatch jerked the Holiday Annual away, and he tossed it into the car. At the same moment the green Austin shot onwards, leaving the hikers staring, and Bob Cherry crimson with rage. He made a fierce jump after the car; and Ponsonby waved a mocking hand at him and laughed as it shot away.

"Why, I—I—I'll—" gasped Bob, almost speechless with wrath. "He—he—he's grabbed my book—I—I—I'll—"

"What the thump does he want it for now?" said Nugent in wonder. "Now that we've told him there's nothing in it—"

"Pon still believes that there's somethin'," drawled Lord Mauleverer, "and I've got a sort of opinion that Pon's right. It's not invisible ink, as he fancied—he knows that now. But—"

"I'll smash him!" roared Bob. "I don't care whether there's anything in the book or not—it's mine, and that pinching rotter isn't going to snaffle it. I tell you I'll smash him into little pieces!"

"He's gone!" said Nugent, staring down the lane after the car. It turned a bend of the lane and vanished from sight.

"Get after him!" snorted Bob.

"My dear chap—on foot—"

"I'm going!"

And Bob went—at a rapid run! And the other fellows followed at a trot; though certainly without the remotest expectation of getting hold of Cecil Ponsonby of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Unexpected!

PONSONBY sat and grinned.

On the floor of the car at his feet lay the disputed Holiday Annual—Pon's at last! The Greyfriars hikers had dropped out of sight behind in the winding Sussex lane. Whether they were following him or not, Pon did not care a straw. The heftiest hiker was not likely to overtake a motor-car! Ponsonby grinned with triumph.

Gadsby and Monson, however, stared at him blankly. They had been as surprised as the hikers by Pon's sudden and unexpected snatch.

"What the thump's this game?" demanded Gadsby.

"Off your chump?" asked Monson.

Ponsonby chuckled.

"We've got it!" he answered.

"And what's the good of it now that we've got it?" demanded Gadsby. "You heard those fellows say they've searched

it for invisible writing! Think they'd have missed it if there was any?"

"Hardly!"

"It's as plain as daylight that you were barkin' up the wrong tree. There's nothin' in it!" said Monson. "That smash-and-grab man never put any dashed message in the book as he fancied."

"He did! I was watchin' him," said Pon coolly. "He was foolin' that benighted ass Bunter into takin' a message to his confederate. He put it in that Holiday Annual that Bunter had borrowed from Cherry. As I couldn't find any writin', I thought of invisible ink, of course. But if it isn't that, it's somethin' else. The message is there!"

"You still believe that?" exclaimed Gadsby.

"I know it!" answered Pon coolly.

"But what—how—"

"That's what we're goin' to find out! Lots of time, now we've got hold of the giddy volume! We'll do sixty before we stop, and I fancy those hiking hooligans won't see us again!" chuckled Ponsonby. "Then we'll root through the book, an' find out what they hadn't gumption enough to spot. And then we'll jolly well hit for Kent, pick up the hidden plunder, walk it along to the police station at Courtfield, and claim the fifty pounds' reward! It's all cut and dried now!"

Pon, evidently, had no doubts. Gadsby and Monson looked rather dubious, however.

"How the thump could there be a message in the book, if a fellow searchin' it can't find it?" demanded Monson.

Ponsonby shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

"You're a silly ass, Monson!" he said.

"And you're another, Gaddy! Lots of secret ways of makin' up a message—known to crooks like that rotter who smashed-and-grabbed at Courtfield. Of course, they have secret ways of tipping one another—the man wouldn't be likely to write in plain English in the circumstances. It's in the book somewhere and somehow, and I'm goin' to spot it, if I have to sit up with a wet towel round my head, by gum! But we'll do sixty first—an' keep clear of those Greyfriars cads. I'll send Cherry his book back by post, with my kind regards when I'm done with it. Put it on, Jervis!"

Instead of putting it on, however, Jervis, the chauffeur, jammed on his brakes. Ponsonby stared round angrily. It was only prudent to put a good distance between himself and the Greyfriars hikers—after an action which amounted to robbery on the King's highway. But there was, so to speak, a lion in the path. It is the unexpected that often happens, and it happened now. Jervis braked only in time, and the car came to a halt before an obstruction in the road.

Pon & Co. stared at that obstruction in blank amazement. Across the lane lay the trunk of a tree, roots in the ditch on one side; branches jamming into the hedge on the other. It was not a fallen tree, fallen by accident; obviously it had been placed there deliberately to block the road. And such a thing on a peaceful highway in the well-ordered kingdom of Great Britain was absolutely astounding. In the great United States of America it would not have been very surprising; and hold-up men might have been expected to jump into view and surround the car, with a request for hands to be put up! But in England it was amazing!

"What the jolly old dickens—" exclaimed Gadsby.

"What silly idiot—" snarled Ponsonby.

A man was sitting on the tree-trunk,



As the car started, Ponsonby leaned out and made a sudden, swift snatch at the Holiday Annual in Bob Cherry's hand. "Why, I—I—I'll—" gasped Bob, almost speechless with wrath. "He's grabbed my book. I'll—I'll smash him!"

He was a stout man, dressed like a farmer, with a cheery, ruddy face. He rose and glanced at the fellows in the halted car.

"Sorry, gentlemen!" he said politely. "Look here, what does this mean?" exclaimed Ponsonby savagely. "What the dooce do you mean by blockin' the road like this?"

"We're in a hurry!" added Gadsby. "Look here, that tree will have to be moved, see? We've got to get by!"

"I fancy it would take a good many hands to move it," said the farmer with a cheery grin. "It's all right—it will be shifted before dark. I'm staying here to see that there's no accidents."

"But what does it mean?" yelled Ponsonby. "We've got to pass!"

"Sorry—the road's stopped!" exclaimed the farmer. "No car's allowed to get through to Little Puddleton to-day!"

"Bother Little Puddleton! I've never heard of the place! How dare you block the public road? It's against the law!"

"I'm feared it is," said the farmer with a grave nod, "but that's neither here nor there, young gentlemen. I'm sorry to give you trouble; but you'll have to turn back. You can get round by turning a mile back—it won't take a lot of time in a car!"

That was true enough; but less than a mile back were the Greyfriars hikers! If Ponsonby turned back, he was likely to find trouble before he found the turning.

"But what does it mean?" howled Gadsby.

"There's a tithe sale at Puddleton Farm to-day," explained the farmer. "Jonas, the auctioneer from Chupham, is expected in his car! He ain't getting there, see?"

"Oh, my hat!"

Through the newspapers, Pon & Co. had vaguely heard of the "Tithe War," raging in various parts of rural England. They had not expected to drop on that "war" in this way, and at such a very unfortunate moment. They had heard of auctioneers attempting to hold sales of farmers' stock for tithes, being chased, and ducked in ponds. Evidently the "war" was going on the Little Puddleton front; and Mr. Jonas of Chupham was doubtless booked for an exciting time if he turned up for the sale at Puddleton!

"But you can't do this!" howled Ponsonby in great excitement. "It's against the law, I tell you!" Which was rather cool of Pon, considering how he had obtained possession of the Holiday Annual with which he was so anxious to escape.

"Sorry, gentlemen!" said the farmer, still polite. "But it won't take you long to go round a mile or two in your car. This is a serious matter to us; the farmers are up for miles round to stop the sale at Puddleton. We ain't seeing old Wilyum Waggs sold up in his old age! No, sir!"

"Bother William Waggs!" howled Ponsonby. "Blow William Waggs! Look here, you've got to let my car go by, you silly old idiot!"

The stout farmer looked at Ponsonby gravely and quietly.

"You're a schoolboy, I take it, sir?" he asked.

"Eh? Yes!"

"Do they thrash you at your school?"

"Eh! No! What do you mean?"

"Ah!" said the farmer. "They should! It would do you good! I'll tell you what, sir! You call me any more names, and I'll thrash you myself."

Ponsonby did not call the farmer any more names.

The stout gentleman returned to his seat on the horizontal beech. Pon & Co. looked at one another. Pon was white with rage. For the rights and wrongs of the "tithe war" he cared nothing. But he cared a great deal about whether he escaped with the Holiday Annual he had snatched from Bob Cherry.

"Well, we can't get through!" said Gadsby, at last. "We've got to get back and take another turnin', old bean. After all, those cads won't dare to try to stop a car!"

"They couldn't!" said Monson. "There's gates on this lane," snarled Ponsonby. "The minute they see us comin', ten to one they'll shut a gate."

"Well, we've got to chance it! Go all out and trust to luck!" said Gadsby. "Anyhow, I suppose you're not thinkin' of liftin' the car over that dashed tree? If we wait here they'll come up and find us at a halt."

Ponsonby gritted his teeth.

But there was evidently no help for it. He snarled to Jervis, who backed and turned the car. The farmer, sitting stolidly on the felled tree, watched them depart. The green Austin flew away in a cloud of dust; and Pon & Co., as they whizzed back the way they had come, watched the road anxiously for the Greyfriars hikers.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Six for Three!

"BOB, you ass—"

"Rats!"

"Chuck it, fathead!"

"Rot!"

"The chuckfulness is the proper  
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caper!" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Listen to the voice of ridiculous reason, my esteemed and idiotic Bob."

Bob Cherry unwillingly slowed down. Seldom was Bob in an angry temper. But he was now intensely angry and exasperated. The cool cheek of Ponsonby in snatching his book and making off with it under his eyes made him wild with wrath.

But wildly wrathful as he was, he had to realise that a fellow on foot had no chance whatever of overtaking a motor-car in flight.

For a quarter of a mile Bob had fairly raced—hoping, perhaps, that Pon might have stopped to examine his prize, or for any other reason. The other hikers kept pace with him, panting in the hot August sunshine. But they made him listen to reason at last.

"For goodness' sake, let's get a rest!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Where the thump is the sense of fagging along in a hot sun, racing with a motor-car?"

"He might have stopped—" growled Bob.

"Catch him stopping—he knows we'd be after him. I dare say he's ten or twelve miles away by this time," grunted Johnny, mopping his perspiring brow. "Blow him, anyhow! I'm going to sit on this gate and rest."

"Same here!" said Nugent.

"The samefulness is terrific."

"Yaas, not a bad idea!" drawled Lord Mauleverer. And Mauly was first on the gate.

The juniors had passed two or three gates on that winding Sussex lane, all of them fastened open for the traffic. They were only closed when cattle were in the unfenced land adjoining—and then carts and cars had to halt and open them for passage. This particular gate was hooked back to an oak-tree by the roadside; and five of the hikers sat in a row on the top bar, glad of a rest. Bob Cherry stood in the middle of the lane staring in the direction of Little Puddleton, out of sight behind meadows and woodland; the direction Pon had taken in the car. Pon & Co. had long been out of sight, and even Bob had to admit that there was slight chance of seeing them again. Now that Pon had what he wanted he was likely to clear out of Sussex as fast as his car could carry him. It was intensely and bitterly exasperating to be flouted and defeated like this by a fellow he disliked and despised.

"If one of these gates had happened to be shut—" said Bob.

"But it didn't happen!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"I know that, ass! I said if it did!" grunted Bob, his temper evidently considerably ruffled.

"If 'ifs' and 'ans' were pots and pans—" said Johnny.

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"It is true that the esteemed proverb remarks that if the if-fulness and the an-fulness were the potfulness and the

panfulness, there would be no work for esteemed and ridiculous tinkers," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Nevertheless, speech is silvery and silence is the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the well, my esteemed Johnny."

Bob Cherry grinned. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's edition of those proverbs seemed to have the effect of restoring his good-humour.

"Well, I suppose we shan't catch him," he said. "We'll jolly well thrash him next term, anyhow."

"Hear, hear!" agreed Harry Wharton.

"Only he's got my book," said Bob. "Just cheek, I suppose, when he admitted himself that he was on a false scent and there was nothing in it." He glanced at Lord Mauleverer. "You still think there's something in it?"

Mauleverer nodded.

"Yaas!" he answered.

"That makes it all the more rotten! To think of that cheeky cad getting hold of it!" Bob clenched his hands again. "If there's really a clue in that book to Micky the Sprat's loot, it ought to be handed over to the police at once. Pon doesn't mean to do that."

"No fear!"

"How long are we going to stick here?" asked Bob restively.

"Well, we might as well give Bunter a chance to come up—"

"Blow Bunter!"

"I fancy he's a mile behind, at least. I—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry suddenly. "Get off that gate! Unhook it! Sharp! Quick! Get a move on."

He leaped to the end of the gate, where it was fastened by a looped wire to the oak. He grabbed the loop loose and set the gate swinging shut across the road.

The other fellows had no time to get off. They swung with the gate. They clutched hold as they swayed—and there was a roar from Johnny Bull as he tumbled off and landed in the lane.

"Yaroooooh! You potty ass—"

Click! The gate shut and latched! Johnny Bull scrambled to his feet, and four hikers scrambled off the gate.

"You silly ass—"

"What the thump—"

"What the jolly old dooce—"

"Look!" roared Bob, pointing up the road. A green Austin car had come in sight, coming along towards the hikers at a tearing rate.

"Pon!" yelled Nugent.

"Coming back—"

"We've got him!"

"Asking for it, by gum!"

Bob Cherry's eyes danced. Something, evidently, had stopped the Highcliffe fellows on the road and caused them to turn back. They were coming back at the full speed of the car, whizzing almost like lightning. On an open road the hikers would have had little chance of stopping the car. But the shutting of the gate worked the oracle!

At the sight of the shut gate across the road, Jervis jammed on his brakes with frantic haste. But the green Austin was going so fast that it was hardly a yard from the gate when the chauffeur succeeded in stopping it. And the instant it stopped, the Greyfriars fellows were round it.

Ponsonby was on his feet, his eyes gleaming with rage. What he had feared had happened. He was in the hands of the Philistines.

"Hands off, you tramps!" he yelled. "Back the car, Jervis! Keep it moving! Turn round! Hands off, you rotters!"

"Hands on, I fancy!" grinned Bob Cherry.

He was first to clamber into the halted car. Ponsonby met him with a fierce blow that made him blink. But he was in the car the next moment, and Ponsonby was in his grasp.

"Whooooop!" yelled Pon, as he flew headlong out of the car and crashed.

"Here, hands off!" panted Gadsby. "We weren't in it—I tell you we were against it—we— Yaroooooh!"

Gadsby thudded beside Ponsonby. Johnny Bull already had hold of Monson, and that youth, yelling, joined his companions in the dust. Jervis, the chauffeur, jumped out of his seat, apparently to go to their aid; but he backed away from the hikers as they turned on him.

"You'd better keep clear, my man!" said Harry Wharton. "You'll get damaged if you chip in! You saw that cur Ponsonby steal a book from us—stand back and mind your own business."

"Jervis!" yelled Ponsonby, sitting up. "Lend a hand, you fool—help me, or you're sacked! Do you hear?"

Bob Cherry picked up his Holiday Annual and jumped out of the car with it. The other hikers surrounded Pon & Co. and dragged them to their feet. They began to struggle, and Jervis, though evidently not very willingly, came to their aid.

But it booted not. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull grasped the chauffeur and pitched him headlong into the car.

"Stay there, or you'll get damaged!" said Bob.

Jervis was feeling rather damaged already. And he stayed there.

"Look here, hands off!" mumbled Gadsby. "You've got your dashed book back. Now hands off, and let us go!"

"You're going to have a lesson first," said Bob Cherry grimly. "I could have you run in for punching my book, as you jolly well know. You're going to learn to keep your hands from picking and stealing."

"Let go!" yelled Ponsonby, struggling.

"Heave him over," said Bob. "I'm going to give him six. I haven't a stick handy, but the Holiday Annual will do."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby, struggling and kicking, was turned over on his face, in the grasp of Wharton and Nugent. The other hikers took care of Gadsby and Monson, who had ceased to resist, and looked on, apprehensive of their own turn to come. Jervis, in a breathless state, blinked from the car, but without thinking of interfering further.

Taking the Holiday Annual, Bob Cherry proceeded to hand out "six" to Cecil Ponsonby.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!" shrieked Ponsonby, wriggling wildly. "Oh, you rotter! Ow!"

Whack, whack!

"Whooooop! Help! Oh gad! Ow!"

Whack!

The last whack nearly split the covers of the Holiday Annual. It elicited a frantic yell from Ponsonby.

"Yaroooooh!"

"That's enough for Pon," said Bob cheerily. "Chuck him into the ditch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton and Nugent heaved Pon into the ditch. Fortunately for him, it was dry. But there were nettles in it, which the hikers had not noticed. Pon noticed them at once. He rolled and roared.

"Now, Gadsby—"

"Look here," gasped Gadsby. "I tell

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Don't forget, all you "Magnetites" who are going to the seaside this summer, that Messrs. Cadbury Bros., of Bournville, are contributing bars of Dairy Milk 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.

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you— Leggo! Hands off! Oh, my hat! Oh crikey! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Six whacks with the Holiday Annual were duly administered to Gadsby. Then he pined Ponsonby in the ditch.

"Your turn, Monson!"  
"I say— Yow-ow-ow! You rotters! Oh crumbs!" Monson was up-ended, and he wriggled and roared under six hefty whacks. Then he, too, joined his leader among the nettles.

Three groaning Highcliffians crawled out of the ditch. Without a word to the Greyfriars fellows—though they gave them expressive looks—they packed themselves into the green Austin, the gate was opened, and Jervis drove away.

Bob Cherry grinned, and held up the Holiday Annual as they went.

"If you still want this jolly old book, Pon, you can try again!" he bawled.

Pon's answer was a savagely shaken fist. Then the car disappeared up the road, and the Highcliffians were gone.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

On the Little Puddleton Front!

**B**OB CHERRY packed that much-disputed Holiday Annual into his rucksack, slung it on his back, and smiled cheerily.

"Getting on?" he asked.  
"Getting back, I think," said Harry. "We'd better find Bunter before we get on any farther. He may have fallen dead under his load."

"The fat idiot has had plenty of time to catch us up," said Johnny Bull, staring back along the lane. "Where the dickens is he?"

"Stopping for a rest, most likely. He would need it, with all he had to carry."

"Get on, and leave him to it!" growled Johnny Bull. "I'm fed-up with hanging about for Bunter!"

Harry Wharton laughed.  
"We might get on and leave him to it, but we can't leave the tent and the cooking outfit, fathead!"

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer. "That's why."

"That's why what, ass?"  
His lordship chuckled.

"That's why Bunter offered to carry the baggage. He knew that we couldn't leave the campin' outfit behind."

"Oh, the fat rotter!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "That was it, of course. That's why."

"The whyfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "We have been donefully diddled by the esteemed fat Bunter."

"Why, I dare say he stopped the minute we were out of sight," exclaimed Nugent. "Not much good waiting for him to come up. We shall have to go back."

The hikers looked at one another. Now that they had guessed the astute dodge of the Owl of the Remove, there was no doubt about it. Certainly, it was no use waiting for Bunter to come up. The delay caused by the Highcliffians had given him plenty of time to come up if he had wanted to. Evidently he was not coming up. There was no sign of him on the road.

"The fat villain!" said Harry. "Pulling our leg, of course. I'll bet he chucked down the baggage and sat on it the minute we lost sight of him. Come on, we've got to go back for the fat blighter."

And the hikers started on their return journey. The green Austin had long vanished. But as they hiked along the lane, returning towards the spot where they had left Bunter a mile back, a Ford car came along. It was driven

by a fat man with gold-rimmed glasses perched on a beaky nose, and a police-constable sat by his side in the car—a plump, ruddy-cheeked country policeman. There was a hint of a cheery grin on the policeman's ruddy face, but the beaky man who was driving had a set and serious expression. Glancing at the hikers in the lane, he drew the car to a halt and called to them.

Harry Wharton went up to the car, wondering what was wanted.  
"You've just come from Little Puddleton?" asked the fat man.

"No. We hadn't got so far when we turned back," answered Harry. The fat man gave a grunt. Apparently he was anxious for news about Little Puddleton.

"Have you seen anybody on the road?" he asked.

RAISE A LAUGH AND BAG A PENKNIFE!

It's only the work of a moment to write down on a postcard that screamingly funny joke you've heard. Yet it might win for you

A PRIZE THAT'S WELL WORTH HAVING!

The following joke was sent in by B. Kempner of 62, The Drive, Hove, Brighton, Sussex, who is now very proud of the penknife I have sent him!—Ed.



College Student: "Have you an opening for a bright, energetic college graduate?"  
Boss: "Yes, but don't slam it as you go out!"

"Some schoolboys—"  
"I mean farmers, or farmers' men."  
"No," answered Harry. Ponsonby could have answered the question in the affirmative had he been there. But the hikers had not gone within sight of the felled tree and the gentleman sitting on it.

"You're sure of that?" asked the beaky man, blinking at Wharton through his gold-rimmed glasses in a suspicious way.

"Quite," answered Harry.  
"The road's not blocked—carts up-ended, or anything?"

"Not so far as we went," answered Wharton, in astonishment. "Why should it be?"

Another grunt from the fat man.  
"Mr. Jonas is the Chupham auctioneer, sir," said the ruddy constable, weighing in to explain. "There's a tithe sale at Waggs' Farm at Little

Puddleton to-day. There's a lot of excitement. If you've seen anything of the road being blocked, it's your duty to tell me as an officer of the law."

"Oh, certainly!" said Harry. "But we've seen nothing. Hold on, though," he added, remembering Pon & Co.'s inexplicable return into the hands of the hikers. "I fancy the road may be blocked farther on. Some fellows who went that way in a car had to turn back. I wondered why they turned back. That may be it."

The fat man grunted again.  
"Looks like it, constable," he said. "You're sure about a car having been turned back, young man?"

"Quite," said Harry. "And I know the fellows in it wouldn't have turned back if they could have helped it. They were very anxious to get on."

"That makes it pretty clear," grunted Mr. Jonas. "We'd better try the other road."

He backed and turned the car and shot away by a turning. The Ford was out of sight in a couple of minutes, and the hikers resumed their way.

"We seem to have landed in some jolly old excitement," said Bob Cherry, with a whistle. "Must be rather serious if an auctioneer has to take a bobby with him to a sale. Not the sort of thing one likes to see happening in England. Law and order's our long suit in this country."

"What's it all about?" asked Nugent.  
"Blessed if I know. Farmers don't like paying tithes," said Bob. "I suppose it's the hard times. But where's that fat villain Bunter?"

The hikers were in sight of the spot where they had parted from Billy Bunter that morning. They knew it by a haystack standing at a little distance off the road. But there was no sign of the fat Owl! Obviously, he had not followed on, or they would have met him. But if he was taking a rest it was not in the lane, for he was not to be seen. "Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry. "Bunter! Bunter! Bunter!"

Bob's powerful voice rang far and wide. But it did not reach so far as the haystack in the field. Had it done so, it would have fallen upon deaf ears, as Billy Bunter was fast asleep in his bed of hay. Even had he been awake and heard, probably he would not have heeded. When Bunter wanted a rest, he wanted a rest, and that was that!

"Bunter! You fat scoundrel, Bunter!" roared Bob.

But answer there came none!  
"The piffing, pie-faced, pernicious porker!" growled Bob. "We can't go on without him, as he's bagged our outfit. We were silly asses to be taken in. Fancy believing for a minute that Bunter intended to do any work."  
"He's takin' a rest somewhere," remarked Lord Mauleverer. "Suppose we do the same?"  
"Fathead!"

"Not much good looking for him," said Frank Nugent. "He may be behind any of the hedges for half a mile round. I suppose he will turn up for lunch."

Johnny Bull gave a snort.  
"There won't be any lunch till he does," he growled. "Most of the grub was packed in my kit."

"Then he won't turn up at all," grinned Nugent. "If he's got grub enough to last him the day, he won't do any more hiking."

"Oh, the fat scoundrel—"

"The footling frump—"

"Bunter! Bunter! Bunter!" roared Bob.

But only the echoes answered.

"We'll scalp him!" said Bob. "We'll squash him! We'll burst him. This is just a trick to get a day's slacking instead of hiking! What the thump did he come on a hike for, if he doesn't want to hike? Are we going to hang about all day waiting for that benighted bandersnatch to turn up?"

Five exasperated hikers looked at one another. Lord Mauleverer sat placidly on a fence while the Famous Five made up their minds what was to be done. His lordship never objected to a rest.

"Well, let's get on to Little Puddleton, and get some lunch at the inn," said Harry, at last. "Bunter may come rolling in in the afternoon. If not, I suppose we shall have to come back for him again. Anyhow, we want some lunch—"

"We'll burst him!" growled Bob. "Get off that fence, Mauly, you slacker, and come on!"

"Yaas, old bean!"

Once more the Greyfriars hikers turned, and walked once more on the way to Little Puddleton. They passed once more the gateway where the discomfiture of the Highcliffians had taken place, and kept on, and soon afterwards came in sight of the obstruction that had caused Pon & Co.'s car to turn back. The felled tree was still across the road, and the red-faced farmer sitting on it. Now, however, he was dealing with bread and cheese; someone having apparently brought him lunch. He glanced at the Greyfriars fellows, and they stared at him, and the tree he was sitting on.

"That's why Pon turned back," remarked Bob. "Bit of luck for us—what? Hallo, hallo, hallo! Any objection to a chap hopping over your jolly old tree?"

The farmer grinned.

"None at all, sir," he answered. "It's here to stop the auctioneer's car from Chupham. Get over, and welcome!"

"Tithe trouble—what?" asked Bob.

"That's it, sir! They're going to sell up old Willyum Waggs—leastways, they think they are. But they ain't!" added the stout gentleman, with a solemn shake of the head. "Why, sir, there's fifty farmers up, all round Little Puddleton and Mudford and Dusty Corner—as far as Claybank-under-Tootles. And if Mr. Jonas gets into their hands, I'm sorry for him! If he don't know yet what it's like in a horse-pond, he will find out!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob. "If I was in the auctioneering line, I think I should cut out tithe sales. I should hate to find out what a horse-pond was like inside."

The hikers clambered over the tree, and went on their way, leaving the stout gentleman sedately disposing of bread and cheese. It was strange enough to see an elderly, grave, and evidently law-abiding man engaged in what was actually a defiance of the law. The stout gentleman was evidently convinced of the justice of his cause; but clearly there was something wrong somewhere.

A little later the hikers came in sight of Little Puddleton. They had expected to see a drowsy little village, half asleep in the August sunshine. Such was Little Puddleton's usual aspect; but on this particular day there was unusual excitement, and an unusual crowd. Farmers' gigs and traps and carts crowded the irregular street; groups of people stood about in eager talk. Horses were hitched to trees and railings. And the Barley Mow inn was almost swarming.

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"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "We've dropped into a jolly old lively beehive; and the bees are a-buzzing. I wonder if we shall get any lunch?"

"We're seeing life in rural parts, anyhow," said Harry. "You see a lot of things hiking that you don't see from a car or a railway train. I suppose nine people in ten don't know that this sort of thing is going on in England at all."

"I suppose somebody's in the right, and somebody's in the wrong," said Bob. "But which is which?"

"The whichfulness is terrific!"

"Goodness knows! Let's see if we can get any lunch."

On any other day the hikers would have had the Barley Mow almost to themselves. Now they found it rather difficult to get room, to get attention, and to get lunch. At last, however, a hurried and flurried, ancient waiter brought them lunch, and they sat down to a substantial meal, with a din of talk going on on all sides. If they had attended to it, no doubt they might have learned the history of the tithe war in general, and the case of William Waggs in particular. But they were hungry, and they gave their attention to their lunch.

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## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### No Sale!

"H'E'S coom!"

An excited man put his head into the doorway of the Barley Mow, and shouted. There was a buzz of voices, and a jumping up from chairs and benches at once. Excited men rushed out of the inn in a mob, in such a hurry that two or three chairs were overturned.

Harry Wharton & Co. had finished their lunch, and were beginning to pay attention to the talk round about them, when the interruption came. Almost in a moment they were left alone in the Barley Mow; only the waiter remaining, and even he gluing his ancient features to the window to see what passed in the street. From the street of Little Puddleton came a roar and a trampling of horses' hoofs.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Nugent. "What's up now?"

"Somebody's come, that johnny called in," said Bob. "But who the dickens is the somebody, and what has he come for?"

"Getting exciting," said Johnny Bull. "I fancy from the way those men looked that the 'somebody' is going to get hurt."

"Let's go and see the show, anyhow," said Bob. "Country life is more jolly exciting than people think, if this sort of thing is truly rural."

The Famous Five were all on their feet now. Although they hardly knew what was going on in Little Puddleton, they had caught the excitement in the atmosphere of that rural spot. What had just happened at the Barley Mow, might have happened in a Wild-West town, in an alarm that the Redskins were coming. But it was really amazing in rural England.

Somebody, they could not imagine who, had come—or, as the Sussex man said with his musical vowels, had "coom." Somebody apparently who had been expected by the unusual crowd in Little Puddleton—somebody whom they were hostile towards. The juniors felt a thrill of excitement, and perhaps a little alarm—not for themselves, but for the Little Puddleton people. Many of the faces had been very grim as the farmer-folk rushed out of the inn; and

it was not pleasant to think of these healthy, hearty, honest folk landing themselves into trouble with the law.

Bob Cherry tapped the old waiter on the arm, and the man unwillingly turned his face from the window.

"Who's come?" asked Bob.

"Him!" explained the waiter. "It's a bad business." He shook his white-haired head. "A very bad business."

"But who's 'him'?"

"Mr. Jonas."

"Oh, the jolly old auctioneer!" exclaimed Bob.

The hikers remembered the beafy fat man in the Ford.

"Yes." The waiter glued his face to the pane again. "Dear, dear! He's gone into the barn; but the bailiff's not there. He could never have got through, with the roads watched. I hope they haven't hurt the bailiff. There will be trouble if they have," said the old waiter, shaking his head.

His concern evidently was not for the bailiff personally.

"Come on!" said Bob. "We're not missing this! You don't always find yourself in the thick of battle when you're on a hike."

The Famous Five and Lord Mauleverer left the inn, and found themselves in a surging, shouting crowd. Farmers' men and farmers' villagers of all sorts, agricultural gentlemen of every variety mingled there, all in the same state of excitement. The name of "Willyum Waggs" was on every lip, as well as that of Mr. Jonas, and that of Mr. Hunker, who, the juniors gathered, was a bailiff to whom had been assigned the rather disagreeable task of seizing William Waggs' stock for unpaid tithe. They gathered, however, that Mr. Hunker had not been able to get through; other roads, as well as that which the hikers had arrived by, no doubt being blocked. Mr. Jonas, however, had got through, and he had arrived, and gone into Waggs' Barn, where the sale was to be held—a roomy building in sight of the Barley Mow.

The crowd was surging in that direction, a crowd on foot, and several farmers mounted on horses. There were already plenty of people in the barn and round it, and a roar of voices was incessant.

Harry Wharton & Co. followed the crowd, and arrived in the great open doorway of the barn. There was no sign of a car, so it seemed that the auctioneer from Chupham must have left his Ford and arrived on foot. No doubt he had found the road blocked; and, being a determined gentleman, he had got out and walked. Anyhow, here he was in the barn, beaky nose and gold-rimmed glasses and all, with a red and angry face—the object of hisses and hoots and catcalls on all sides.

When the juniors caught sight of him he was dabbing with a handkerchief at an egg that had burst on his cheek—the first missile of many. It was a genuine new-laid British egg, if that was any comfort to Mr. Jonas. Perhaps it was, for a foreign egg might have been highly scented as well as sticky. At the moment Mr. Jonas did not seem to be enjoying life.

"Get on with the sale!" roared a stout farmer. "Get on with it, Jonas! Got the cattle in your trousers pocket?"

There was a roar of laughter.

As the bailiff was not present with the distrained property, it was evidently impossible for Mr. Jonas to get on with the sale. Perhaps he was hoping for the arrival of Mr. Hunker. It was Mr. Hunker's happy task to get hold of the property of the unfortunate Willyum





Ponsonby, struggling and kicking, was turned over on his face, in the grasp of Wharton and Nugent. Taking the Holiday Annual, Bob Cherry proceeded to hand out "six" to the Highcliffe junior. Whack, whack, whack! "Yow-ow-ow!" shrieked Ponsonby, wriggling wildly. "Oh, you rotter! Help! Whooop!" Whack, whack, whack!

Waggs. Unless and until Mr. Hunker turned up, no sale was possible.

Harry Wharton & Co., pushed into the huge barn by the crowd round them, were wedged in, and could hardly have left if they had wished to do so. But they were quite keen to remain and see the proceedings through. As Harry Wharton had remarked, hikers saw a lot more of real rural England than people saw from cars and railway trains. They were seeing rural life now in a rather unusual aspect.

"Jolly exciting, ain't it?" murmured Bob Cherry. "Jonas seems to have lost his bobby! He had a bobby in the car with him, you remember."

"One bobby wouldn't be much use here," said Harry. "I hope to goodness the bailiff won't turn up. They look wild enough to lynch him."

Smash! went another egg, this time catching Mr. Jonas on his beaky nose. He dabbed at it frantically.

Then for a moment attention left Mr. Jonas, as there was a shout:

"Here's one of them!"

"One of whom, I wonder?" murmured Nugent.

The juniors stared round. A shiny-looking man with greasy features was wriggling in the grasp of two or three Little Puddletonians, squeaking with terror. Who he was, and what he had done, the hikers could not imagine; but the roar of wrath round about them soon enlightened them on that point. The greasy man, it seemed, was a buyer who had come to bid at the auction of Willyum Waggs' stock, doubtless unaware of the terrific state of public feeling in Little Puddleton and the vicinity. Anyhow, it was evident on his looks that he was now sorry that he had come.

"Have him out!"

"Stick him in the horse-pond!"

"Help! Police! Gentlemen—gentlemen!" shrieked the greasy man, as he was bundled headlong out of the barn and vanished from the sight of the hikers.

From the distance they heard a heavy splash. Evidently the greasy man had made acquaintance with the horse-pond of Little Puddleton.

"I say, this is rather thick!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"Here's another!" came a roar.

Another man was chased out of the barn, running as if for his life, his hat falling off as he flew.

"If I'm ever looking for bargains in beasts," remarked Bob Cherry, "I shan't come to an auction in Little Puddleton!"

The juniors chuckled.

They had rather wondered how Mr. Jonas expected to carry through a sale at all with public feeling in this excited state. Obviously no Little Puddletonian would have made a bid for the property of Willyum Waggs. But it seemed that buyers came from other parts—sharp men, looking for bargains; and no doubt, in the circumstances, the stock would have sold cheap enough to give them a good profit, if the sale had taken place at all. But with the prospective buyers chased and ducked, the bailiff unable to put in an appearance, and the auctioneer pelted with eggs, it was fairly clear that that sale would not take place.

More eggs were flying now; some playful sportsman seemed to have brought in a supply of them. They cracked all over Mr. Jonas.

He dodged and ducked, and shouted remonstrances and threats, giving an absurd impression of a fat man doing a song and dance.

There was loud laughter in the crowded barn. Friendly voices advised

Mr. Jonas to go. But the auctioneer was a resolute man and he declined to go. He was still waiting for Mr. Hunker to arrive with his men driving the beasts upon which distraint had been levied.

"Out of it, Jonas!" said a man in the doorway. "You won't see Hunker to-day. His car got tipped in a ditch somehow, and so did Hunker."

Mr. Jonas dabbed eggs and did not answer.

Harry Wharton & Co. were rather anxious to see him go. They could see, if Mr. Jonas could not, that excitement was growing, and that the auctioneer was likely to be severely handled if he did not go. As he refused to budge, the crowd surged closer round him, and he was pushed and shoved towards the doorway. There was a scuffle, and Mr. Jonas went out of the barn in the midst of a surging mob. Harry Wharton & Co. followed.

"Put him in the pond!" came a roar from the crowd.

"Police!" yelled Mr. Jonas.

"Bring him along!"

The hapless auctioneer struggled as he was hustled and hustled in the direction of the horse-pond. His hat fell off and was trampled on; his gold-rimmed glasses disappeared. The juniors caught sight of a group in the corner of the field; five or six men, sitting on something that wriggled. It was the policeman who had accompanied Mr. Jonas to Little Puddleton! Evidently there was no help for Mr. Jonas from that quarter.

With a roar the excited crowd swept towards the pond, the hapless auctioneer borne along in their midst.

It was a large pond, shallow and very muddy. There was a splash as the hapless fat man was hurled into it.

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"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

A dragged object stood up in the shallow water. An egg cracked on a beaky nose. Mr. Jonas dabbed water and mud from his face and spluttered wildly. He came splashing through the pond to the margin; but it was so plainly the intention of the crowd to throw him in again that he stopped, turned, and splashed away across the pond to the farther side. In the middle the water was up to his shoulders; but he splashed and spluttered on, squelched through mud, and emerged from the pond into the field beyond.

Yells and hoots followed him across the pond. Five or six of the younger fellows, lads of the village, began to run round the pond, obviously to collar Mr. Jonas and pitch him in again. Obstinate as he was, it was plain that Mr. Jonas had had enough by that time. He turned his podgy back on Little Puddleton and all its works, and started running across the field. Six or seven whooping pursuers went in chase. The fat man, going strong, disappeared through a gap in a hedge, and his pursuers disappeared after him.

"Oh gad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "This is frightfully excitin', you men! I hope they won't catch that johnny. I can't help thinkin' that he's had enough."

"I fancy that's his idea, too!" grinned Bob. "Never saw a man look more thoroughly fed-up. Suppose we follow on and see that they don't quite slaughter him! We've got to go that way, anyhow, to look for that fat villain Bunter."

"Let's!" agreed Harry Wharton.

And the Greyfriars hikers, at a trot, followed the way the chase had gone, which was in the direction of the distant haystack that marked the spot where they had lost Bunter. They crossed a couple of fields, and then met the lads of the village returning; the Little Puddletonians having given up the chase of the terrified auctioneer. Harry Wharton & Co., however, kept on their way to look for Bunter. Bunter had to be found before they could resume their march; and they promised him, when

they found him, as severe an experience as had fallen to the lot of the Chupham auctioneer.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Beastly for Bunter!

**B**ILLY BUNTER smiled a smile of fat contentment.

Bunter was enjoying life.

For the first time since he had started on the hike with Harry Wharton & Co., Bunter was feeling satisfied with things generally.

Every day the beasts had walked him off his legs, till to-day. Now Bunter had spent a happy morning asleep in the hay—which was Bunter's idea of a really enjoyable hike!

Probably he would have slept all day, but admonitions from the inner Bunter awakened him at lunch-time.

He woke up hungry.

In Johnny Bull's pack, which the fat Owl had so cunningly contrived to have landed on him, there were provisions.

Bunter was not long in unpacking them.

Sandwiches galore, and cold potatoes and radishes and corn beef and a cake—and a big bunch of bananas—almost enough for Bunter!

Bunter sat at ease in the hay and polished off the provisions to the last crumb.

He was almost satisfied when he had finished.

He leaned back luxuriously in the hay and grinned a satisfied grin. This was something like! A rest all the morning, a jolly good feed, to be followed by a rest all the afternoon. If hiking had always been on those lines Billy Bunter would have been an enthusiastic hiker!

He chuckled as he reflected on his fat astuteness.

Little as Bunter liked hiking, he did not want to part from the hikers. The alternative was going home, and after a week of the holidays at home Bunter was fed-up with the family circle—though not so thoroughly, perhaps, as the family circle were fed-up with Bunter!

But there was no danger of losing the

hikers. They couldn't go on without their outfit—so astutely bagged by Bunter! They would have to wait at Little Puddleton till he joined them—which would not be soon! He rather fancied that it would be in the cool of the evening—where was the sense of plugging along in a hot sun?

Likely enough, the brutes would propose going on in the evening, instead of going to bed at an inn like sensible chaps! But the astute Bunter had them there! They would have to come back to the haystack for their baggage! Bunter had no intention of carrying it with him to Little Puddleton when he went on. It was too heavy for him. He could leave it where it was, and get another rest in the village while the beasts fetched it. Then it would be too late to resume the march that night!

Bunter rather prided himself on being a brainy fellow. There was no doubt that he had given his fat brain a lot of exercise on this occasion. By sheer astuteness he had gained a whole day of laziness!

The warmth of the weather, the softness of the hay, and the enormous lunch he had parked in his podgy interior combined to induce slumber. Billy Bunter was going to have a nap—a long nap!

But he was cautious! Any minute those beasts might come back looking for him, and he did not want to be found.

Carefully he concealed the packs under loose hay. Then he concealed his own fat person under some more. Then, resting his weary head on a fat arm, he slid into balmy slumber. From under the hay came a whirring, rumbling sound—Bunter was asleep and snoring!

Several times during his feed he had blinked across the field, wondering whether a farmer or a farmer's man might come along and root him out. The stack was unfinished, and there were haycocks all over the field, sweet-scented in the sun. But he had seen nobody. Although Bunter was unaware of it, local industry was suspended on the Little Puddleton front that day on account of the "tithe war." He felt quite safe and secure when he went to sleep again.

But, as it happened, he was destined to be interrupted this time. Deep in balmy slumber, he did not hear hurried footsteps and panting breath in the field by the haystack. Had he been awake he would have been startled, and might have been alarmed, by the sight of a hatless, breathless, drenched, and muddy man who came plugging at a weary run across the field.

Mr. Jonas was making for the road to get back to Chupham. But his hectic experiences at Little Puddleton had told on him, and he was so fatigued that he could scarcely put one podgy leg before another.

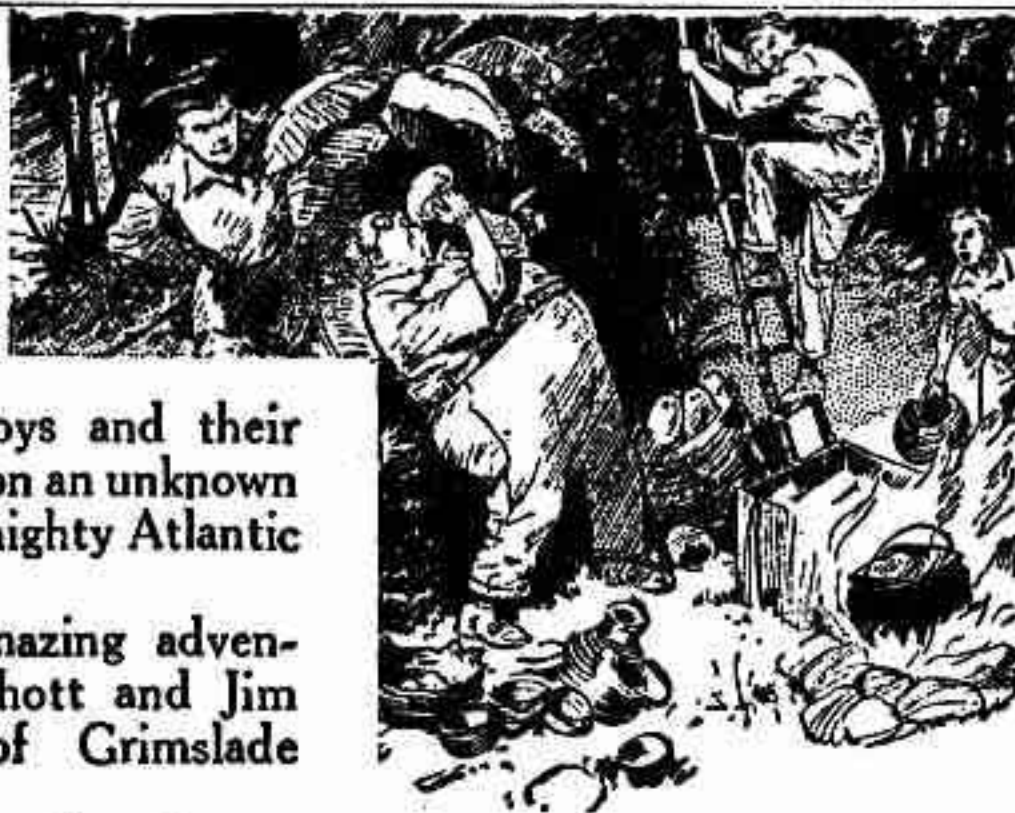
He stopped in the shadow of the unfinished stack, glad to get out of the blazing August sunshine and mop his perspiring brow.

He stared back across the fields in the direction of Little Puddleton.

He hoped that by that time the pursuit had been given up, and that he would be left in peace to walk his way homeward. As a matter of fact, the pursuit had been dropped several fields back—the Little Puddletonians had only chased Mr. Jonas to scare him away. But as he stared back he saw six figures coming across the field in the distance.

They were, as a matter of fact, the Greyfriars hikers. He had left his gold-rimmed glasses somewhere underfoot in Little Puddleton, and his vision was rather hazy. Six figures advancing from the direction from which pursuit had

## SIX SHIPWRECKED SCHOOLBOYS



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If you want a real treat, read Frank Richards' magnificent thrill-adventure story entitled "The Cheerio Castaways!" which appears in this week's seven-story issue of *The RANGER*.

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game meant pursuit to the hapless Chupham auctioneer. And he had not a run left in his podgy legs.

He groaned. He had hoped to get to the road and get home, or back to the car he had left on the other side of the village. Evidently there was no chance of that. Visions of being dragged back to Little Puddleton and ducked again in the horse-pond floated before the eyes of Mr. Jonas. But he could not run—his fat legs were almost dropping off already. Cover was the only resource—and the unfinished stack was at hand. Fifty years ago Mr. Jonas had played games, hiding himself in hay! Now, at a ripe age, he had to play the same game again!

There was plenty of loose hay about. All he could do was to cover himself with hay and hope for the best.

Arming himself with a pitchfork, which was near at hand, in case of emergency, Mr. Jonas took a last glance back across the field. The six figures were closer. They did not seem to be running—but they were coming steadily on!

Mr. Jonas leaped into the loose hay, hunting cover.

The next moment there was a fearful yell.

The loose hay heaved, as if an earthquake was going on beneath it.

Mr. Jonas started back in amazement and alarm. His foot had struck something as he leaped into the hay. He

was unaware, so far, that what he had struck was the fat face of William George Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove. There was something heaving and wriggling under his feet. Naturally he did not know that it was Billy Bunter.

"Urrgh! Ow! Yaroooooh! Beasts!" came a roar from under the hay. "Gerroff my tummy, you beast! Yarooooooop! I'm not here! I say, you fellows, gerroff my tummy! Yoooooop!"

"Gig-gig-goodness gig-gig-gracious!" stammered Mr. Jonas.

There was a heave under him, and he stumbled and sat down in hay. Then

(Continued on next page.)



# How's THAT Umpire?

The last of our popular articles on King Cricket appears below with "Umpire's" final batch of

personal replies. Readers who are interested in Soccer should look out for the special series of Soccer articles and replies to readers, which will appear in this paper next week.—EDITOR.

**W**HEN a cricket season—or a football season, for that matter—draws to a close, it is the custom to review the deeds of those giants of the game who have made up-to-date history. But what of the lesser lights, without whose help the famous players of the day could do little? They, too, have had their successes and have put in sterling work with bat or ball, or in the fielding department, which the cricketing public are too prone to overlook because they have their eyes on men like Hammond, Sutcliffe, Verity, or Freeman.

Take young Hollies, of Warwickshire, for example. Now, last season this promising young player was given one or two trials for his county—and took four wickets for a total of 321! Not very encouraging figures, those, you say? And that total number of runs was hit off only 76 overs! But young Hollies—and he was young—stuck to his guns, practising his leg-breaks until the county, who have great faith in a trier, gave him another chance this season.

*Their faith, and the player's perseverance, had its reward when Hollies quickly proved himself a bowler to be treated with respect by even the top-notch batsmen. That's the spirit which counts, in every class of cricket, as well as the county grade!*

In the same way, the "fashionable" counties like Yorkshire are apt to steal most of the "news" and the limelight. But what about teams like Essex, Glamorgan, or Kent? I saw Kent play Surrey at the Oval, just after they had beaten Hobbs & Co., at Blackheath. Now, the Oval seems to have some sort of a "hoodoo" over Chapman's men, who haven't won on Surrey's home ground for more years than I care to remember. After Surrey had made 482 for 8 in reply to Kent's first innings' total of 293—and Frank Woolley was back in the pavilion for a duck!—no real cricketer could have grumbled had the Kent men sat on the splice in an effort to save the game. Was that what happened? Not on your life! In company with several thousands of thrilled spectators, I sat and

watched Ashdown knock the cover off the ball in a glorious 178, Ames sent the fielders scurrying in a fearless 81, and Todd carried on the good work with a high-speed 52 not out. Anyone coming late into the Oval ground that afternoon might have imagined that the Kent men were racing against the clock to win, instead of fighting a game they were in grave danger of losing. That's Cricket, with a capital "C"!

*Winning or losing isn't the most important thing, after all, even in the County Championship. What counts is how you win, or how you go under.*

## THE BOWLER WHO ARGUED!

**I** REMEMBER playing last season—a side had asked me if I'd take the place of someone who hadn't turned up—and being treated to the sort of thing that should never happen on the cricket-field, or any other sporting field. We lost the toss, and were put in the field. Our fast bowler—he was rather loud-voiced, I recollect—got three quick wickets, then there was a stand. Nothing could dislodge the two batsmen, and twice our fast bowler appealed against one of them for l.b.w. Both appeals were dismissed by the umpire, who was one of the batting side—and our bowler became involved in a heated argument.

"I never appeal unless I'm sure the man's out!" he exclaimed. I thought that the umpire's retort was pretty snappy. "Don't you?" he said. "Well, I never give the man out unless I'm sure of the appeal!"

Talking of the l.b.w. decision, brings me to a query sent in by "Swerver," of Maidstone. "If a ball swerves into the wicket from outside the off or leg stump," he writes, "and hits the batsman's legs before it hits the ground, is the batsman out if he is in front of his wicket?"

*Provided the ball would have hit the stumps had it not been for the batsman's legs, most decidedly he is out. A ball swerving in from outside the off or leg stump is not the same as a ball which pitches outside the stumps.*

## FIELDING IS WORTH WHILE.

**D**ID you manage to see the West Indies at any time during their visit to this country? I saw them more than once, and one fact impressed me about their displays. Never mind whether or not they were really up to "England" standard, or if they did or did not give our men a hard fight in the Test matches—they did, as it happens! To have seen the dusky-skinned team in the field was to have seen a team on its toes; it was an object-lesson in team-spirit and keenness. George Headley may have carried off the honours with his flashing blade; the English bowlers may have been too much for the rest of the team as a whole; but in the field every man was out to do or die. As a matter of fact, fielding is one of the joys of the summer game.

*It's all very well to hit a six or to send the middle stump flying, but does it beat that great feeling that comes to the man who stops a red-hot drive that would have gone for a certain four?*

I don't think so. The man who makes 6 with the bat, and saves 30 in the field, is worth his place every time!

Here's a cricket "poser" which will stump your pals in nine cases out of ten. A batsman plays a ball hard along the ground towards cover-point. It is a splendid stroke, made in classical style. He does not move from his crease, he isn't caught, he does not hit his wicket in making the stroke, and yet he is out! How was that?

That problem will keep 'em guessing—and when they give it up you can supply the answer by informing them that, being injured, the batsman was allowed a runner. Since the runner called the man at the other end for a run, and just failed to get home, the batsman for whom he was running was out.

I was somewhat surprised to have the following question from W. S. B., of Southend. "If a batsman hits the ball in the air, and is in the middle of his second run when the fielder holds the catch, how many runs are added to the score?" That's an old "stumper" which I thought was now generally known.

*The answer, W. S. B., is that only completed runs are added to the score. If, for instance, the ball was hit so high that the batsmen were running their third run, two would go on the scoreboard. It is not enough for the batsmen to have crossed in mid-wicket, as W. S. B. seems to think—they must actually have finished the run by grounding their bats in the respective popping-creases.*

"UMPIRE."

from the loose hay rose a fat and excited face.

"Beast!" roared Billy Bunter.

"Who—what—what—" stuttered Mr. Jonas.

"Yah! Rotter! Beast!"

"Who—what—"

"Ow! I've got a pain! You trod on my tummy! Wow!" yelled Bunter. "Oh lor'! Oh crikey! Beast!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a roar across the field. "I know that jolly old voice! That's Bunter!"

And the Greyfriars hikers came on at a run, reached the gap in the haystack, and stared at Mr. Jonas and Billy Bunter in amazement.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter Knows How!

"BUNTER!"

"The esteemed and idiotic Bunter!"

"You fat rascal!"

"Got him!"

"Jump on him!"

All the Famous Five had something to say, and they all said it at once. Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles in dismay. Mr. Jonas blinked at them, minus his spectacles, in relief. At close range he could see that the hikers were not Little Puddle-tonians on the warpath. His terrors of the horse-pond left him, and he leaned on the hay, panting.

Bunter pressed both hands to his fat equator, where the auctioneer had trodden and gasped and gurgled.

"I say, you fellows, I've got a fearful pain! I say, I wasn't hiding in the hay, you know! I say, I was just coming on—I—I—I was just going to start! I wasn't asleep when that beast trod on me and woke me up."

"Scrag him!" said Bob Cherry.

"Jump on him!" roared Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter—in spite of his fearful pain—jumped out of the hay and dodged. Perhaps his pain was not so fearful, after all. The Famous Five rushed after him. The packs were still hidden deep in the hay, and the hikers did not see them; besides, they were thinking only of Bunter for the moment.

Lord Mauleverer, however, gave a kindly thought to the gasping auctioneer.

"You're all right, sir!" said Mauly politely. "Those sportsmen turned back—nobody after you now."

"Thank goodness!" gasped Mr. Jonas.

"You—you are sure they are not in sight?"

"Quite sure, sir!"

"Oh, thank goodness!"

Mr. Jonas detached himself from the haystack and stared across the field. Then he started for the road near at hand. A car was coming along the road, driven by a tall, thin man whose face seemed to be moulded in iron, so hard were the features. He was driving slowly, looking about as if in search of somebody; and Mr. Jonas, sighting him, waved a fat hand and shouted:

"Stop! Here, Hunker! Stop!"

Mr. Hunker, the bailiff of Chupham, halted the car, and Mr. Jonas panted across to him. He was stepping through the gap in the hedge to the road when something struck him in the back like a cannon-ball.

It was Billy Bunter—in frantic flight from the hikers.

"Oh!" roared Mr. Jonas.

He pitched forward into the road, landing on his hands and knees.

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"Wow!" gasped Bunter.

He rolled after Mr. Jonas, and landed on his back.

Harry Wharton & Co., grinning, followed him through the gap in the hedge, and surrounded him. The fat junior lay gasping on his back, a good deal like a captured turtle.

"I say, you fellows!" he gurgled.

"Got him!"

"Squash him!"

"Spifficate him!"

"The spiffication is the proper caper!"

"Keep off, you beasts!" howled Bunter. "What have I done, I'd like to know? I haven't been stopping to rest! I haven't been asleep! I was wide awake when I woke up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Hunker, with a faint grin on his iron face, stepped from the car and gave Mr. Jonas a hand up. The auctioneer gave Bunter an expressive look, and then leaned on the car, panting. Mr. Jonas' experiences that day had been such as seldom fall to the lot of a rural auctioneer. Mr. Hunker, too, looked as if he had had a rather hectic time. His car was smothered with mud, and he was muddy himself, from head to foot. Both looked as if they had been in a ditch—as, in fact, they had!

"Fine goings on!" said Mr. Hunker, in a deep, growling voice. "I've heard that they were ducking you, Jonas!"

"They did—they did!" gasped Mr. Jonas. "I've lost my hat! And my glasses! I'm drenched! Goodness gracious! The excitement in Little Puddle-ton to-day is extraordinary! I cannot account for it."

Harry Wharton & Co. glanced round, smiling, at the Chupham auctioneer, as he made that remark. Evidently, Mr. Jonas regarded the selling-up of Willyum Waggs as all in the day's work. But it seemed to the juniors rather natural for Willyum himself to get a little excited about it.

"Did you get the beasts?" added Mr. Jonas.

"I did not!" said Mr. Hunker, in his deep, growling voice. "My car was tipped in a ditch! I was tipped after it! I walked to Waggs' Farm! The beasts had been driven off! Nothing to seize! That's the game they generally play when they get news that the bailiff is coming, of course! They drive off the beasts to somebody else's fields. There will be a dozen summonses for assault over this affair!"

Mr. Hunker snorted.

"After I'd left, some of them helped me to get the car out of the ditch," he said. "Look at it! Look at me!"

"Give me a lift to Chupham!" gasped Mr. Jonas. "I'm through! No more tithe sales for me! Never!"

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Hunker. "The beasts will be driven back now it's over. I shall seize them, according to the order of the court. I have already made my arrangements. I shall not let Waggs know when I am coming—I shall take care of that, this time! Get in the car."

The iron-faced man helped Mr. Jonas into the car, and drove away with him.

Bob Cherry stared after him.

"Poor old Willyum!" he said. "I don't know Mr. Waggs, but I can't help feeling rather sorry for him. That man Hunker looks a tough customer."

"I suppose he's doing his duty," said Harry, "but it seems rather rough on poor old Waggs! But we haven't slaughtered Bunter yet."

"I—I say, you fellows." Bunter sat up and set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose. "I say, no larks, you know! I've got a pain in my tummy where that fat man trod on me. I say, if you fellows can't behave yourselves

I shall jolly well throw you over, and refuse to keep on the hike with you at all."

"Oh, my hat! What a calamity!" gasped Bob Cherry. "If you have tears, you fellows, prepare to shed them now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I mean it," said Bunter, heaving himself to his feet. "I'm not standing this sort of hooliganism, I can tell you. If you want me to hike with you—"

"If!" chuckled Bob.

"The if-fulness is preposterous."

"You might be grateful, at least, to a fellow for carrying practically all the baggage," said Bunter. "But it's always the same! I do all the work—and what thanks do I get? None!"

"Scrag him!"

"Oh, let's get on!" said Harry Wharton. "We've found the fat villain, anyhow! Lucky that man Jonas trod on him in the hay—we might have had to look for him for hours! Come on! We're going to do eight miles this afternoon."

"Eight miles!" gasped Bunter.

"Or ten—"

"Beast!"

"Where's the baggage?" demanded Bob. "That's what we want—and you can roll on astern or not, just as you please. We want the packs."

"The—the packs!" repeated Bunter.

A sly gleam came into the fat Owl's eyes, behind his spectacles. He realised that the hikers had not spotted the packs, which he had hidden deep in the hay. Eight miles that afternoon did not appeal to Bunter in the least. Eight yards would have been enough for him, or a little too much. Billy Bunter did not mean to deprive the hikers of his fascinating company. Neither did he intend to do eight miles if he could help it.

"Well, where are the packs?" demanded Bob.

"They—they're gone!" gasped Bunter.

"Gone?" yelled the hikers.

"Yes, I—I tipped a carter to carry them for me." Truth and Billy Bunter had long been strangers, and he was not thinking of striking up an acquaintance with truth now. "A man named Thompson—he was going into Little Puddle-ton with his cart, so I got him to carry the packs."

"You lazy, slacking, fat villain!" roared Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry! It's all right—you've only got to ask for Robinson at the village—"

"Robinson?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes, the carter's name was Robinson—George Robinson! You'll find him all right in the village."

"You said Thompson a minute ago!"

"I—I mean Thompson, George Thompson. I—I wonder what made me say Robinson?" gasped Bunter. "Of course, I mean Johnson—that is, Thompson. Fred Thompson—he told me his name—I asked him specially!"

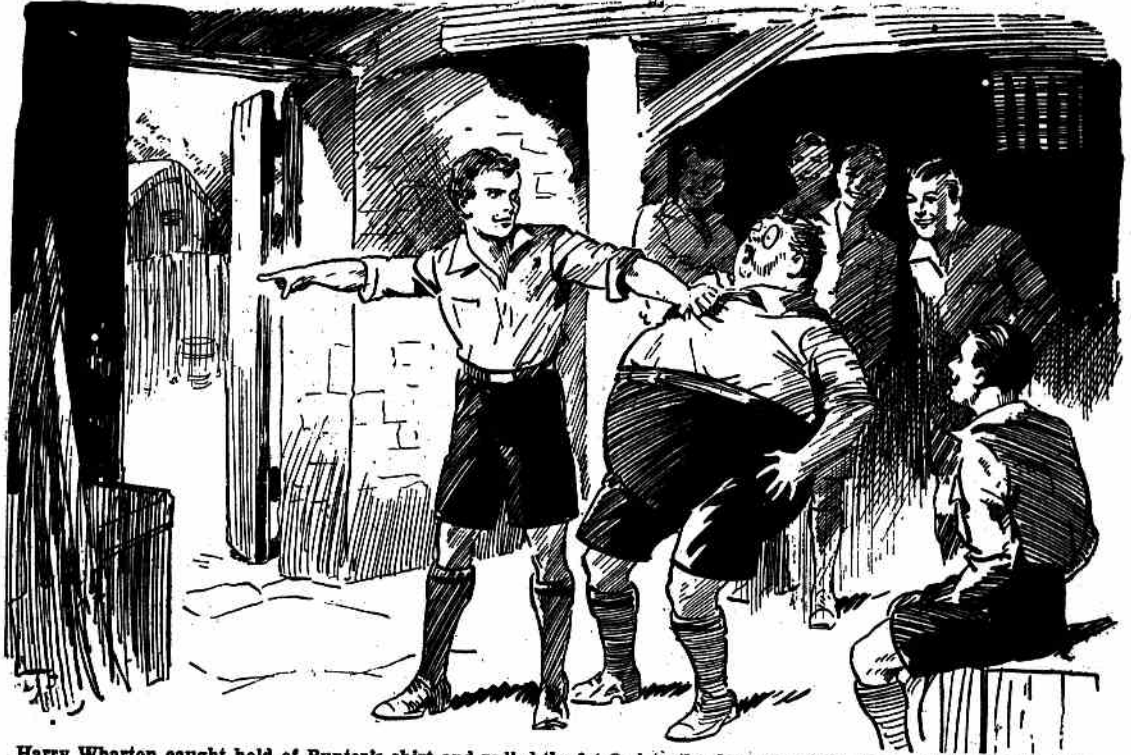
"He told you his name was George and Fred Thompson?"

"Yes—George Fred Thompson! Ask for him at Little Puddle-ton, and he will hand them over. If you're ready to start, I—"

The hiker looked at Bunter as if they could have eaten him.

"Oh, let's get on!" said Harry. "We shall find the man in the village, I suppose! Look here, Bunter, you'd better keep up with us this time—if you're not on the spot when we get the packs you'll be left behind, and you can go an eat coke! See?"

"Easy enough for me to keep up, I fancy," sneered Bunter. "Who's the best walker in this party, I'd like to know?"



Harry Wharton caught hold of Bunter's shirt and pulled the fat Owl to the doorway of the barn. "Go and fetch those packs!" he said. "And if you show up without them, you'll get kicked!" "I—I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter. "How can I fetch the packs when I sent them on by a tramp—I mean, three gigantic carters snaffed them—I mean to say—

"Oh, kick him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yaroooooooh!"  
"Come on!" said Harry, and the juniors started. They walked across the fields again to get back to Little Puddleton.

Billy Bunter blinked after them through his big spectacles. He chuckled. "He, he, he!"

At Little Puddleton the hikers had the happy task of inquiring for a non-existent carter, named Thompson. That task was likely to keep them busy for quite a long time. Billy Bunter was going to get his rest, after all. He got it! As the hikers disappeared across the meadows, Billy Bunter rolled back to his bed in the hay, rested his head on one of the packs which the hikers had gone to the village to find, and closed his eyes once more in balmy slumber. And once more his fat snore awoke the echoes of the Sussex meadows.

**THE NINTH CHAPTER.**

**Sold Again!**

"**B**IT of a change!" remarked Bob Cherry, as the hikers walked into Little Puddleton in the golden August afternoon.

It was more than a "bit" of a change! The wild excitement in the Sussex village had died out—gigs and carts and traps were gone; the crowd had dispersed—only two or three old villagers were hanging about the Barley Mow; and the ancient waiter, with nothing else to do, was swatting flies with a newspaper two days old. The "war" on the Little Puddleton front, evidently, was over for the time. Quiet and sleepy, Little Puddleton seemed to be dozing in the summer sunshine.

"The changefulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"The preposterous fury of combativeness has been subsideed by the esteemed wings of peace, and the improvetfulness is atrocious."

"Now we've got to find Thompson," said Harry Wharton. He glanced back from the village street to the meadows. "No sign of Bunter—the fat slacker is still lagging behind."

"Let him lag!" said Johnny Bull. "We're jolly well going on as soon as we get the packs, and Bunter can lag all he likes!"

"That's settled!" agreed the captain of the Greyfriars Remove. "But we've got to find the carter who brought on the packs. They may be able to tell us at the Barley Mow."

The juniors went into the inn. Old Anthony, the waiter, was willing to oblige with information.

"Thompson!" he repeated, scratching his white whiskers thoughtfully. "Know the name? I should say so, sir! There's three Thompsons in Little Puddleton, and seven—no, eight—over at Much Puddleton, as well as more'n a dozen at Puddleton-by-Poke. And down at Claybank-under-Tootles there's about—"

"Hold on!" interrupted Harry Wharton hastily. "One Thompson will be enough, if it's the right one. The one we want is a carter."

"That'll be young Tom," said the waiter. "'Cause why, sir, young Tom Thompson started with the cart that he bought from Herbert Giles, last Candlemas. No, it was before Candlemas—the day Mr. Giles' cow was taken that bad, that he had to send for the vet from Chupham—"

"Where can we find young Tom?" inquired Wharton, not deeply interested in the sad state of Mr. Giles' cow.

"Well, I don't know that you'll find him to-day at all," said the old gentleman, "seeing as how he has a job at

Hogford-under-the-Bank, and went off first thing this morning with his cart."

Evidently young Tom was not the Thompson required.

"Is there a George Thompson in the place?" asked Harry.

"Yes," said old Anthony, "if you mean the one with the club foot—!" He nodded seriously to the inquiring hikers. "I mind the time, sir, when young George's life was saved by that club foot. There was six of them, sir; and five of them went to the War; and young George, he says, in the bar of this very inn, sir, he says—"

"Yes, but—"  
"They never came back from them foreign parts, sir," said the old man, shaking his head. "But George, you see, couldn't go, along of that club foot. So here he still is, at Little Puddleton; and I says to him, more'n once, 'That club foot's saved your life, George!' And he says: 'That's more'n your fat 'ead will ever do for you, Anthony!' And I says, George, I says—"

"Is he a carter?"  
"No, he ain't a carter," said Anthony. "He works at the black-smith's. You'll find him at the forge, if you go along by Waggs' barn and turn down where they've been cutting the firs, and keep on as far as Giles' pond, and then—"

"It's a carter we want!"  
"That'll be young Tom! But he's over at Hogford-under-the-Bank—"

"Isn't there another carter named Thompson here?"

"Well, there's Albert, does a bit of work at times with a cart," said old Anthony, dubiously. "But I believe he's at the haying to-day."

"Might be Robinson," said Bob.

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

"That idiot Bunter didn't seem sure about the name. Any Robinsons here?"

"I've never heard of more'n one," said old Anthony. "But he ain't a carter. He's Mr. Waggs' 'orseman, he is."

"Look here, a fellow with us sent some baggage on, by a carter, this morning, whose name is very likely Thompson," said Harry. "Heard or seen anything of him?"

"Can't say I have," said old Anthony, shaking his head. "Might it be young Frank?"

"Shouldn't wonder. Where's young Frank?" asked Wharton, almost in despair.

"He drives Mr. Waggs' 'aycart. You'd find him on Mr. Waggs' farm, any time, when he ain't a-driving of the cart."

By this time the informing conversation of the old waiter of the Barley Mow had palled on the hikers. They decided to root up and down Puddleton looking for that carter themselves.

The villagers of Little Puddleton were polite and obliging, and willing to give information. Unfortunately, they had none to give. This, of course, was accounted for by the fact that Billy Bunter hadn't sent the packs on to the village at all. But as yet the hikers did not guess that. Up and down and round about Little Puddleton they went, inquiring here and inquiring there, but getting no news of the missing baggage.

Finally, as the afternoon was wearing on, they had tea at the Barley Mow, and then started again. This time they decided to walk to Waggs' Farm and ascertain whether it was "young Frank" who had given the baggage that lift. They were beginning to suspect, by this time, that there was a "catch" somewhere, for a carter bringing in the baggage would naturally have landed it at the village inn. On the other hand, in the excitement and confusion that had reigned in Little Puddleton that morning, he might have done almost anything with it. Waggs' Farm seemed the last chance of getting on the track of that elusive baggage. They were rather interested, too, to make the acquaintance of Mr. William Waggs, on the subject of whose beasts the "tithe war" was raging on the Little Puddleton front. Passing the big barn where the tithe sale had failed to come off, they followed a cart-track to a gate, beyond which lay gardens and a pleasant-looking red-tiled farmhouse.

An old gentleman in a white hat was trimming rows of peas, in sight of the gate. They were green peas, and evidently growing well, for every now and then the old fellow passed a few into his mouth and munched them, eating them raw. The hikers lined the gate and looked at him, wondering whether the place was Waggs' Farm and the old fellow the redoubtable Willyum. He looked an exceedingly peaceful old gentleman to be the cause

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of the terrific excitement the hikers had witnessed that morning.

Becoming aware of their existence, the gentleman in the white hat turned towards the hikers, nodded, and touched his white hat in polite salute. As he was too far off for easy conversation the Greyfriars fellows passed through the gateway and approached him.

"Mr. Waggs?" asked Harry.

"Roight!" said the old gentleman.

"Then this is Waggs' Farm?"

"Roight again!" said Mr. Waggs encouragingly.

"You've got a man—a carter—named Thompson?"

"Roight!"

"Can you tell us whether he brought in some baggage this morning?"

"I should say not," answered Mr. Waggs.

"Sure?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Well, nigh sure," said Mr. Waggs.

"You see, young Frank ain't been out with the cart to-day. I sent him with the cattle over to the Three-Acre Meadow, on Smithson's land, when I heard that the tithers were coming."

"Oh!" said the hikers.

Mr. Waggs stated that he was "nigh" sure that young Frank hadn't brought in the baggage. Evidently, he was a cautious old gentleman. He really might have been quite sure, in the circumstances!

"Well, that's that!" said Nugent.

"Looks as if we shall have to say goodbye to the packs! Bunter's trusted them to a stranger, who may have carted them off goodness knows where."

"We can't go on without them," said Bob.

"Did Bunter send them on at all?" exclaimed Harry, a sudden suspicion awakening in his mind. "Was he pulling our leg, the fat scoundrel? He hasn't turned up yet—and he jolly well doesn't mean to leave us!"

"Oh crumbs!" exclaimed Bob. "If he's diddled us again—"

"The diddlefulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Bunter has pulled our leg once morefully."

"I'll bet he had them there all the time, out of sight in that hay!" said Bob. "Just fooling us about, while he took another snooze!"

"What a brain!" murmured Lord Mauleverer.

The hikers gazed at one another with intense feelings. Lord Mauleverer was smiling, perhaps not anxious to exert himself on the open road. But the Famous Five were feeling deeply exasperated. Now that they thought of it—rather late in the day—they had little doubt that the astute Owl had spoofed them once more, and that the packs never had been sent on to Little Puddleton. Bunter was prepared to let them spend the afternoon hunting for the packs that weren't there, while he rested in the hay! It was exasperating to active hikers, who did not want to linger long, even in so pleasant a spot as Little Puddleton.

"Ever see peas like them?" asked Mr. Waggs. "Taste 'em!"

Mr. Waggs, clearly, was proud of his peas. He had reason to be. The hikers politely tasted them, and agreed that they were wonderful.

"Main crop, these are!" Mr. Waggs told them. "You should have come along in May, and seen my earlies! You should that!"

Mr. Waggs nodded solemnly, evidently feeling that the hikers had lost a great deal by not coming along in May and seeing his earlies.

"Well, I'm blessed if I know what to do, except to burst Bunter when we see him again," said Harry. "It's a

bit late for starting again now; and we've not got the packs yet. What about camping?"

"Good idea!" said Lord Mauleverer at once.

His lordship was always ready to fall in with a proposal for camping.

"May as well," said Nugent. "We must have walked miles and miles up and down the village this afternoon, inquiring for Thompson, and—my hat!—there never was a Thompson at all! That villain Bunter—"

"Hiking?" asked Mr. Waggs.

Evidently they had seen and heard of hikers, even in that remote spot.

"That's it!" said Harry. "We're going to look for a camp. Will you let us camp in one of your meadows? We will pay, of course!"

Mr. William Waggs looked at him thoughtfully.

"Better not camp in a medder," he said. "You're welcome, if you loike, but if you take my advice, you won't camp in a medder."

"Why not?" asked Harry.

Mr. Waggs pointed to the sky. The juniors looked up at the bright, blue summer sky in wonder. They did not guess for the moment what the old farmer meant. Then Bob Cherry "tumbled" to his meaning.

"Rain?" he asked.

"Roight!" said Mr. Waggs.

"It doesn't look much like rain," said Nugent.

"Nor it don't," agreed Mr. Waggs.

"But you think it will rain?"

"Roight!" said Mr. Waggs.

"Oh, my hat! And we haven't the tent!" murmured Bob.

To the hikers it did not look like rain, but they had no doubt that the gnarled old gentleman knew what he was talking about.

"Why not camp in the barn?" asked Mr. Waggs.

"Jolly good idea, if we may," said Harry, smiling.

"Whoy not?" said Mr. Waggs stolidly.

"It's empty, and won't be wanted till next week, unless Mr. Jonas wants it for a sale." He gave a dry chuckle. "Coom up to the house at half-past eight and have sooper. Whoy not?"

"You're very kind!" said Harry gratefully.

"Roight!" said Mr. Waggs.

"Then, if we may, we'll camp in the barn."

"Roight!" said Mr. Waggs. Whoy not?"

And the Greyfriars hikers camped in the barn.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Supper for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

A fat, warm, red, and irritated face, and a large pair of spectacles glimmered in the doorway of Waggs' Barn. It was now past eight o'clock, and the summer sun was setting over the Sussex downs.

The hikers had camped very comfortably in the big barn—the scene of so much excitement that morning, now extremely calm and peaceful. They had fetched water from the pump, and washed off the dust of the roads, and had made themselves neat and tidy for the visit to the farmhouse, where the hospitable Mr. Waggs had asked them to "sooper."

They liked Mr. Waggs, and liked their surroundings, and were not sorry, on the whole, that they were camping for the night at Little Puddleton. It was undoubtedly a very pleasant spot, with the wide hayfields red in the sunset, and

the green downs in the distance. They had watched Mr. Waggs' "beasts" driven back from the three-acre field on Smithson's land to their native meadow—the "beasts" that Mr. Jonas had been going to sell by auction that day if Mr. Hunker had succeeded in "seizing" them. Now they were in the barn, putting final touches to their toilet, when Billy Bunter blew in.

Bunter did not look good-tempered. He blinked wrathfully and reproachfully at the Greyfriars hikers.

"I say, you fellows, I've found you!" hooted Bunter. "I've been all over the place asking after you. I expected to find you at the inn, of course. What are you doing here?"

"Camping, fathead!"

"Well, I'd prefer to put up at the inn," grunted Bunter. "Look here, get out of this rotten barn, and let's put up at the inn. I'll pay the bill, if that's what's worrying you," added Bunter scornfully.

"Who's going to lend Bunter the money to pay the bill?" inquired Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, one of you fellows would have to lend me the money, as I've left mine at home at Bunter Court. I suppose you can trust me with a few pounds? Look here, I said I'd prefer to stop at the inn."

"Passed unanimously," said Bob. "We'd all prefer you to stop at the inn, old fat bean. Get going! We're camping here."

"Well, if you're camping here, I suppose I'd better camp, too," grunted the Owl of the Remove. "You might have left word where a fellow could find you. I've been an hour finding where you were."

Bunter rolled into the barn. The hikers gathered round him. Bunter had arrived, but there was no sign of the packs.

"What have you got for supper?" asked Bunter. Apparently it was supper that had drawn Billy Bunter to Little Puddleton. "I can tell you, I'm frightfully hungry!"

"Never mind supper," said Harry. "Where are the packs?"

"Eh?"

Bunter did not seem to be thinking of the packs. Naturally, he was thinking of supper. He had had a long and luxurious rest in the hay, and it was only a growing void in his capacious interior that had driven him to exertion at last and caused him to roll into Little Puddleton in search of the hikers. Now he wanted supper, and wanted it bad.

"What have you done with them?" roared Johnny Bull. "You never sent them on by a carter, you fat spoofer!"

Bunter grinned for a moment.

"Have you left them a mile away?" demanded Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I suppose you don't imagine that I could carry all that stuff miles and miles? They're all right. Nobody will find them in the hay. Besides, I sent them on by a carter, as I told you—"

"Collar him!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Here, I say, you fellows! Yaroooh! yelled Bunter, as the hikers collared him. "I say, stop kicking me, you beasts! Wow! If you bang my head on the door again, I'll— Yaroooooop! I say, you fellows, it was only a joke. Can't you take a—whooooop!—joke? Yaroooooh! I should have sent them on by a carter if I'd seen a carter, but I didn't, so— Yow-ow-ow!"

"If that fat scoundrel's left the packs a mile away, we'll make him go back and fetch them in," said Johnny Bull.

"Hear, hear!"

"I—I haven't!" gasped Bunter. "Leggo! I say, you fellows, I'm sorry

about those packs, but the fact is, a tramp got them."

"A tramp got them?" yelled Bob.

"Yes. Got them off me and bolted," said Bunter. "I—I fought like a lion! But they were too strong for me—"

"They?"

"Yes, I fought with both of them—"

"Both one tramp?" shrieked Bob.

"Eh? I mean, there were two tramps—that is to say, three!" gasped Bunter. "Three hulking fellows—gigantic, in fact. I might have handled two of them, but three were too many for me. I fought like anything! But—but they got the packs away and—and ran. I chased them for miles—"

"Oh crikey!"

"And now I come in tired and hungry, and there isn't any supper ready. I think you fellows might have got supper ready."

Harry Wharton caught hold of Bunter's shirt and pulled the fat Owl to the doorway of the barn.

"Go and fetch those packs!" he said.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Don't show up again without them. You'll get kicked if you do!"

"Hard!" said Bob Cherry.

"The hardness will be terrific!"

"I—I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter, "how can I fetch the packs

In the farmhouse they met Mr. Waggs again, and Mrs. Waggs, a plump and buxom and hospitable dame, who, however, had a slight expression of haunting worry on her plump, kind face. The hikers thought they could guess the reason. The "tithe war" worried Mrs. Waggs more than it did Willyum. She was distressed by the circumstance that her good man was on the wrong side of the law. There was little doubt that Mrs. Waggs was right, for the law, whether in strict accordance with justice or not, was certain to be too strong for Willyum in the long run. The hikers, grateful to Willyum for his kind hospitality, could not help feeling rather concerned about him, too.

Mr. Waggs, however, was in very cheerful spirits. He told the hikers all about his green peas—earlies, second earlies, and main crop—also about his beets, which, it appeared, were coming on splendidly. "Proices," it seemed, were not so satisfactory as the crops; but Willyum lived in hope that the Government would do something about that. He hoped that they would do something about the tithes, too! Evidently Willyum had a hopeful nature. He called them "toithes," and plainly did not like them a little bit.

"Taking a man's beasties for toithes!" said Willyum, in tones of thrilling indignation.

"But it's the law, Willyum!" said Mrs. Waggs.

"Law!" said Willyum. "Man and boy, I've farmed this land for fifty year! All my loife toithes went with the price of corn—oop one year, down another! Then they fixes them permanent—in a year when corn is hoigh! Law!"

Mr. Waggs snorted.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked a fat voice.

The hikers jumped, and forgot all about the tithes.

"Found you again," said Billy Bunter genially, as he rolled in. "I say, you forgot to mention that you were having supper at the farmhouse. Lucky I was keeping an eye on you, what? Good-evening, sir—good-evening, ma'am!"

"Friend of yours?" asked Mr. Waggs. "Sit down, young gentleman! Why not?"

The hikers looked at Bunter. He grinned at them.

Evidently, at the hospitable supper-table of Mr. Waggs, Bunter could not be dealt with as he deserved.

Secure in that happy knowledge, Billy Bunter sat down to supper.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Night Attack!

**P**ATTER! Patter! Patter!  
It was the rain on the roof.  
"Willyum was right!" remarked Bob Cherry.  
"Right as rain!" said Nugent, with a grin.

Evidently Mr. Waggs knew the weather signs. After supper the hikers walked back to the barn to camp for the night; and then the rain started. It came down hard and fast. Water ran in streams down the sloping roof of the barn, and pattered and trickled outside.

"Not a night to camp out!" said Harry. "Thank goodness Waggs offered us the barn! He's a jolly good old chap."

"One of the best," said Bob. "I suppose we can't roll Bunter out in the rain?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"We'll make him fetch the packs before brekker," said Harry Wharton. "We've got the things we need with us,

**CAN YOU RHYME?**

For sending in the following  
Greyfriars limerick, Dennis  
Bunting of 2, Heanor Road, Loscoe,  
Derbyshire, has been awarded a  
useful

**LEATHER POCKET WALLET**

Said Loder to Carne, with a grin:  
"To-night I'll slip down to the  
inn."  
But, indeed as he ought,  
Gerald Loder was caught.  
And now every day he stops in!

**NOW YOU HAVE A TRY,  
CHUM!**

when I sent them on by a tramp—I mean, three gigantic carters snaffed them—I mean to say— Whoooooop!"

A boot landed behind Bunter and helped him out of the barn. He sat down and roared.

"Now cut!" said Johnny Bull. "And don't come back without the packs."

"Yow-ow-ow! I say, you fellows, they're quite safe, hidden in the hay," gasped Bunter. "You can fetch them in the morning before we start. I—I'll help you if you like. There!"

"Are you going?"

"Oh, you awful rotters!" groaned Bunter. "I say, I'll go after them after supper. I—I meant to all along, you know. I'm hungry."

"Gather round," said Bob, "and all kick together!"

"Yaroooooh!"

Billy Bunter squirmed away, picked himself up, and dodged round the barn. The hikers went back into the building. A minute later a fat face and a large pair of spectacles looked round the door.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Collar him!" roared Johnny Bull.

There was a rush to the door. But Billy Bunter was gone before the hikers reached it. This time he did not reappear.

Nothing was seen of Bunter when the Greyfriars hikers left the barn to walk up to the farmhouse to supper. They concluded that he had made up his fat mind to fetch the packs from the haystack.

anyhow. I'd rather be in this barn than in the tent to-night."

"Yes, rather!"

"The rafterfulness is terrific."

"Well, but for me you'd be in the tent," said Bunter. "You might thank a chap! I don't expect you to, of course—I've given up expecting anything like gratitude from you fellows. Still, there it is."

"Kill him, somebody!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows, that was a jolly good supper," said Bunter. "They grow all the stuff on the farm, you know—no foreign muck. I say, what about camping here for a few days—say a week? Save money, you know! Not that I care much about money—it's not my way—but you fellows keep on making a fuss about it. Only yesterday you were grouching because you had to pay for the ginger-pop. And look at the fuss you made over that taxi fare the other day! Well, if you want to do this hike cheap, let's camp here. I heard that old jossler, Waggs, tell you that he wouldn't think of charging you anything, Wharton."

"What?"

"Well, if he's not going to charge anything, why not stay on?" asked Bunter. "The grub's good, and we shan't have to pay for it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"We can wait till he gets fed-up before we clear!" explained Bunter. "I dare say we could stick him for a whole week. He looks a jolly good-natured old fossil."

The hikers gazed at Bunter in the lantern-light that illuminated the barn. He blinked at them inquiringly.

"Well, what about it?" he asked.

"You fellows would never have thought of it, of course! I think of things!"

"Yes, that's the kind of thing you would think of, you—you octopus!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Bunter may be in danger if he stays here over to-morrow!" remarked Frank Nugent thoughtfully.

"Eh? Wharrer you mean?" exclaimed the fat Owl. "How should I be in danger?"

"There's a bailiff coming to-morrow to seize the beasts! He's bound to pick out the fattest beasts! If he gets hold of you—"

"You silly idiot!" yelled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!" anorted Bunter. And he went to bed. Evidently his brilliant suggestion of "sticking" the hospitable Mr. Waggs till he got fed-up, was not going to be adopted by the hikers.

Ground-sheets were spread on straw, of which there was plenty at hand; and the hikers rolled themselves in their blankets. Billy Bunter had put in a good deal of sleep that day; but sleeping was one of the things that Bunter could do really well; and he was snoring before the other campers nodded off. Soon, however, they were all asleep, while the rain pattered on the roof through the dark hours.

It was nearly midnight when, if the hikers had been awake, they might have heard a sound at the door of the barn.

But they were fast asleep; and did not hear the door unlatched and opened, nor feel the drift of rain that came in on the night wind.

A gleam of light came through the dark, wandering about the dark interior of the barn. It came from an electric torch.

"They're here!"

It was a low whisper.

"Get inside, Pon! This dashed rain is goin' down my dashed neck!"

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"Quiet!"

Three shadowy figures stole into the barn.

"Mind you don't tread on the brutes!" whispered Cecil Ponsonby. "They're too many for us if you wake them up."

"What-ho!" murmured Gadsby.

"Better leave the door open. If we have to bolt—"

"Quiet!"

Ponsonby flashed the light over the sleeping figures of the hikers. He had to pick out Bob Cherry, the proprietor of the disputed Holiday Annual. It was easy enough to pick out Bunter, by his snore; but with the other fellows, it was not so easy to distinguish one from another.

Gadsby and Monson remained near the door. They were glad to get in out of the rain; but they were rather anxious to have a line of retreat open, and to have it close at hand.

Ponsonby crept on tiptoe towards the sleepers.

Gaddy and Monson were only half-hearted in undertaking that midnight raid; but Pon was savagely determined. Gaddy and Monson were thinking of their comfortable beds at the Barley Mow, where the Highcliffians had put up for the night. But Pon, as usual, had his way; and here they were, on the warpath. They had learned from old Anthony, the waiter, that the Greyfriars hikers were camping in Waggs' barn; and they had waited till a late hour to make sure that the campers were asleep. They were sleeping soundly enough now; and all Pon had to do was to pick out Bob Cherry and his rucksack, in which the Holiday Annual was packed. Softly, silently, he passed from one sleeping form to another, peering at the unconscious faces in the beam of the electric torch, Gadsby and Monson watching him from the door.

Bob Cherry's mop of flaxen hair glimmered in the light. Ponsonby came to a stop. That mop of flaxen hair rested on a rucksack, which Bob was using as a pillow.

Pon set his lips.

He had found what he wanted. But how he was to extract the rucksack from under Bob's head, without awakening him, was rather a problem.

He shut off the light, after carefully taking his bearings. Then he took hold of the rucksack and pulled it gently.

There was a murmur from Bob in his sleep, and Pon stopped at once. The slumbering junior did not awaken, but he stirred.

It was clear that if his pillow was pulled away he would awaken. There was no chance of getting it away without an alarm, and Pon made up his mind to it. He had to take the risk of snatching away the rucksack and running; escaping before the awakened junior could get hold of him. There was nothing else to be done, unless he was to give up the enterprise—which he did not mean to do.

Leaning over Bob, he gripped the rucksack, gave a sudden jerk, and tore it away. Bob's head bumped on the ground-sheet under him, and he awakened with a gasp. Pon made a spring for the door, rucksack in hand.

"Ooogh!" gasped Bob. "What the thump—"

He started up, in amazement and alarm, rubbing his head, which had had rather a hard knock on the floor.

Ponsonby ran for the door.

It had been only cautious to shut off the light. But that, as it happened, was Pon's undoing. He raced for the door, and bumped blindly into Gadsby.

"Here, look out!" gasped Gadsby.

"What—"

Crash!

The rucksack dropped from Pon's hand as he staggered.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob was shouting in the darkness. "Who—what the thump—who's that?"

Gadsby and Monson dashed out into the rain. Ponsonby, gritting his teeth, groped on the floor for the fallen rucksack. Voices were heard on all sides now. All the hikers were awakened, with the exception of Billy Bunter, who snored on regardless.

"Somebody's bagged my rucksack!" yelled Bob. "Pinched it from under my head—"

He jumped towards the door of the barn.

Ponsonby grabbed up the rucksack in the dark, and was leaping to escape, when Bob collided with him. Instantly Bob grasped at the unseen figure in the dark.

Ponsonby, his eyes glittering with rage, struck out. Bob gasped as he got a thump on the chest. But he clutched at his assailant, getting hold of him. Desperately Pon swung round the rucksack, and crashed it on the Greyfriars fellow, and Bob gave a breathless howl. But he grabbed at the object that struck him, and grasped it, and tore it away from Ponsonby. He swept it round in the dark, and it was Pon's turn to howl, as it landed on his ear.

"Get a light!" yelled Bob. "I've got the thief here—"

Ponsonby made a desperate leap out of the barn.

He had failed, and he had no idea of attempting to get the rucksack again, now that it was in Bob's hands, and the hikers were all awake. There was a glitter of light, as an electric torch was turned on, and Pon leaped out of the barn only in time.

He raced away in rain and darkness.

"What the dickens!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. He ran towards Bob, the light in his hand.

"What the terrific dickens!" gasped Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Bob Cherry stared into the rainy night through the wide-open doorway. Pon & Co. had vanished.

"He's gone!" gasped Bob.

"He—who?"

"Blessed if I know! Some tramp, I suppose. He woke me up jerking away my rucksack. I've got it back! He banged me with it—"

"More than one of them," said Johnny Bull. He pointed to the muddy marks inside the barn. "Two or three of them. Look here!"

"Well, I gave one of them a swipe!" said Bob. "I suppose we ought to have fastened the door. I'll fasten it now."

"Nothing missing," said Nugent. "Lucky the rotter woke you up, though. Some rascally tramp, I suppose."

Bob Cherry shut the barn door and secured it. Nothing was missing, and no damage done, save a bump on Bob's head.

The damage, as a matter of fact, had been collected by the raider. Pon & Co. were not enjoying life, as they fled in the rainy night. They had approached the barn with stealthy caution;

but when they left, they left at a rapid run—which was injudicious in the dark and the rain. They bumped into hedges, and tipped into ditches, and found themselves in a wet and rainy field, having missed the track back to the village in the dark. Shadowy figures loomed round them, and there was the sound of a startled "moo."

"Cows!" gasped Gadsby. "Oh crikey! You fool, Pon! You silly idiot! Catch me playing this fool game again!"

"Oh, shut up, you dummy!" snarled Pon.





Harry Wharton & Co. rushed at the cattle-drivers, bowled them over, and then sat on them. "It's all right, Mr. Waggs," bawled Bob Cherry, "your cows are safe enough—and we've got the thieves." "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Waggs unexpectedly. "Did you think they was thieves coom after my coos? Ha, ha, ha!"

"We've barged into a cattle-shed or somethin'," groaned Monson. "Oh, you silly owl, Pon!"

"Go and eat coke!"  
Pon groped for his electric torch, and by its light, the hapless Highcliffians groped and squelched their way out of the field. It was a muddy, wet, untidy, and infuriated trio that got back into Little Puddleton at last, and got to the inn. And before Gadsby and Monson turned in, they spent a good ten minutes in telling their leader what they thought of him.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Cattle-Lifters!

**B**OB CHERRY was the first up of the hikers in the barn.

The other fellows had returned to their blankets, and slept as soundly as if there had been no alarm; but there was a bump on Bob's head, and it rather disturbed his slumbers.

At the first gleam of dawn he turned out of his blankets, while the other fellows were still fast asleep.

The rain had ceased to pour, but it was still coming down lightly. Bob opened the door of the barn, and looked out into the glimmering sunrise.

The rim of the sun showed over the downs, and it was light; but the shadows were still thick. It was not the kind of dawn that a hiker likes to see—rain makes a lot of difference. On a fine morning, Bob, as he could not sleep, would have enjoyed going for a ramble till his friends turned out; but in the dropping rain the prospect was not attractive. He stood in the doorway,

rubbing the bump on his head, and looking out on a wet and dripping landscape.

Nobody was up at Waggs' Farm. As on all farms, early hours were the rule; but it was still too early for even the farmer's men to have awakened. Windows and doors at the farm were still shut. The whole place was silent, save for the trickling of rain. Not a soul was stirring, so far.

Bob, as he rubbed his bruised head, wished fervently that he could have sighted the thief in the night who had given it to him. It had not occurred to the hikers that their old enemies of Highcliffe were at Little Puddleton, and Bob supposed that the visitor of the night was some tramp, looking for a chance to "pinch" something from the hiker's camp. He could have found a little pleasant and agreeable exercise in punching that tramp, if he could have spotted him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob suddenly.

His eyes fixed on an open shed across the field. A number of "beasts" were in that shed, sheltering from the rain. Round the corner of the shed a slinking figure appeared.

Round the other corner came another. Two men muffled up against the rain, had gone silently into the cattle-shed. Looking round, Bob had a glimpse of another man—a tall, thin man, with an overcoat collar turned up about his neck—standing under some trees at a little distance. The tall man was alternately glancing towards the cattle shed and the farmhouse, evidently on the watch.

Bob caught his breath.  
He did not need telling that these men did not belong to the farm. They were not Mr. Waggs' men, early at work. That was quite plain. Two muffled men

had stolen stealthily among the cattle, and the tall man was obviously watching for an alarm.

"Thieves!" murmured Bob.  
It seemed impossible to doubt it. There were three of them—and there had been three in the raid on the barn during the night, as the muddy tracks on the floor had shown. It seemed plain enough to Bob that it was the same gang. They had failed to "pinch" anything from the hikers, and now they were looking for something elsewhere. They did not, however, glance towards the barn, which looked as if they did not know that anyone was there. Still, no doubt they fancied that the hikers were fast asleep, as all of them, excepting Bob, were, and as Bob would have been, but for the bump on his head.

Faint sounds of disturbed cattle floated across the field. From the open shed clumsy forms came lurching out—cows, driven by the two muffled men who had gone in. The cows—the property of Mr. William Waggs—were driven out of the shed, almost in silence. Bob's glance turned on the tall man again.

He was looking towards the farmhouse, obviously to make sure that nobody was stirring there yet; and Bob saw him wave his hand to the other two, and point to the lane. They started driving the cows in that direction. At a distance, the tall man followed, looking back over his shoulder uneasily every other moment.

Bob could doubt no further. If the cattle were not being stolen, there was no explanation of what was going on—no explanation, at all events, that Bob Cherry could think of. And Bob was not likely to let it go on.

That was impossible, especially after  
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the kind hospitality of Mr. Waggs. The kind old farmer had given the hikers the shelter of his barn for nothing, he had stowed them a gorgeous supper, and had asked them to breakfast at the farmhouse in the morning. And he refused even to think of taking any payment, though, as the juniors knew well enough, he was in financial difficulties. A man who lived in fear of a bailiff's visit might have been excused for inhospitality; but old Willyum had been hospitable itself. Bob was only too glad of a chance of doing something in the way of recompense.

He stepped back into the barn and hastily awakened the other fellows.

"Wake up! Quick! Buck up!" He shook them into wakefulness. "Get a move on, all of you! Sharp!"

"What on earth's the row?" yawned Nugent, rubbing his eyes.

"Those tramps—"

"Oh, my hat! Have they come back?" exclaimed Wharton, jumping up.

"They're stealing old Waggs' cows!" gasped Bob.

"Wha-a-at?"

"I've just spotted them! For goodness' sake be quick! We can't let the old man be robbed under our eyes, after his kindness."

"I should jolly well say not!"

"The notfulness is terrific!"

"Oh gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

"I—I say, are you sure? Don't let's jump on the farmer's men by mistake, old bean!"

"Look for yourself!" snapped Bob. "Buck up!"

The Greyfriars hikers crowded to the barn doorway. The sun was higher now, glimmering through the drizzle of rain, and it was quite light. The two men, muffled in coats, were driving the cows down the track to the gate—in silence. The tall man behind was looking round anxiously at the farmhouse. The juniors could not see his face, which was hidden between a soft hat pulled down over his brows, and the coat-collar turned up round his neck.

But his actions left no possibility of doubt. Without speaking a word, he made gestures to the cattle-drivers to hurry, all the time glancing back at the farmhouse, or staring across the fields with an anxious uneasiness that was not to be mistaken.

"Oh gad!" murmured Mauly. "That's plain enough—but—who ever heard of cattle-lifting in England?"

"No mistake about it, anyhow!" said Johnny Bull. "We're on this."

"Yes, rather!"

"Three of them, and six of us!" said Bob. "They look pretty hefty fellows, but we can handle them. Two each, what? I'll go for that tall sportsman, and you can lend a hand, Johnny! You other fellows go after those thieves and mop them up."

"What-ho!"

With a sudden rush, the Greyfriars hikers came out of the barn.

Wharton and Nugent, Hurree Singh and Mauleverer made a rush after the cattle-drivers. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull ran at the tall man.

They saw him give a startled jump as he spotted them. But he had time for only one jump. They had hold of him the next moment, and, powerful man as he was, he went down with a crash in their grasp.

He gave an angry bellow as his face went with a splash into a rain puddle. Bob Cherry had a knee in the small of his back the next moment. Now that the big man was down, it was only judicious to keep him there! He was altogether too hefty to be allowed to get on his feet again.

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"Pin him!" gasped Bob.

"Urrrrrrgggh!" came a spluttering roar from the face in the puddle. "Wurrrgh!"

The tall man struggled frantically. He got his features, dripping with mud, out of the puddle. But he could not get up or turn over and grapple. Bob's knee ground into his back, and Johnny Bull grasped his neck with both hands, keeping him down. He struggled and heaved and spluttered in vain.

Holding him down, in spite of his strenuous resistance, the two juniors looked round. The other party had been equally victorious.

The two cattle-drivers had been taken quite by surprise like the big man. They had been watchful for an alarm from the farmhouse, but not from the barn. Harry Wharton & Co. rushed them over, landed them on the ground, and sat on them.

The cows, no longer driven, blinked sedately at the struggling forms, walked round them, and took a leisurely way back to their shed.

"Urrrrrrgggh!" came from the struggling figure under Bob Cherry's knee. "Grrrruuugh!"

"Gurgle as much as you like, old bean!" chuckled Bob. "We've got you! You'll go to prison for this, you villain! Bang his head, Johnny, and keep him quiet!"

Bang!

"Yoooooop!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, in a voice calculated not only to awaken Waggs' farm, but half Sussex as well. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wake up! Waggs! Mr. Waggs! Thieves! Wake up!"

From a cottage near the farmhouse, a man, half-dressed, came running out. It was Robinson, Mr. Waggs' horseman. He caught up a pitchfork from somewhere and dashed on the scene. Then the farmhouse door was thrown open, and Mr. Willyum Waggs, also half-dressed, appeared in view. Mr. Waggs rubbed his eyes and stared at the startling scene in the rain and the rising sun. Then he yelled to the horseman.

"They've coom! Get the coos away, Garge! You know where! I tell you, drive them coos!"

"Garge" Robinson at once changed his direction, and bolted off to the cattleshed. Immediately he began driving out the coos, and hurrying them away across the fields. There were loud grunts of protest from the plump animals, who evidently did not like being hurried. But they had to hurry, and "Garge" disappeared across the fields with them.

These proceedings made Bob Cherry wonder whether he was dreaming.

"It's all right, Mr. Waggs!" he bawled. "The cows are safe enough—we've got the thieves!"

"Bless my buttons!" ejaculated Mr. Waggs. "You've got—what?"

"The thieves—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Waggs unexpectedly. "Ha, ha, ha! Did you think they was thieves coom after my coos?"

Bob jumped.

"Eh? What? Yes! Of course! What—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" bellowed Mr. Waggs.

"Look here, they were driving off your cows!" shouted Johnny Bull. "What the thump are you laughing at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Mr. Waggs almost wept. "They thought it was thieves after my coos! Oh, dang my buttons! Ha, ha, ha!"

It was clear that there was a misapprehension somewhere, though the hikers could not begin to guess what it

was. But Bob Cherry was suddenly enlightened by a rasping voice from under him. The tall man had got the mud out of his mouth at last, and was able to speak.

"You young villain. Gerroff! I'll have you looked up for interfering with an officer of the court! Gerroff!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob.

It was Mr. Hunker!

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## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### A Little Mistake!

**M**R. HUNKER was released as if he had become red-hot!

He staggered to his feet. He dabbed mud from his face and gurgled.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull gazed at him, amazed in horror.

They realised the truth now! It was not a gang of thieves who were driving off Mr. Waggs' cows. It was the sheriff's officer and his men, seizing the goods under distraint! They had handled, and baffled, a sheriff's officer in the execution of his painful duty—for which the penalties were unknown, but frightfully serious.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob in utter dismay.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"Groooogh!" said Mr. Hunker.

"Hoooh! Young rascals! Whooogh!" Mr. Waggs, evidently tickled by the mistake the hikers had made, held his sides and bellowed.

"Ha, ha, ha! They thought you were a thief coom after my coos, Hunker! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, what were we to think?" gasped Bob. "We saw them sneaking the cows away when nobody was up—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" bellowed Willyum Waggs.

Three or four farmhands had turned out, and arrived on the spot at a run. The two men collared by Harry Wharton & Co., being released, did not stay to argue the matter. They bounded away to the gate, jumped over it, and ran as if for their lives. Then the dismayed hikers joined the group round Mr. Hunker, who was dabbing and gouging mud from his face.

"It—it—it's that man Hunker!" said Nugent blankly.

"The Hunkerfulness is terrific!"

"Oh gad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "We've rather put our foot in it, you men! Hikers ain't really allowed to rag sheriff's officers."

"Oh crumbs!"

The juniors remembered the remark they had heard Mr. Hunker make to Mr. Jonas the previous day. He had told the auctioneer that he was not going to let Mr. Waggs know when he was coming next. Evidently he had been using strategy. According to the law, goods could not be seized between sunset and sunrise. Mr. Hunker had left it till after sunrise—but not very long after!

Probably, tough customer as he looked, he disliked the unpleasant duty he had to perform, and wanted to put it through, if he could, without scenes of violence, which must have had serious consequences for Mr. Waggs and his loyal but somewhat unreflecting friends. But for the hikers there was no doubt that he would have succeeded.

The Greyfriars fellows could not exactly feel sorry that they had saved Mr. Waggs' cows for him. But they realised that the matter was serious when the men they had collared were not, after all, thieving tramps, but acting under instructions from the court. Still, they could hardly blame themselves for such a mistake.

"You young rascals!" said Hunker. "Laying hands on an officer of the law! Groogh!"

"Well, we never knew you, old bean," said Bob. "What the dickens were we to think when we saw you sneaking the cows away? Of course, we thought they were being stolen."

"You young idiot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" bellowed Mr. Waggs. "Take it smiling, Hunker! The young gentlemen never knew who you was! They thought you'd coom to steal the coos! Ha, ha, ha!"

A faint grin dawned on Mr. Hunker's iron face.

"Young lunatics!" he grunted. He gave his muddy eyes a last rub and stared round. His men had vanished, with two or three farm-hands after them. The cows were disappearing across the fields, to take refuge once more in the three-acre field on Smithson's land. Mr. Hunker had failed in his enterprise; the tithe sale was as far off as ever. He gave the hikers a rather grim look.

Then he strode away to the gate and departed.

Mr. Waggs chuckled. "Young gents," he said, "it's looky for me you camped in my barn last night. They'd have had the coos! Don't you worrit about Hunker; his bark's worse than his bite. He'll be laughing over this presently."

Which was rather comforting to the Greyfriars hikers, in the peculiar circumstances.

They went back to the barn, leaving Mr. Waggs still gurgling with mingled merriment and satisfaction. His "coos" had had a narrow escape, and he owed their preservation to the hikers; though how long Willyum fancied that he could keep up this game was rather a mystery to the Greyfriars fellows. They concluded that Mr. Hunker's bark must be very much worse than his bite, for undoubtedly he could have made things very warm for Willyum.

"Well, I can't say I'm sorry we've saved the jolly old cows," remarked Bob Cherry. "I thought it was the same gang that barged in here last night. Couldn't have been, of course—"

"Ha, ha! Not likely!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

That was quite clear now. The fellows who had nearly got away with Bob Cherry's rucsack in the night obviously were not Mr. Hunker and his men.

"But this sort of thing can't go on," said Lord Mauleverer. "Whether the law's right or wrong, it's too strong for jolly old Willyum. They'll get his cows off him sooner or later."

"Poor old Willyum!" said Bob. "I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter sat up and blinked. "What are you turning out so early for? I'm not getting up yet, I can tell you."

"Stay where you are, old fat bean."

"I'm jolly well going to—"

"You won't mind missing brekker?"

"What?" Bunter jumped up. "I didn't know it was breakfast-time! I say, where's my boots? I say, where's my shirt? I say—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was still very early, but the hikers, being up, did not think of returning to their blankets. The rain had almost ceased; and, having finished dressing, they went out for a stroll before breakfast. Billy Bunter dressed in hot haste, without wasting valuable time on washing, and rushed after them.

"I say, you fellows!" bawled Bunter, blinking round for the hikers. "I say, is brekker ready?"

"Not till seven!" called back Bob Cherry.

"Why, you—you—you beast! It's hardly six yet!" yelled Bunter. "You've made me get up for nothing! You—you—you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rotters!" howled Bunter, and he rolled back into the barn to his blankets.

Not in the least dismayed by the loss of his society, Harry Wharton & Co. strolled round the farm. After the rain came a bright and sunny morning, and the promise of a fine day for hiking. Having time on their hands till breakfast, the hikers walked across the fields to the haystack where Billy Bunter had rested the previous day, to look for the packs that the fat Owl had left there. They found them in the hay and sorted them out, and walked back to Waggs' Farm with them.

Billy Bunter was snoring in the barn when they returned with the packs. He ceased to snore as Bob Cherry dropped the folded tent on him. His snore stopped quite suddenly.

"Whoo-hoop!" roared Bunter. "Wharrer you up to? What—"

"We've fetched in the packs for you, old fat bean," said Bob.

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

"That's how Bunter thanks a chap!" remarked Bob. "Drop the other lot on him, Johnny!"

Thud!

"Yaroooooop!"

The Famous Five walked over to the farmhouse for breakfast. Lord Mauleverer had a thoughtful expression on his face, which remained there during breakfast. Billy Bunter rolled in late; but he very soon made up for lost time. The hospitable board was well spread, and Bunter did his best to clear it. Mr. Waggs was in great spirits that morning, still chuckling over the great joke of the Chupham bailiff having been mistaken for a cow-stealer. Mrs. Waggs, though kind and hospitable, still had that slightly worried look that the hikers had noticed the evening before, and of which they easily guessed the cause.

"Penny for 'em, Mauly!" said Bob, when the hikers walked back to the barn, after breakfast, to pack up for the march. Lord Mauleverer's noble face was still deeply thoughtful.

"Eh! I was thinkin'," said Mauly. "I wonder—"

"You wonder what?"

"Oh, nothin'!"

"That fat idiot Bunter is still grubbing!" growled Johnny Bull. "If he's not ready when we start, he can jolly well stay behind!"

"Yes, rather!"

"What's worrying you, Mauly?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I was wonderin' if a fellow could barge in!" said Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully.

"How—when—and where?" asked Wharton, perplexed.

"Oh, nothin'!"

"Fathead!"

"What I mean is, would it be rather a cheek?"

"Would what?"

"Oh, nothin'! Let's get goin'," said his lordship. "Mr.

Waggs is a jolly old fellow, you men, but he's just a little bit of an ass! He can't keep this game up for ever; they'll snaffle his cows sooner or later. On the other hand, how can he pay tithes if he

doesn't make the money out of his farm? Bit of a problem, what?"

"Horrid!" said Bob. "Is that what's worrying you?"

"Yaas."

"Trying to think of an answer to that one?" asked Nugent.

"Yaas."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, here you are, you fat villain! Ready?"

"No!" said Bunter. "I'm not ready! You know jolly well that I like a rest after a meal. I'm going to get some apples, too. Old Waggs says we can take some apples if we like; and as he's not going to charge anything, I think we'd better all take as many as we can carry, and— Whoooooop!"

Bunter sat down suddenly, with assistance. He sat and roared. Having finished packing, the hikers took a grateful farewell of the hospitable Waggs and started up the track to the village. Billy Bunter, having recovered his breath, rolled out of the barn and blinked after them.

"I say, you fellows," he roared, "wait for me! I'm going to get some apples!"

Apparently deaf, the hikers hiked on to Little Puddleton. Billy Bunter blinked after them and hesitated. But the lure of the apples was too strong; he rolled away for apples, and the hikers walked into Little Puddleton without Bunter.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Mauly is Mysterious!

LORD MAULEVERER stopped at the Barley Mow.

"Hold on, you fellows," he said.

"Going to rest already?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically. "We've done about three hundred yards."

His lordship grinned.

"No; I just want to speak to the waiter. I won't keep you a few minutes."

And Mauly went into the Barley Mow. The hikers waited.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry, as a man in a peaked cap came sauntering round the building. "Know that merchant?"

It was Jervis, Ponsonby's chauffeur. As he saw them the man turned, and walked back to the outbuildings behind the inn. But they had recognised him, and could guess that the green Austin was there, and that Pon & Co. were at the inn.

"Those Highlife cads here!" said Johnny Bull. "We can guess now who it was barged into the barn last night."

"Pon, of course!" exclaimed Wharton.

"After my jolly old Holiday Annual," grinned Bob. "What about rooting them out, and giving them a whopping before we start?"

"Not up yet, I expect," said Harry.

"Anyhow, let them rip! Here's Mauly."

Old Anthony came to the inn door with Mauleverer.

"The red-tiled house, next to the corn chandler's, in the High Street," he

(Continued on next page.)



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was saying. "You can't mistake it, sir. It's jest opposite the noo tin church. Not the old church that's down Wheat Lane over by Johnson's Corner—the noo tin one—"

"Thanks!" said Lord Mauleverer; and he slipped something into the old gentleman's hand, and rejoined the Famous Five. "Come on, you men!"

Somewhat puzzled, the hikers walked down the village street with Mauly. Harry Wharton looked back two or three times, but there was no sign of Bunter. That fat and fatuous youth, evidently, was busy with Mr. Waggs' ripe apples, and he was not likely to leave them till he had packed away all that his extensive circumference could encircle.

"That fat chump's not coming," said Harry.

"Bother him!" growled Johnny Bull. "He knows we're making for Greenfield this morning, and he can follow on if he likes. Are we going to hang about while he scoffs Waggs' apples?"

"No fear!" said Bob Cherry emphatically.

And the hikers hiked out of Little Puddleton.

"May as well go round by Chupham," said Lord Mauleverer.

"That's rather out of the way, old chap."

"Interestin' old place," said Lord Mauleverer. "That man Hunker lives at Chupham."

"Well, we don't want to see Hunker, do we?" demanded Bob. "The less we see of Hunker the better, I think, after the way we handled him."

"Oh, I dare say he's not a bad chap!" said Lord Mauleverer easily. "There's a new tin church at Chupham, too, as well as an old one down Wheat Lane by Johnson's Corner. Might as well see the sights."

"Look here, you ass! What are you getting at?"

"Chupham," said Lord Mauleverer.

Considerably puzzled, but willing to give his lordship his head, the hikers took the road for the town of Chupham. Mauly, as a rule, fell in with other fellows' suggestions, and seldom made one of his own. Now, however, he seemed keen on passing through the country town of Chupham, which lay a couple of miles out of the route. However, the hikers had plenty of time on their hands, and they walked along in the fresh morning sunshine to Chupham.

In the High Street of that town Lord Mauleverer looked this way and that way, and finally stopped before a red-tiled house, which was next to a corn chandler's, and opposite a tin church.

"This is the place," he remarked.

More and more mystified the hikers looked at the red-tiled house, and looked at Mauleverer. It was the place they had heard the old waiter at the Barley Mow describe to his lordship. But what Mauly wanted there was a mystery to them.

"You men walk round and see the sights for a few minutes," said Lord Mauleverer. "I'm goin' in here."

"Do you know somebody in Chupham, then?" asked Harry.

"Eh? No."

"You're going to call on somebody you don't know?" ejaculated Nugent.

"Yaas."

"Off your rocker?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Yaas—I mean, no! It's all right. You fellows walk down Johnson's Lane to Wheat Corner—I mean, down Wheat Lane to Johnson's Corner, and look at the new church—I mean the old church.

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Frightfully interestin', I'm sure. You can tell me about it afterwards."

"Well, my hat!" said Bob.

Leaving the hikers staring, Lord Mauleverer went in at a gate, up a garden path, and knocked at the door of the red-tiled house. He was admitted, and the door closed after him.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another.

"What on earth is this game?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Goodness knows!"

The hikers did not walk down Wheat Lane to see the old church at Johnson's Corner. Puzzled and mystified, they waited by the railings of the red-tiled house garden. They had waited about ten minutes, when the door opened, and Lord Mauleverer came out, and glanced round. He came quickly down the garden path to the waiting hikers.

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed. "Thank goodness you didn't go wandering! Lend me ten bob."

"Oh crikey! What the thump do you want ten bob for?"

"Because I've only got twenty-five pounds five shillings."

"You—you—you want ten bob, because you've only got twenty-five pounds five shillings!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Yaas."

"Mad!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"You see, it's twenty-five pounds fifteen shillings," explained Mauleverer.

"What is?" shrieked Bob.

"Oh, nothin'! Lend me a ten-bob note," said Mauly.

In an almost dazed state of astonishment, Harry Wharton handed a ten-shilling note to his lordship, and Mauleverer went back into the red-tiled house. In silence the mystified hikers waited for him to reappear. When the front door opened again and his lordship came out, a man was with him, whose iron face was relaxed in an amused grin.

"Hunker!" gasped Bob.

Evidently it was Mr. Hunker, the bailiff, on whom Lord Mauleverer had called.

His lordship came down the path, and rejoined the hikers. Mr. Hunker, still with that grin on his face, closed the door after him.

"Now let's get goin'," said Lord Mauleverer briskly. "We've got to get as far as Greenfield before we camp, you know. Come on!"

The hikers walked out of Chupham. They were still in a state of great astonishment, puzzled to account for the mysterious proceedings of Lord Mauleverer. However, the matter was dismissed from mind as they rambled by sunny roads and shady lanes, by bridle-path and footpath, striking across country, to arrive at Greenfield.

It was nearly noon when they sighted that village, and camped on an open common for lunch. If Billy Bunter was following on, they saw nothing of him; but if he came, he could not fail to spot their camp. And if he did not come, they were prepared to bear the loss of his company with fortitude. A long morning's march in the keen country air had made them hungry, and they devoted their attention to getting lunch.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Pulling Pon's Leg!

**B**ILLY BUNTER gave a little jump.

The fat junior was seated on a bench under the beech-tree outside the Barley Mow in Little Puddleton. It was the sound of a familiar

voice that made him jump—the voice of Cecil Ponsonby of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe.

Bunter had been sitting on that bench quite a long time.

He had stayed in the apple-loft at Waggs' Farm, cramming rich, ripe apples till he could cram no more. Then, with a rather uncomfortable feeling under his well-filled belt, he had rolled on to the village after the hikers. Perhaps he hoped to find them waiting for him there. As he was more than an hour behind them, it was not really likely.

He sat down on the bench to rest and consider the matter. There was an eight-mile trek planned for that morning, and never had Billy Bunter felt less disposed for an eight-mile trek. How many apples he had packed away he could hardly have counted; but the number was large, and Bunter, like the young lady at the tea-party, was swelling visibly.

He had to get on to Greenfield somehow, or lose the hikers. But the more he thought of hiking it, the less he liked the idea. How to get a lift, without paying for it, was rather a problem. And Bunter was still sitting under the beech, wrestling with that problem, when Pon & Co. came out of the inn.

Pon & Co. had not risen early. Their wild adventures over night had rather tired them, and they had not turned out till ten o'clock. After that they had breakfasted in the Barley Mow, and it was past eleven when they strolled out of the inn, to smoke cigarettes after brekker, which was one of the little ways they had. They did not observe the fat junior on the bench under the beech-tree, for the moment, as they strolled out. Ponsonby stood looking up and down the sunny village street.

"Those cads will be gone long ago," he remarked. "Not much good lookin' for them in the barn again."

"Catch me lookin' for them in the barn again!" growled Gadsby. "I've had enough of that."

"And some over!" grunted Monson.

Billy Bunter blinked round him through his big spectacles. The three Highcliffians were standing quite near him, but not looking in his direction. Bunter eyed them very uneasily. There was a very considerable probability of a ragging, if the three caught one of the Greyfriars fellows on his own. Billy Bunter rather wished that he had got off with the hikers.

"We came jolly near snaffling that Holiday Annual last night!" growled Ponsonby. "I had that brute Cherry's rucsack in my hands, and I should have got away with it, if you hadn't barged in my way and tripped me, Gaddy, you ass—"

"You barged into me, you mean!" grunted Gaddy.

"Oh, rats! Anyhow, the rotter got it back—and I know that book was in it; I could feel it there. I wonder if we could find out which way the cads have gone."

"We shall have earned that fifty pounds reward by the time we finger it!" remarked Monson.

"Fifty pounds isn't picked up every day," said Ponsonby, "and I tell you I know that the clue is in that Holiday Annual. It's not only that, either—but I'm goin' to beat those Greyfriars cads to it! You can bet they'll be rootin' through the book, lookin' for the clue; and if they find it they'll snoop the reward. I'm not havin' that, I can tell you. We've got to get on their track, and try again. One swallow doesn't make a summer—we shall have better luck next time."



Ponsonby was almost upon Bunter when Bob Cherry passed the fleeing fat junior and interposed. Bob had a bucket of water in his hand, though he had spilled some as he ran. Now he spilled the rest—with one fell swoop—over Ponsonby. Swoosh! Splash! "Grooooooogh!" gurgled Ponsonby.

"Couldn't have worse!" grunted Gaddy.

Billy Bunter grinned. An idea was working in his fat mind.

"I say, you fellows!" he squeaked.

Pon & Co. started, and spun round. They stared at the fat junior on the bench, under the beech-tree.

"One of those cads!" said Monson.

"Bunter!" exclaimed Gadsby.

Pon gave a quick and rather uneasy glance round, expecting to see the other hikers in the offing. To his relief, there was no sign of them. He came towards Bunter, with a gleam in his eyes. If the fat junior was alone, Pon was the fellow to give him what he would have liked to give to the others. Bunter blinked at him.

"Where are the other cads?" asked Ponsonby politely.

"Oh, really, Pon—"

"Left you behind, what?" asked Ponsonby.

He made a sign to his comrades, and they came nearer to Bunter.

"Oh, no—I stayed behind to speak to you chaps," said Bunter breezily—which was hardly in accordance with the truth, as Bunter had not known till five minutes ago that Pon & Co. were in Little Puddleton at all. "I fancy I can help you."

"Wha-a-t?"

"That Holiday Annual, you know," said Bunter. "I jolly well know why you're after it! There's fifty pounds reward out for the man who finds the stuff! I know all about it. Well, what about a fiver for me?"

"A—a—fiver for you!" repeated Ponsonby, staring.

"That's not much out of fifty, if you snoop the fifty!" argued Bunter. "If you don't, I don't get anything! If you do, you stand me a fiver for my whack!

See? I know where to get hold of the Annual."

"Oh!" ejaculated Ponsonby. He caught on now. He gave Gadsby and Monson a quick glance.

"I don't see leaving that book lying around in a rucksack, if a fellow can make fifty pounds by squinting at it!" argued Bunter. "What about it?"

"By gum!" murmured Gadsby. "That's all right, Pon."

"Right as rain!" said Ponsonby.

His manner to Bunter was geniality itself now, and certainly did not indicate that, a minute ago, he had been thinking of ragging the fat Owl. If Bunter was willing to get hold of that Holiday Annual for him, all was plain sailing. Obviously, Bunter could do it easily enough, if he liked, as a member of the hiking party.

"Good egg!" said Monson.

"I say, you fellows, I don't see any harm in the idea!" said Bunter, blinking at them. "What do you think?"

"None at all," said Ponsonby. "You can bank on that fiver, Bunter, if we snaffle the reward, of course. Where are the cads—ahem!—I mean, where are the hikers now?"

"Gone on to Greenfield," answered Bunter. "They're camping there for lunch. If you like to give me a lift in the car we can catch them up before they move on again."

"Done!" said Ponsonby, at once. "We'll drop you there, and wait for you to come along with the book, Bunter."

"That's the idea," assented Bunter, rising from the bench.

Ponsonby called to Jervis, and the chauffeur brought round the green Austin. The three Highcliffians sat in it, and room was made for the fat Owl of the Remove.

Pon & Co. grinned with satisfaction

as the car shot away on the road to Greenfield. With Bunter's assistance, all the difficulties of their enterprise faded away; the Holiday Annual was as good as in their hands.

Bunter also grinned with satisfaction. He was getting the lift he wanted, to Greenfield. Pon had not got the Holiday Annual yet! It was, perhaps, doubtful whether he would get it. But Bunter was getting his lift! On that point, at least, there was no doubt!

The car slowed as it drew nearer to Greenfield, the Highcliff fellows keeping a keen eye open for the Greyfriars hikers.

"There they are!" said Gadsby suddenly.

On the green common, near the village, the camp was sighted. Bob Cherry could be seen, carrying a bucket of water from the village pump. Frank Nugent and Lord Mauleverer were coming into camp with groceries from the village shop. Johnny Bull was putting oil from a can into the cooking-stove. Harry Wharton was scraping potatoes, Hurree Singh was shelling peas. All the hikers were happily occupied getting lunch. The car stopped at a little distance, Pon & Co. watching the hikers curiously. They stopped behind a clump of trees on the roadside, to screen the car from the view of the hikers in the camp.

Billy Bunter rolled out of the green Austin.

"We'll wait here," said Ponsonby.

"Right-ho!" agreed Bunter.

He blinked at Pon & Co. through his big spectacles. Then he blinked through the trees at the hikers' camp. It was about a hundred yards away. He seemed to hesitate.

"I—I say, you fellows—"

he began.

"Better get off," said Ponsonby. "Don't let them know we gave you a lift, or they may smell a rat. You'll have to be a bit careful, Bunter."

"That's all right," said Bunter. "You fellows wait there! Of course, I shall have to ask Bob—"

"What?"

"It's his Annual, you know," said Bunter, blinking at Ponsonby. "I shall have to ask him to let me have it."

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"If he agrees, all right," said Bunter. "If not, it's all off, of course. You understand that?"

Pon & Co. gazed at Bunter. They knew exactly how much Bob Cherry was likely to agree to the Holiday Annual being handed over to the enemy!

"I hope," said Bunter, with dignity, "that you weren't thinking that I should pinch the book! I could hardly do anything of that kind, of course. I'll ask Bob, and if he agrees—"

"You—you—you—" gurgled Ponsonby. "You—you've been spoofing us to get a lift in our car—you—you—"

Pon grabbed at the door to reopen it. Bunter did not wait for him to get out.

Bunter flew. He whisked through the trees and dashed away across the common towards the camp at top speed.

"After him!" shrieked Ponsonby. Pon & Co. leaped from the car. They dashed through the trees after Bunter. Their faces were crimson with rage.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter. "Help! Rescue! Highcliffe cads! I say—rescue! I say, you fellows!"

Bunter fairly flew as he yelled. All the hikers stared towards him. For a moment they did not understand the cause of Bunter's frantic haste. Then,

as the three Highcliffians came bursting into view in fierce pursuit, they understood. Instantly camping operations were suspended, and the hikers rushed to the rescue.

Bunter had little chance in a foot race with Pon & Co. Had he had to cover the whole distance to the camp, certainly they would have overtaken him, and he would have paid dearly for that lift in the green Austin. But he did not have to cover half the distance. Harry Wharton & Co., running as if on the cinder-path, met him more than half-way.

"Hold on!" gasped Gadsby. "We don't want a scrap with that mob—"

"I jolly well don't!" panted Monson. They halted. But Ponsonby, in a frantic state of rage, rushed on. He was almost upon Bunter when Bob Cherry passed the fleeing fat junior and interposed. Bob still had the bucket of water in his hand, though he had spilled some as he ran up. Now he spilled the rest—with one fell swoop—over Ponsonby.

Swooooooh! Splash!

"Groooooooh!" gurgled Ponsonby. "I say, you fellows, keep them off!"

yelled Bunter. "I say—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Pon & Co. did not need keeping off! Gadsby and Monson were already running back to the car. Ponsonby staggered and spluttered, drenched with water from head to foot.

"Haven't any more water, old bean!" said Bob. "But you can have the bucket!"

Pon, apparently, did not want the bucket! At all events, he did not wait for it! Spluttering and gurgling, he turned and ran after his comrades. A minute later the three Highcliffians were packed in the green Austin and the car was shooting away up the road.

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Another Lift for Bunter!

**B**ILLY BUNTER was in time for lunch!

So that was all that!

That being all right, everything was all right!

Bunter enjoyed his lunch! Life, once more, was worth living. After lunch he disappeared.

He was in need of a rest. He was not seen while the washing-up and the packing-up went on.

Not till the hikers were ready to start again did Billy Bunter appear in the office. Even then he was not keen on marching. But he had to march or stay behind; so he made up his fat mind to it, and marched.

For half a mile Bunter hiked in silence. Then he spoke.

"I say, you fellows!"

"Save your breath for walking, old fat bean!" said Bob Cherry.

"Best walker here, and chance it!" said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, 'tain't fair for you to carry all the packs!"

"Eh?"

"I'll take the tent—"

"What?"

"And the cooking outfit, too. The weight's nothing to me, you know—I'm not feeble, like you chaps."

The hikers gazed at Bunter. He blinked at them.

"I mean it," he said. "Hand them over."

"Well, my only hat!" said Harry Wharton. "Is he really idiot enough to think that he can play the same trick on us twice!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I hate seeing you fellows doubled up like that!" said Bunter. "Let me carry the lot!"

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

Evidently the fat and fatuous Owl was scheming in the depths of his fat and fatuous brain to play the same game over again, to get possession of the baggage and disappear into some secluded corner for a rest! But the hikers were not likely to "fall" for that again!

"We won't give you the packs to carry, old funny bean!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "If you're getting tired we'll help you on the road. Pon seems to have given you one lift. I'll give you another!"

"Eh? How can you give me a lift?" asked Bunter.

"Like this!"

Bob's foot shot out.

"Whoooooop!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"


"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled on, without waiting for another lift.

And on the Little Puddleton front the tithe war was over! It was with great astonishment that Willyum Waggs learned that somebody—unknown—had barged into Mr. Hunker's office at Chupham and paid the tithe. Willyum never knew who it was. But it was a great relief to Willyum. Nobody, now, would "coom" for his "coos"; and he was able to devote his undivided attention to his green peas!

THE END.

(The next yarn in this grand holiday series is better than ever, chums! It's entitled: "THE HUNTED HIKERS!" There's bound to be a run on next week's MAGNET, so order your copy IN ADVANCE!)



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MORE THRILLS IN OUR POPULAR SPORTING STORY!

# 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. Spurred on by a rascal named Valetti, Len Allison, the old man's nephew and "boss" of the works, enlists the services of a masked hunchback to steal the plans. The raid proves fruitless, however, although old Simon is badly battered. With his crippled father to support, Bill Allison, a crack left-handed bowler, leaves Mike Doyle, a mechanic, in charge of the workshop, and joins the county club as a pro. Bill very soon establishes himself as a match-winner. Following another unsuccessful attempt to steal the plans, Bill and Mike visit Len's home, only to see their enemy escape through a secret panel in the wall. Later Bill brings about a victory for Avonshire against Essex by taking O'Connor's wicket just on the stroke of time.

(Now Read On.)

## The Shadow of Fear!

**W**ELL, that was that—the Essex match won, and another eight points for Avonshire well and truly earned. As he towelled himself down briskly Bill grinned cheerfully at the memory of Jack O'Connor's shocked expression when his wicket had fallen, and made a mental note to use that fast ball more often in future. It was the goods!

Yet somehow, once the first glow of triumph had worn off, the boy's mood soon changed again.

His grin faded away by degrees, and a faint shadow of doubt and worry crept back into his eyes. By the time he was dressed and out of the County ground his mind had switched clean away from cricket, and was grappling with other and less pleasant problems.

Strangely enough, however, Bill's state of anxious perplexity was not entirely due to his Cousin Len, or that rough and ugly customer, Corsica Phil Valetti. Mike Doyle's prophecy concerning these two beauties had soon proved to be correct.

Len, it was learnt, had gone to London on business, or, in other words, bolted. Valetti, too, as far as Bill knew, seemed to be lying very low after the affair in Len's study. For the present, at least, there was an enforced lull in the Allison family feud, and had it not

been for the queer behaviour of Cannonball Mike Doyle himself, Bill would have been perfectly content with life.

But what sort of game his loyal, though secretive comrade had been playing during the last three days had got the youngster guessing.

The Allison supercharger was finished now, ready to be fitted into a car as soon as the partners acquired one. And now that the work was done Mike appeared to have lost all interest.

Since Friday night Bill had scarcely set eyes on the dour, taciturn ex-racer at all. Mike left the cottage immediately after breakfast, and came back late at night, usually too tired to talk much even had he been willing to do so—which he was not. And more than once Bill noticed that his friend's shoes and trousers were coated with fresh dirt.

"The blessed oyster's up to something all right," the youngster mused as he let himself into the empty cottage that evening, after his regular call at the hospital to see how his crippled father was progressing. "But I know he won't spill the beans till he's ready, so I might as well stop giving myself a headache about it!"

His father, Bill had just been informed, was making good strides, though the doctors held out little hopes of Simon Allison ever recovering completely. Still, any improvement was better than nothing, and in a slightly cheerier frame of mind Bill made sure that the precious invention was safe in its cunning hiding-place, and then strolled out into the garden to pull a lettuce for supper.

It was as he settled down to a solitary meal of cold ham and salad that the door swung open, and in walked Mike.

"Golly!"

Bill stiffened at sight of his friend's saturnine grin and the strange suppressed excitement gleaming in the deep-set eyes. Something had happened, that was clear—something big enough to have jerked Mike out of his usual stolid calm.

"What's the matter, Cannonball?" queried the boy eagerly. "My hat, you look as though you've been dragged through a hedge backwards!"

Without a word, Mike crossed to the table. He cut two big slices of bread, coolly relieved Bill of his well-filled plate, and made himself an enormous ham sandwich. This he wrapped in a handkerchief and stowed the bundle in his pocket.

Then he moved towards the door again.

Bill yanked him back by the collar.

"D'you mean you're going out again, fathead?" he demanded. "Gosh, Mike, what is this game, anyway? Tell a chap, for the love of Pete!"

Mike grinned at him mysteriously.

"I'm—er—negotiating for a car," he drawled, with mock dignity, and made another move for the door. But there, with his hand on the latch, he paused again long enough to astound Bill with another cryptic remark. "Also, I'm watching Corsica Phil Valetti! So long, Willyum! I'll see you later!"

Next moment he was gone.

If ever a man needed watching, that man was Corsica Phil Valetti!

In his present mood, the swarthy, tawny-eyed gangster was as dangerous as a starving timber-wolf.

The constant succession of disastrous failures in his fight to secure old Simon Allison's supercharger had stretched his nerves and temper to breaking-point. Furthermore, his arrogant pride had been sorely damaged, and that, to a man like Valetti, was the last straw.

In his own picturesque lingo, he, one of the smartest crooks who ever graduated with honours in that tough school, the Chicago underworld, had been made to look a "sucker."

Weeks ago he had confidently assured Len Allison that the "lifting" of the Allison invention would be as easy as falling off a log. And now that he had failed to deliver the goods, young Len, himself in a pitiful state of fright, had rounded on his confederate with all the viciousness of a weak man who finds himself driven into a corner.

Since that hair-raising experience a week ago, when they had entered Len's study through the secret panel, only to find Cannonball Mike Doyle and young Bill very much in possession, the two conspirators had parted company.

Len had gone to London by the very  
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first train next morning, ostensibly on business, but in reality to take refuge there until he could summon up nerve enough to return to Avonport. And although Valetti had slunk back into the town, calling his partner all the lily-white cowards he could lay his tongue to, he also had been careful to keep well out of sight of Mike Doyle or Bill.

It was not, however, that he was afraid of either of his resolute opponents calling in the police. He knew them better than that by now. What he was chiefly afraid of was that his old enemy, Mike, would take the law into his own hands. He had a very healthy fear of that rough, grim Irishman, had Corsica Phil!

Thus, having moved from his comfortable lodgings near Len's mansion, the badly rattled crook had taken a small room down in the meanest quarter of Avonport. For nearly a week he had hidden himself there, only stirring out late at night when the need for fresh air drove him into the dark, narrow streets.

On the seventh evening, however, he could stand the strain no longer. To one of his temperament, enforced idleness was as gall and wormwood. What he craved was action again—action of any kind, and hang the risk!

Furiously crumpling up the evening paper—which was full of Bill Allison's latest bowling exploits against Essex—he began pacing up and down the stuffy room like some sulky animal in its den, while bitter thoughts, seething in his brain, found utterance in equally savage words.

"Curse Len Allison and his uncle's darn invention! By heck, if I wasn't playin' for mighty big stakes, I'd beat it back to th' States pronto! This stunt's been a flop from th' start, thanks to Mr. Dirty Doyle and that cub cricketer! Bad luck all round! An' to make it worse, my dee-ah pardner ain't got the grit of a bunny-rabbit, either!"

The memory of Len Allison's pale, terror-stricken face, as he had seen it last, brought an oath to his thick lips. For a moment the Corsican's dark face was distorted into a devilish mask.

"You poor sap!" Contemptuously he addressed the absent Len. "By thunder, I'll teach you yet what it means to let Phil Valetti down an' leave him flat like you've done! Reckon you're out of it now, do you? You reckon I'll find some way o' grabbin' that supercharger on my own, while you're safe in London! Tchah!"

A cloud of Turkish cigarette-smoke wafted across the room.

"Waal, you're backin' a loser, Len. I ain't yore catspaw, you're mine! You're goin' to help me get that old fool's invention yet, in spite of fifty Mike DoYLES and Bill AllisonS. And when I've got it, whistle for it, my bucko! That gadget'll bring me a sight more dough in the States where I'm known than it will from you, Mister Boss of the busted Allison Motor Works!"

But how to get hold of the Allison invention was still the burning question.

Moreover, it was a question which had to be solved quickly, now, or not at all.

The new firm of Allison & Doyle, he knew, was making money. Not much, it is true, but enough to render their prospects of being able to afford a decent demonstration car brighter as every day passed. And therein lay the whole crux of Valetti's dilemma. Unless he could make himself master of the Allison plans before the invention was

safely launched upon the motor-market, he could "pack up."

To and fro tramped the disgruntled rogue, conning over plan after plan, only to reject them all in weary disgust. At last he halted and glowered blackly around the shabby room, feeling that if he didn't escape from these four dingy walls soon, he would go crazy.

"Bah! This darned hole stifles a guy's brain. Wonder if I dare risk takin' th' car out for a spin? Mebbe a quick run-around will liven up my wits! Doggone, th' coast ought to be clear now, after a whole week. Likely as not, Dirty Doyle reckons I've beat it to London with dear Leonard!"

Turning off the light, Valetti opened the window and looked out warily. Down in the dark close street a few children were playing noisily, and farther up he glimpsed the vague form of a man loafing at the mouth of one of the numerous little alleys. But even as the Corsican glanced in that direction, the fellow shuffled slowly out of sight, and a woman's shrill voice summoned the children indoors. Two minutes later, the street was deserted.

Valetti closed the window with a bang, and then reached for a leather coat and wide-peaked cap.

The sudden desire for a drive, for a reckless burst along the quiet country roads outside Avonport, got the better of his caution. In his day, Corsica Phil had been a racing-driver second only to Mike Doyle, and but for his innate crookedness, might have been lasting fame on the United States motor-tracks. Racing was in his blood. At times, even now that every track in the world was closed to him, the desire for speed, for the feel of a steering-wheel quivering in his hands and the sonorous roar of a powerful engine in his ears, acted on him like a drug.

"Blazes, I'll chance it!" he growled, hurrying out of the room.

That decision was one of the most fateful he had ever made in his life!

### A Blow in the Dark!

**O**UTSIDE in the street, the Corsican paused for another quick, searching stare up and down, but saw nothing to rouse his fears again. Tugging his cap-peak lower, and sinking his chin into the collar of his coat, he strode off, avoiding the street lamps as much as possible, but moving briskly.

By devious twists and turns, he made his solitary way across Avonport towards the river, looking back over his shoulder from time to time. Uneasiness still lay heavily upon him. Once the chilly fear that he was actually being followed gripped him suddenly, and, whipping round, he fancied he saw a blurred shape glide into the shadow of some trees overhanging the front gate of a little villa.

But though he, too, darted for cover in a flash, and stood rigid, with heart beating painfully, nothing more happened. No sturdy youngster or lean muscular man, walking with a slight limp, emerged from the dark entrance.

At last, convinced that the swaying of the trees had deceived his eyes, he prowled on again.

"Nerves! Bein' cooped up in that blame room's got me down!" he grumbled.

By the time he reached the river bank, the burly Corsican was breathing hard and sweating freely.

Along the towpath he went, and turning into a little lane, came at length to the wall of Len Allison's big house. The place, as he knew, was empty and closed now, for the servants had been given a holiday by their "generous" master. Valetti made a brief halt there, half-minded to steal into the building through the secret passage; but then, thinking better of it, he strode on until, in another fifty yards, a small boathouse loomed up beside the lane.

This also belonged to Len Allison, but during the last six weeks the young boss of the Allison works had had sundry alterations made there, at Valetti's urgent request. Now the long, low wooden shed was used for something else beside the storing of a pleasure dinghy and small canoe.

It was, in fact, the secret garage wherein the conspirators kept a certain low-slung open touring-car, in which the mysterious Joe the Hump had twice made his escape after the unsuccessful raids on Bill Allison's cottage at Kelsey.

Waiting for a while until he was sure no one could be watching, Valetti produced a curiously-wrought key, and opened the new double doors that faced on to the lane. A torch flashed in his hand. Then he gave a grunt of relief as he saw that the tourer was still inside, just as he had left it a week ago.

Since that calamitous night, the Corsican had not dared to visit the camouflaged garage for fear that Mike Doyle or young Bill might be spying on him. And even now, after closing the doors noiselessly, he flashed his torch to every part of the shed before advancing another step.

Everything, however, seemed in order. Nothing had been tampered with, no outsider, as far as he could discover, had been inside the place. Stepping suddenly into the tonneau of the car, he lifted the cushions of the back seat, and shone a light into the shallow cavity beneath.

The sight of a little black bag hidden there seemed to reassure him completely then.

For the first time for several days, a jaunty smile wreathed Valetti's lips as he stripped off his coat and raised the engine-bonnet. Soon he had the car tuned to his satisfaction, filled up, and ready for the road. The confident grin became a chuckle as he stepped back in the end, wiping his oily hands.

"Sure was a nifty idea o' mine to turn this ornery shed into a garage. No wonder th' cops combed Avonshire for the old bus without findin' her!" The Corsican congratulated himself. "Waal, we'll jest have a drive across country now to blow the cobwebs away. Mebbe it wouldn't be a bad idea to come back through Kelsey and risk another look round there!"

So saying, Valetti moved to the doors again, opened them, and thrust his head out into the silent darkness.

And that was almost the last thing Corsica Phil Valetti remembered doing for some considerable time!

The attack that followed was launched with such devastating speed and efficiency that the Corsican hadn't a hope. He was caught—caught flat-footed!

All he saw was a black phantom-like figure that seemed to spring out of the very ground. His heart gave a sudden sickening bound; a choked, guttural scream forced itself from his lips as he found himself staring straight into a shapeless face.



Then a hateful, sardonic voice spoke quietly.

"Tha-anks!" it drawled; and with that, two iron fists drove through the air.

A straight left to the solar-plexus was followed by a terrific right to the jaw. And Valotti, too dazed to defend himself, got the full benefit of both. There came a dull thud, a crisp smack. Under the double impact Corsica Phil went down like a log, and stayed down.

Sucking his knuckles, the masked attacker stepped nonchalantly over his prostrate form, and yanked him into the shed again. Then swiftly, but coolly, he went to work.

The effects of a knockout, even such a fearful k.o. as the Corsican had suffered, usually wear off in a few minutes, and during that time, his vanquisher had much to do.

First he untied the blue silk handkerchief that concealed the lower half

of his face, and then, picking up the hefty rogue as though he was a child, dumped him into Len Allison's old dinghy and piled the light canoc on top of him.

"Guess that'll be another weight on your mind when you wake up, Phil," he chuckled softly.

By the light of the Corsican's own torch, he gave the powerful but nondescript-looking tourer an expert once-over. That done, he nodded placidly and slid behind the steering-wheel.

Next moment the purr of a self-starter filled the shed with explosive echoes.

Loud and startling though the din was in contrast to the former stillness, it failed to awaken Corsica Phil. Nor did he drift out of slumberland and open a pair of bleary eyes again until some time after the audacious raider had made good his escape in the looted car.

Meanwhile, the "bandit" was stepping hard on the gas.

Passing Len Allison's house at a rare bat, he cut across the next bridge that spanned the river, and then, with a foot planted firmly on the accelerator, headed for the quiet, rugged hills beyond Avonport.

A dozen miles the "bandit" covered in as many minutes, and that despite the darkness and the winding lanes. Not until he was well into the hills did he pull up at length beside a dense, whispering coppice.

With the complacent air of a man who has put a good job of work behind him, he then unwrapped a stick of chewing-gum, thrust it into his capacious mouth, leaned back, and began to chew luxuriously.

And suddenly he began to laugh as well; gasping and shaking with mirth till the tears ran down his leathery cheeks.

(Continued on next page.)

## COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

**I** RECEIVED a query a little while ago from Jack Canard, of North Circular Road, N.18. He asks me to settle this question for him: Which is

### THE LARGEST DOG IN THE WORLD?

Jack thinks the Great Dane earns this distinction; but, as a matter of fact, he is wrong. The largest, strongest and tallest dog in the world is the Tibetan mastiff. It is very much like a sour-faced, heavy-eared Newfoundland dog, but is much larger in size. However, a Tibetan mastiff is a dog which is rarely seen in this country. It may interest Jack—and others—to know that the Great Dane is also known as the German mastiff, or boarhound. Do you know how many types of dogs there are? The Kennel Club registers over 62 varieties, but actually there are no fewer than 185 varieties differentiated by naturalists!

What is the most curious dog in the world? Do you know? It is the Chinese Crested dog. It is practically hairless, with a mottled, fleshy skin, and it carries on its forehead a crest or topknot of long bristly hair!

You will be interested in this query from Jack Baynes, of Sunderland.

### WHAT IS A SHOOTING STAR?

he asks. Well, to begin with, it isn't a star—and it doesn't shoot! Actually it is a piece of metal or stone, hurtling through the atmosphere. So long as it remains in what is known as the ether—that is outside the atmospheric belt which wraps round the world—you cannot see it. But it travels at such a terrific rate that the moment it gets into air, a tremendous friction is set up, and this makes the metal or stone white hot. When it passes out of the atmospheric belt it cools down again, and is once more lost to sight.

Sometimes, however, these "shooting stars" actually hit the earth, but, luckily, they invariably fall in some desolate region. The force of their impact otherwise would create a great amount of damage.

**T**HE next query requires a little longer answer. S. O'L., of Exeter, Devon, tells me

### HE WANTS TO BECOME AN AUTHOR,

and asks me how to go about it. If this reader can write the kind of stories which Editors require, there is no reason why he should not achieve his ambition, but I warn him that it is by no means an easy profession to embrace. He must first of all decide exactly what kind of stories he wishes to write, and then must study the periodicals or magazines which publish that type of story. Without modelling himself on other authors, he must try to write the same type of story, and when he is satisfied with his efforts, he should have them typewritten—on one side of the paper only—and submit them to the Editors.

A stamped, addressed envelope should be enclosed for the return of the manuscript in case it should prove unsuitable. My chum must not expect to get his first efforts published. I know authors who wrote for years without getting a single story published. But if he sticks it he will learn by his failures. If he shows good promise, an Editor is always willing to help him, but unless his work is equally as good as that of existing authors, I am afraid he will find it difficult to sell it. If he buys "The Authors and Artists' Year Book," he will get a list of Editors and the kind of stories they require.

The same reader asks me about

### THE GRAVE OF KING ARTHUR!

Is it possible to see it at Glastonbury? he asks. I am afraid it is not, because most of the stories told about King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table are mere romances. There certainly was an Arthur, but he was a British chieftain who distinguished himself in the wars with the Saxons in the latter part of the 5th century. No one knows the truth about his death, but it is said that he was killed by a near kinsman.

Glastonbury is identified with "Avalon," where Arthur is said to have had his

wounds miraculously healed, but there have been so many myths and romances interpolated into his life that none can tell where the truth ends and the fiction begins. It is certain, however, that a British chieftain of that time could not have been the centre of such a court of knights as the romances describe.

## NOW for a few RAPID-FIRE REPLIES.

**R.S.A., and London Chamber of Commerce Examinations.** "Regular Reader," of Preston, Lancs: You will get full particulars of the examinations if you write to: The Secretary, London Chamber of Commerce, 97, Cannon Street, London, E.C.4, and the Examination Officer, Royal Society of Arts, 18, John Street, Adelphi, London.

**More About Bunter's Brother Sammy E. G., of Leeds:** I will bear your request in mind, and see what I can do in the future.

**Joining the Air Force.** "Magnetite," of Farnworth: You can get a booklet at your local post office, giving particulars of how to join the R.A.F. Or you can apply to the nearest recruiting office for particulars. Occasionally vacancies for specialists are advertised in the "Situations Vacant" column of newspapers.

**Kite Dimensions.** "Enquirer," of Cork: You can make a box kite as small or large as you wish. I'm afraid I haven't space to describe the method of making in full, but you will doubtless be able to get a "How to Make" book from your public library, which will give you full particulars.

And now for next week's bumper programme.

### "THE HUNTED HIKERS!"

By Frank Richards,

is the title of the grand long complete holiday yarn of the chums of Greyfriars. The title alone is sufficient to tell you that you are in for a rattling fine story that will hold your interest to the very end.

There'll be another ripping instalment of our popular sporting story, "Allison of Avonshire!" and a full-of-fun issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," while our shorter features will appear as usual. Make sure of next week's MAGNET, chum, by ordering it in good time!

YOUR EDITOR.  
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,353.

## Hiding the Loot!

"O H gosh—oh, my sufferin' Sambo!" groaned Mike Doyle holding his aching ribs. "Bedad, what a shock an' all for pore old Phil! Robbing the robbers—hijacking the hijackers! Mike Doyle, 'tis a bold bad bandit ye are, an' no fatal error!"

"But, glory be, didn't Phil make it easy for me? Th' very first time he works up nerve enough to take a decent walk he leads me straight to his garage, fills up th' car for me, opens th' door, and then sticks his ugly mug out into the night for me to hit! And did I hit it? Oh, boy!"

Helpless with hilarity, the "hijacker" sagged lower on the driving-seat, squirming and struggling for breath. It was many years since the dour Cannonball had last indulged in such a whole-hearted outburst of glee. Yet there was a certain grimace about his merriment, too!

"Bedad, I told young Bill I'd get him a demonstration-car free, gratis, an' fer nothin'!" he panted. "An', by golly, I'll bet I've taken a few more screws an' bolts out o' Phil Valetti's plans to-night! Phil, me beautiful blackguard, we've tumbled your secret entrance and your secret garage, and now we've pinched your getaway car for our own work. So now come and search for it, me laddie-buck, and I wish you luck when you find it!"

Wiping his streaming eyes, Mike drove on again more sedately, though every now and again he burst into another fit of silent laughter. There was no danger of pursuit; no danger, either, of Corsica Phil Valetti reporting the car-bandit to the police! All safe, the Cannonball glided into dark, peaceful Kelsey a few minutes after eleven o'clock.

Instead of driving on to the cottage, however, Mike took the car round to the rear of the Red Lion, Kelsey's one tiny inn, and came to a halt in the cobbled yard.

Almost at once, a stout, hearty-looking old man, carrying a lantern, emerged from the back door of the inn and stumped across to the car, grinning sleepily.

"Ah, so ther ye be at lyan', Muster Doyle! I'd nigh give up waitin' for ye!" he welcomed Mike, in broad, Avonshire dialect. "Got tea car a' reet, then, I see! Did'er cost 'ee much?"

"Not much, Jem," assured Mike, with a bland smile. "Not nearly as much as I expected, anyway. In fact, I got her so cheap, you might say I practically pinched her!"

Old Jem Willis, mine host of the Red Lion, chuckled knowingly.

"Ah, you motor-fellers! Ye're a

praper lot o' highway robbers, some o' ye!" he nodded, blissfully unaware of how near the truth he was in this instance. "We-ell, I had yon shed cleared out like a promised ye, so ye can droive 'er roight in!"

"Fine!" Mike clapped the genial innkeeper on the shoulder. "But now listen, Jem! For the next few days I don't want anyone nosin' around this shed unless I'm here. Savvy? Young Bill and I, we've—or—obtained this car so that we can demonstrate old Mr. Allison's invention, and—well, you know we've had plenty o' trouble over that already. And the dirty spalpeens who crippled the poor old boss are still out for blood. See? Is there any risk of strangers sneakin' into this yard any time?"

Jem Willis' massive jaw hardened.

YOU REALLY MUST read this week's splendid school story of TOM MERRY & CO., at St. Jim's, entitled:

## "GUSSY'S SACRIFICE!"

By Martin Clifford.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy is in the soup properly—and it's all the fault of his young brother Wally. Gussy is sentenced to be flogged because he won't sneak, on a chap who tipped a bucket of tar over a Form-master! Gussy wouldn't sneak in any case; but as the offender is Wally, his silence is even more understandable. Gussy knows that his brother will be instantly expelled if he is found out. It is a dramatic situation, and Gussy deals with it in his own unique way: You'll find this stirring yarn in the

GEM

On Sale Wednesday. Price 2d.

"If any stranger was to sneak in yere, th' next place he'd sneak into would be th' 'orspital!" was the ominous reply. "Hoy, Snatcher! Snatcher, coom ye 'ere, b'y!"

In answer to the summons, something that at first glance looked rather like a small donkey prowled noiselessly from the Stygian blackness beside the shed. In actual fact, however, the animal was an enormous cross-bred mastiff, with sullen, red-rimmed eyes, slaving jaws, and hard ridges of muscle all over its sleek body.

Mike, squinting warily at this formidable guardian of the inn-yard, edged away discreetly as half-bared fangs glistened in the lamplight.

"H'm! A nice little pet!" he observed dryly. "Just make sure he knows that I'm not a stranger, will you, Jem?"

"Oi will thaat!" Mr. Willis chortled fatly. "An' as it 'appens, there'll be someone else around as'll make short work of any nose-yparkers, Muster Doyle. Me son, Jack—'ee come back from Bristol this artemnoon—out o' work ag'in, pore lad. Reckon now I'll be findin' him some jobs about the place, like, so 'e'll be potterin' round th' yaard most of th' time—see? An' he wunt stand no naansence, neither!"

"Ah!" Mike's eyes quickened with interest. He had seen "me son Jack," who was a young fourteen-stone giant, with a pair of fists that looked capable of punching a hole through armour-plate. "Maybe I could give your youngster a job up at the cottage, some time," continued the Irishman. "A hefty gosoon like him'd be handy to keep an eye on th' place when young Bill and I are away!"

Having driven the car into the empty shed and locked up, Mike wrung Jem Willis' hand gratefully.

"I'll be down here to-morrow, working all day," he announced. "An' meanwhile, Jem, 'tis meself that's mighty obliged to you for your kindness."

"'Tis nothin'!" chuckled Jem, leading the way out of the yard. "Plenty folks'd do more'n that for young Bill or Muster Simon, let alone yourself. Ye're welcome, Muster Doyle! Yere car'll be saafe enough there. G'-night!"

Whistling contentedly between his teeth, Mike sauntered up the road to the cottage, thinking pleasant thoughts.

"Well, and that's that!" he mused. "We've got a car at last, and to-morrow I'll adjust the supercharger. An' we've pretty nigh solved all the little mysteries Phil and that Len Allison pup have worked up for us. They can't get at the car while that man-eatin' hound's about, even if they find where I've parked it; and if they come searchin' the cottage 'me son Jack' can attend to 'em if we're not there. The only danger now is that hump-backed swab, Joe the Hump!" Mike's nobby fists clenched at the memory. "Maybe we'll solve that mystery, too, before long!" he snorted.

Quietly he entered the cottage garden and stood for a moment looking up at Bill's window with a quaint little grin.

"You're a good scout, Bill. You an' yore old man deserve all th' luck," he murmured, and suddenly chuckled. "Well, if I don't give you a pleasant surpris to-morrow night, bedad, Corsica Phil can use me as a doormat!"

Tired, but triumphant, Mike, the motor-bandit, stole into the little dwelling.

(Look out for more startling developments in next week's chapters of this thrilling sporting story, chums!)

## DON'T BE BULLIED!

Some splendid illus. lessons in Jujitsu. Articles and full particulars Free. Better than Boxing. 2d. stamp for postage. Learn to fear no man. Or send P.O. 1/- for First Part to "A. P." "Blenheim House," Bedford Lane, Finsbury, Middx.

BE TALL Your Height increased in 14 days or Money Back. Complete Course, 5/- Booklet free privately. —STEEBING SYSTEM, 28, Dean Road, LONDON, N.W.2.

BLUSHING, Shyness, "Nerves," Self-consciousness, Worry Habit, Unreasonable Fears, etc., cured or money back! Complete Course 5/-. Details—L. A. STEEBING, 28, Dean Road, London, N.W.2.

MAGIC TRICKS, etc.—Parceis, 2/6, 5/6. Ventriloquist's Instrument. Invisible. Imitate Birds. Price 6d. each, 4 for 1/-.—T. W. Harrison, 239, Pentonville Rd., London, N.1.

BE TALLER! Ross System is Genuine. Watch Yourself Grow! INCREASED my own height to 5ft. 3 1/2 ins. T. H., age 164, to 5ft. 7 1/2 ins. T. P., age 21, from 5ft. 5 to 5ft. 10 1/2. B. P., age 20, 3 1/2 ins. in 16 days! A. G., age 19, 5 ins. in 6 weeks! Fee £2 2s. STAMP brings FREE Particulars. P. M. ROSS, Height Specialist, Scarborough, Eng.



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J. ROGERS & SON, "English" Manu- facturers (WHOLESALE AND RETAIL), 52, GROVE VALE, LONDON, S.E.22. Send for FREE Descriptive List.

STAMMERING, Sluttering. New, remarkable, Certain Cure. Booklet free, privately.—SPECIALIST, Dept. A.P., 28, Dean Road, LONDON, N.W.2.

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When Answering Advertisements Please Mention This Paper.

**CAN YOU SWIM THE CHANNEL?**  
If so, please swim across with a tanner and save a Greyfriars man from serious trouble for non-payment of hotel bill.—L. CHURCHILL (Shell), Hotel D'Idem, Dieppe.

**LAND TO LET**  
Recently occupied by Highlife Holiday Camp and well fitted with broken bottles and cigarette ends. Fine grazing ground for ostriches.—Write "OPTIMISTIC OWNER," Box No. 59, GREYFRIARS HERALD.

No. 48 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

September 2nd, 1933.

# THE NEW Greyfriars Herald

EXTRA GOOD EDITION

**"SWAP" BARGAIN**  
Complete Camping Orift going dirt cheap. Will exchange for return ticket to Margate, free board-licence for a week, bottle of lightning cold cure, and ten pins of non-ortho-bite ornament.—Write "HAD SOME," Cornfield Council School.

**CAN ANYONE LEND US—**  
A really heavy hob-nailed boot? We want to help Coker, who's complaining that he hasn't got a real "blok" out of life for months!—Write POTTER and GREENE, Box No. 57, GREYFRIARS HERALD.



## SURF-RIDER'S \$ SURPRISING SKILL!

What silly ass said that Coker couldn't do surfing! Who couldn't do surfing! Who couldn't do surfing! Well, it was said by a jolly well off man, Coker, who is now the uncrowned king of the surf-riders at Sandown. I. of W., and shown all over the country are clamouring for his services. And no wonder! For Coker, with one of his well-known strokes of genius, has become the first man on earth to turn surfing into surfing!

Porter and Greene, in their ignorance, imagined that their leader was going to make a dash of it. When Coker lived a speedboat and announced his intention of going surfing they looked quite alarmed.

"Have you ever practised surfing before?" Porter asked. "No," Coker admitted. "But, of course, that doesn't matter where a chap like myself's concerned."

Porter and Greene could only gasp. "Oh!"

"It's all a matter of balance," Coker explained. "Balance and speed. I happen to possess a natural sense of balance, and the speed will depend on the fellow who's steering the speedboat."

Porter and Greene gasped. "Oh!" again.

"I must see him beforehand and tell him to let her really out. A mere forty miles an hour's no

in five seconds the speedboat was roaring through the water at top speed—and Coker was flying behind her!

"Yes, dear reader, we mean 'flying' literally. Coker's sense of balance was so perfect that he didn't stand on the float like normal surf-riders—he just flew through the air like a human sea-gull, only striking the surface of the water with his anatomy at irregular intervals when he needed a flip to send him bounding into the air again!

We can honestly say it was one of the most remarkable displays of surf-riding ever witnessed, and Coker has achieved national-wide fame through it.

Several people were waiting on the beach for him when he returned, with contracts all ready to sign.

But Coker made no reply to their tempting offers. As a matter of fact, he couldn't. It was two hours before he was able to speak—and two days before he properly recovered his breath.

Porter and Greene were awfully pleased about it!

**NOT A MIRACLE!**  
The general scepticism which greeted the story of a young negro turning white while basking at Margate will quickly vanish at the subsequent announcement that the "negro" in question was Dicky Nugent of the Second.

**WUN LUNG ON HOLIDAY**  
"Curious" writes to ask: "What does a heathen like Wun Lung do with himself during the summer vac?"

Ab, "Curious," you may well ask! Does he sink, with soft, stealthy tread, into a whirlpool of villainous deeds of exotic amusement in Limehouse? Does he haunt some sinister old house where every panel opens into a secret passage and unearthly cries make the night hideous? Does he, in some foul underground cellar, practise mysterious rites of eastern magic to the barbaric music of cymbals and tom-toms? Well, to be quite frank, he doesn't. What he usually does, as a matter of fact, is to go to Brighton and stay at a boarding-house just off the front called "Homeligh" or "Seaview!"

**BULSTRODE JOINS FOREIGN LEGION**  
The startling news which reached us yesterday to the effect that Bulstrode of the Removoe had joined the Foreign Legion turns out to be not quite so alarming in the light of further advice we have since received.

It appears that Bulstrode had gone to France on a "long day" trip and, feeling like a straggler, had walked along the sands out of the town.

After walking a couple of miles he came across a scene that stirred within him a latent desire for adventure—a scene that reminded him of romantic novels he had read and romantic "talkies" he had seen of the burning deserts of Algeria. The scene that brought these matters to his mind was a parade of a company of the Foreign Legion!

There they all were, just as he had seen them on the pictures—the dark, swartly Legionnaires, the villainous sergeants, and the aristocratic-looking officers! Bulstrode rubbed his eyes. It was just like a dream come true!

Looking around him, Bulstrode saw a big tent at the entrance to which a large crowd of civilians struggled to get in. There was a notice posted up outside in French, the meaning of which Bulstrode didn't fathom; but it was obvious at a glance that was "on." The

What I think of William Walter Dabney  
By Tomkinson Minor (Fourth)

Please don't expect me to give a solemn and well-considered summary of Dabney's character. That sort of thing is right out of my line. I couldn't be serious for long if I tried, and I couldn't possibly be serious about Dabney for any length of time!

Dabney is one of those people who bark in the sunshine of another man's personality. Just as you associate Dabney with "Temple"—only Dabney happens to be the "onion," while Temple takes the "tripe!"

It seems to be Dabney's mission in life to blast "Oh, rather!" now and again, while Temple is doing a bit of chin-wagging. This seems a tame and inglorious sort of mission to me; but that I'm not necessarily right is proved by the fact that Dabney seems as happy as a sandboy at it! He's fated to be poor old Dab! He's fated to be thought of merely as Temple's lieutenant. He reminds me of Mary's little lamb.

Temple had a little lamb whose antics caused much laughter. For everywhere that Temple went that lamb would follow after!

But I mustn't be too hard on Dab. He never did me a harm; he's a good citizen; he wields a respectable bat at cricket and puts up a good show at football. In fact, taking him all round, he must be a pretty decent chap!

The trouble is that he simply doesn't bother to reveal himself as a separate individual; he'd rather go on being the reflection of his leader. So really he doesn't give a man the chance to tell what sort of fellow he really is!

(Next week Dabney gets a Tomkinson and Roland for his Officer. Watch out for his article, and see! Ed.)

**Snoop's Generosity**  
Snoop surprised us, prior to breaking up for the holidays, by drawing Gosing on one side with the remark that he had something to give him.

"Thankee kindly, Gosing," said Snoop.

"No need to thank me," Snoop said. "Quite a pleasure."

Then, in extremely impressive tones, he said: "A stitch in time saves nine!" and walked away, leaving Gosing gaping after him in a perturbed rage.

Snoop smiled when we asked him what was the big idea.

"I thought, as it was the end of the term, that it was up to me to give him a tip," he explained. "So I did so. I suppose you're not going to deny that the old proverb isn't a jolly good tip to any intelligent man?"

Well, we're not prepared to deny it ourselves. But we tremble to think what Gosing would say if you asked him his opinion on the matter!

**DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM**  
Sammy Buntor has always magnified that he's unalshah and honest; but when I locked him in an old oak chest at home till he told the truth, he immediately admitted that he was greedy and dishonest.

This only goes to prove the truth of the old saying: "There's many a true word spoken in a chest!"

**OBVIOUS**  
Dropping in unexpectedly on Dick Rake the other day, we were surprised to find him scribbling away at a massive French grammar.

"What ever are you doing?" we gapped.

"Just polishing up my French before I catch the Continental Boat 'Yvain'!" was Hake's bland reply.

**DISCLAIMER**  
This notice is inserted to give official denial to the rumour that Bolsover was recently beaten on points by Kid Smashum. The fact is that Bolsover got far more "marks" than his opponent.

(Signed) BOLSOVER'S SECONDS.

**WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?**  
Tom Redwing often goes down to Pag-by-the-seas on a half-holiday for a chat with some of the old salts among whom he is used to live before he won a scholarship to Greyfriars.

Dick Rake is a keen amateur photographer. His prize snapshot is one of Billy Bulster treading on a banana skin!

Popular George Wingate is the champion swimmer of Greyfriars. At a Courtfield Swimming Gala he won a silver cup for lifesaving on the dops!

Jimmy Vivian, though small for his age, is a hard hitter, and is a skilled chess player, and can outwit any fellow in the Removoe, with the possible exception of Mark Linley.

Harro Singh, the dusky nabob, is a truculent fellow, which Skinner & Co. forgot when they tried to beseech him at cards. Bolsover ran amok—and dealt Skinner & Co. swollen noses all round!

**GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!**

**'Lonzy's Little Letters**  
Dear Editor,—Though I have the certitude, as unpretentious a juvenile and as enthusiastic a protagonist of humility as ever became a conscientious element of the scholastic edifice to which we acknowledge allegiance, I have always harpoured literary aspirations and behought myself that I possessed certain definite qualifications favourable and interventional to the successful construction of imaginative narratives. It is all the more surprising, therefore, dear Editor, to apprehend that such examples of my authorship as I have transmitted to you for journalistic publication, which, I might asseverate, comprise tragical and comedies of the annual and vegetable world, of immeasurable dramatic significance, have invariably suffered the humiliation of editorial rejection. Is this logically explicable?

Yours in disapprobation,  
ALONZO TODD.

(Briefly, Lonzy means, why don't you print the stories he sends us? Reader, if you saw this week's specimen—it runs to 40 chapters and bears the title "The Life and Adventures of a Vegetable Marrow"—you'd understand—and pity us! We get a headache reading Lonzy's letters, let alone his stories!—Ed.)

**SWEEPSTAKES**  
The following is a list of the names of the winners of the sweepstakes held by the Greyfriars Herald for the year 1932-33.

First Prize: Mr. J. B. Smith, 10, The Green, Sandown.

Second Prize: Mrs. E. D. Jones, 15, The Hill, Sandown.

Third Prize: Mr. G. H. White, 20, The Lane, Sandown.

Fourth Prize: Miss M. N. Black, 25, The Court, Sandown.

Fifth Prize: Mr. P. Q. Brown, 30, The Farm, Sandown.

Sixth Prize: Mrs. R. S. Green, 35, The Wood, Sandown.

Seventh Prize: Mr. T. U. Grey, 40, The Park, Sandown.

Eighth Prize: Miss V. W. White, 45, The Close, Sandown.

Ninth Prize: Mr. X. Y. Black, 50, The Field, Sandown.

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Seventh Prize: Mr. T. U. Grey, 40, The Park, Sandown.

Eighth Prize: Miss V. W. White, 45, The Close, Sandown.

Ninth Prize: Mr. X. Y. Black, 50, The Field, Sandown.

Tenth Prize: Mrs. Z. A. Grey, 55, The Meadow, Sandown.

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The following is a list of the names of the winners of the Sandown for the year 1932-33.

First Prize: Mr. J. B. Smith, 10, The Green, Sandown.

Second Prize: Mrs. E. D. Jones, 15, The Hill, Sandown.

Third Prize: Mr. G. H. White, 20, The Lane, Sandown.

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