

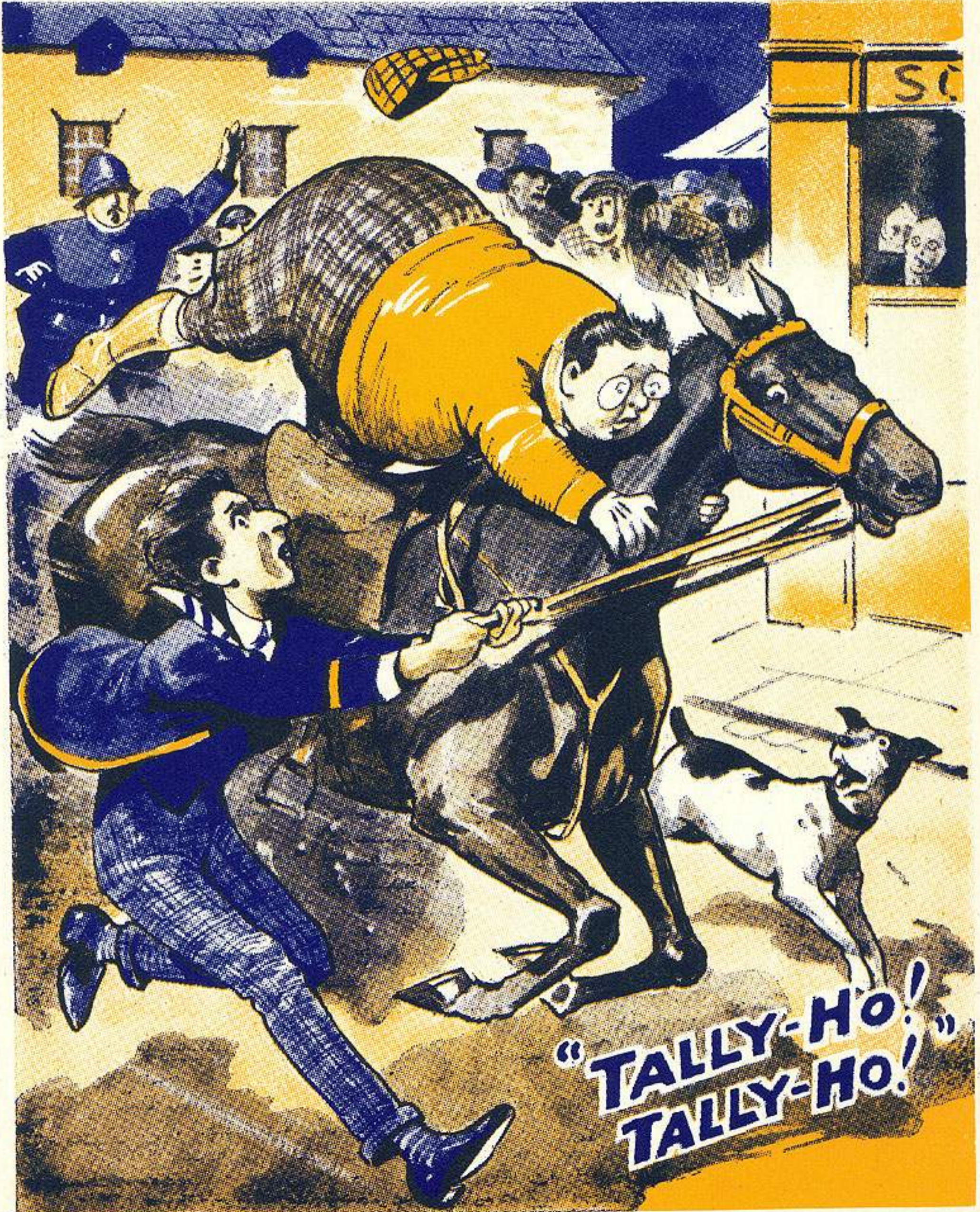
BILLY BUNTER is funnier than "A SNOB IN CLOVER!" This Week's Superb School Story!

The MAGNET 2^D

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EVERY SATURDAY.

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"TALLY-HO!
TALLY-HO!"



A SNOB IN CLOVER!

BY
Frank Richards

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Rolling In It!

"MILLIONS!"
"Eh?"
"Billions!"
"What?"
"Millions and billions!" said Billy Bunter, blinking at Harry Wharton & Co. through his big spectacles. "Rather decent, what?"
The chums of the Greyfriars Remove gazed at Bunter.
It was break-up day at Greyfriars School, and they had plenty of other matters to think of. They had some more packing to do. They had a round of farewells to make. They had trains to think of. They had Coker's hat to knock off, for the last time that term. But these other matters faded from their minds as they heard those remarkable, surprising, indeed amazing, observations from the fat Owl of the Remove.
"Millions!" repeated Bob Cherry.
"Yes, old chap!"
"Billions?" gasped Frank Nugent.
"That's it, old bean!" said Bunter with a cheery nod.
"Of what?" demanded Harry Wharton.
"Eh? Pounds, of course."
"Millions and billions of pounds!" said Johnny Bull dazedly.
"Well, say dollars!" said Bunter.
"Blessed if I know whether it's pounds or dollars! Either's a lot of money, isn't it?"
"The lotfulness is terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Bunter!" said

Hurree Janset Ram Singh, gazing blankly at the Owl of the Remove.
"But what—"
"Has your postal order come at last?" asked Bob, "and is it for a million pounds? Or a billion?"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I say, you fellows, you needn't cackle!" said Billy Bunter. "Millions and billions, you know! I call it rather decent!"
"I should call it more than 'rather decent!'" said Harry Wharton, laughing.
"The ratherfulness would be preposterous!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.
"Of course, it would seem more to you fellows than to me!" remarked Billy Bunter. "You're not accustomed to wealth. You're not accustomed to a place like Bunter Court—a stately mansion swarming with liveried flunkeys—"
"Not at all!" agreed Bob. "No more than you are, in fact, old fat man."
"Oh, really, Cherry—"
"Is the fat duffer wandering in his mind?" asked Harry Wharton.
"Has he one to wander in?" asked Johnny Bull.
They gazed at Bunter.
There was something unusual about Billy Bunter that morning!
He was walking as if on air! His fat face expressed unbounded satisfaction. Every now and then he gave a little chirrup of irrepressible glee. Evidently life seemed good to Bunter that day. He found the world worth living in. The universe was not always

run to Bunter's satisfaction. Now, however, he seemed to have absolutely no fault to find with it.

He smiled! He beamed! He almost bubbled!

Something, it was clear, had bucked Bunter tremendously. That was clear! But what it was, was not so clear.

Even if his celebrated postal order, so long expected, had arrived at last, it could not have accounted for this. Besides, he was talking of millions, and even billions! Postal orders, assuredly, did not run into those figures!

It was all the more surprising, because on break-up day, Bunter was not wont to be very chirpy. Generally, on such an occasion, Bunter was rather worried, having to solve a problem for the holidays. The magnificence of Bunter Court never attracted him homeward—not if he could help it! The humbler homes of other fellows had a greater attraction, if somehow he could contrive to barge into the same.

But on this particular occasion, Billy Bunter was not seeking to "stick" anybody. Apparently, he had his own plans for the "hols." Lord Mauleverer was dodging him that morning, but for once Mauly need not have dodged. Vernon-Smith was prepared to kick him if he tried to wedge into the car that was coming for Smithy, but the fat Owl was not wasting a thought on the Bunder's car. Harry Wharton & Co., when he rolled up to them in the sunny quad, were ready to tell him, as politely as possible, but firmly, that he was superfluous. But Bunter was not after an invitation for the "hols." For once, it seemed, he was not "after" anything! Bubbling with happy satisfaction, he talked of millions and billions, like a fellow in possession of those stupendous sums—though he did not seem clear whether they were millions of pounds or of dollars!

HARRY WHARTON & CO., THE CHEERY CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS!

Anyone looking at Bunter and listening to him, might have supposed that he had come into a fortune—a tremendous fortune!

Amazing to relate, he had!

Still, it did not seem probable, to fellows who were used to be being dunned for loans of sixpence or a shilling by the fat, impecunious Owl.

So Harry Wharton & Co. just gazed at him, wondering! Coker of the Fifth, whose hat was to be knocked off, passed at a distance, unheeded. The Famous Five did not even see Coker! Bunter held all their attention.

Bob Cherry tapped his forehead significantly. It looked to Bob like a case of mild insanity. Often and often Billy Bunter talked of wealth, and magnificence, and stately mansions, and titled relations. But he had never run into millions before! Never into billions!

"I say, you fellows, how much is a billion?" asked Bunter.

"A million millions," answered Wharton, laughing. "Quite a decent sum, whether in pounds or dollars."

"Fishy says it's only a thousand millions!" said Bunter.

"I believe they call a thousand millions a billion in the United States," answered the captain of the Remove. "But even that's a tidy sum! Got it in your trousers pocket?"

"If you have," said Bob Cherry gravely, "you can square up that eighteenpence you've owed me all this term."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do!" advised Johnny Bull with equal gravity.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I haven't got it in my pocket, you silly ass!" hooted Bunter.

"Not really!" ejaculated Frank Nugent.

"No!" snorted Bunter. "How could I have?"

"How, indeed?" chuckled Wharton.

"The howfulness is terrific."

"Bang goes my eighteenpence!" sighed Bob Cherry. "I was afraid there was a catch in it somewhere!"

"All the same, you fellows, I'm a millionaire now—"

"I don't think!"

"I mean a billionaire—"

"Go it!"

"Rolling in it!" said Bunter impressively. "A millionaire—I mean a billionaire—"

"Make it a trillionaire!" suggested Nugent. "It sounds bigger, and it's just as true!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you fellows don't believe me—"

"Believe you!" gasped Wharton.

"Oh, my hat!"

"I seem to feel a sort of doubt!" murmured Bob Cherry. "One of those small, lingering doubts!"

Billy Bunter blinked at the Famous Five through his spectacles. He looked them up and down contemptuously and scornfully.

"Of course, I expected you fellows to be envious!" he said, with a curl of his fat lip. "You would be!"

"You blithering, blethering idiot!" said Harry Wharton. "If you're not off your podgy rocker, do you expect any fellow to swallow a yarn like that?"

"It's true!" roared Bunter.

"Fathead!"

"I'm a millionaire—"

"Ass!"

"I mean a billionaire—"

"Chump!"

"I was going to offer to run you fellows home in my car—"

"Your car!" yelled Bob.

"My car!" answered Bunter firmly.

"Is he really potty?" asked Johnny

Bull, in wonder. "Is he dreaming day-dreams? You haven't got a car, you frabjous fozzler!"

"I can buy one, I suppose," snorted Bunter.

"B-b-buy one!"

"Yes. Money's no object to me."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'm sending down to Courtfield for the best car they've got at Chunkley's, in their motor department."

"Oh crumbs!"

"It will only run to a thousand pounds or so," said Bunter negligently.

"Only!" gurgled Bob.

"A mere nothing to me!"

"We'd better take him to Quelch," said Nugent, quite concerned. "Bunter had better see a doctor. He can't travel in this state."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky ass!" hooted Bunter.

"Well, look here! Before you pay for that car, what about that eighteenpence?" asked Bob. "Every little helps in the hols. And you won't miss it out of those millions and billions and trillions."

"Eighteenpence!" Bunter's lip curled. "Do you think I carry coppers, you fathead?"

"Yes; when you can borrow them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've no coppers about me," sneered Bunter. "No small silver, either. I've no use for such trifles."

From cadging coppers and borrowing bobs, Billy Bunter, of the Greyfriars Remove, suddenly becomes a billionaire! He fairly revels in his new wealth, but in his manners and customs he remains the same old Bunter!

"I have," said Bob; "lots. I'll change a note, if you like."

"Oh, all right! I've nothing smaller, at the moment, than a hundred-pound note."

"Eh!"

"What?"

"Change that," said Bunter.

The fat Owl took a note-case from his pocket. It was a new note-case, of a very expensive leather, and must have cost several pounds, at least. But that was not the only surprising thing about Billy Bunter's note-case. It was crammed with banknotes.

His fat fingers selected one, and jerked it out. The Famous Five of the Remove gazed at it as if it mesmerised them.

It was a banknote for £100.

And it was only one of many. Bunter had dozens of them.

If the skies had fallen it could hardly have astonished the chums of the Remove more. They gazed, and they gazed, and they gazed.

"Going to change it?" jeered Bunter.

Bob Cherry took the banknote and scanned it carefully. There seemed to be only one explanation of this miracle, and that was that Bunter had somehow got hold of a wad of "spoo" banknotes, and was using them to "swank" with.

But examination demonstrated that the banknote was genuine. Unless Bob's eyes deceived him, it was the real article. In deep silence he handed it back to Bunter.

"Not going to change it?" sneered the fat Owl.

"Where on earth did you get that stack of money, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton. "You've got over a thousand pounds there."

"Seems a lot to you, I dare say," said Bunter. "Not much to a millionaire—I mean a billionaire. Yah! I shan't give you a lift in my new car now, so you can go and eat coke!"

Billy Bunter rolled away, sniffing. Harry Wharton & Co. gazed after him. They were not, as the fat Owl supposed, envious. But they were amazed. They were astounded. They were flabbergasted. They gazed after him, speechless. Billy Bunter had taken their breath away.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

PETER TODD looked worried; he felt worried. There was quite a troubled frown on his face as he sorted out odds and ends in Study No. 7 for packing.

As it was the last day of the term, as he was going home for the holidays, as he was not going to see his fat study-mate, Bunter, again for weeks, Peter might have been expected to look bucked. Instead of which he looked, as he felt, worried.

And it was about Bunter that he was worried. No doubt it was a pleasure to part with Bunter. The less any fellow saw of Bunter the more, as a rule, a fellow liked it. Still, Peter did not want to leave Bunter behind him in serious trouble. He did not want the next news of Bunter to be that the fat and fatuous Owl was in "quod." A poet has declared:

"He that takes what isn't his'n,
Is pretty sure to go to prison."

And it seemed to Peter that the sword of Damocles, in that very undesirable form, was suspended over the fat head of William George Bunter.

It was all very well for Billy Bunter to talk about Bunter Court, about the horde of liveried menials, the fleet of motor-cars, the gatherings of the nobility, sprinkled with princes and princesses. So long as it was only gas it did not matter. But when Billy Bunter produced banknotes for large sums, what was a fellow to think?

Anything, except that they were Bunter's.

The last few days Bunter had displayed uncommon wealth. That was surprising enough. He had displayed a valet—a smooth-faced, sleek-looking manservant named Jarvis. That was more surprising. But now he had put the lid on, so to speak. He had displayed, not fivers and tenners, which by some remote possibility might have belonged to him, but hundred-pound notes, which by no imaginable possibility could be his.

Once upon a time, Peter remembered, Bunter had picked up a banknote, and, on the principle that findings were keepings, his fat fingers had become glued to it. But he could hardly have picked up dozens of banknotes for large denominations. Neither, presumably, could he have held up a bank. Still less probable was it that such huge sums had reached him from home. Where, then, had they come from? Peter was not inquisitive, so far as that went, astonished as he was. But he was worried. Bunter had been up to something—what?

Toddy piled books on the table and blinked at them with a wrinkled brow.

Since he had grown so suddenly and strangely wealthy Bunter had shown up a more agreeable—at least, less disagreeable—side of his character. He spent his money royally—so royally, in fact, that if it had gone on long it would certainly have drawn the attention of the beaks to him, and they would have wanted to know. Instead of sponging on fellows up and down the Remove passage, Bunter had started a series of magnificent spreads, to which all were welcome. Any hard-up fellow who wanted a loan had only to ask Bunter. He shelled out at once. This improvement in Bunter only added to Toddy's concern for him. What did it all mean?

There was a step in the passage. Peter knew that soft step, and the soft deferential cough of the man who stopped at the door. It was Bunter's valet, Jarvish.

Peter Todd looked at him as he appeared in the doorway. He saw a rather shortish, sleek man with a smooth face, and plump, smooth hands, which he had a habit of winding together. He was dressed quietly and respectably in a dark suit, and he looked the well-trained manservant to the finger-tips. Only a sly glimmer in his eyes might have made an observant fellow feel distrust of him. It had several times been in Peter's mind to ask that man Jarvish what it all meant. And now, as he was not likely to have another chance of seeing him, he determined to do so.

"Master William—" began Jarvish, in his soft, sleek voice.

He stopped as he saw that Bunter was not in the study, and would have stepped back.

"Hold on!" said Peter Todd quietly. "I want to speak to you, Jarvish."

"Very good, sir!" said Jarvish.

"What's the game?" asked Peter.

Jarvish raised his eyebrows a little.

"The game, sir," he said. "I do not quite follow."

"I'll make it clear," said Peter grimly. "A few days ago my study-mate, Bunter, was the hardest-up fellow at Greyfriars. He spun yarns about a wealthy home and a valet and so forth, and nobody believed a word of it. All of a sudden you turn up. The Head takes you at face value, and allows you to stop in the servants' quarters till break-up. Before you turned up Bunter was as stony as a cobbled yard. Since you've turned up he's been rolling in money. I want to know why and how—see?"

Mr. Jarvish wound his smooth hands together.

"I believe, sir, that Master William has come into a very large sum of money," he said. "But I regret, sir, that I do not feel at liberty to discuss my young master's affairs."

"Bunter's really your young master, is he?"

"Oh, quite, sir!"

"And you came from his home?"

"Naturally, sir."

"Then how is it," asked Peter, "that his young brother, Sammy Bunter of the Second Form, had never even heard your name when I asked him about you?"

Peter watched the sleek face as he asked that question. He watched it intently.

But Mr. Jarvish did not turn a hair. If he had secrets to keep, there was no doubt that he was on his guard.

"Possibly Master Samuel had forgotten, sir," he suggested.

"Likely, isn't it?" grunted Peter.

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"Look here, Jarvish, there's something fishy about it—something jolly queer."

"Indeed, sir!"

"Bunter's crammed with money! If it's not his own, he'll get into trouble about it. It can't be his own! You've got some sort of a hand in it! There was nothing of the kind before you barged in. What does it mean?"

"I think, sir, that I had better refer you to Master William," said Jarvish.

"It is not part of a manservant's duties to discuss his master's affairs, sir. Perhaps you can tell me where to find Master William? I desire to inform him that I have carried out his instructions with regard to packing—"

"You'll find him in the quad, swanking banknotes!" said Peter. "He's practically waving them about like banners. Somehow or other, he's got hold of a wad of money this very morning. And I want to know—"

"Thank you, sir!" said Jarvish, and he withdrew from the study doorway, and went down the Remove passage with his soft step.

Peter snorted! He had been snubbed—by Bunter's valet! He was strongly tempted to step after James Jarvish and plant a boot on his sleek person.

Certainly, if all was open and above-board Billy Bunter's valet had a right to refuse to be questioned. But how could it be above board when Billy Bunter was in possession of unheard-of sums of cash?

There was something mysterious about it—something fishy—something very disquieting. Unless Billy Bunter had found the celebrated purse of Fortunatus all that money couldn't be his own! Whose was it? Even the purse of Fortunatus, in the ancient tale, was not more amazing than Bunter as a millionaire—or a billionaire!

This man Jarvish had appeared suddenly, unexpectedly, from nowhere in particular. If he was some sort of a rogue, getting a fool into his hands, the thing did not seem to fit together.

Rogues extract money from fools—they do not supply them with that necessary article. Yet it seemed that it was only from Jarvish that Bunter's astounding supply of cash could have come. And yet Jarvish looked what he evidently was—a well-trained manservant! How could a manservant have stacks of money to give away—apparently for nothing?

Peter left the study, and followed Jarvish down the stairs and out into the quadrangle. A good many fellows glanced at Jarvish, whose sleek and deferential manner had made quite a good impression on most of the fellows with whom he had come into contact. He stopped to speak to Wingate of the Sixth, with deep respect:

"Perhaps, sir, you could tell me where to find Master Bunter?"

The Greyfriars captain glanced round at him. So civil and deferential was Mr. Jarvish's manner that Wingate refrained from telling him that a Sixth Form man could hardly be expected to know anything about the movements of such a trifling microbe as a Lower Fourth junior.

"I think I saw the kid by the gates," answered Wingate briefly.

"Thank you, sir!"

Jarvish went across the quad, towards the gates, which stood wide open. Billy Bunter was not on view there; but Gosling, the ancient porter, was adorning the porch of his lodge. Toddy, who was also looking for Bunter, followed on.

What happened next took Peter entirely by surprise. It was so entirely unexpected.

He noticed, without any particular heed, that a man on the road outside

had stopped, to glance in at the school gateway. The man was a long-limbed, lean-featured fellow, in a slouched hat, looking like an American. It was not uncommon for a passing pedestrian to glance in, when the gates were open, at the green old quad and the grey old buildings. Peter Todd did not heed the circumstance at all. But it had an electrical effect on Mr. Jarvish!

He stopped suddenly and whirled round, and came running back towards the House. So swift was his action that if the stranger at the gates saw him at all, he could hardly have seen anything of him, but his back.

And so swift was he that Peter Todd, standing in his way, was knocked over before he knew what was happening!

Jarvish evidently did not even see him.

He bolted for the House, like a frightened rabbit for a burrow, crashed into Peter, and sent him sprawling.

"Whoop!" roared the astounded Toddy as he bumped.

Jarvish staggered for a second, recovered himself, and dashed on. Almost in a second he darted into the House doorway and disappeared.

"Ow!" howled Peter. "Wow!"

He sat up dizzily.

The long, lean man at the gates, after a cursory glance in, walked on. Probably he had not noted Jarvish at all, so sudden and rapid had been the sleek man's flight for cover. Peter Todd sat and spluttered.

"Ow! Oooogh! Wow! The silly ass! Is he potty? Wow! Barging a man over—Ow! Wow! Wow!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Plays the Goat!

"**S**AY, bo!"

Billy Bunter jumped.

The fat junior was standing in the road, a dozen yards from the school gates, staring up the long, white ribbon of road that ran across the green common towards the town of Courtfield.

Bunter, apparently, was expecting something, or somebody, from Courtfield. He was blinking impatiently through his big spectacles. He did not look behind him, and he was startled by a tap on his fat shoulder from behind, and still more startled by the nasal voice that spoke in his fat ear.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He spun round like a fat humming-top.

A tall, lean-faced man, with narrow slits of eyes shaded under a slouched hat towered over him. It was the lean man who had looked into the gateway of Greyfriars with such an electrical effect on Jarvish.

Bunter blinked at him in alarm, and promptly backed away. But he backed only one step! The lean man's grasp closed on his shoulder with fingers that seemed of steel, sinking into the fat.

"Wow!" howled Bunter.

"I guess I want you to chew the rag with me a piece!" said the lean man pleasantly.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

He cast a longing blink towards the school gates. He deeply regretted that he had stepped out into the road to see if his new car from Courtfield was coming! He was very anxious to see that new car! But he was not at all anxious to see "Tiger" Bronx, the gangster of Chicago.

He had, indeed, almost forgotten the existence of Mr. Bronx. It was distinctly unpleasant to be reminded of it.

"I—I say, you leggo!" gasped Bunter.

"I'll ehout for help if you don't leggo! You keep off, you beast!"

The gangster's slits of eyes glittered round him. There was, for the moment, no one in sight. One moment was enough for Tiger Bronx, accustomed to acting swiftly, whether with his hands or with his "gun." A jerk of his powerful arm and Billy Bunter was hooked out of the road, into the trees on the farther side. He swung in the tall man's grip like a bag of potatoes.

"Whoooooh-hoop!" gasped Bunter, as he was slammed against a tree and left standing there. Tiger Bronx faced him.

"Now, you fat gink—" said Bronx. "Yow-ow! Ow!"

"I guess I been looking for you a few! I'll say I want you to give me the office!" said the lean man.

"Eh?"

"I'm after that guy Jarvish! I reckon

mysteriously tracking down was within the walls of Greyfriars. Certainly he could not have guessed that he was passing there as Billy Bunter's valet!

But it was clear that he had spotted the fact that the Owl of the Remove was "mixed up" with Jarvish, and he had been looking for Bunter in quest of news. Now he had found Bunter, and the grim, threatening expression on his hard, lean face, told that he would not be particular about his methods of extracting information from him.

"You spilling the beans?" he inquired.

"The—the fact is, I—I don't know anything about him!" gasped Bunter. "I've never seen him—"

"Hay?" Mr. Bronx barked out that word so sharply that Bunter jumped.

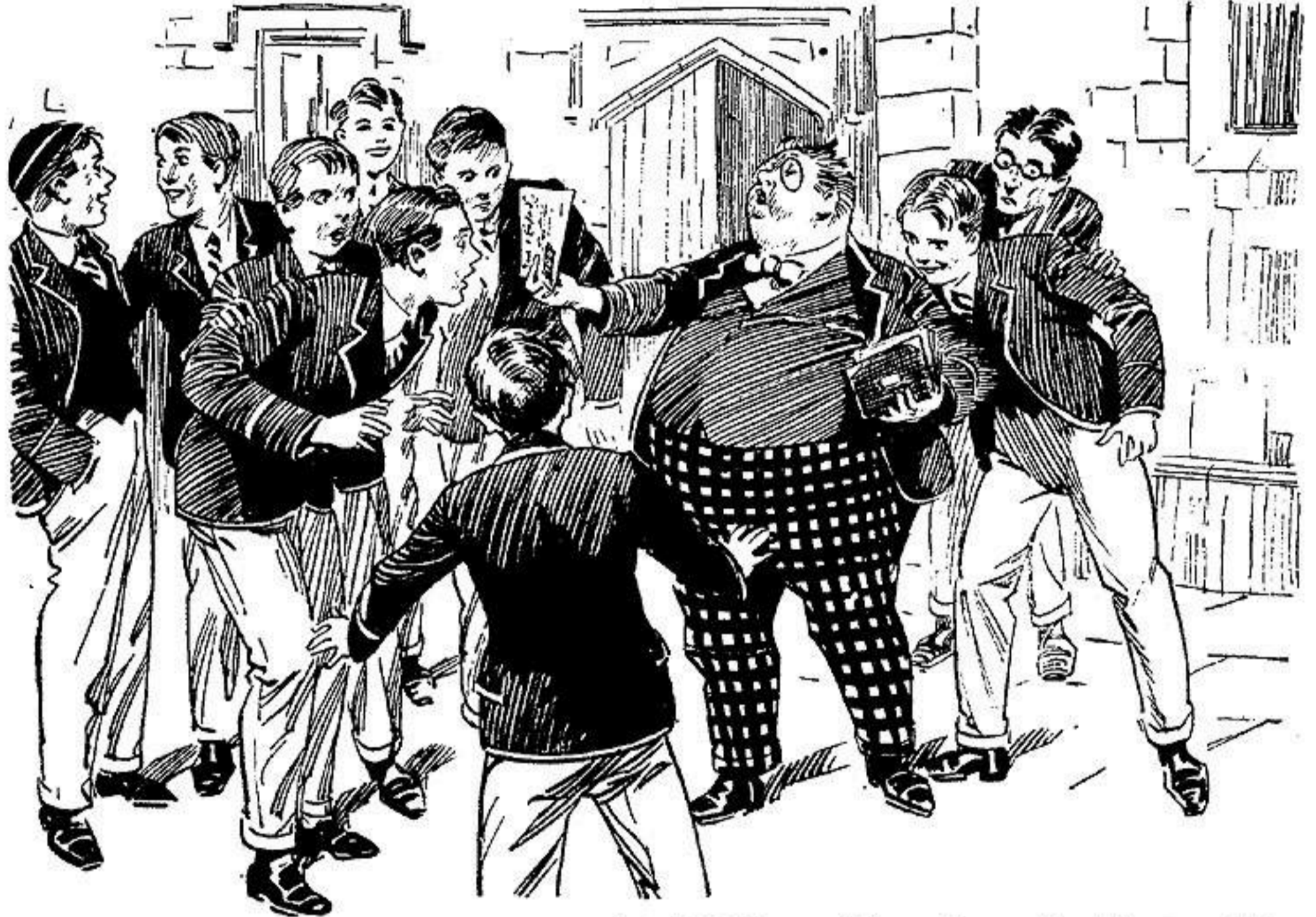
canned horse in Chicago! I'll mention that he's got more dollars than he can count if he sat down to it for a month of Sundays! Yep! He's squared you, I guess!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter. It was true that Jarvish had "squared" him, to a much more extensive extent than the gangster could possibly have dreamed.

"Now, you open that bully-beef trap of yours and let it drip!" said the gangster. "Spill it, and spill it quick! Spill the whole bibful!"

Billy Bunter blinked at him helplessly.

He was hardly thirty yards from the school, buzzing with the noise and activity of breaking-up day. But



"What about that eighteenpence you owe me, Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry. "I've nothing smaller, at the moment, than a hundred-pound note," said the fat Owl. "Can you change it?" He withdrew a notecase from his pocket. It was crammed with banknotes. His fat fingers selected one, and jerked it out. It was a banknote for £100! The Removites gazed at it, as if it mesmerised them!

You're wise to that! You've got mixed up with that galoot somehow! I guess you savvy a whole heap about that jay! Yep! You helped him make his get-away when I had him cinched in the wood! You was fooling around when he dodged me after that. I want to know where to lay my finger on him! You're going to spill it! Got that?"

Bunter blinked at the gangster, his little round eyes almost popping through his big, round spectacles in terror.

He was well aware that Tiger Bronx was a dangerous character.

Mr. Bronx "packed a gun," as he would have described it, though it was rather doubtful whether he would have ventured to use that "gun" on the old-fashioned side of the Atlantic!

Still, his lean hand straying towards his hip pocket implied a threat that made the fat junior quake.

Obviously, Mr. Bronx did not know that the sleek man whom he was so

"I—I mean, I—I haven't seen him since the last time I—I saw him!" gasped Bunter.

"I'll say I could have guessed that one!" said the Tiger. "How long since you seen him?"

"Oh, weeks and weeks!"

"Hay!"

Again that ejaculation, coming like a bullet, brought Bunter up sharp.

"I—I mean, days and days—that is—I mean—that is to say—I—I mean—Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

If Mr. Bronx had been much less keen, he would have been keen enough to see that Billy Bunter knew where Jarvish was. His face grew harder and grimmer.

"I guess you want to spill it, fat boy!" he said. "I reckon Jarvish is paying you to keep it dark. He's got the dust—boodles of it! I'll say that smooth-face! guy walked off with the biggest fortune ever made out of

there was no one at hand to help him.

The gangster's jaw squared threateningly.

"Where's that guy?" he snapped.

"I—I—I—" stuttered Bunter.

"I reckon he's somewheres around! Where?"

"Oh lor'!"

The gangster's lean hand reached out at Bunter. Probably he was going to shake him, and shake an answer out of him. But what he was going to do never transpired; for Bunter, in sheer terror, lowered his bullet head, and butted. He hardly knew what he was doing—he only knew that he dared not let that steel-like grip fasten on him again.

Suddenly, unexpectedly, he butted, his bullet head catching the gangster fairly in the wind.

Bronx gave a startled, agonised gasp.

His tall, lean figure seemed to fold up like a pocket-knife as the wind was knocked out of him by that sudden impact.

"Urrrrg!" he gurgled.

He sprawled over on Bunter, his long, lean arms sawing the air.

Bunter wriggled away, and he crashed on the ground.

Billy Bunter did not look at him! He bounded.

"Urrggghh!" came from the gangster.

Bunter lost no time.

He went back to the road like a bounding kangaroo.

But, really, he need not have hurried. Bronx was in no state to deal with him. On his hands and knees, the gangster was gurgling horribly, trying to get his breath, and not quite succeeding. Hideous gurgles and gasps and choked groans came from him.

Bunter did not hear them.

He was flying. His feet barely touched the ground as he flew. He crossed the road like a streak of lightning.

It was a matter of seconds before he was hurtling in at the gates of Greyfriars. Gosling blinked at him from his lodge in surprise. Bunter did not even see Gosling. He flew on wildly.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bumps for Bunter Minor!

SAMMY BUNTER, of the Second Form, wiped his mouth with his sleeve. That was Sammy's elegant way of removing traces of jam!

Sammy was jammy!

The Second Form Room was deserted—save for Sammy. Probably Bunter minor had selected it because it was deserted, having a large bag of jam tarts to dispose of.

Sitting at his desk, with that bag before him, the fat fag had disposed of the tarts, one after another, till he was of the jam jammy.

In that happy and sticky state he was discovered by half a dozen Remove fellows who looked into the Form-room.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here he is!"

Bunter minor blinked at them through the big spectacles that made him look so like Bunter major.

The Famous Five and Peter Todd came in. Sammy Bunter gave them a sticky grin.

"You're too late!" he remarked. "They're all gone!"

"Who are all gone?" asked Harry Wharton.

Greyfriars was breaking up; but it had not broken up yet. Nobody was gone, so far.

But Sammy, it appeared, was not alluding to Greyfriars fellows. He tapped the empty bag.

"I've just eaten the last one!" he said, grinning.

Sammy had been alluding to the tarts.

"You fat young ass!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Did you think we were after your sticky tuck?"

"Eh! What are you after, then?" asked Sammy.

"You!" said Peter Todd.

Sammy eyed the Removites suspiciously.

"Here, I say, no larks!" he said. "Wharrer you want?"

"Only the pleasure of your conversation for a few minutes, old bean," said Bob Cherry.

"Draw it mild!" jeered Sammy. "I say, have you seen young Gatty? I told him to phone for a taxi for me. Time he turned up."

The Remove fellows eyed Sammy. The Second Form, when they went, were going in the school bus to the station. If Sammy was taking a taxi, it looked as if Sammy, as well as Billy, was in possession of unusual funds.

"So you're going in a taxi?" asked Peter

"I can afford it!" said Sammy, disdainfully.

"You're the only fag in the Second who can, then!"

"Very likely!" grinned Sammy. "I'm giving Gatty and Myers a lift. They're jolly civil to a fellow now! He, he, he!"

"Are you rolling in it, like Billy?" asked Peter.

"I don't know about rolling in it. I've got some dibs," said Sammy.

"No biznev of yours. I'm not lending you anything."

"You fat frump!" roared Peter, much incensed at being suspected of wanting to borrow of a Second Form fag.

"Wharrer you want? I've got some packing to do."

"It's about Billy," said the captain of the Remove.

Sammy chuckled.

"What about Billy?" he asked.

Sammy, apparently, was on his guard.

"There's something up with your brother," said Peter Todd. "Look here, Sammy, we want to know what it means."

"Where is Billy getting all that money from?" asked Bob.

"Whose is it?" asked Nugent.

"And who is that man Jarvish?" asked Johnny Bull.

"And what's the game, anyhow?" inquired Harry Wharton.

The six Removites were looking and feeling serious enough. The sight of £100 notes in Bunter's possession had quite alarmed the Famous Five. Peter Todd had consulted with them on the matter, in great uneasiness; and they had fully agreed with Peter that the matter ought to be looked into. They had sought Sammy as a source of information. Now they had found him, however, Sammy's look did not indicate that they were going to get the information they sought.

"I asked you about Jarvish yesterday," went on Peter, "and you told me you'd never heard of him."

"Did I?" murmured Sammy.

"I asked you whether Billy had a valet when he was at home, and you just cackled!"

"A man can cackle if he likes!" Sammy pointed out.

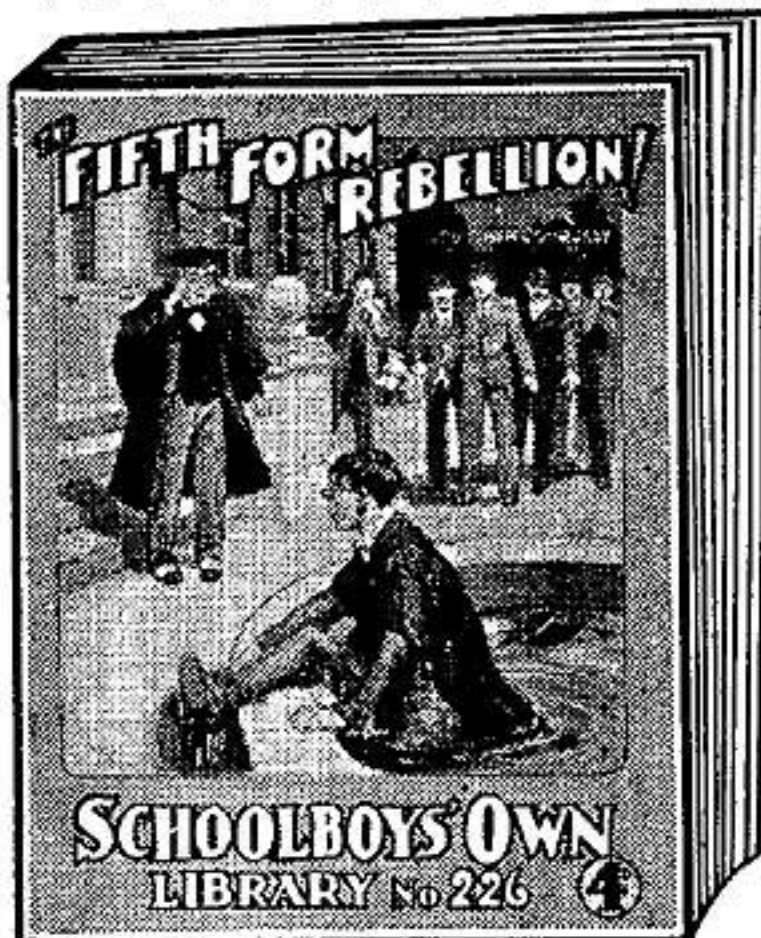
"Now, look here, Sammy," said the captain of the Remove. "This is a serious matter. Your brother's got hold of tons of money, goodness knows how and where. Toddy thinks it's got something to do with that man Jarvish, and it looks like it. Nobody can make it out. Have you seen your brother lately?"

Sammy grinned.

"I went to see him at once, after what Toddy told me yesterday," he answered. "I wondered what was up. He, he, he!"

"Oh!" said Harry.

It dawned on him that Sammy, hearing that his major was in amazing funds, had barged in at once for the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Evidently Billy Bunter had



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whacked out some of the funds—hence Sammy's present sticky state and the taxi he was getting. Probably Sammy was not deeply concerned about the mysterious source of that wealth, so long as his fat fingers touched some of it.

"We're alarmed about Billy," said Peter Todd. "We don't like clearing off to-day and leaving him up to his silly neck in trouble."

"Billy's all right!" said Sammy. "Well, where is he getting all that money from?"

"He's come into a fortune! At least, he told me so!" Sammy chuckled. "He's such a fibber, a fellow never knows! But that's what he told me!"

"That's rot!" said Bob Cherry. "The rotfulness is terrific."

"Well, he's got the dibs," said Sammy. "Lots!"

"We know that. That's what worries us," said Harry. "There must be something fearfully fishy about it."

"No bizney of yours!" said Sammy.

"Well, no, not exactly. But Bunter's a Remove man, and he's such a fool he's the chap to barge into any trouble that's going. Who on earth is that man Jarvish?"

"He's Billy's valet," said Sammy calmly.

"What?"

"Billy's valet at home, you know."

"You fat fibber!" roared Peter Todd.

"You told me yesterday you'd never heard of the man."

"I'd forgotten, you see. I remembered afterwards," said Bunter minor coolly.

"After Billy had tipped you to back him up in his lies?" exclaimed Peter Todd, exasperated. "Is that it?"

"He, he, he!"

"It's a serious matter, Sammy," urged Harry Wharton. "I can't make out that man Jarvish, but I know there's something fishy about him and his being here at all. Bunter's passed him off on the Head as a manservant from home—"

"That's what he is!" said Sammy.

"We came on him one afternoon before he showed up here," went on the captain of the Remove. "He was running away from a lanky American man. Toddy says he saw the same man looking in at the gates not half an hour ago, and Jarvish saw him and bolted into the House. What does it mean?"

Sammy blinked at him. It appeared that Sammy knew nothing, at least, of the lean American.

"Blessed if I know!" he answered.

"But Jarvish is all right. He's Billy's valet, and was recommended to him by his last valet, Jertingham."

Sammy recited this as if he were reciting a lesson to Mr. Twigg, his Form-master. Obviously it was inspired by instructions from his major in the Remove.

"You're lying!" hooted Peter.

"Bow-wow!" retorted Sammy.

"Billy's put you up to this! You never knew anything about Jarvish when I asked you yesterday. Now, look here—"

"Can't!" said Sammy.

"Eh? Why not?"

"Your features, you know! Can't expect a fellow to look at them! Bad for the eyesight!"

Peter made a jump at the fat fag. Sammy made a jump and dodged behind a desk. Bob caught the wrathful Toddy by the arm.

"Hold on, old bean!" he said. "We've got to get at it somehow. Look here, Sammy, you don't understand that the matter's serious—"

"Stop!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as Bunter minor circled round the desks,

with the evident intention of making a bolt for the door.

He cut across and grabbed the fat fag by the collar.

"Now, you fat young tick—"

"Leggo!" yelled Sammy.

"We want to know—"

"I've told you! Leggo!"

"Who's that man Jarvish?"

"Billy's valet. Had him three months. Leggo!"

"Will you tell the truth for once?"

"Leggo! Shut up! Leggo, you beast!"

Sammy wriggled.

It was evident that Sammy had been "squared" by a whack in the plunder.

He was prepared now to back up his major's story through thick and thin.

There was nothing to be learned from Sammy.

GREYFRIARS CARTOONS

By HAROLD SKINNER.

No. 12. PETER TODD.

(Leader of Study No. 7, Remove Form.)

This week our lightning artist selects for his subject a character with whom you are all familiar—PETER TODD, whose one ambition is to become a lawyer.



Lean and lanky Peter Todd Has a long and quaint proboscis, 'Lonzy's nose is also odd, Resembling the rhinoceros's.

Peter's reading for the Bar, If he sticks, and does not shirk it, He may have a Judge's car, When he makes his Judge's Circuit!

"I don't believe any of the Bunters could tell the truth if they tried!" growled Johnny Bull. "Bump him!"

"The bumpfulness is the proper caper!"

"I say— Leggo! Yaroooooh!" roared Sammy, as the exasperated Removites swung him off the floor of the Second Form Room.

Bump!

"Yow-ow!"

Bump!

"Yoooooop!"

Bump!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Whooop!" yelled Sammy.

He sat and roared. Leaving him sitting and roaring, Harry Wharton & Co. left the Form-room, followed by Sammy's unmusical howls.

Evidently there was nothing doing.

If there was any truth in the Bunters—which was doubtful—it was not to be got out of them.

It was some satisfaction to bump Sammy for his check and his untruthfulness. But the mystery of Billy had to be left where it was.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's New Car!

"WHOSE car?"

"Yours, Smithy?"

"No."

"Mauly's, I suppose," said Skinner.

"No," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Jolly good car!" said Squiff.

"I'll say it's some auto!" remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"New car for the Head—" suggested Hazeldene.

"It wouldn't come to this door," said the Bounder. "Bunter was saying he was getting a new car—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Quite a crowd of fellows had gathered to look at the car that had rolled up the drive from the gates and stopped outside the House.

It was a magnificent car.

It was large, it was handsome, it was of an expensive make, it was fitted up in the finest style—it was, in fact, the last word in luxury and pomp.

Only a very wealthy fellow, it was clear, could own a car like that car.

Even the wonderful car that came for Mauly from Mauleverer Towers was not more magnificent than this—not, indeed, quite so magnificent.

Even Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith's palatial Rolls was put in the shade, by comparison.

It looked like a brand-new car. It was spotless. It was speckless. It gleamed and shone.

The chauffeur in a quiet, dark livery who stood by it was in keeping with the car.

He stood like the bronze statue of a chauffeur, indifferent to a gazing world. So aristocratically aloof did he look that fellows hardly liked to ask him questions.

There was a ripple of laughter as Smithy suggested that it might be Bunter's new car.

Bunter often talked about the wonderful cars at home, but the only Bunter car that any Greyfriars fellows had ever seen was a Ford of uncertain age which Mr. Bunter drove himself.

That expensive car and that expensive chauffeur seemed rather unlikely to belong to a fellow who only a few days ago had been cadging loans of sixpence or a shilling up and down the Remove.

"By gad!" Temple of the Fourth came up. "That's a decent bus! Who's the happy man, you fellows?"

"I guess that auto cost five thousand dullers, and then some!" said Fisher T. Fish admiringly.

"Whose is it?" asked Temple.

"Nobody knows."

"Unless it's Bunter's!" grinned Smithy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dash it all, I shouldn't wonder!" said Skinner. "Bunter seems to have pots of money lately. Goodness knows where he gets it from, or whose it is, but he's got it!"

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the House. He blinked at the crowd of juniors and blinked at the car. He grinned with satisfaction.

"Oh, it's come!" he remarked.

"Tell us it's yours!" grinned the Bounder.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,384,

"It's mine—
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! It's my new car," said Bunter. "I wanted a new car for the hols, you know. That's it."

"Now tell us another!" suggested Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Whose jolly old bus?" asked Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five and Peter Todd, coming out after their unsatisfactory interview with Sammy of the Second, joined the mob of gazers at the big car. They gave it admiring looks. Really it was worthy of admiration. Any fellow looking at that car might have wished that he was a millionaire and able to buy one like it.

"Mine," said Billy Bunter.
"Yours!" yelled Peter Todd.
"I told you I was having a new car, Toddy."

"You howling ass—"
"Oh, really, Toddy—"
"Did you win it in a raffle?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Billy Bunter gave a disdainful sniff. He rolled down the steps towards the car and the statuesque chauffeur standing by it. All eyes followed him. All ears heard him address the driver.

"You from Chunkley's?"
"Yes, sir!"
"That's my car, then?"

The chauffeur eyed the little fat Owl for a second.

"Master Bunter?" he inquired.
"Yes—that's me."

The chauffeur touched his cap.
"Your car, sir!" he said respectfully.
"What's your name, my man?" asked Bunter.

"Parkinson, sir."
"I suppose you've been told I shall want you for a few weeks, till I make arrangements?"

"Yes, sir!"
"That's all right!" said Bunter. "I hope you're a good driver, Parkinson."

"Yes, sir," said Parkinson, without moving a muscle. What that imposing chauffeur thought of his new employer was not to be read in his impassive face. Neither did he seem to notice that Bunter called him Watkinson, after he had just stated that his name was Parkinson.

Chunkley's, at Courtfield, was run on the lines of a huge London stores, and they supplied everything. Evidently on this occasion, they had supplied the chauffeur as well as the car.

Both, it was clear, were of the best quality.

"What can she do?" asked Bunter, blinking at the car through his big spectacles. Bunter did not really know a fearful lot about cars. But he was rather keen to let this magnificent chauffeur suppose that he did.

As a matter of fact, that chauffeur rather awed Bunter. He was not yet used to being a billionaire!

The man looked expressionless; but Bunter suspected him of being, perhaps, cheeky. It was rather cheeky of him to be so tall, when Bunter was so short.

That was why Bunter affected to forget his name. Lord Mauleverer had a way of forgetting people's names. He thought it rather a good idea to borrow that habit of Mauly's. It was the sort of thing to put a cheeky person in his place, Bunter considered.

"Seventy, sir!" said Parkinson.
"Eighty at a pinch."

Bunter immediately resolved that there should never be a "pinch." Not

while his valuable person was in the car.

"Not bad!" he said. "I like to cover the ground when I'm motoring, Williamson."

"Yes, sir!" said Parkinson.
"Did you say your name was Williamson or Watkinson?" asked Bunter, driving the point home, as it were.

"Parkinson, sir!"
"I never remember the names of menials!" said Bunter carelessly.

"Wait here until I'm ready."

The chauffeur gave ever so slight a start, but he was impassive again at once. He touched his cap.

"Yes, sir!"
Bunter waddled up the steps again, under a sea of staring eyes. Fifty fellows had heard his talk with the chauffeur.

It was Bunter's car—Bunter's new car! They could not doubt that now. They gazed at Bunter.

His valet from Bunter Court had surprised the Remove. His new wealth had astonished them. But his new car took their breath away.

"It—it—it's really, yours, Bunter?" articulated Smithy.

"Eh? Oh! Yes."
"What did you give for it?" gasped Skinner.

"Eh? I don't know!"
"You don't know what you gave for your car?" gasped Bob Cherry.

Bunter shook his head.
"How should I know?" he answered negligently. "I don't bother my head about such sordid details. I leave all such things to my man."

"Ye gods and little fishes!" murmured Bob.

"I told Jarvis," continued Bunter, while the astounded Greyfriars fellows hung on his words, "to get me the best car and the best chauffeur that could be got at once. The cost was immaterial."

"Oh crumbs!"
"Whether it runs to a thousand pounds, or a couple of thousand, I really couldn't say!" remarked Bunter.

"I dare say Jarvis knows."
"Well, my hat!" said Skinner, gasping for breath. "Your jolly old man will jolly well make something for himself, I fancy, if you leave him to do business on those lines."

"Why shouldn't he?" said Bunter carelessly. "I don't mind if the man makes a few hundreds out of me."

"A—a—a few hundreds!" gurgled the Bouncer. "That's the chap, you men, who was trying to borrow half-a-crown in the Remove the other day."

"Bit of a change since then!" grinned Bob.

"The changefulness is terrific!"
"Seen my man anywhere?" asked Bunter, blinking round.

"If you mean Jarvis, he was looking for you in the study half an hour ago," said Peter Todd. "He came out to look for you in the quad, and—"

Bunter rolled into the House without waiting for Peter to finish. He left the Remove fellows in a buzz of excitement and wonder.

Peter Todd looked at the Famous Five, and they looked at Peter Todd. This latest development of the wealthy Bunter put the lid on, as it were. They looked at the tremendous car; they looked at the statuesque chauffeur; they looked at one another.

"What on earth do you make of it?" asked Peter.

Harry Wharton shook his head.
"Don't ask me!" he said helplessly.

"He says Jarvis got him the car!" said Nugent. "I know jolly well Jarvis hasn't been out of gates—I

believe he hasn't put his nose outside the gates since he's been here."

"And I jolly well know why!" said Johnny Bull. "He's afraid of running into that lanky American sportsman."

"He will have to clear off to-day, and the man will spot him, if he wants him!" said Bob.

"He may have ordered the car by phone," said Harry Wharton, "or written. Chunkley's have got their money, or it wouldn't be here! In the name of all that's mysterious, where does all that cash come from?"

"Goodness knows!"

"Well, I give it up!" said Peter. "If Bunter's landing himself in trouble, he will have to get on with it. We've done all we can—and that's nothing!"

Harry Wharton nodded. They were feeling uneasy and unquiet about Bunter; but, after all, it was no special business of theirs. Whatever the truth was, there was no getting it out of Bunter. There was something mysterious, something very extraordinary—behind all this; but they could not begin to guess what it was.

So they gave it up, and went about their own affairs, leaving the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove to get on with it—whatever it was!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Cheek!

BILLY BUNTER blinked into Study No. 7 in the Remove through his big spectacles.

He was frowning a little over those spectacles. By this time Billy Bunter had got used to having a "man" to whom he could give orders. Bunter liked giving orders. It was a sort of habit likely to grow on a fellow like Bunter.

Lord Mauleverer, who had troops of servants and keepers and all sorts of retainers at home, never gave an order if he could help it—he hated giving orders. But Bunter did not resemble his lordship in that respect. Bunter liked it, and when he had the power, he indulged that liking. Now he had the power. Jarvis was his man.

Bunter's idea of a servant was that that individual should always be at his beck and call—never present when he wasn't wanted, always present when he was. Bunter was rather exacting in servants—probably because they were few and far between in the household at home. A manservant would have had to be a bit of a magician to fulfil all Bunter's lofty and lordly requirements.

It annoyed Bunter to have to look for his man when he wanted him. Jarvis should have started up from nowhere as soon as he was wanted.

"Oh, here you are!" said Bunter gruffly.

Jarvis was in the study. He was seated in Peter Todd's armchair, wiping his sleek brow with a handkerchief. The weather was very warm, which was perhaps the reason. But possibly Mr. Jarvis had not yet recovered from the shock of seeing the long, lean man looking in at the gates.

He was on his feet in an instant at the sight of his young master. The handkerchief disappeared, and he stood respectfully before Bunter, winding his sleek hands together!

Bunter frowned at him.

"This won't do, Jarvis!" he said sternly.

"I trust, sir, that I have given no cause for dissatisfaction!" said Jarvis, in his soft, sleek voice.

"Sitting down in my study!" said Bunter sternly.



As Jarvish approached the school gates, a long-limbed, lean-featured fellow in a slouched hat, looking like an American, glanced in at the gateway. Jarvish stopped suddenly, whirled round, and came running back towards the House. So swift was he, that Peter Todd, standing in his way, was knocked over before he knew what was happening. "Whoop!" roared the astounded Toddy.

"Please excuse me, sir!" said Jarvish humbly, though for a moment there was a gleam in his eyes. "The heat, sir, overcame me a little—"

"Well, don't let it occur again!" said Bunter.

"Certainly not, sir."

"I believe in servants keeping their places!" exclaimed Bunter. "I'm always kind to menials! None kinder! But I allow no cheek!"

"Oh no, sir!"

"No familiarity."

"Certainly not, sir."

"I had to come up here for you Jarvish!" went on Bunter. "It's a bit thick to have to come upstairs to look for my valet."

"I regret it exceedingly, sir—"

"Well, never mind," said Bunter graciously. "You're a good servant, on the whole, Jarvish—I'm satisfied with you."

"You are very kind, sir."

"I mean to be kind," said Bunter. "Do your duty, obey orders, keep your place, never answer back, and always be on hand when you're wanted, and we shan't quarrel, Jarvish."

"I hope to give every satisfaction, sir! If I may venture to offer a suggestion, sir—"

"Cut it short, then!" said Bunter.

"It would perhaps be advisable, sir, not to make too great a display of wealth, so recently acquired, before quitting the school!" said Jarvish. "It is likely to excite comment, not wholly desirable—"

"Eh?"

"Once away from Greyfriars, sir, of course, the circumstances will be different. But here—"

"That's enough!"

Bunter raised a fat hand.

"I never ask servants for advice, Jarvish! Don't say any more."

"Very good, sir!"

"Speak when you're spoken to, Jarvish! Not at other times."

"Certainly, sir."

"Now go and see that my luggage is put in the car!" directed Bunter. "Your own as well. I'm going before all the mob. Now my car's come, I may as well get off."

"If you will permit me to follow you later, sir—"

"I've said you're coming with me. You've made the arrangements by telephone at Margate, as I ordered you?"

"Quite, sir! But—"

"I shall want you there! You don't suppose I can take my own boots off at Margate, do you, Jarvish?" asked Bunter, with an air of amused contempt. Jarvish seemed to breathe hard for a moment.

"The fact is, sir, I am a little overcome by the heat!" he said. "With your permission I will join you later at the Hotel Splendide at Margate."

"You will do nothing of the kind," said Bunter. "You'll stick beside the chauffeur in my car."

Jarvish breathed harder! Bunter was not aware that he was thinking of a long, lean man who had looked in at the gateway, and who, for anything Jarvish knew to the contrary, might be hanging about the road outside the gates at that very moment. Jarvish had powerful reasons for not wanting to "meet up" with the lean man from Chicago. Indeed, it was his dislike of meeting Mr. Bronx that had caused his association with Billy Bunter in the first place.

In some mysterious way James Jarvish intended to make use of Billy Bunter as a shield between his own funky person and the American gangster. But his plans were not completed yet. Until they were completed Jarvish did not want to see Tiger Bronx.

"If you will allow me, sir—" he recommenced.

"That's enough, Jarvish! Do as you're told!" said Bunter.

Jarvish set his sleek lips. For his own unknown reasons he was content, indeed eager, to play the part of valet to William George Bunter. But, it seemed, there was a limit. Bunter was, in point of fact, a tool; though he was very far from being aware of it.

"It will always be my pleasure, as well as my duty, to carry out your instructions, sir!" said Jarvish. "Indeed, I hope to be able to anticipate your wishes! But—"

"Get going!" said Bunter.

"But, sir, I must request you to leave without me," said Jarvish. "You have consented, sir, to the arrangement proposed by me, by which means my immense fortune will be made over to you on condition that you retain my services as your valet. But the legal documents, sir, have not yet been drawn up."

Bunter started.

"The—the legal documents!" he stammered.

"At Margate, sir, the services of a solicitor may be obtained for the purpose. Nothing, so far, has been concluded!" said Jarvish. "I have no desire, sir, to back out of the arrangement—"

"Bub-bub-back out!" gasped Bunter. "But in the circumstances—"

"My dear chap, it's all right!" exclaimed Bunter hastily. "Hang on here if you like! I—I don't want you! I mean, I give you leave to come on later, if you prefer it!"

The slightly obstinate look disappeared from Jarvis's smooth face at once. As soon as he had gained his point he was the obsequious manservant again.

"Thank you, sir!" he said humbly. "I assure you, sir, that I appreciate your kindness deeply. No doubt, sir, they will be able to provide you with a temporary valet at the Hotel Splendide. It would distress me very much if I thought you were driven to performing any menial offices for yourself."

"That's all right!" said Bunter. "I—I say, don't say any more about backing out of that arrangement, Jarvis! It suits me! I may say it suits me down to the ground."

"Very good, sir."

"You can stick in this study if you like! Sit down in that armchair if you want to! Anything you jolly well like!" said Bunter generously. "You'll find me a jolly kind-hearted master, Jarvis."

"I am sure of it, sir!"

Bunter rolled out of the study, leaving his "man" there alone. The look that came over Jarvis's face when he was gone did not indicate either respect or admiration for the lordly Bunter. A sardonic sneer crossed the sleek face. But it was replaced by an uneasy look as Jarvis stepped to the window and peered out, keeping carefully behind the curtain as he did so. Perhaps he feared to see the lean face and slouched hat of the man from Chicago in the quadrangle below.

Billy Bunter rolled down the Remove passage frowning. It seemed to him that Jarvis was showing the cloven hoof.

He had been distinctly cheeky, Bunter considered!

Cheek was a thing that Bunter felt that he never could stand from a menial. On the other hand, the astounding wealth that was now Bunter's had proceeded from James Jarvis, and the man who was making him a millionaire, or a billionaire, might perhaps be allowed a little rope. Anyhow, Bunter had been quite alarmed at a hint that Jarvis might back out before the legal papers were signed and sealed. Once that transaction was completed Billy Bunter resolved that his "man" should have a severe lesson, on the spot, if he ventured to be cheeky again.

In the meantime he had to give Jarvis his head, and proceed on his holidays unattended by his manservant—which, of course, was rather a hardship to a lordly fellow like William George Bunter.

Still, he departed in great style.

Gosling and Trotter placed his baggage on the car. Bunter tipped them a fiver each—and they almost fell down!

A mob of fellows were still staring at the magnificent car. The school bus was ready to take the juniors to the station. Generally there was rather a rush and a scramble for that bus! Now nobody looked at it! Interest was centred on Billy Bunter and his wonderful car.

Even great men of the Sixth, like Wingate and Gwynne, were interested in it. Even "beaks" showed some interest. Prout, the master of the Fifth, was standing there with his eyes on it.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,384.

Quelch, the Remove master, was looking out of his study window. Bunter's departure, undoubtedly, was in style.

He sat with his fat little nose in the air trying his hardest to look as if he always travelled in fifteen-hundred-pound cars. The effect was, perhaps, slightly marred by a smear of recent jam round his extensive mouth.

However, Bunter rolled away in state to the gates.

"Well, that's that!" said Peter Todd, and Peter went for the bus.

Harry Wharton & Co. were about to follow him when they sighted Coker of the Fifth in the quad, and remembered that—owing to Bunter—they had not knocked off Horace's hat for the last time that term, as planned.

So they tracked Horace Coker, cornered him under the elms, and duly knocked his hat off—to an accompaniment of loud and indignant roars from the enraged Coker.

After which there was a little liveliness for some minutes, and when the cheery chums of the Remove left Coker for dead, they found that they had lost the bus, and had to wait for the second one. Which was how it happened that they did not leave Greyfriars by bus after all, but in a different and much more superb and magnificent manner.

HOW'S THIS FOR A CLEVER GREYFRIARS LIMERICK, CHUMS?

When Smithy's before the head
beak
He pretends to be gentle and meek.
But to those standing by,
He will just wink his eye—
You can't beat the Bunder for
cheek!

A vanity case has been forwarded
to M. Seywell, of 13, Sherrymill
Hill, Whitchurch, Shropshire, for
the above winning effort.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Wants a Bodyguard!

"STOP!" yelled Billy Bunter.

Parkinson braked. Well-trained and impassive as he was, the excellent chauffeur supplied by Chunkley's, Ltd., of Courtfield, showed a slight surprise as that yell from Bunter rang in his ears.

The car slowed down.

"Sir!" said Parkinson.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

The new Bunter car was hardly half a mile from Greyfriars. Bunter, sitting at ease on soft, luxurious leather, was enjoying life—till he spotted something on the road ahead.

On that startling object his eyes and his spectacles were fixed in alarm, and Parkinson, following his glance, regarded the object with a puzzled eye.

Parkinson saw nothing surprising or alarming in a little brown Austin car, with a man in a slouched hat standing beside it, with an unlighted cigar sticking out of the corner of his gash of a mouth.

Bunter did.

Bunter knew that car, and knew that man, and the sight of Tiger Bronx had a dismaying effect on him.

He did not want to meet Mr. Bronx any more than Jarvis did. Not, at all events, in a lonely spot where the gangster could not be given into charge of a policeman.

Jarvis, in his terror of the man from

Chicago, seemed to have no faith in protection from the police. Indeed, Bunter had a vague, lurking suspicion that Jarvis's deep-seated fear of the gangster had something to do with his strange scheme of handing over his gigantic fortune into Bunter's keeping.

But Bunter, naturally, had a proper faith and reliance in the police force of his native land. He would have backed any British "bobby" against the most truculent gangster in Chicago or New York.

Had there been a constable at hand Billy Bunter would have regarded Mr. Bronx with proper contempt and disdain.

Unfortunately there wasn't.

So Bunter yelled "Stop!" and Parkinson stopped. The fat junior gave Bronx a terrified blink.

The man was looking at him in his new car. He had, in fact, seen Bunter before Bunter had seen him. Standing by his little Austin he was waiting for the big Rolls to come up. Bunter, having spotted him, had no intention of coming up.

"Get back, Parkinson!" he gasped.

In his alarm and agitation Bunter forgot to forget Parkinson's name.

"Back, sir?" asked the chauffeur.

"Back to the school!"

"Oh!"

The most excellently trained chauffeur supplied by Chunkley, Ltd., could not have failed to be surprised. But to hear was to obey. Parkinson backed and turned, and restarted for Greyfriars.

Immediately the lean American was in his car, and the little Austin was following. As the mountain did not come to Mahomet, Mahomet was coming to the mountain.

"Make her move!" howled Bunter.

"Yes, sir."

Parkinson made her move.

If there was one thing that could rouse that grave, decorous chauffeur from his accustomed impassivity, it was getting speed out of a car. Hitherto Parkinson had been a statue, or rather an automaton. Now he seemed to come alive, as it were.

Quite a gleam came into his eyes. Human expression dawned in his face; and he made her move.

The way the big Rolls leaped into life brought a startled squeak from Billy Bunter. Taken off his balance, he rolled back on the cushions.

Parkinson had said that that car did seventy or eighty at a pinch. Bunter's impression was that it was doing about eight hundred.

It shot; it flew! If the wheels touched the ground at all they only grazed it. Like an arrow from a bow the big car whizzed. What Bunter was up to, Parkinson did not know. Neither did he care. He had been told to make her move, and he made her move. It was the one joy of life that appealed to him. It seemed to Billy Bunter that his new car did the half-mile back to Greyfriars in one jump.

The little Austin hung on behind. It was a very speedy little car. It looked hardly large enough for the lean American's long legs to curl up in it; but what it lacked in size, it made up in speed. Still, the magnificent Rolls dropped it in a few seconds.

By the time Billy Bunter had righted himself, and was able to blink round him again, the Rolls was slowing down to turn in at the gates of Greyfriars. The school bus, crammed with juniors, had just started for Courtfield. Bunter blinked at it. He spotted Peter Todd's face on the crowded vehicle, and saw Peter staring. He stood up, holding on

with one fat hand, and waving the other to Peter.

"I say, Toddy!" he yelled. "I say, get down! I want you!"

If Peter Todd heard him, he heeded not. The fact that Bunter wanted him, important as it was, did not appear to Peter a sufficient reason for losing his train.

Toddy grinned, waved his hand, and rolled on in the bus. Billy Bunter snorted, and turned in at the gates.

He blinked round him anxiously.

A good many fellows had gone; but a good many had yet to go. Five juniors who had just dealt faithfully with Coker of the Fifth, were coming away from the elms. Bunter spotted them, and waved a fat hand.

"Stop, Parkinson!"

"Yes, sir!"

Parkinson halted on the drive.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Here's jolly old Bunter come back again! Turned up like a bad penny."

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co., in surprise, came up to the halted Rolls. They had seen Bunter go, and supposed that he was gone for good. Apparently he wasn't.

"Here we are again, old fat bean!" grinned Bob. "Anything gone wrong with the jolly old works?"

"Don't be an ass!" said Bunter.

"Eh?"

"I mean, the car's all right. I've come back for you fellows."

"You've come back for us," repeated Harry Wharton.

"Yes, old chap."

"My esteemed and idiotic Bunter!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, hop in!" said Bunter. "Lots of room!"

The Famous Five stared at him.

"But we're going home by train," said Frank Nugent.

"I'll drop you anywhere you like," said Bunter.

"Our baggage has gone on in the bus."

"Well, you'll get it all right. Never mind that. Lovely day for a joy-ride," urged Bunter. "Take you all the way home if you like, Wharton, before I go on to Margate."

"But why?" asked the amazed captain of the Remove.

This sudden desire for their company rather astonished the Famous Five. In other circumstances, of course, it would have meant that Bunter was seeking to "tick" somebody for the holidays. That could hardly be the case now, however. This new and magnificent Bunter was not at the old Bunter's game. Apparently he had returned, simply because he wanted their company in the car, which was flattering, but rather surprising.

"Oh, hop in!" said Bunter. "You've lost you bus; I saw it go. You don't want to wait for the next."

"But we're going different ways, after Lantham Junction," said Harry.

"Inky is coming home with me, but Johnny and Bob and Frank—"

"I'll drop the lot of you at Lantham, if you like."

The chums of the Remove looked at him, and looked at one another. They could not make this out. They were about to assent, when the fat Owl spoke again.

"Dash it all, you've never been in a car like this before!" said Bunter.

"Your people don't keep cars like this. You'll be able to tell them you've had a run in a really decent car for once."

Upon which the intended assent changed to dissent at once.

"Thanks—no!" said Harry Wharton dryly.

"Go and eat coke!" growled Johnny Bull.

"You silly ass!" said Bob.

"I say, you fellows, don't walk away while a fellow's talking to you!" howled Bunter. "I say, I really want you! I say, don't let a chap down!"

The chums of the Remove were turning away. But they turned back at that, more and more surprised.

"What the thump do you mean, if you mean anything?" demanded Wharton.

"I—I'd like you fellows in the car till—till I get clear." Bunter came down to facts at last. "That lanky American—you've seen him—"

"What on earth—"

"He's hanging about on the road, keeping his eye on me. I—I—I believe he's going to hold up my car."

"You howling ass!"

"I say, you fellows, you might come along and see me through. I'll take you all to Margate with me, if you like. I've booked the best suite in the best hotel there—I mean, my valet has booked it for me."

"Bow-wow!"

"Keep your old Margate!"

"I—I say, you fellows, do stand by a chap!" pleaded Bunter. "That American beast won't dare to stop a car full of fellows! If he does, you can handle him. Come with me as far as Lantham! I—I want you to!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"If you put it like that, fathead, we'll come! But for goodness' sake, try to bottle up your silly swank till we get out!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Shall we?"

asked Harry, looking at his friends. "We've lost a train if we wait for the second bus. We can catch it at Lantham if Bunter runs us across. And if the fat idiot's afraid of being stopped on the road by that wild and woolly man from the wild and woolly West—"

"Oh, let's!" said Nugent.

"We'll come!" said Bob.

It was, after all, a pleasanter way of getting to Lantham than cramming into a crowded train. There were advantages in being a millionaire or a billionaire and phoning to Chunkley's for the best car and the best chauffeur they could provide!

As for a hold-up on the road, that idea made the juniors smile! But it did not make Bunter smile! He was alarmed, and he was deeply relieved to have a bodyguard with

him. In his relief and satisfaction he remembered to forget Parkinson's name.

"Get off, Snookerson!" he said.

And Parkinson got off once more.

**THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.
A Hold-Up on the Road!**

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Jolly!" said Bob Cherry.

"But I say—"

"Lend me a million pounds, Bunter, old bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say," roared Bunter, "that's him!"

"He!" said Bob solemnly. "What would dear old Quelch say, Bunter, if he heard you say 'that's him'? Even on holiday a fellow should remember his grammar."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"It is he!" said Bob. "Even in a blue funk, old bean, you shouldn't mix up your cases! Nominative case—"

"You silly idiot!" roared Bunter. "I tell you it's him!"

It was indeed he—or, as Bunter preferred to put it, him! A mile from the school the big Rolls picked up the little Austin.

Lounging over the wheel of the latter was the long, lean American, who had seemed to haunt the vicinity of Greyfriars ever since James Jarvish had turned up there.

Tiger Bronx stared at the big Rolls, evidently recognised Bunter at once, and headed for him. The little Austin seemed to have been hanging about aimlessly, its driver watching the road, no doubt in the hope of seeing Bunter again. The big Rolls passed it; but as it passed, the lean man spotted Bunter, and shot in pursuit.

"He's after us!" grinned Nugent, looking back.

(Continued on next page.)

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"The jolly old chase is up!" chuckled Bob.

"The shasefulness is terrific!"

"Who the dickens is the man?" asked Harry Wharton, puzzled, "and what the merry thump can he want?"

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter. "His name's Bronx, that's all I know! I say, you fellows, I knew he would be watching for me—"

"But what does he want?" asked Harry. "We've seen that sportsman before. He was after your man Jarvish. But you haven't got Jarvish tucked away under the seat here, have you?"

"The funky beast wouldn't come in the car!" grunted Bunter. "I jolly well know now that he knew that lanky American was hanging about. That was it, of course! Lot he cares what happens to me!"

"Well, the man won't bite you," said Nugent. "Perhaps he wants to ask you where Jarvish is. He seems fearfully keen on getting into touch with your jolly old valet!"

"Of course he does, but I'm not going to let him get at Jarvish! I've taken him under my protection, you know."

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

Billy Bunter, as he blinked back uneasily through his big spectacles, did not look like protecting anybody! Indeed, the Famous Five were only in the car at all because Bunter felt the need of protection himself!

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" snapped Bunter. "Suppose he begins to shoot—"

"The supposefulness is preposterous!"

"Well, he might! They shoot one another in Chicago, you know, where that gangster beast comes from. I wish there was a bobby about!"

The Famous Five chortled. They were not in the least afraid of the lean man in the Austin. As for shooting, in Chicago style, on an English road, that was rather too like the films to appear probable to them.

"Wilkinson!" hooted Bunter. "Make her move! You're crawling!"

The Rolls was doing about thirty. Immediately she made it forty, and edged on to fifty.

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Bunter, as the wind sang by him. "I—I say, not so quick, you idiot! We don't want to be killed!"

"Why, this is ripping!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, his eyes sparkling. "Let her go all out, Bunter! We're enjoying this!"

"And you'll soon drop that American merchant, at this rate!" said Johnny Bull.

"Beast! I'm not going to have my neck broken!" howled Bunter. "It's my car, ain't it? Shut up!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Slow down, you dummy!" yelled Bunter.

Parkinson obediently slowed down again. Bunter was anxious to get away from Mr. Bronx. But he did not like to see trees and hedgerows fleeing past him as if past the windows of an express. High speed did not really appeal to Bunter. He had only one neck—and attached a very great value to it.

The Austin, which had been momentarily dropped, picked up again. It came buzzing on in the rear, in a cloud of dust.

The Rolls turned from the high road into a lane which led to the Lantham main road. Round the corner after it came the Austin.

"Sticking to us!" said Bob cheerfully.

"The stickfulness is terrific!"

"Keep ahead, Wilkinson!" said Bunter. "Don't let that checky rotter

catch us. But don't break our necks—see?"

"Yes, sir!"

It was easy enough for the big Rolls to keep ahead. But Parkinson had to put on some speed to do it. The road was rather rutty, and the car rocked. Bunter rocked, too, and gasped. But he did not tell Parkinson to slow down any more. The lean man was going all out.

Harry Wharton & Co., looking over the back of the big car, watched him curiously. They were interested and intrigued by the strange and mysterious proceedings of the lean man and his strange and mysterious hunt for Bunter's valet!

What it all meant was a deep mystery to them; but there was no doubt that it was all rather exciting.

What the lean man hoped to effect by his chase of the Rolls was not clear. He could not overtake it unless Parkinson chose to let him. Even if he did, it was hardly clear what he was going to do.

But it was the unexpected—the utterly unexpected—that happened. The Rolls was half-way along the lane that led from one high-road to the other when the lean man went into action—dramatic action! No doubt he realised that he was not getting on with overhauling the Rolls, and wanted to bring matters to a head before it was out of the solitary lane and among the traffic of a busy main road again.

Crack!

The Greyfriars fellows jumped.

For a second they thought it was a back-fire. But it was not that! There was a little black revolver in the right hand of the man in the Austin, whose left was on the wheel. And a spurt of dust was kicked up from the road by a whizzing bullet!

"He—he—he's shooting!" stuttered Bob Cherry, almost in stupefaction.

"Great pip!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Billy Bunter. "Oh crikey! Oh, lor'! I told you so! Oh jiminy! Ow! Make room for a fellow, you beasts!"

Bunter plunged down headlong to the floor of the car, sprawling among feet. He seemed to dislike extremely the idea of stopping a bullet.

"You funky ass!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter. "Put it on, Parkinson! Make her go! Make it eighty—ninety—fast as you can!"

Bunter's objection to a risky speed vanished at the crack of the revolver!

Crack, crack!

"He's shooting at the tyres!" breathed Nugent.

"The mad villain!" said Wharton, between his teeth.

It was clear that the lean man was not firing at the passengers. He was trying to "get" the tyres with a shot.

The desperate recklessness of the act amazed the schoolboys. For a burst tyre, with the car doing fifty or sixty, meant a fearful mix-up, in which both limb and life would be endangered.

Crack!

The shot rang again, and glanced off the back of the car. Wharton shouted to the chauffeur:

"Stop!"

"Keep on!" shrieked Bunter, from the floor.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Beast! It's my car—"

"Dry up, idiot!" shouted Wharton. "Stop!"

The first shots, apparently, had been fired only as a warning. But the last had glanced on the car, showing that the lean man meant business. If they did not stop, he was going to stop them—at risk to limb and life!

Nobody had a tancy for piling up in the wreckage of a smashed car. On the other hand, the chums of the Remove had a very strong desire to get to close quarters with the reckless rascal who was endangering half a dozen lives. They were very keen to show Mr. Bronx that a lane in Kent was not a proper place for Chicago gangster stunts.

Parkinson drew to a halt. Even in these amazing and startling circumstances, he retained his impassive calm. Judging by his unmoved expression, Parkinson might have been quite accustomed to pursuing motorists taking pot-shots at him!

The Rolls came to a halt, and the Famous Five jumped out, with gleaming eyes. Bunter remained on the floor. Parkinson sat statuesque at his wheel. In a cloud of dust the little Austin rushed up, crashed to a halt. The lean man leaped down, and came running to the group of schoolboys, revolver in hand.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Sticky!

"SAY, you fat guy—"

"Yaroooh!"

"You hop out, pronto!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"You hear me talk? You hear me yaup? You want me to blow a hole through your pesky cabeza? Say!"

Tiger Bronx stood beside the Rolls, threatening Billy Bunter with the little black revolver that the fat Owl remembered so well.

He had hardly glanced at Harry Wharton & Co.

Passing them, heedless of their looks of concentrated wrath and indignation, he reached the car, and started talking to Bunter. It was Bunter he wanted—for news of Mr. Jarvish! Apparently he took it for granted that a bunch of schoolboys would be only too glad to keep clear of a ruffian with a deadly weapon in his hand.

If so, he took rather too much for granted!

The chums of the Remove were not scared by the firearm. For one thing, they were fairly certain that Mr. Bronx only carried it because he belonged to the happy country where such things were "packed." They considered it extremely improbable that he would venture to use it. But even if they had believed that he was desperate enough for that, they would not have allowed the impudent rascal to carry off matters with a high hand.

As it happened, there was no danger from the revolver, whether Mr. Bronx was reckless enough to use it or not. For as he glared into the car at the terrified Bunter, he turned his back on the other fellows, with a contemptuous disregard which was rather irritating—and which he soon had reason to regret.

The chums of the Remove exchanged a glance, and then they all moved at once, as if worked by the same spring.

Five fellows jumped at Mr. Bronx like five cats.

He was grabbed by the back of his collar, the back of his neck, and his shoulders, and came down in the lane with a crash, backwards.

He sprawled on his back, taken quite by surprise.

Harry Wharton had a grasp on his right arm instantly, forcing his pistol-hand upwards, in case he might, in his rage, have pulled trigger. But Mr. Bronx, dizzy, and quite confounded by the sudden and heavy crash on the earth, was not thinking of pulling



"I guess I want you to chew the rag with me a piece!" said the lean man, as his grasp closed on Bunter's shoulder with fingers that seemed of steel. "I—I say, you leggo!" gasped Bunter. "I'll shout for help if you don't leggo! You keep off, see, you beast!" With a jerk of his powerful arms, the gangster hooked Bunter out of the road and into the trees.

trigger. The revolver hung loosely in his relaxing fingers—and Wharton jerked it away by the barrel.

The long-limbed rascal heaved and struggled. He was a powerful man, and the juniors had plenty to do to hold him. Parkinson, however, awaking from his aristocratic calm, stepped down and lent a powerful grasp. The "Tiger" was safely pinned.

"I say, you fellows, keep him off!" Bunter, blinking out of the car, was yelling frantically.

"You funky fathead, shut up!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Help!" roared Bunter.

"Dry up, ass! We've got him all right!"

The lean man struggled fiercely. But he had no chance in so many hands. He was a prisoner.

"Keep the brute safe, you men," said Harry Wharton. "I'll take care of his gun for him!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Bob.

Wharton stepped off the lane and emptied the remaining chambers of the revolver into a hollow among the trees. Then he tossed it away into a thicket.

Having thus disposed of the gangster's "gun," he came back to the group holding the gangster, with a grim face.

Billy Bunter, by that time, was pulling himself together a little. He was on his feet, blinking out of the car through his big spectacles.

"You got him safe, you fellows?" he inquired anxiously.

"Safe as houses, old fat bean!" said Bob Cherry.

"I guess—" began Mr. Bronx.

"You shut up!" said Johnny Bull. "You're dead in this act! What are we going to do with the blighter, Wharton?"

"We're going to give him a lesson!" answered the captain of the Remove grimly. "He could be given into

custody for firing a pistol on the King's highway. But I think we can make him tired of such stunts."

"I guess—" recommenced Mr. Bronx.

"Parkinson!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Clear out all the juice in that Austin. He can walk off after we've done with him, and carry his car under his arm, if he likes."

"Yes, sir!"

Parkinson went to attend to the Austin.

Mr. Bronx started struggling again when the chauffeur's grip was taken off him. But the Famous Five pinned him down. Johnny Bull's knee, planted firmly in the pit of his stomach, very soon made the gangster tired of struggling.

Harry Wharton jerked a handkerchief from the gangster's pocket, twisted it, and bound his wrists firmly together with it.

"Say," gasped the Tiger, "I guess I'll take you all for a ride for this! You hear me whisper!"

"You talk too much, old bean!" said Bob Cherry. "Shut up!"

"I guess—" roared Mr. Bronx.

"This isn't a guessing competition! Ring off!"

"I reckon—"

"He's wound up!" said Bob Cherry. "Tap his napper on the ground, and perhaps he'll give us a rest."

Bang!

"Whooooop!" roared Tiger Bronx. After which he was silent. He did not, apparently, want another tap.

"Now tie his hoofs," said Harry. "We'll leave him to wriggle loose and we'll leave him plenty to do."

"Hear, hear!"

Mr. Bronx's own necktie and a twisted handkerchief secured his ankles together. Then he lay wriggling on

the ground, quite helpless. It was likely to be an hour, at least, before he could wriggle loose.

But the Greyfriars fellows were not done with him yet. The Tiger's lesson was not complete.

"Shove that basket out of the car," said Harry.

"I say, you fellows, that's my grub in that basket!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, in alarm.

"That's why we want it!"

"But, I say—"

Heedless of the alarmed Owl, Bob Cherry lifted out the basket of tuck which Bunter had thoughtfully provided for his journey.

Bunter, on a journey, was likely to forget his soap and his toothbrush, but he never forgot that he might be hungry! There was a choice assortment of jam tarts and cream puffs in the basket, and several bottles of ginger-beer. Harry Wharton opened the basket—eyed with alarm by Mr. Bronx as he did so, and with still more alarm by Billy Bunter.

"I say!" howled Bunter. "Wharrer you going to do with my tarts?"

"We're giving them to this sportsman, old bean."

"Why, you silly ass—" roared Bunter.

Squash, squash, squash!

"Urrrrgggh!" gurgled Mr. Bronx as juicy tart after juicy tart squashed on his lean face. "Wurrgh! By the great horned toad—gurrgh!"

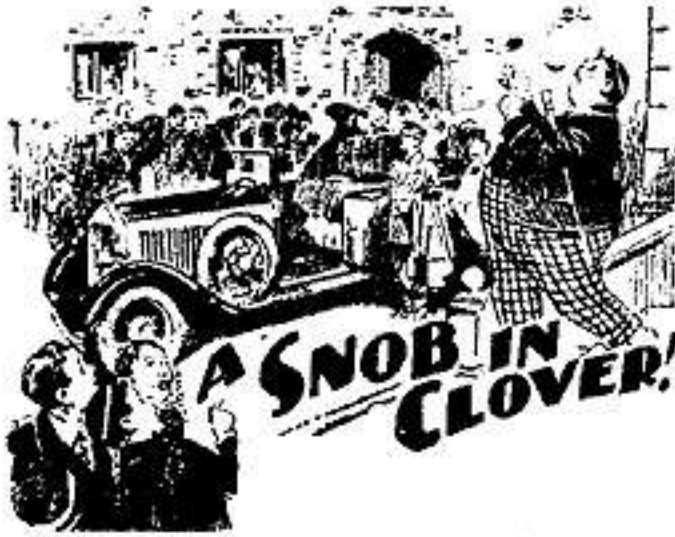
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, you're wasting my tarts!" wailed Bunter.

"Gurrgh!"

There were a dozen tarts. Every one of them squashed on the features of Mr. Bronx till he disappeared from view under sticky jam and pastry.

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

Then he was given the cream puffs, in his neck, in his ears, and in his hair. "I say, you fellows, they're my cream puffs!" howled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Wurrrggh!" came in horrible gurgles from the gangster. "Gurrrh! I guess I'll—wurrrggh—I reckon I'll sure—wooooooogh!"

"Now the ginger beer!" "Ha, ha, ha!" "I say, you fellows, that my ginger beer!" shrieked Bunter.

But the owner of the ginger beer was unheeded. Bottle after bottle was opened, and flowed over the sprawling, gasping, gurgling gangster.

He wriggled, and writhed, and spluttered, and stuttered. The juniors yelled with laughter as they looked at him. He was jammy and sticky—even Billy Bunter, in all his jammy and sticky career, had never been so jammy and sticky as this. His aspect was so extraordinary that it brought a grin to the impassive visage of Parkinson.

"I think that will do!" said Harry Wharton. "He won't forget that in a hurry, I fancy."

"Suppose I get hungry before I get to Margate?" roared Bunter.

Even that awful possibility did not seem to worry the chums of the Remove. They only chortled.

"Now, Mr. Bronx, if that's your name," said Harry Wharton, "you've had a lesson, and you'd better take the tip and behave yourself while your in this country. Got that?"

"Gurrrggh!" gurgled Mr. Bronx. "I guess I'll—wurrrggh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The juniors stepped back into the car, and Parkinson took his seat. The Rolls rolled on again, laughing faces looking back at the wriggling gangster as it went.

Mr. Bronx was left in a parlous state.

Not for an hour, at least, was he likely to get loose, unless some passer-by came along and released him. When he did, he had the jam and cream to deal with, after which he had to get petrol from somewhere before he could get his car going again. For the present, at least, it was certain that Mr. Bronx was done with. And Billy Bunter, relieved by that happy certainty, took comfort and ceased to mourn for the jam tarts, cream puffs, and ginger beer. The Rolls rushed on to Lantham, and Mr. Bronx vanished from sight—left to an exceedingly sticky time!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Riches Take Unto Themselves Wings!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"There's the station!"

"I say—"

"We get down here!"

"Do let a fellow speak!" roared

BUNTER.

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The car slowed down in the High Street of Lantham. In spite of the delay on the road, caused by Mr. Bronx, the Famous Five were in ample time for their train. They were thinking now of catching it. Bunter, however, was not thinking of trains.

"You fellows are like sheeps' heads—nearly all jaw!" said Bunter crossly. "If you'd give a fellow a chance to speak—"

"Cut it short, old fat man," said Bob. "There's the station—"

"What about a snack?" asked Bunter. "I shall be hungry before I get to Margate. I know that! What about a snack at the Pagoda?"

"You don't want us to watch you parking the foodstuffs, old bean."

"I'm asking you to join me in a snack!" said Bunter with dignity. "You've always made out at school that I never stand my whack!"

"No making out about it," said Johnny Bull. "You never did!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Tell your shover to stop; we're at the station."

"Keep on to the Pagoda, up the street!" said Bunter, and Parkinson drove on up Lantham High Street.

"Look here—" granted Johnny Bull.

"We're going to have a snack at the Pagoda," said Bunter. "You fellows can do with one before you go. Lots of trains from here."

"Oh, all right!" said Harry.

Nobody objected to a snack at the Pagoda, the best teashop in Lantham, so far as that went. If Bunter wanted to be hospitable it was rather ungracious to decline. No doubt, also, he wanted to "swank." Still, there was no harm in letting him swank if he wanted to.

On the last occasion when Billy Bunter had "tea'd" at the Pagoda in Lantham, there had been a spot of trouble, owing to the trifling circumstance that he had devoured more than he could pay for. It had been quite awkward at the time. A waiter had been very suspicious and scornful, and doubtful about letting Bunter go on his promise to call in and pay the balance next time he was passing. Perhaps he had doubted whether Bunter would be passing again! If so, his doubts had been well-founded—Bunter hadn't been!

Now, however, all was changed! With his new and wonderful wealth, Bunter was rather keen to show that scornful and suspicious waiter how unfounded his suspicions had been! And a fellow could get good "grub" at the Pagoda if he could pay for it. Bunter could pay for it now—indeed, he was in a financial position to buy the whole place if he liked!

The car stopped outside the teashop! The juniors stepped out.

Billy Bunter hooked his note-case out of his pocket.

Bunter liked to flourish that note-case.

Like his car, it was the best that Chunkley's could supply! And it was crammed with articles that even Chunkley's could not supply.

In one compartment were £100 notes. In another were £50 notes. In two more were "tenners" and "fivers." In the smallest division were a few pound notes, which the Greyfriars millionaire required for small change! There were no ten-shilling notes! Bunter disdained them! As for silver and coppers, Bunter was already forgetting that he had ever touched such absurd trifles.

"Buying Lantham?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yah!"

"Don't show that Bank-of-England to everybody, Bunter!" advised Bob Cherry. "You'll get it pinched."

"If I did, I've got lots more!" said Bunter disdainfully. "I've only to send my man to the bank."

So far from acting on Bob's excellent advice, Bunter was rather keen to show his note-case to everybody!

Several people who were loitering on the pavement by the teashop glanced at it; among them, a rather shabby man with ferrety eyes, whose ferrety eyes gleamed at the sight of the wad of notes.

"Parkinson!"

"Sir!"

"I shall be about an hour! Go and get yourself a snack somewhere."

Bunter detached a couple of pound notes from the note-case and tossed them to his chauffeur.

"Thank you, sir!" said Parkinson, unmoved.

Bunter, undoubtedly, could be generous when he had lots of money! There was no doubt that he liked making it fly.

He dropped the note-case carelessly into his jacket pocket.

"Come on, you fellows!" he said.

And he led the way into the teashop. Parkinson drove away, perhaps to get himself a "snack," but probably not to spend two pounds on it.

The juniors sat down round one of the tables. A waiter came up. Bunter was rather disappointed that it was not the waiter he remembered. He would have liked to overwhelm that scornful and suspicious waiter. However, the grub was the chief consideration. When the grub was all right, everything was all right in Bunter's opinion. And at the Pagoda the grub was all right! The only drawback was that the prices were rather high. But that did not matter to Bunter now. In fact he rather liked high prices! His wealth was burning a hole in his pocket.

Bunter's orders were extensive. He had said that it was going to be a snack! Judging by the orders he gave, it was going to be a lunch, a dinner, a tea, and a supper all rolled into one.

The table was soon piled.

"Go it, you men!" said Bunter hospitably. "Don't spare the grub! Where that came from there's plenty more! What? He, he, he!"

A shabby man approached the teashop, paused by a tub of palms to glance round him, and then came towards the juniors' table.

It was the man with the ferrety eyes who had watched Bunter flourishing his note-case outside.

The next moment the notecase had changed ownership, and the shabby man had disappeared.

If he had entered the teashop for a meal, he had, apparently, changed his mind, for he had gone out again.

Bunter did not waste a thought on him.

He proceeded with his "snack."

It was "some" snack! Indeed, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked, justly, that the snackfulness was terrific. By the time Bunter had finished he was breathing hard from his exertions. The other fellows had finished long before, but they politely waited for Bunter to have done. It seemed, for some time, that Bunter never would have done. But an end comes to all things, at long last, and an end came to Bunter's snack!

He signed to the waiter, who laid a little bill on the table. The amount of that little bill would have been rather alarming to any fellow whose

financial resources had the usual limits. Billy Bunter, however, only glanced at it carelessly. A trifle of £4 16s. 6d. was nothing to Bunter—now!

"Better be moving, you fellows!" said Bunter, as the waiter retired after laying down the bill.

"Can you move?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Yah!"

Bunter rose slowly. He could move—though with some little difficulty. He slipped his hand into his pocket for his notecase, to extract a five-pound note to pay the bill at the desk, and a pound note to leave on the table as a tip for the waiter.

He groped in the pocket. A startled expression came over his fat face. He groped—and groped—and his fat hand came out of the pocket—empty!

"I—I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "Where's my notecase?"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Shell Out!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stared at Bunter. Bunter blinked at Harry Wharton & Co. He dived his fat hand into his pocket again, and groped. He groped in vain. Once more the fat paw came empty away.

"Where's it gone?" gasped Bunter.

"Lot of good asking us!" said Bob Cherry. "Isn't it in your pocket, you fat chump? Why, I saw you put it there—after you showed it to all Lantham in the street."

"Tain't there now!" gasped Bunter.

"Feel in your other pocket, fathead!" said Harry Wharton.

Bunter groped in his other pockets. The result was the same!

"Dropped it under the table?" suggested Nugent.

"Well, look!" said Bunter. "I've

stood you a jolly decent feed—make yourselves useful for once!"

The Famous Five looked at Bunter—expressively. Then they stooped, to peer under the table and chairs. But the notecase was not there! There was no sign of that beautiful new expensive notecase, packed with banknotes and currency notes. It was gone—gone from Bunter's gaze like a beautiful dream!

"Not here!" said Johnny Bull, with a grunt.

"Well, where is it?" demanded Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Bob suddenly. "That shabby sportsman who passed by you—you've had your pocket picked!"

"Rot!" grunted Bunter.

"That's it!" said Harry Wharton, with conviction. "I saw the man outside, before we came in—he was watching Bunter brandishing his wealth—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Then he followed us in, to get it off (Continued on next page.)"



The UMPIRE SAYS



"Umpire" winds up his series of cricket articles with an interesting talk about the Oval, Kennington, where the last of this season's Tests is being staged.

SURPRISING, BUT TRUE!

AS we are almost at the end of another cricket season, I should like to thank my reader chums who have made the season more interesting for me, and who, by their questions, have actually compelled me to add to my cricket knowledge. They have asked questions the answers to which I have had to look for, and in the looking I have discovered things which I did not previously know.

Here is an instance: A reader in Birmingham asks me whether in all the Test match years, as the outcome of a series of games between England and Australia, the two countries have finished up all square? As a matter of fact they have not—in England. Really that is rather surprising, seeing that five Tests are played and that it is always possible for some of these games to be drawn. But always either England or Australia have had a clear lead in wins at the end of five matches.

Then comes the question of what would happen if a series of Tests did finish with the teams level on wins? Personally, I think there would be an immediate effort to arrange a sixth Test, but whether it would be possible for this to be done is another matter.

If the teams finished level on wins and a deciding game could not be arranged, then (this replies to another correspondent) the country in possession of the "Ashes" would be said to have retained them.

Even if neither side could claim a definite advantage no awkward complications would arise. England and Australia do not play for any sort of trophy—officially. So far as the M.C.C. and the Australian official body are concerned the two countries just play for the honour of winning. The "Ashes" are mythical. True there have been presentations—

unofficial—in the past, of urns containing "Ashes" and that sort of thing, but the "Ashes" term merely arose because of a sort of "In memoriam" verse printed in a London newspaper when Australia first beat England at cricket. The word really signified our death.

REAL CRICKET WISDOM!

THE Oval, Kennington, where the last of this season's Tests is being staged, has been the centre of many amazing Test games and Test scenes. This is natural, because it has so often happened that the outcome of the whole series has depended on the last match, which has been played at the Oval since 1896.

The Test match at the Oval which all the old-stagers still talk about in the most excited way was that of 1902, which England won by one wicket. This was, in some respects at any rate, the most remarkable game which has ever been played between the representatives of the two countries. The enormous possibilities of the game were clearly demonstrated.

In the last innings England had to get 263 runs to win.

Our chances of getting them were greatly reduced by over-night rain which rendered the pitch difficult. And we certainly seemed to have lost all possible chance of getting the runs when five of our best batsmen were back in the pavilion with only 49 runs on the board. That was at lunch-time. What an opportunity for heroic batting!

Fortunately, we had the man for such an occasion—Gilbert Jessop, the smiter!

For most batsmen such a situation would have been considered to compel caution. Most present day batsmen

would have taken that view, without a doubt. But "The Croucher," as Jessop was called, owing to his peculiar style—only knew one way of batting. That was to hit the ball hard. He plumped for his natural style, and therein showed real cricket wisdom.

A THRILLING FINISH!

WITH the Hon. F. S. Jackson as his partner, Jessop banged the Australian bowling about to the extent of 104 runs in 75 minutes. What a display! What courage! England had a chance again.

Even so, we still wanted 15 runs to win when nine men were out and Wilfred Rhodes, the last man in the batting list, went out to join his Yorkshire colleague, George Hirst. They got them, one by one, and England won. Only the other day I was talking to Wilfred Rhodes about this most thrilling finish, and I was not surprised that he was able to recall almost every trifling detail of that nerve-racking half-hour.

"I can still remember the winning hit I had the luck to make. The ball from Trumble was just a trifle over-pitched, and I straight drove it between the bowler and mid-on into the long field. I was batting at the gasometer end and, as soon as I saw the ball beat the fielders, I know the match was over. I set off running and did not stop until I had got into the pavilion.

"Just as I reached the pavilion gate the crowd began to come across the ground, and George Hirst, who had had to run from the pavilion end to cross me in the winning run, was unable to get back into the pavilion for a long time.

"That was my eighth Test match for England, and the first in which I finished on the winning side."

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

I must now get square with my post-bag by giving some replies very briefly. Here they are:

T. Corfe (Dublin).—Although the batsmen may complete a run before the ball, hit high in the air, is caught, the run is not counted.

J. L. Hopkinson (Sutton-in-Ashfield).—The batsman can make good his ground, when running, without the necessity of being actually within the lines of the crease. He can run much wider of the wicket than the lines go if he so desires.

John Beal: The batsman is not out if, in the running, he accidentally knocks down the wicket.

"UMPIRE."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,384.

Bunter!" said Johnny Bull, with a nod.

"And he's got it!" said Frank.

"The gotfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Your pocket has been pinchfully picked, my esteemed and idiotic Bunter!"

Snort, from Bunter.

"I'm not a fellow to have his pocket picked!" he grunted. "I'm not a silly mug, like some fellows I could name!"

Harry Wharton glanced round the extensive and rather well-filled tea-shop. He did not see the shabby man—and hardly expected to. It was more than half an hour since he had passed by the fat Owl of the Remove—and having picked Bunter's pocket he was not likely to linger on the spot.

Probably he was far, far away by that time—the wealthiest sneak-thief in the United Kingdom.

"Well, it's gone!" grunted Bunter. "If that fellow really picked my pocket, I think you fellows might have stopped him—I really think that!"

"You silly ass! Why didn't you stop him?"

"How was I to know he was picking my pocket, you silly ass?"

"How were we to know, you blithering idiot?"

"Oh, don't jaw!" said Bunter crossly. "You are the fellows for jawing, and no mistake! It's gone; no good jawing!"

"Give your fat chin a rest, then!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"If you've got the number of the notes, we can go along to the police station," said Harry.

"I haven't!"

"Where did you get them, fathead? You can get the numbers."

"My man got them. I told him I should want some money. I suppose he got them from a bank."

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter. His wonderful wealth was an undying cause of surprise. But this was more surprising than ever. It was really rather remarkable for a fellow who wanted money to tell his man to get some, and to suppose that he got it from a bank! If that was how Bunter was supplied with cash, it looked as if Jarvis was more of a magician than a manservant!

"I'll tell Jarvis to get the numbers and let the police know," said Bunter. "If I think of it, I mean! But just at present I'm stony!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"All my money was in that notecase. What's going to be done?"

"Looks as if we are!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

The waiter was hovering near the table now. £4 16s. 6d. was rather a large sum for a party of schoolboys to run up. And he could see that there was some trouble on hand.

The chums of the Remove exchanged glances.

£4 16s. 6d. had to be paid! There was no doubt about that! Bunter, the billionaire, was, temporarily, at least, in the old familiar state of Billy Bunter, the impecunious!

"We've got to stand it!" said Harry Wharton. "Can't be helped! Lucky we've got some tin about us!"

"You needn't worry about the money!" said Bunter sarcastically. "I'll settle it a dozen times over, if you like!"

"Once will be enough—if you ever do!" said Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,384.

Evidently there was no help for it! The Famous Five went through their pockets. Not being billionaires, they found some little difficulty in raising unexpected sums that ran into pounds.

Bunter watched them sarcastically. Shortage of cash excited, in Bunter, a mingling of amusement and contempt.

It was not many days since Bunter had been a borrower of bobs, a cadger of coppers! But an overflow of bank-notes seemed to have washed all that out of his fat mind.

"My hat! Are you fellows short of a few pounds?" sneered Bunter. "Must be rotten to be poor! I say, you fellows, what is it really like to be poor? How do you stand it?"

Without answering that question, the juniors sorted out their cash, and made up the required sum among them.

"Leave a quid on the table for the waiter!" said Bunter. "I always give generous tips!"

"Leave all the quids you like!" said Bob. "We're not leaving any. Make it a bob, you men."

"Look here, don't be horrid, mean!" said Bunter. "It's letting me down! I think you fellows might keep up decent appearances when you're with a decent fellow!"

"Shall I kick him?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Look here, you fellows—"

"Oh, come on!" said Harry. "Let's get out!"

The waiter's eye lingered on the party till the bill was paid at the desk. The Greyfriars fellows left the Pagoda, five of them feeling rather inclined to kick themselves for having entered. Four pounds sixteen and six might be a trifle to a billionaire, but it had made a fearful inroad on the financial resources of fellows who were not billionaires.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Where's my car?"

"Blow your car!"

"I'll sack that man Williamson," said Bunter darkly. "What the dooce does he mean by not being here when I want him?"

"Come on!" said Harry.

"I say, you fellows, one of you cut off and fetch my car!" snapped Bunter. "I expect the fellow's parked it up the street somewhere."

The Famous Five started for the station.

"I say, you fellows, I want my car!" hooted Bunter.

They walked on.

"Are you deaf?" yelled the Greyfriars billionaire.

Apparently they were deaf. At all events, they turned deaf ears. They walked on to the station, and disappeared.

"Beasts!" snorted Bunter. "Cheeky beasts! After I've stood them a jolly good feed—getting shirty simply because they had to pay for it. Ungrateful rotters!"

The Rolls rolled up. Parkinson had apparently sighted the fat figure of his lord and master from a distance.

Bunter gave him an angry blink. "You've kept me waiting, Watkinson!" he snapped.

"Yes, sir," said Parkinson.

"I'm not used to being kept waiting. I can jolly well tell you, Williamson!"

"No, sir," said Parkinson.

"This won't do, Wilkinson."

"Very good, sir!"

Bunter snorted, and packed himself in the car. It rolled away with him. Reclining on luxurious soft cushions, with his fat little legs stretched out, his

eyes shut behind his big spectacles, and his mouth open, Bunter dropped into a doze, and slept and snored while the car ate up the miles to Margate.

Harry Wharton & Co. in the train were travelling much less luxuriously. But they were minus Billy Bunter's fascinating society, so there was no doubt that the train was preferable to the car.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Swank!

"I WONDER—" remarked Harry Wharton.

"The wonderfulness is terrific!" assented Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

And they both smiled.

The two juniors, strolling on the terrace at Wharton Lodge, were thinking of Bunter, the billionaire.

They could not help wondering a little how the billionaire of the Remove was getting on.

Bunter in his present palmy state was an interesting study.

They could guess that he was making the fur fly at merry Margate.

It was a week or so since Greyfriars School had broken up for the holidays. Harry Wharton and the nabob were at Wharton Lodge; the other members of the Co. at their various homes. They were to meet during the hols, and some sort of a holiday trip was to be fixed up—it was not yet decided what.

Bob Cherry was keen on a trip in a passenger plane to foreign parts, which his comrades agreed was a ripping idea. The objection was that it cost a lot of money; and in none of their various families was there a billionaire, or even a millionaire. So nothing had been settled, so far.

None of the Co. had any news from Bunter. That was unusual in the hols; but the circumstances now were far from usual.

So far from seeking to "barge in" at Wharton Lodge or Cherry Place, Billy Bunter would probably have declined, with disdain, an invitation to either establishment.

Something much more gorgeous was required to satisfy Bunter the billionaire.

The chums of the Remove did not expect to hear from him, in fact, unless his sudden riches took unto themselves wings and flew away, as riches are proverbially wont to do.

They would not have been surprised had that happened. Bunter's accession to vast wealth had been so very extraordinary that they could not help thinking that there was a "catch" in it somewhere.

"The old fat bean's spreading himself at Margate, I fancy," remarked the captain of the Remove.

"The spreadfulness is probably preposterous!" grinned the Nabob of Bhanipur. "But perhapsfully the esteemed Bunter will go up like the absurd rocket, and come down like the ludicrous stick."

"I wonder!" said Harry.

Wells, the butler, looked out.

"The telephone, Master Harry," he said.

"Oh, good! That will be Bob," said the captain of the Remove; and the two juniors hurried into the House.

Wharton took the receiver.

"Hallo! That you, Bob, old chap?" he asked. "Heard anything from Bunter? I've been rather expecting to hear that they've found him burst at Margate."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Eh?" Wharton jumped.



Five fellows jumped at Mr. Bronx like five cats. The gangster was grabbed by the back of his collar, the back of his neck, and his shoulders. Harry Wharton had a grasp on his right arm instantly, forcing his pistol hand upwards, in case the American, in his rage, might pull the trigger. "I say, you fellows, keep him off!" Bunter, blinking out of the car, was yelling frantically.

It was not Bob Cherry's voice that came over the wires. It was Billy Bunter's.

"Look here! You cheeky ass—" "Oh, is that Bunter?" "Yes, you cheeky fathead!" "Well, what have you rung me up for, you ass? I was expecting a call from Bob," said the captain of the Remove. "You haven't rung up to say you've burst, have you?"

"You silly ass!" "Well, what's the news, old fat man?" asked Harry. "Have you bought Margate?"

"I could, if I jolly well liked." Harry Wharton laughed. "Still rolling in it?" he asked. "Oh, yes! Nothing new to me. Accustomed to vast wealth from my earliest childhood, you know."

"I've heard that one." "Brought up in the lap of luxury." "That's an old one, too." "Beast!"

"Well, have a good time, old fat bean!" said Harry good humouredly. "Is there a famine at Margate yet?" Snort! on the telephone.

Wharton waited. Snorts did not enlighten him as to why the Greyfriars billionaire had rung up.

"I suppose you're having a pretty rotten time," went on Bunter's fat voice.

"Not at all—thanks!" "I mean, there can't be much doing in your humble home?"

"Fathead!" "I was thinking of running down in my car and seeing you."

"Oh!" Wharton wondered whether the riches had taken unto themselves wings. This rather looked like it.

"I mean, it would be interesting in a

way," went on Bunter. "How the poor live, and all that—what?"

"You blithering idiot!" "But I'm not coming—" "Thanks!"

"On the whole, I don't care for slumming, or anything of that sort." "Slumming!" gasped Wharton.

"Well, perhaps not exactly slumming," said Bunter. "But you see what I mean? On the whole, I don't think it's really wise for an immensely wealthy fellow to come into too close contact with needy people."

"It's wise to say these pleasant things from the other end of a telephone wire, anyhow. Otherwise, you would get your silly nose punched."

"Oh, really, Wharton—" "Is that the lot?" demanded the captain of the Remove. "If you've got anything to say, you howling fathead, say it and wind up! They'll be charging you for another three minutes."

"That's nothing to me. A lot to you, I dare say. But to me—" "Good-bye!"

"Hold on! I haven't finished yet." "Buck up and finish, then!"

"I want you to come over here. Bring Inky with you. If the other fellows are with you, bring them, too. I'll pay your fares."

"What?" "Expense is no object to me. Come over in a car if you like. I'll pay for it."

"Go and eat coke!" "If that's what you call gratitude, Wharton, when a wealthy fellow is taking you up in the hols out of pure kindness—"

"Ass!" "Kindness is thrown away on the poor," said Bunter. "I've always found that. But I really never expect gratitude. Never mind that—"

Harry Wharton replaced the receiver on the hooks. He had had enough of this pleasant and interesting conversation with Bunter.

It appeared that the riches had not, after all, taken unto themselves wings. Bunter was still rolling in money. And it seemed to have got into his head considerably. Hurree Janset Ram Singh glanced at his chum's frowning face as Wharton stepped from the telephone cabinet in the hall.

"Only that fat Owl Bunter," said Harry. "He seems to have rung me up to blow off a cargo of swank—"

Buzzzz! It was the telephone-bell. "Oh, that will be old Bob!" said Harry, as he went back to the instrument. "That you, Bob, old bean?"

"Eh? It's me! We seem to have got cut off, or something," said Bunter's fat voice. "I hadn't finished speaking, old chap. Are you and Inky coming over?"

"No!" hooted Wharton. "It would be a ripping change for you, old chap, after mooching about for a week with nothing to do in a poor place like yours."

"I wish you were near enough to be kicked!"

"Think of Inky, too—he must be fearfully bored at your poor little humble home, Wharton. Give him a chance."

Wharton breathed hard. The telephone is a wonderful invention, but it has its drawbacks. A fellow speaking from the other end of the wire could not be kicked, however earnestly he asked for it.

"Mind, I mean it!" went on the fat and fatuous Owl. "I'm not pulling your leg, Wharton. I'm not the fellow to forget fellows I know at school, even if they're not of the same social standing."

"Don't I wish I could reach you!" said Harry.

"Eh? I'm asking you to come over—"

"Not worth the journey to kick you!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, you can take it from me that I'm speaking seriously; I really want you to come! I'll give you a good time. Bathing, swimming, fishing, boating, yachting—anything you like! You can always have one of my cars. You'll like the grub at this hotel—it's fine!" There was a sound over the telephone-wires like the smacking of lips. "The bills are enormous, of course, but that's nothing to me. You'll live on the fat of the land as my guest. Rather a change for you—what? He, he, he! Coming?"

"No!" roared Wharton.

Wharton slammed the receiver back on the hooks and left the telephone. A few moments later the bell rang again. Bunter apparently had not finished—but Wharton had!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter in all His Glory!

"JARVISH!"

"Sir?"

"You sent the telegram?"

"I did, sir."

"Any answer yet?"

"No, sir."

"Bring it to me as soon as it comes."

"Very good, sir."

"It's rather rotten, people not being on the telephone, Jarvis."

"Quite so, sir."

"Poverty is no crime, Jarvis—"

"No, sir."

"But it's a doocid bother in one's friends."

"Oh, quite, sir!"

"But I'm not the man to let down an old pal like Toddy simply because he's poor, Jarvis."

"No, sir."

"In fact, I rather think it's up to me to take the chap up and give him a bit of a good time."

"Yes, sir."

"I'm a generous chap, Jarvis."

"Quite, sir."

"Toddy's plucky, too," said Bunter.

"He's a bit of a freak, but he's got pluck. He wouldn't be afraid of that American sportsman. Not that that's why I'm asking him here, of course."

"Not at all, sir."

"You can cut, Jarvis."

"Very good, sir."

Billy Bunter was reclining in what a novelist might have called an attitude of unaffected grace in a wicker chair on the balcony of the Hotel Splendide, at Margate.

The Hotel Splendide faced the sands and the sea. So did Bunter as he reclined on the balcony.

Sweet strains of music came from a band in the distance. The promenade was black with promenaders; the beach was a hive of humanity.

On that brilliant August day Merry Margate was very merry. People seemed to be packed into it almost like sardines in a tin.

Bunter had lately lunched.

After lunch Bunter required a rest. Bunter's lunches since he had become a billionaire had been extensive. Bunter had spread himself in many ways, but most of all at meals.

Bunter, the billionaire, was enjoying life.

There had been several trips up to London in the big Rolls. Generally it had returned laden with luggage. For the first time in his fat life, Bunter was able to go shopping without counting the cost. His shopping was on an enormous scale.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,384.

How many suits of clothes he now possessed, perhaps his valet knew, but Bunter certainly did not. He had never been good at arithmetic, especially going into high figures.

He did not even know how many trunks he had for packing them in—not that Bunter was likely to do any packing!

No form of work had ever had any real appeal for Billy Bunter, and since he had become wealthy he had developed an aristocratic inability to do the slightest thing for himself.

Sometimes when Jarvis was putting his shoes on for him he expressed a languid surprise at the fact that there were fellows in the world who put their own shoes on. It was a hard world for the poor. Bunter was quite sorry for them.

Bunter had become quite unable to put his own shoes on. He could not even brush his own hat. Certainly he could not have brushed them all, for he had now so many hats that it would have been quite a lot of exercise to brush the whole number.

Ordinary hotel accommodation would have overflowed with Bunter's new and numerous possessions, but Bunter's accommodation was ample.

He had the largest and best suite of rooms at the largest and best hotel in Margate. He did not even know what it cost; he left the bills to Jarvis to pay.

Bunter was treated with tremendous respect at the Hotel Splendide, from the magnificent manager, the still more magnificent head waiter, down to the smallest boy-in-buttons.

What they really thought of him they never told Bunter. It might have caused the horn of plenty to run dry. Bunter would have been offended.

Members of the staff bowed to the ground before a billionaire who exuded tips—and such tips! Bunter never tipped anybody less than a pound note. Often it was a fiver; sometimes a tenner. Fortunatus, in possession of his celebrated purse, could hardly have been more open-handed. Indeed, the fable of Fortunatus seemed to have come true in Bunter's case. He spent as if he had an inexhaustible purse.

He had forgotten the incident at Lantham; it was not worth remembering. A few hundred pounds more or less was, to Bunter, a trifle light as air.

Bunter was enjoying life. He enjoyed it to the full. He liked Margate; the wonderfully healthy air gave him a wonderful appetite. He dealt faithfully with the excellent fare provided by the Hotel Splendide. The grub was all right—everything was all right. There was only one fly in the ointment.

That fly was visible at the present moment—in the shape of a long, lean man in a slouched hat, who was strolling on the promenade in front of the hotel, in sight of the Greyfriars billionaire.

Bunter frowned at Mr. Bronx.

He had seen the lean American several times in Margate, and, though the man had not approached him, his vicinity had made Bunter uneasy.

Strange to say, it had not produced that effect on Jarvis. James Jarvis seemed to have lost most of his haunting terror of the gangster.

Bunter, if he had thought about the matter, might have wondered why. Jarvis had been afraid to leave the school with him because Bronx was hanging about the roads. He had travelled late at night in a swift car to rejoin his "young master," and had arrived pale and uneasy, like a man who had been haunted by fear on his journey.

But his fears seemed to be gone now.

Bunter had seen him glance at the lean American from a window without turning a hair. Yet it was, so Bunter supposed, Jarvis that Mr. Bronx was "after." He had only bothered Bunter as a guide to Jarvis. Now he knew where Jarvis was if he wanted him. So he was, no doubt, done with Bunter. Still, the sight of the lean, hard face and slits of eyes gave the fat junior a tremor of uneasiness. It made him feel that he would like to have somebody about him who was not afraid of that lean, ruthless, threatening face. It was not only the desire to show off his wealth that had caused Bunter to issue generous invitations to Greyfriars fellows.

"Your telegram, sir!"

Jarvis's voice broke in on Bunter's meditations. He detached his eyes, and his spectacles, from the lean figure strolling in front of the hotel, and blinked round.

"Open it, Jarvis!" said Bunter.

Jarvis opened the telegram.

"Read it to me!"

Bunter was too aristocratically languid to read a telegram for himself.

"Right-ho! 'Arrive four-thirty.—Peter," read out Jarvis.

"He's coming, then!" said Bunter.

"Order a room to be prepared for him, Jarvis."

"Very good, sir!"

"What am I doing this afternoon, Jarvis?" asked Bunter. During a visit to Mauleverer Towers, Bunter had once heard Lord Mauleverer ask his man what he was doing that afternoon. Bunter thought it rather good.

"You are riding, sir!" said Jarvis.

"Am I?" yawned Bunter.

"Your horse, sir, will be brought round from the livery stable at four-thirty!"

"I shall have to change," remarked Bunter thoughtfully. "Lot of trouble changin' one's clobber, Jarvis."

"No doubt, sir."

"But a fellow must do it."

"Quite, sir."

"I hope they're sending a decent gee," said Bunter. "I'm rather particular about horseflesh, Jarvis. We keep some good bunters at Hunter Court—I mean, we keep some good hunters at Bunter Court—"

"I have directed them, sir, to send the best horse in the stable."

"I hardly think there's anything in Margate up to my style," said Bunter. "However, we shall see. You can go and get my riding clothes ready."

"Very good, sir!"

Jarvis noiselessly departed. Bunter blinked after him. Sometimes it struck him as curious that this sleek, sly man was willing to provide him with boundless wealth for no reward but the permission to act as his faithful valet and attendant! It was so very remarkable that even the obtuse Owl of the Remove wondered, at times, whether there was a catch in it.

But thinking was not Bunter's long suit. He gave that, and everything else, very little thought.

He blinked over the balcony rail again. The long, lean American had disappeared. That was a relief. The mere sight of him gave Bunter a sinking in the pit of his podgy stomach. Certainly it was Jarvis that the gangster had been after; yet Bunter had a feeling that there was danger in that quarter.

He rose at last and went to his suite, for Jarvis to change him into his riding clothes—Bunter being, by this time, totally incapable of changing his clothes without assistance.

By the time he was changed, a groom had arrived, leading the horse that he was to ride. Bunter rolled out, and

blinked at the horse. It was quite a good horse. It looked as if it had some spirit. On previous visits to Merry Margate, Bunter had ridden donkeys on the sands. In his present high and palmy state, he preferred to forget that he had ever ridden donkeys.

Riding, Bunter fancied, was one of the things he could really do well. Bunter had many beliefs of that kind, which were liable, when put to the test, to turn out to be only fancies. It was like Bunter to believe that he could "witch the world with noble horsemanship"—till he got on the horse. Then he was likely to discover that "before taking" was quite different from "after taking."

The groom held the horse while Bunter heaved himself into the saddle. How it happened that he heaved himself over it, and came down on the other side, Bunter did not know.

"Ow!" he gasped.
The groom grinned.
"Jarvish!" howled Bunter. "Where's that fool Jarvish? Where's that silly idiot Jarvish? Where's—"

"Here, sir!" Jarvish was at his elbow.

"Help me to mount!" snapped Bunter. "I pay you to make yourself useful!"

"Oh! Quite so, sir!"
The horse stared round at Bunter. He seemed surprised.

"Hold him!" grunted Bunter.
"Yessir! 'Olding him, sir!"
"Now then, Jarvish—"
"Yes, sir!"

Bunter was heaved into the saddle. This time he stayed there. Stirrups were arranged to his liking. He grasped the reins. Jarvish stepped back.

Bunter hesitated to tell the groom to let go. Now that he was mounted, he seemed a terrible distance from the ground. He realised, too, that a horse was not a reliable thing like a motor-car. It had a will of its own, a volition of its own. It changed gears, as it were, of its own accord. Bunter intended to take a gentle canter in the country lanes and fields outside the town. A doubt smote him as to whether his steed had the same intention. If there was a dispute, Bunter could not help feeling that the horse might have the best of it.

But he who hesitates is lost! Without being told to let go, the groom did let go. Probably he thought that that was what was wanted. Anyhow, he let go.

What happened next was never clear to Bunter.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Plucky Peter!

PETER TODD stepped from the train.

The station was crowded. The train had been crowded. All Margate was crowded in August, as

a matter of course. There was an air of cheerfulness and jollity about the place, and Toddy was feeling cheerful. He wormed his way through the swarming crowd, carrying his bag, and emerged into the brilliant sunshine for which Margate is famous.

Outside the station he paused and looked round. He wondered whether Bunter had sent a car for him. Really, the owner of boundless wealth might have paid an expected guest that little attention. But nobody seemed to be waiting for Peter, and he did not think of taking a taxi for a short distance. Peter was not a billionaire. He inquired his way to the Hotel Splendide and started to walk.

Peter had been rather doubtful about accepting that invitation, sent by telegram, to visit Bunter in his palatial quarters. He was doubtful about what sort of a host Bunter would prove to be.

On the other hand, he was rather curious to see the Greyfriars billionaire in all his glory. And he had a few days on hand with nothing special to do. So he had decided to come. It was easy enough to go again if he did not find Bunter, the billionaire, to his taste—which was quite probable. If Bunter, in his prosperity, had remembered a school pal who was not so wealthy, it was rather decent of him. If he simply wanted a witness to his swank, Peter did not mind—he was a tolerant fellow. Anyhow, there he was.

Margate was packed! And it seemed to Peter, as he swung along, that there was some excitement going on. Loud shouting reached him from a distance. He saw people running.

"Look out!"
"Stop him!"
Clatter, clatter, clatter!

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Toddy.
He stopped and stared. Up the street, scattering pedestrians on all sides, came a galloping horse, with a rider clinging to its back.

Toddy stared blankly.
A busy street, crowded with people and cars, was hardly the place for a rider to choose for a ride, especially at such a pace.

But as that rider came swooping up the street, Peter discerned that it was not a matter of choice with him.

Probably he had intended to ride in some other direction.

Whatever his intentions might have been, the horse completely disregarded them. The reins were swinging round his head as he galloped. Two fat arms were clutching his neck. The horse seemed frightened. That style of riding was really calculated to frighten a horse.

People ran and jumped and dodged out of the way of the runaway steed. Peter prepared to dodge. It was not a light matter to get in the way of those clattering, thundering hoofs.

Then, suddenly, Peter recognised the rider. He had a glimpse of a terrified

fat face, and of a pair of spectacles that gleamed back the rays of the sun.

"Bunter!" gasped Peter.
Bunter's hat was gone! His hair streamed up in the wind, like quills upon the fretful porcupine. He had lost his stirrups as well as his reins. Only his convulsive grasp on the horse's neck saved him from being tossed off. He was emitting a series of startled squeaks as he careered:

"Ow! Wow! Help! Stop him! Hold him! Yaroooh! Oh crumbs! Oh crikey! Ow! Wow, wow, wow!"

Clatter, clatter, clatter!
Peter Todd dropped his bag. Peter, as Bunter had told Jarvish, had pluck. It needed some pluck to attempt to stop that frantically excited animal in full career. Fortunately Toddy had the pluck!

He drew a quick, deep breath, set his teeth, watched and waited. And as the horse came thundering by he jumped and grasped.

His grasp fastened on the dangling reins, which was lucky for Peter. Had he missed his grasp, the result would have been exceedingly unpleasant. But Peter did not miss.

He grasped and held, and the next second he was torn from his feet and dragged on in the maddened rush of the horse.

It seemed to Peter Todd that his arms were being jerked out of their sockets, but he clenched his teeth and held.

It was only a matter of moments. The horse's head was dragged down, the wild gallop slackened. A policeman rushed up—several more men rushed up—many hands grasped at the runaway. He was brought to a stop.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Help! Yaroooh! Help!"

"Got him?" gasped Peter.
"Safe now, sir!" said the constable.

Peter let go. He rubbed his arms to make sure that they were still attached to him. They felt as if they weren't. There was an ache in them that could almost have been cut with a knife.

The horse stood trembling, safely held. Bunter, apparently unaware that his wild Mazeppa-ride was over, was still clinging to the unfortunate animal's neck, and yelling.

The policeman unhooked him and set him on his feet on the ground. He was grinning.

"All right now, sir!" he said, reassuringly.

"Ow! Wow! Wow!" answered Bunter. "Ow! Oh lor'! Wow!"

"This young gentleman stopped your horse, sir! Saved you from a nasty accident."

"Lucky I came along, old fat bean, what?" said Peter.

Bunter blinked at him.
"Oh! You!" he said. "Ow! I'm out of breath! I—I say, is that horse safe? Hold him! I say—"

"Getting on him again?" asked Peter.

(Continued on next page.)

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Bunter shuddered.

"No fear! Somebody take him away! Oh dear! Take that beast away! I told Jarvis to get me a good horse! That's the beast he got! I'll sack him! Ow!"

"The horse is all right," said Peter. "It's the jolly old rider—"

"Oh, really, Todd—"

"What the thump did you get on a horse for, when you can't ride?" demanded Peter. "It was asking for it."

"You cheeky ass—"

"A clothes-horse is more in your line."

"Look here—"

"Name and address, please," said the constable, taking out a notebook.

The excitement was over.

The constable took Bunter's name and address. The groom arrived and took the horse. The crowd dispersed, and Peter Todd picked up the bag he had dropped on the pavement. A little boy ran up with Bunter's hat and nearly fell down when Bunter tossed him a pound note!

Bunter waved a fat hand to a passing taxi.

"Get in, Toddy!" he said. "You weren't walking to my hotel, surely?"

"Sort of!" said Peter.

"And carrying your own bag!"

"Whose bag should I carry?"

"Dash it all, Toddy, you might remember that there's such a thing as appearances," said Bunter warmly. "I don't want my friends to let me down! You might have taken a taxi to the hotel, at least!"

"Who'd have stopped your runaway gee-gee, if I had?"

Bunter did not answer that question. He rolled into the taxi, and Peter followed with his bag.

"Hotel Splendide!" said Bunter.

The taxi buzzed off.

"Rotten, isn't it?" said Bunter.

"Your riding?"

"No!" roared Bunter. "This taxi! I'm not used to riding in taxicabs, I can tell you."

"Same here!" agreed Peter. "Too jolly expensive."

"I mean, I'm used to a decent car! I can rough it, I hope, but this is rather the limit! Blessed if I know how the poor stand such hardships!"

"There's worse hardships than riding in taxicabs, old fat bean! Lots! You should have seen the carriage I came down in! Packed."

"Third?" sneered Bunter. "Look here, Toddy, don't talk about it at my hotel. What the dooce did you travel third for, anyhow?"

"Because there wasn't any fourth!" explained Peter.

Sniff, from Bunter!

"Are those your best clothes, Peter?" he asked, after a pause. "I say, you might have dressed a bit better. You look frightfully dusty."

"I picked up some dust stopping your fiery charger, old bean! I dare say I can get a brush down at your hotel. Now you're a millionaire, you'll have a brush to lend a fellow! You won't want to borrow mine, as you do at Greyfriars."

"Jarvis will attend to your clothes. Don't let anybody at the Hotel Splendide see you brushing them yourself."

"Never!" said Peter. "I hope I'm not likely to let anybody suspect that I ever brushed my own clothes! I'd rather be suspected of a murder."

"Not that brushing will do them a lot of good! The fact is, you're rather shabby, Peter."

"Shabby clothes are better than shabby manners! I have the advantage of you there, old podgy pippin."

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"I don't want any check, Peter Todd!"

"Well, I don't want any, Billy Bunter, but I'm getting it. One good turn deserves another."

The taxi stopped.

"Here's my hotel!" said Bunter. "I wish you looked a bit more decent, Peter. I hardly like the commissionaire to see you! I suppose it can't be helped! This way! Where are you going, fathead?"

"I'm going to the station."

"You silly ass; what are you going to the station for?"

"Train home!"

Bunter blinked at him. He did not want to part with Peter. It was amazing that Peter wanted to part with him. Apparently Peter did!

He grabbed Peter Todd's arm.

"Don't be an ass, old chap! I say, they have ripping grub here! Come on!"

Bunter fairly dragged Peter into the hotel!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The "Goods" on the Gangster!

"I'LL say," remarked Mr. Bronx, "that this is the opossum's eyelids!"

He dropped into a canvas chair beside Mr. Jarvis.

Jarvis shivered slightly.

There were hundreds, if not thousands, of people on the Margate sands. Deck-chairs with trippers in them were innumerable. Jarvis had walked along the beach for some distance from the towering facade of the Hotel Splendide. He seemed unaware of a long-limbed, lean figure that followed. He sat down in a deck-chair at a little distance from all others, but one. Really it might have looked as if Mr. Jarvis desired somebody to come and sit beside him. If he did, he did not find it wholly pleasant when Tiger Bronx sat down. A shiver ran through him, and his smooth, sleek, sly face twitched uneasily.

Mr. Bronx stretched out his long legs and dropped his right hand into the pocket of his loose jacket. Something bulged in that pocket, and Jarvis knew what it was. The muzzle of the gangster's revolver was only a foot from him, and Bronx was holding the weapon with his hand in the pocket. And Jarvis, who knew something of the Tiger's reputation in the happy city of Chicago, was aware that Bronx had fired from the pocket on more than one occasion when he had to use his "gun."

It was hardly possible that the most desperate and reckless gangster from the wild and woolly West, would venture to do so on a crowded beach. There was the "get-away" to be considered, and Bronx could hardly have hoped to get away in such a case. Nevertheless, Jarvis wriggled with nervous dread.

"Looking for a chance like this!" drawled Mr. Bronx. "I been keeping tabs on you, Jarvis."

"I know!" said Mr. Jarvis in his low, oily voice.

"I guessed you was wise to it! You ain't took any leetle paseos into lonely places. Did you pipe me on your trail right now?"

"I did!"

Mr. Bronx nodded. He was puzzled. He had been very keen on getting a talk with Jarvis. It seemed that Jarvis also wanted a talk! Which was a strange departure from Mr. Jarvis's previous manners and customs.

"Spill it!" said Bronx after a pause.

"You got something up your sleeve! Uncork it."

"Exactly! You need not keep your hand on your gun, Bronx. I know that you dare not use it here, though I admit that it gives me the shivers."

The gangster chewed the end of an unlighted cigar and stared at him. He was quite perplexed.

"My nervous system," went on Jarvis calmly, "is not strong! I have a mortal terror of deadly weapons. You are aware of that, however."

"Just a few!" grinned the Tiger. "Brushing coats and hats is your long suit. Guns ain't in your line."

"Precisely."

"You figure," said the gangster, "that I don't dare let this here gun go pop, with all these guys rubbering around? But I'll say, Jarvis, that if I tell you to get up and walk, this leetle gat in this pocket will persuade you to walk wherever I tell you, and you won't raise no objections, not so's a guy would notice it!"

"Perfectly so!" assented Jarvis.

"Waal, then," grunted Bronx, more and more perplexed, "looks to me as if I got you where I want you! Say!"

"As you have observed, I have something up my sleeve!" answered Jarvis smoothly. "You have followed me from the United States, Bronx. You have hunted and chased me, and threatened my life. In this country you will be hanged if you shoot me. Unfortunately, you are the kind of reckless desperado to take the risk. The fact that you would be hanged afterwards would not in the circumstances, be any consolation to me."

"More to come?" asked Bronx.

"Quite! You have driven me to take measures for my own protection."

"I'll say that the British police don't scare me a whole heap!" said the gangster derisively.

"I have not applied for police protection. That would not meet the circumstances."

"I'll say nope!" agreed the Tiger. "Your best guess, Jarvis, is to hand over the fortune you've cinched. I'm arter it, like a dog arter a bone, or a politician arter a bribe! I ain't letting up till I handle the heap of dollars that Old Man Shook made by packing canned horse!"

His slits of eyes glittered.

"If you was to sit in the middle of Scotland Yard, with all the police boobs a-sitting round you like a Quaker meeting, I guess a pill from this leetle gun in my pocket would get you!" he said.

"I am only too well aware of it!" said Jarvis. "And as I enjoy the Shook billions only for my lifetime, I am aware that you are desperate enough to take that risk or any other. But I have sought this interview with you to point out that if you shoot me, or kidnap me, or take any other lawless measures, you will gain—just nothing! It is no longer in my power to hand you the billions."

"You ain't dropped the biggest fortune in the United States out of a hole in your pocket, walking around?" jeered Bronx.

"At the present time," said Jarvis calmly, "I am a poor man."

"Can it?"

"I am in receipt of a fair salary as valet and personal attendant of a young gentleman. That is scarcely worth your while, Bronx."

The gangster stared at him.

"Where's the big boodle, then?" he demanded.

"The Shook fortune," said Jarvis, "has been legally assigned to another



"Go it, you men!" said Bunter hospitably. "Don't spare the grub. Where that came from, there's plenty more! What? He, he, he!" A shabby man approached the tea-shop, paused by a tub of palms to glance round him, and then came towards the juniors' table. The next moment, Billy Bunter's note case had changed ownership!

person for his lifetime. Every possible legal measure has been taken, and I could not control it now if I desired. What I have done cannot be undone."

"You giving me guff?"

"You are welcome to call on Mr. Biter, a solicitor of this town, and ascertain the facts. I have instructed him to give you any information you wish."

"Put it square!"

"I will do so. On the condition that he retains my services as valet, at a fixed salary, my fortune is assigned for life to a young gentleman, whom you have seen. In case of his demise, it returns to me. As he is twenty years younger than I, that is not a probable happening."

"Guess again!" snarled Bronx.

"Every legal precaution has been taken," said Jarvis. "I shall be happy to give you every opportunity of ascertaining the facts. Master Bunter is now in full enjoyment of my wealth. I could not touch it if I wished."

"That fat guy?"

"Precisely."

"You're stringing me along!" snarled the Tiger. "You'd never let the boodle go out of your hands, after double-crossing me to get it under the old man's will, and me his only relation."

"If you choose to ascertain the facts—"

"I guess I'll get wise to it. But—"

"If you shoot me," said Jarvis calmly, "you simply enable Master Bunter to leave the money by will, in the ordinary way. I hardly imagine that he will make a will in your favour. Only in the event of his demise will it return to me; that is provided for. But the boy is, of course, likely to outlive me by twenty years."

Bronx gritted his teeth.

"If you kidnap me," resumed Jarvis, "you may hold me to ransom

for the amount of salary I draw as Master Bunter's valet. I scarcely think it would be worth your while."

There was a long pause.

"You was always a sly, sneaking, double-crossing lobo-wolf, Jarvis!" said the gangster at last. "If it's as you say, you've put it across all right. You got the goods on me."

"I think so!" assented Jarvis.

He rose from the deck-chair.

"I have quite enjoyed this little conversation," he remarked. "It has, I think, cleared the air. On any other occasion, however, when you desire a little talk, I am entirely at your service, when the exigencies of my service allow me leisure. At the moment I have no choice out to return to the hotel, as my young master will require my assistance in dressing for dinner."

He walked back along the beach.

Bronx made no movement to detain him.

That amazing communication had quite taken the wind out of his sails. As he expressed it, Jarvis had "got the goods" on him.

"Carry me home to die!" ejaculated Mr. Bronx at last, addressing space. "The pesky, double-crossing gink! I'll say this is surely the opossum's eyelids!"

Jarvis's smooth face wore a smile as he walked back to the Hotel Splendide. He had bought his safety by parting with his immense fortune. But probably it was in Mr. Jarvis's mind that the parting was only temporary. Mr. Jarvis was a much deeper man than his young master, William George Bunter, was likely to dream. And had Billy Bunter guessed, or even dreamed, the cunning rascal's real motive for assigning him that enormous fortune, Billy Bunter would have chosen rather his old impecunious state. But Bunter

was not likely to guess the thoughts that worked behind the smooth, sleek face of his deferential man.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Hospitable Host!

BILLY BUNTER, just then, was thinking of other matters.

Bunter was thinking of his guest, Peter Todd; though not wholly from the point of view of a hospitable host.

Bunter was rather worried about Peter. He was in his dressing-room, quite a large apartment that opened off his still larger and more magnificent bed-room. Peter was sitting astride of a chair, with his face to the back of the same, his arms leaning on the chair back, regarding Bunter with a curious eye. To Bunter's annoyance and surprise, he showed no sign of being overwhelmed or discountenanced by his regal surroundings. He was, in fact, thinking that the fat and fatuous Owl did not fit in very well with the surroundings! But Peter did not say so—being a little more polished in manners than his host.

Peter had wondered, when he accepted Bunter's invitation to spend a few days with him in Margate, whether he had made a mistake in so doing. It had not taken him long to realise that it was a mistake!

In the study, at Greyfriars, Bunter could be kicked whenever he asked for it. Kicking him, in the Hotel Splendide, at Margate, was hardly feasible. Without being occasionally kicked, Bunter was intolerable. If Peter had doubted that, Bunter was making it quite clear unto him.

"We dress for dinner here, Toddy!" said Bunter; with an extremely disparaging blink at Peter's clothes.

"I suppose so," assented Peter. "You'd hardly go down to dinner as you go down to bathe."

"I mean, we put on evening dress!" snapped Bunter. "Do try to understand that you're among decent people now, Peter. There's a lot of really decent people at this hotel—Colonel Popshot, and Sir Stoney de Broke, and quite a lot of nobs. Of course, there's a bounder or two—"

"More than one?"

"Oh, yes!" said Bunter, blind to Peter's sarcasm. "You know what rank outsiders are—when they've got hold of money, they barge in among their betters. What are you grinning at, you ass?"

"Was I grinning?"

"Well, look here, we're wasting time. The dressing-bell's gone," said Bunter irritably. "The dinner gong will be next. My man will be coming to dress me any minute. If you've not brought any evening clothes, I can lend you some. I've lots." He blinked at Peter. "You can get into them."

"Well, I think there would be room sideways, at least."

"You're so jolly lanky," said Bunter disparagingly. "I dare say Jarvis could find you some trousers. I make my man dress well."

"Go it!" said Peter.

"I'll let Jarvis lend you a hand when he's finished with me. You've simply got to look decent. I've got lots of things here, and you can wear anything you like."

"Anything I like?" asked Peter thoughtfully.

"Oh, yes! And I say, Peter, mind how you talk at table. We have four to my table—you and me, and two really nobby people I'm friends with. One's an Army man, Captain Catcham; the other an old Public school man, named Sponge. I've played billiards with them rather a lot, with tenners on the game."

"You must have won a lot of money."

"Well, the fact is, I've rather lost," said Bunter, still blind to sarcasm. "But I can afford it, I suppose. I wish you weren't so beastly poor, Peter. It

makes it awkward for a fellow to take you up."

Bunter shook his head dubiously.

He wanted Greyfriars fellows there, chiefly to swank before their impressed and admiring eyes, though partly because he was in haunting, uneasy fear of the long lean man from Chicago. But he could not help feeling that Toddy was not a happy choice.

Toddy was not exactly poor, but he was certainly not rich. And he had a sarcastic way of speaking that was not really respectful to a billionaire.

But it was a case of Hobson's choice. Bunter had urged Lord Mauleverer to come, but his lordship had, for some reason unknown to Bunter, been unable to do so. He had telephoned to Wharton Lodge, and Harry Wharton had replied in the disrespectful negative. He had phoned Vernon-Smith, but Smithy had answered that he did not want to be there to pick up the pieces when Bunter burst all over Margate. So he had wired to Peter, and Peter had come. But Bunter could not feel quite pleased with him.

It did not occur to him that Peter was not feeling absolutely pleased and bucked, either.

"Well, we've got to make the best of it," went on Bunter. "But, as I've said, mind how you talk at table, Peter. Don't say anything about your people living in Bloomsbury, for instance."

"Not?" asked Peter.

"No. And don't mention that your father's a solicitor."

"No."

"Don't mention your people at all. They're rather no-class, you know. Don't let me down, Peter, when I'm being kind to you. Keep your eyes on me, and do just as I do."

"Gurrrrrgh!" gurgled Peter.

Bunter stared at him.

"What are you making that row for?" he demanded.

"Practising," explained Peter.

"Practising what, you fathead?"

"Doing as you do when you're eating soup. I suppose we shall have soup at dinner? If you want me to do as you do with the soup, I shall have to

practise a bit first. Gurrrgh! Ooogh! Groooogghh!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter.

"Grrruurrrgh!" Peter went on with his practice. "Wurrrgh!"

"Shut up!" shrieked Bunter.

"Oh, all right! Only want to get it right. I don't want to let you down at dinner. If I'm to do as you do—"

"If you're going to be a funny idiot, I—"

"Not at all; one's enough."

"And don't talk about what happened this afternoon with the horse," went on Bunter. "No making out that you saved me from an accident, or any silly swank of that sort. I was having a ripping ride when you barged in, fancying that the horse was running away with me—"

"Eh!"

"You jolly well thought the horse was running away. You know you did."

"I did," agreed Peter. "Looked sort of like it."

"It would have been all right if you hadn't butted in. But never mind that; only don't jaw about it. Better not talk at all, perhaps, except to back up anything I say—see?"

"I see."

"It's time Jarvis was here. Where's that ass Jarvis? I'll sack him if he keeps me waiting when I'm ready to dress—"

"Here, sir!" said a smooth voice. Jarvis appeared from nowhere.

Billy Bunter was too busy for the next twenty minutes or so to waste time on Peter Todd. Jarvis helped him into his evening clothes; and, in point of fact, Bunter needed a little help. His circumference, always extensive, seemed to have spread a little more since he had been living on the fat of the land. Like the Duke of Artois, in the eighteenth century, who required four serving-men to wedge him into his wonderfully fitting bags, Billy Bunter needed some wedging.

Jarvis wedged him in.

When Jarvis's somewhat difficult task was over, Billy Bunter surveyed the result in a pier-glass, with a smirk of happy satisfaction.

Never, Bunter thought, had he seen so really elegant, well-dressed, and distinguished a fellow as the one that looked back at him from the glass.

"After all," said Peter thoughtfully, "you can easily afford to pay for that glass now you're rolling in oof."

Bunter blinked round at him.

"Pay for the glass?" he repeated.

"I mean, if you crack it."

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter.

"You shouldn't give way to these mean feelings of jealousy, Peter, of a chap better-looking than yourself. Is it my fault that I'm a good-looking chap?"

"Oh, no!" gasped Peter. "You've got lots of faults, but I shouldn't say that that was one of them."

"There goes the gong, and you're not dressed! You'll be late for dinner, Peter!" snapped Bunter.

"Well, if I miss the soup, I've wasted that practice—"

"Jarvis, stay here and help Mr. Todd to dress."

"Yes, sir."

"Remember all I've told you, Peter."

"Every word, old fat bean."

Bunter rolled out of the room. In many matters Bunter was unpunctual, but he was seldom, or never, late for a meal.

Jarvis coughed.

"If I can be of any assistance, sir, I—"

"Thanks—no!" said Peter, shaking his head. "Brought up in humble home, I learned in early youth to put



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THE GEM

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my own socks on. Accustomed to roughing it. I can buckle my own braces. At a pinch I can tie my own necktie. In extreme cases I have been known, Jarvish, to get into a jacket without a helping hand. Run away and play, Jarvish, and I'll dress myself."

Something like a grin was visible on Jarvish's smooth face as he went. Then Peter Todd, unassisted, proceeded to dress for dinner.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Dressed for Dinner!

BUNTER had finished his soup. He was beginning on fish. The immense dining-room of the Hotel Splendide was crowded. There were many tables, with twos and threes and fours sitting at them. Soft strains of music came from somewhere. Soft-footed waiters glided noiselessly, doing wonderful conjuring tricks with plates and trays. Bunter's special waiter watched him as if Bunter was the apple of his eye. The head waiter hovered near Bunter's table with a benevolent eye on him. For Bunter himself, perhaps, their admiration was not great.

But for Bunter's financial resources they had a deep respect. They were making small fortunes out of that distinguished guest. He was worth any dozen of the others from a pecuniary point of view. Indeed he was almost worth the lot.

Bunter was not talking. He was always too busy at dinner to talk till the sixth or seventh course.

The two nobby gentlemen with whom he had struck up a friendly acquaintance sat at the same table. Both of them had been delighted to make Bunter's acquaintance, and still more delighted to learn that he fancied he could play billiards. There had been at first a slight sense of rivalry between Captain Catcham and Mr. Sponge. But they had made a "gentleman's agreement" about it. They took Bunter in turns. They had learned that he had enough banknotes for both, so harmony had been established.

Bunter was rather anxious about the impression Peter Todd would make on these two nobby acquaintances. He would much rather have produced Lord Mauleverer.

However, as he had given Peter the run of his extensive wardrobe, he hoped for the best. But, finding the fish good, Bunter forgot Peter. He was so deeply absorbed in fish that he did not notice Captain Catcham and Mr. Sponge give a sudden, simultaneous start. He did not heed a startled gasp from the head waiter, and another startled gasp from his own waiter. He was not aware that the hum of conversation in the room had died out.

"Good gad!" murmured Captain Catcham.

"What the dooco!" said Mr. Sponge. Then Bunter glanced up.

He blinked round. His eyes and his spectacles fixed on Peter Todd.

Peter was coming at last. He had missed the soup and nearly missed the fish, but here he was. Here he was—But Bunter for a moment could hardly believe his eyes or his spectacles.

Distrustful of Peter's clothes, he had generously offered him a free selection from an extensive wardrobe. But certainly he had never foreseen what Peter was going to select.

Peter wore a pair of Bunter's trousers. Sideways there was room for two or three Peters in them, but lengthwise

they hardly reached down to Peter's lanky calf.

From the trouser-ends to the shoes, however, ran pink silk socks of a very bright and very effective pink.

Even that was not the worst. Bunter had advised Peter to borrow bags from Jarvish. Instead of which, Peter had borrowed a tail-coat.

It was about twice too large for Peter, and the tips of the tails flapped gracefully against the pink socks.

If Peter had dressed himself up specially to cause a sensation at the Hotel Splendide he could not have succeeded better.

But he seemed unaware that he was the cynosure of all eyes as he came along the vast dining-room.

His face was perfectly grave and composed.

OTHERS ARE WINNING USEFUL PRIZES—WHY NOT YOU?

The following laughable story sent in by A. H. Greenwood, of 16, Colindale Avenue, Victoria Ave., East Blackley, Manchester, wins one of this week's **USEFUL POCKET KNIVES**:



Policeman: "Now, then, what are you doing up there, stealing apples?"

Small Boy (up in tree): "N-no! I found them on the ground and was just putting them back!"

Get busy with pen and paper now, chums, and post your efforts to "Limericks and Jokes" Editor, c/o MAGNET, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

Bunter's eyes almost popped through his spectacles. He was so amazed and dismayed that he sat transfixed, with his fish fork in his hand, a fragment of fish on the end.

Peter arrived at the table.

He sat down.

Two or three waiters were converging towards Peter. They had been going to escort him out gently but firmly, but they stopped as he sat down at Bunter's table.

"Not too late, Bunter, old fat bean!" said Peter cheerily.

"Oh crikey!"

"Anything the matter, old fat man?"

"You—you—you—" gasped Bunter.

"Fish," said Peter, looking at the breathless waiter. "Buck up, or I shall be getting left!"

"Peter—" stuttered Bunter blankly. Captain Catcham put up an eyeglass and surveyed Peter across the table. Mr. Sponge just gazed at him.

Bunter's fat face was crimson. He gave Peter a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"Wharrer you done this for?" he breathed.

"Eh? What have I done?" asked Peter in surprise.

"You—you silly idiot!" hissed Bunter. "Do you think you're larking in the Remove passage? Get out!"

A dazed waiter served Peter with fish. He began to eat. The excellent air of Margate had given Peter a good appetite. It was an excellent dinner, and Peter was prepared to do justice to it.

"Friend of yours?" gasped Captain Catcham, finding his voice.

"Eh? Oh, yes! No!" gasped Bunter.

"Old friend," said Peter—"quite an old pal. Poor but honest. Bunter's lent me these clothes."

"Eh?"

"He wouldn't take 'no' for an answer," explained Peter. "It's his kind heart. Is anything the matter, Bunter?"

"Oh, you beast!" gasped Bunter.

"But I forgot," said Peter. "I mustn't talk. If I do I might let out that my father's a solicitor, and that I live in Bloomsbury."

"Oh gad!" said the captain.

"Things like that," said Peter with owl-like gravity, "have to be kept dark. Bunter's very particular about that. Aren't you, Bunter?"

"Oh dear!"

"You're not eating, Bunter, old bean! Don't you like your dinner? Seems to me jolly good!"

"Oh crikey!"

For the first time since he had been a billionaire and was able to live on the fat of the land, Billy Bunter was not enjoying his dinner.

He hardly ate at all.

He had been doubtful about the show Peter would put up, but he had not dreamed of anything like this. He had counted without Peter's peculiar sense of humour. He was quite unaware that he had asked for it—indeed, begged for it!

Dinner, generally a time of sheer enjoyment to Bunter, was nothing but a long-drawn horror. For the first time in his fat career he wished that a meal was over.

Peter, on the other hand, quite enjoyed his dinner. Perhaps he enjoyed Bunter's face still more.

Bunter did not stay for the finish.

Half-way through the innumerable courses he rose from his chair, his fat face the colour of a freshly boiled beet-root, and not daring to meet the waiter's eye.

"Not going?" asked Peter cheerily.

"Beast!" breathed Bunter.

"My dear chap, if you're going, I'll come."

Peter rose to his feet. Bunter headed for the door. Peter made a stride with his long legs and joined him. He slipped his arm through Bunter's.

"Leggo!" breathed Bunter.

Peter linked arms very firmly. He had to stoop a little to walk arm-in-arm with Bunter, but he did not mind. He walked slowly down the vast apartment. Bunter wanted to hurry; Peter didn't. And with a vice-like grip on his fat arm, Bunter had to accommodate his pace to Peter's. Peter seemed unconscious of the fact that every eye was fixed on them; Bunter was only too acutely conscious of it. Slowly they progressed, Peter's coat-tails swishing against his pink socks. It seemed to the unhappy

Bunter that he would never get out of the sight of those innumerable gazing eyes.

But they got out at last.

"Coming for a stroll?" asked Peter.

"Wha-a-at?" gasped Bunter.

"Stroll after dinner is good for the digestion. And I'd rather like to show off these clothes you've lent me. I'm not always well dressed like this."

Bunter tore his arm away and fled up the stairs. Peter followed, with a cheery grin on his face, and went to his room to change.

The Greyfriars billionaire did not stop till he was in his own magnificent suite; there he dropped into a chair, gasping.

He rang for Jarvis at last. There was a hint of a smile on the sleek face when Jarvis appeared.

"You rang, sir?"

"Yes!" gasped Bunter. "Go and find that beast—"

"If you would be a little more precise, sir—"

"That beast Todd!" hooted Bunter.

"Mr. Todd? Yes, sir."

"And kick him out of the hotel!" hissed Bunter.

"Yes, sir."

"Kick him hard!"

"Very good, sir."

"As hard as you can!" gasped Bunter.

"Certainly, sir."

Jarvis disappeared. He returned in a few minutes. Bunter blinked at him.

"Mr. Todd is already gone, sir—"

"Gone?"

"Yes, sir. He seems to have left immediately. He has taken his bag, sir," said Jarvis.

Peter, bag in hand, was walking to Margate Station. There was a smile on his face as he walked; it lingered on his face as he sat in a third-class carriage, homeward bound. On the whole, he had rather enjoyed his trip to Merry Margate.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Backing Up Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Bunter!"

"The esteemed and idiotic Bunter!"

Five fellows sauntering along a Surrey road came to a halt and gazed at a fat face and a large pair of spectacles that looked at them from a magnificent car. The Famous Five were together again now, and they were discussing their plans for the holidays, when the big car came along and stopped, and a fat, familiar squeak reached their ears.

"Jolly old Bunter!" said Bob Cherry.

"Fat as ever!"

"Fatter!" said Johnny Bull.

"The fatfulness is terrific."

"Enjoying life, old fat billionaire?" asked Bob.

Bunter did not look at the moment as if he were enjoying life. There was a worried expression on his fat face. He blinked back along the road through his big spectacles, and then blinked at the chums of the Remove again. Parkinson sat like a stone image at the wheel, waiting.

"I was coming along to your little place, Wharton," said Bunter. "I've left Margate. Had a splendid time, of course, but—"

He blinked back along the road again. Harry Wharton & Co. looked in that direction. Nothing was to be seen, but a small car coming on in the distance.

"I'm going to take you fellows on a trip!" said Bunter.

"Are you?" said Harry Wharton, as if he doubted it.

"Yes, old chap! I shan't take no for an answer! I've sent Jarvis to London to make the arrangements about the plane."

"The plane!" repeated Bob Cherry.

"Air trip!" explained Bunter. "I'm chartering a plane."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I want you fellows to come! Not because I'm afraid of that lanky American, you know! I hope I can look after myself! Still, I want you fellows to come."

"That lanky American!" repeated Wharton. "He's not after you, Bunter! He's after your man Jarvis."

Bunter cast another worried blink back along the road.

"That's what I thought!" he answered. "But the queer thing is that Jarvis doesn't seem afraid of him now. And—and Jarvis is gone to London—and the beast hasn't followed him! He's followed me!"

"What on earth for?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Blessed if I can make it out!" confessed Bunter. "He seems to have changed his mind for some reason and got after me instead of Jarvis! He's after me now. See that car? Well, he's in it."

"That's the little Austin!" said Bob with a nod. "But what on earth's his game? He can't want you, Bunter."

"How could anybody possibly want you, Bunter?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Beast! I mean, I expect my old pals to stand by me!" said Bunter. "That's why I was coming to Wharton Lodge! I mean, I was coming to offer you the chance of your lives—trip to the Continent in a plane! Expense no object! That beast can follow a car about! He won't be able to follow a plane? What?"

The Famous Five grinned.

"You can grin!" snapped Bunter.

"But I can tell you it's no joke having a desperate villain like that following

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

QUITE an interesting bunch of letters from you this week, chums. The first, which comes from "Regular Reader" (what a lot of you fellows use this nom-de-plume!), of Easton-in-Gordano, Somerset, was evidently written before he read my announcement concerning our new series of Greyfriars yarns. "Congratulations," he says, "to Frank Richards for turning out such glorious holiday reading. Let us have more and more stories featuring Billy Bunter."

Well, as my chum will have seen by this time, we are having more and more of them. I don't think anyone could get tired of Frank Richards' yarns, and the old saying that "you can't have too much of a good thing" is borne out by the many letters which I am receiving telling me how pleased my readers are with the grand yarns of Harry Wharton & Co. Quite a lot of these readers ask me not to forget their favourite characters, so, while Billy Bunter will not be neglected, neither will some of the lesser known lights of Greyfriars.

Just wait until you read:

"Billionairing with Bunter!"

next week's tip-top cover-to-cover story of your old favourites and the many other top-notchers I have in store for you. Much as you have appreciated previous yarns, you'll like these new ones even better—if such a thing is possible!

YOUR EDITOR.

a fellow about. I'd have him run in, only I can't, you know, just for following a fellow! But he's up to something. He means mischief of some sort! He can't be doing it for nothing! He's watching for a chance to get at me!"

The chums of the Remove gazed at the little car coming on. They saw a slouched hat over the wheel. It was Mr. Bronx who was driving. It had mystified them why he was hunting Jarvis. It mystified them still more why he was hunting Bunter.

But evidently he was! For some utterly inexplicable reason he had given up getting after Jarvis and got after Bunter! Obviously, he was not doing it for nothing—though what he was doing it for was a puzzle! It was not surprising that the Greyfriars billionaire was alarmed. That lean, hard-faced man with his glittering slits of eyes and a "gun" in his pocket was quite an unpleasant sort of man to have on one's track.

"I say, you fellows, you'll come!" said Bunter. "Gorgeous trip, you know—Airways' plane, go where we like—"

"Sounds good!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"The goodfulness is terrific."

"And—and if that beast shows up, you can handle him!" said Bunter. "Of course, I could handle him myself, if it came to that! But—"

"The butfulness is preposterous."

"Blessed if I can guess why he should be after you, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "But if he is we'll handle him all right. Step back into the trees, you men! Now you get out, Bunter, and send the car on, as if you'd got out for a stroll. If he stops, we shall know what his game is, and we'll be on hand to give him another lesson. There's a ditch handy here."

Billy Bunter hesitated.

"I—I say, you fellows, you—you won't be far away—" he stammered.

"Right on the spot, old fat bean."

"He's after me, you know—"

"Well, we'll get after him if he is."

Bunter made up his mind to it. He got out of the car.

"Drive on, Parkinson, and wait round the next corner," he said. The fact that Bunter called the chauffeur by his correct name, and not Williamson or Wilkinson, showed how alarmed and agitated the fat Owl was.

Parkinson drove on and disappeared.

Harry Wharton & Co. had backed into cover in the trees and thickets beside the lane. They were not in the least afraid of Mr. Bronx, but they were very curious to know if he really were "after" Bunter, as he appeared to be. If he were, they were ready to put "paid" to him.

Billy Bunter sat down on the grassy bank by the road, leaning back against a big tree. Behind that tree five juniors were in cover.

The Austin came skimming on. Harry Wharton & Co., peering through the hawthorns, wondered whether it would stop.

It did stop!

The long-limbed gangster stepped out. He cast a glance up and down the road. It was clear. The schoolboys were carefully out of sight. "Tiger" Bronx grinned and stepped towards Bunter. The fat junior blinked at him in deep trepidation.

"Say, bo!" said Mr. Bronx. "I guess this is pie! Jest pie!"

"I—I say, if you want Jarvis—" stammered Bunter.



Wearing a pair of Bunter's trousers, pink socks, and a tail-coat twice too large for him, Peter Todd entered the vast dining-hall, the cynosure of all eyes. His face was perfectly grave and composed. Bunter's eyes almost popped through his spectacles. He was so amazed and dismayed, that he sat transfixed, with his fish fork in his hand, a fragment of fish on the end.

"Good gad!" murmured Captain Catcham. "What the dooce!" said Mr. Sponge.

"Nunk!" said Mr. Bronx. "I'll say I'm through with that guy! I guess you're the gink I'm wanting jest at present! Step into that leetle auto."

"Wha-a-t for?" gasped Bunter.

"I'll say I want your company! You're travelling with me a piece!" grinned Mr. Bronx. "By the great horned toad, this is the opossum's eyelids! It sure is! I been looking for a chance, and now you jest drop yourself into the bag like you knew what was wanted! If you ain't the world's prize boob, I'll say there ain't no boobs in Boobsville! You stepping into the auto—or you want me to help?"

Harry Wharton & Co. in the thicket exchanged glances. There was no doubt about it now. Whatever might be the strange and mysterious reason, the Chicago gangster was after Bunter now as he had formerly been after Jarvish. Wharton made his comrades a sign.

Tiger Bronx leaned over Bunter, grasped him by a fat shoulder, and hooked him to his feet.

There was a terrified squeal from the fat junior.

"Owl! I say, you fellows——"

"I guess—— Oh, great gophers!" gasped Mr. Bronx as five active figures leaped suddenly from the hawthorns, grasped him all at once, and rolled him over down the grassy bank. "Owl! Oh! Wow! Let up! I guess—— yaroooooh!"

By the lane ran a ditch. There was a foot of water in it, and under the water more than a foot of mud.

Before Mr. Bronx knew what was happening, he was whirled over the edge of the ditch and hurled headlong in.

Splash!

"Groooogh! Oooooogh!" came in gurgling, gasping accents from the gangster as he wallowed in soft mud.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Bronx sat up in the middle of the ditch.

Water ran down him in streams. Mud clothed him like a garment! His lean features had disappeared under a thick coating of mud. His eyes and nose and ears were full of it. He gasped and gurgled and guggled.

"Urrrgh! Yurrggh! I guess—— oooooooogh!"

He struggled up, squelching mud, and scrambled up the side of the ditch. A hefty shove from Bob Cherry sent him crashing back again, and there was another splash.

"This is the second lesson, old bean!" said Bob. "You had one before, but it doesn't seem to have done you any good."

"Oooooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Again Mr. Bronx strove to scramble out. Again he was sent crashing back. He wallowed in water and mud and slime, gurgling horribly.

"I think that will do!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Come on, Bunter, we'll see you safe back to your bus."

Leaving the gangster wallowing and gurgling, the chums of the Remove walked after Bunter's car, Billy Bunter rolling along with them, his fat face now adorned by a grin. Round the next bend of the road they found Parkinson waiting with the car.

"I say, you fellows, hop in!" said Bunter. "I'll give you a lift home."

"We're walking."

"I'm going to Wharton Lodge any-way."

"Don't!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Good-bye!"

"I say, you fellows, hold on! I'm going to give you the time of your lives in an airplane trip——"

"Bow-wow!"

"I say, you fellows, I mean it! You know how generous I am! Well, I'm going to be absolutely generous with you."

"Go and eat coke!"

"If that's what you call grateful, Wharton——"

"Shut up and hook it!"

"Beast! I—I—I mean——" It was not easy for Bunter, the billionaire, to shed his swank. But he did it. "I—I mean I want you to come! I—I want you to stand by me! I—I don't feel safe! I say, you fellows, be sports, you know—you can't let a Greyfriars man down!"

"Well, if you put it like that——" said Harry relenting.

"I do, old chap! Hop in!"

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged a look. They hopped in. The Rolls rolled on with them, and headed for Wharton Lodge. The die was cast, and Harry Wharton & Co. were booked for the most exciting holiday in their experience, in company with Bunter, the billionaire!

THE END.

(Don't miss next week's treat of a yarn whatever you do, chums. It's entitled: "BILLIONAIRING WITH BUNTER!" There's unlimited thrills for Harry Wharton & Co.—and for you! THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,384.

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Materials exactly the same as used by Film Stars. Contains everything you want. Grease Paint, Nose Putty, Burnt Cork, Cream, Spirit Gum, Lines, Hair, Moustache, etc. WARRANTED PERFECTLY HARMLESS TO THE SKIN. Price 6s., 1/-, 2/6, 5/-, 7/6. Postage 3d. and 6d.

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PEN, PENCIL & RUBBER STAMP

with your own name

5 inches long, fits into pocket. The pen and pencil are in two separate compartments inside the handle. Press the releasing snap at top and the cleverly concealed rubber stamp swings open, inking itself first, and is ready for immediate use on your correspondence, books, music, lines, clothing, stationery, etc. Send us your name in BLOCK LETTERS. Postage 3d. The Most Useful Novelty Ever Invented.

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Just an ordinary-looking piece of toilet soap, but when you try to wash your face becomes all black. Postage 1 1/2d.

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You will never know how much sympathy and consolation it is possible to receive until you fool your friends with this "SORE FINGER JOKE." It is a compact bandage which slips on over the finger in an instant just as readily as a thimble, and may be just as readily taken off. It is coloured with a red colouring matter which has the appearance of blood, and when worn will elicit many sympathising inquiries. Postage 1 1/2d.

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Surprise Kaleidoscope

Your victim cannot understand why everybody laughs when he takes the scoop away from his eye. He looks as though he has taken part in a prize fight, and rubbing makes it worse. Postage 1 1/2d.

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A genuine lump of sugar on which is mounted a perfect imitation of a real fly. Place one of these in the sugar pot and watch for the fun! Deceives everybody. Postage 1 1/2d.

CENTRE SECOND STOP WATCH

Gen's centre second Chronograph Stop Watch, rollable lever movement. Accurate timekeeper, in strong nickel case. Postage 3d. Heavy Chain Albert given FREE with each watch!

