

THE
MAGNET

"The Spy of the Gestapo!" ... Gripping Greyfriars Yarn

The Magnet^{2D}

Billy Bunter's
Own Paper



GUIDING THE SKY-RAIDER!

YOUR "HERALD" IS CENSORED!

Says H. Wharton

IT may surprise many of our readers to hear that their wartime "Herald" is censored; but it's a fact!

Dr. Locke, like most headmasters of big schools, has been warned that school newspapers must contain no information likely to be of use to the enemy.

I can assure you that it makes my editorial task quite a lot harder than it was in the piping days of peace. More than once I have had to reject perfectly good "stories" from established contributors solely on account of censorship. One of them, Peter Todd, had spent all his spare time for a week amassing information about Greyfriars Old Boys who are serving with the Forces. The resultant article was such a mine of information on Service matters that I had to turn it down flat!

The worst of it is, our youthful journalists take a rejection as a fearful insult, and are quite sceptical when I blame the censorship.

Tom Brown, whose description of our match against Rookwood had to be altered to omit all references to troops from a neighbouring camp being present, took it very much to heart.

"So I've got to cut out everything about the troops, eh?" he growled, frowning at the MS. I had handed back to him for correction. "Don't

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you think it's unwise to mention where the game was played, too, in case that helps spies to guess the troops were there?"

"Well, I hardly think——"

"Doesn't it strike you as pretty dangerous to mention the name of the team we were playing?" asked Brown, with crushing sarcasm. "After all, the German spy organisation might link it up with information from Rookwood and make a lot of it."

"M-yes, they might. But I really don't believe——"

"If it comes to that, I should imagine it's giving the game away to mention what we were playing," pursued Brown. "Really clever secret agents might pick up clues galore from knowing we were playing footer!"

"Look here, you ass——"

"But, all serene. Leave it to me!" concluded Brown. "I'll revise it to meet all possible objections."

An hour later I received his amended MS. This is how it read:

Once upon a time, two teams played an enjoyable game at a particular place. Both teams were in good form, but one was slightly better than the other. The other was slightly worse than the one. Some persons applauded at intervals.

The result was as follows (names of teams fictitious):

Whatnames—x doings.
Whatyemaycalls—y thingummies.

PASSED BY THE CENSOR."

That's the sort of thing I have to put up with now the "Greyfriars Herald" is under the censorship!

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

What is the one outstanding thing in each of the following imaginary incidents that proves it to be untrue?

- 1 "Ave you young himps done your blinkin' himpots?" asked Mr. Quelch, with a smile.
2. Having scored the winning goal in the game, Bunter went to the pavilion for a change of clothes and a wash.
3. Coker puffed thoughtfully at his clay pipe and remarked that he couldn't think of a better school captain than Wingate.
4. As Nugent minor started caning the Head, his cheeks were red with excitement against the white of his collar.

SOLUTIONS.

1. Mr. Quelch never smiles in asking for impots.
2. Bunter never washes.
3. Coker could always think of a better man than Wingate—HIM-SELF!
4. It is impossible to believe that Nugent mi's collar would have been white.

Another "DICKY NUGENT" Thriller - - Pictured By C. H. Chapman

"Oh crikey!" exclaims the short-sighted Bunter. "A horseshoe!"

He picks it up in a fat paw and throws it over his shoulder for luck!

Tied to a string by playful Dicky Nugent, it flies back—and Bunter sees stars!



The fat Removite unties the string. "Better luck next time!" he chortles.

Every bullet has its billet—and Mr. Quelch is the billet this time!

Biff! He gets the horseshoe—and Billy Bunter is out of luck again!

AMAZING STORY OF THRILLING SCHOOLBOY ADVENTURE TELLING HOW HARRY WHARTON & CO., OF GREYFRIARS, OUTWIT AN ENEMY SPY!

The SPY of the GESTAPO!

By FRANK RICHARDS



THE ALARM IN THE NIGHT!

HARRY WHARTON opened his eyes, and blinked in deep darkness.

For a moment, he wondered what had awakened him.

It was past midnight, and Eastcliff Lodge—where the Famous Five of the Remove were spending their Easter holiday—was buried in slumber.

The April night had been still and calm, the silence broken only by the wash of the sea under the cliffs.

But it was only for a moment that Wharton wondered. Through the night silence came a short, sharp blast, followed in quick succession by others.

It was not a musical sound. It might have been taken, in peace-time, for the latest thing in Russian music. Loud, sharp, raucous, it split the air, making night hideous.

The captain of the Greyfriars Remove made one bound from his bed. He knew what it was—the alarm-signal of an air raid. It came from a distance along the shore, but it came loud and clear.

“Wake up, you fellows!” shouted Harry.

He ran to the switch and switched on the light.

Four other fellows, already awake, sat up in bed, blinking in the sudden light.

“By gum! That’s the signal!” exclaimed Bob Cherry. He hurled his bedclothes aside and leaped out.

“Jolly old air raid,” remarked

With two juniors on either side of him, holding his arms, and another walking behind him with a boathook, the German tramped savagely along the sands!

Johnny Bull, getting out of bed in a more leisurely manner. Johnny was always calm and methodical, and he was not to be unduly hurried by Herr Hitler.

“Buck up!” exclaimed Frank Nugent. “Anybody seen my gas-mask?”

“Gas-masks,” said Johnny Bull, sententiously, “ought always to be kept quite handy. You’re not likely to want them, but if you do, you want them bad.”

“Ass! Seen it?”

“Ten to one it’s a false alarm,” said Johnny. “We’ve had a few. Unidentified aircraft, old man. But that’s no excuse for losing your gas-mask. The Government took the trouble to hand them out, and a fellow ought to take the trouble to keep them handy.”

“Fathead!” roared Nugent. “You can wag your chin to-morrow; just now I want my gas-mask!”

“If you’d kept it handy—Yaroo!” roared Johnny Bull, as Frank Nugent’s pillow, whizzing through the air, suddenly enveloped his features, and cut short his flow of wisdom. “You silly ass! Ow!”

Bump!
Johnny sat down.

“The larkfulness is not the proper caper, my esteemed Nugent,” said

crastination is the politeness of princes, but a stitch in time saves ninepence, as the English proverb remarks.”

“Where’s my dashed—”

“Here you are, old man!” said Harry. “By gum, the signal’s going strong. If it’s the real goods this time, there’s no time to waste. I’ll cut off and call Bunter! Bet he hasn’t woke up!”

The captain of the Remove had jumped into trousers and jacket and shoes. With the air-raid signal rending the air, there was no time for more.

With his gas-mask in one hand, he opened the door with the other and ran out, leaving his chums hurrying into their clothes.

The big room occupied by the Famous Five of Greyfriars opened on the oak gallery, over the hall of Eastcliff Lodge.

Harry Wharton, as he ran out, saw the lights blaze on in the hall below. Over the balustrade, he spotted the plump figure of Blump, the butler, half-dressed, and for once stirred out of his calm.

Blump switched on the lights, and came ponderously up the staircase to the gallery.

“Is that you, Master Wharton?” he exclaimed. “The signal—”

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"Yes, we've heard it, Blump!" answered Harry. "I'm going to call Bunter. Better knock at Sir William's door."

"I am now going there, sir," said Blump; and he rolled away to the corridor that led to the apartment of Sir William Bird, the lord of Eastcliff Lodge and its many acres.

Harry Wharton cut quickly along the gallery to Bunter's door. Billy Bunter had a room to himself, where his snore was wont to wake the echoes uninterruptedly from bed-time till about nine or ten in the morning. For once that snore was to be interrupted.

The captain of the Remove turned the door-handle and pushed on, to enter the room with the opening door. He was unaware that Bunter's door was locked, and he became aware of that fact quite suddenly as it remained shut and his nose banged on it.

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

He rubbed his nose—but only for a second. There was no time for rubbing noses, with the raid signal sounding.

It might be, as Johnny Bull had said, only a case of unidentified aircraft, and the signal sounded as a precaution; but any time it might be the real goods.

The captain of the Remove thumped on the door, and shouted to the fat junior within.

"Bunter! Wake up, Bunter!"

Snore!

Wharton could hear Bunter. But Bunter, it seemed, could not hear Wharton! Bunter was a good sleeper!

Thump! Thump! Thump!

"Bunter!" roared Harry. "Bunter! Wake up, fathead! Wake up, chump! Wake up, slug! Air raid, blitherer!"

Snore!

"Oh, my hat!"

Thump! Thump! Thump!

"Bunter!" Harry Wharton roared through the keyhole. "Bunter!"

The snore within ceased. Even Billy Bunter had awakened at last. There was a startled howl.

"I say, what's that—"

"Open this door at once, you idiot! Quick!"

"Oh crikey! Shan't! Help!" yelled Bunter. "If that's Brown, I ain't going to open that door! If it's Soames, I ain't going to open it! No fear! Help!"

"You howling ass, it's Wharton—"

"Help!"

"Wharton, you blitherer—"

"Oh!" Bunter, apparently, recognised the voice at last. "Is that you, Wharton? Well, you ain't coming in! If you're after my cake—"

"Air-raid signal!" yelled Wharton.

"You can't pull my leg, Wharton! You ain't getting hold of that cake! That beast, Cherry, got in one night, and put salt and pepper on my cake! If you think you're going to put salt and pepper on my cake—"

"Listen, you fat chump! The signal's going!"

"Oh! Ain't that a foghorn?"

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"No, ass! No, chump! No, fat-head! Get up!"

"Oh crikey!"

There was a sound of scrambling in Bunter's room. It was followed by the sound of a heavy crash.

"Yaroooh!" came a roar. "Ow! I've caught my feet in something! Yow-ow! I've banged my head! Wow!"

"Get dressed, idiot, quick, and come out!"

"Don't you go without me!" yelled Bunter. "You wait for me, you beast! Where's my trousers? Where's my gas-mask? Oh crikey! I say, where's my gas-trousers—I mean, my trouser-mask—I mean— Oh crikey!"

"Unlock the door, chump!"

"Beast!"

Bunter got a light on at last, and unlocked the door. Wharton threw it open and hurried in. A fat figure in pyjamas grabbed frantically at clothes.

"Lend me a hand!" howled Bunter.

"Where's my specs? I want my specs! Can you see my trousers? Help me on with my gas-mask! Find my gas-mask—I ain't going to be gassed and slaughtered and murdered just to please you!"

"Here it is!" exclaimed Harry, grabbing up the gas-mask container from a table.

"Tain't in that!" gasped Bunter. "I keep toffee in that!"

"What!" yelled Wharton.

Billy Bunter, when he took his walks abroad, always had his gas-mask container carefully slung on. Such care and thoughtfulness on Bunter's part was rather unusual. But it was explained by the circumstance that he kept toffee in it.

"Oh, you born idiot!" gasped the captain of the Remove. "You ought to be jolly well booted! Get into your clobber while I find your mask!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a roar along the passage. "You fellows coming?"

"I'm helping this fat frump!" called back Wharton. "You cut along to Sir William's room, Bob—"

"Oh, my hat! Yes, rather!"

"Buck up, Bunter!"

"Beast!" howled Bunter. "Help me on with these trousers! Find my gas-mask! Don't knock that cake off the table, you ass! I want to take that cake with me. Can't you see my shoes? Where are my socks? I think you might find a fellow's socks for him, after all I've done for you! You want me to be bombed and gassed, and blown to bits—that's what you want, you beast! Wow! If you kick me again, you beast, I'll —yaroooooooop!"

Billy Bunter, half dressed, with one sock on, and another in a fat hand, rolled out into the gallery, with the help of Harry Wharton's foot.

AWKWARD FOR WIBLEY!

"**B**LOW!" hissed Wibley of the Remove.

Wibley sat up in bed.

Seldom, or never, had the schoolboy actor of Greyfriars been so intensely exasperated.

The unmusical howl of the air-raid siren penetrated to Sir William Bird's spacious apartment—now occupied by William Wibley. It filled William Wibley, not with alarm, but with an exasperated desire to punch Adolf Hitler's nose.

Wibley had no time to think of getting alarmed. He had more important matters to think of.

"The idiot!" hissed Wibley. "The dummy! The bullet-headed, butter-brained, blithering bandersnatch! The bone-headed Hun! The blithering Boche! Blow!"

There was a tap at the door.

"Sir William!" came Blump's fruity voice through the oak.

Wibley scrambled out of bed.

His door was locked and bolted. Blump could not get in—he could only knock and call. Blump, naturally, was anxious for his master—a venerable old bean in his sixties, who naturally might be supposed to require assistance on such an exciting occasion.

Blump did not know—none of the household staff at Eastcliff Lodge knew—that the occupant of that apartment was no older than any other fellow in the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars School.

Only the Greyfriars fellows knew that Wibley, the schoolboy actor, was playing the part of Sir William Bird in his residence, while the old Secret Service man was absent on a perilous mission in the enemy's country.

That was why Wibley was so fearfully exasperated by the air-raid warning. It was very disconcerting for the schoolboy actor to have to turn out at short notice.

Wibley discarded his disguise when he went to bed. He had to get it on again before he could be seen.

Air raid or no air raid, Wibley had to show up in his outfit as Sir William Bird, or else give away the whole game—which was not to be thought of. Even if exploding bombs followed the siren, it made no difference—Wibley had his part to play.

Wibley switched on the light and jumped into his clothes—or, rather, into Sir William Bird's clothes. Wibley was about the same size as the dapper little baronet he was impersonating at Eastcliff Lodge. He needed only a little skilful padding here and there to fill him out.

Knock, knock! came at the door.

"Sir William! Please do not stay to dress, Sir William!" came Blump's anxious voice. "I can hear the planes, Sir William—perhaps enemy planes—there is no time to waste, Sir William! Please put on a dressing-gown, sir, and open the door!"

Wibley would gladly have done so had he been staying at Eastcliff Lodge in his own proper person. But as he was there as Sir William Bird, he couldn't.

"It is quite all right, Blump!" called back the schoolboy actor, in the deep and rather throaty voice he adopted in his part of Sir William. "Please go and see if the chaps—I mean if the young gentleman are awake."

"They are all up, sir! If you will unlock the door—"

Wibley was racing into clothes. That did not take him very long. But he had other work to do before that door could be unlocked.

"See that the servants are safe, Blump!" he called out.

"The servants are already on the way to the cellars, Sir William. Everything is in order—there is no panic, sir! But you—"

Blump turned the doorhandle. But the door was locked, and there was also a bolt on the inside—Wibley had had that bolt placed there especially, since the mysterious Mr. Brown had paid him a midnight visit and caught him without his disguise.

Blump had no chance of getting in. Knock, knock!

"Sir William!" bleated Blump.

"Oh, can it!" yapped Wibley.

He was unlocking the suitcase in which his venerable outfit was parked at night.

"Wha-a-t!" stuttered the butler.

"I—I mean, it's all right, Blump! Go and see that the servants are safe in the shelter! And the Greyfriars men. Go at once!"

"But you, Sir William—"

"I will be down immediately! Buzz off—I mean, go at once!"

"I do not like to leave you unaided, Sir William!"

"Fathead!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"I mean, that is all right, Blump! Thank you, my good fellow, but I do not require any assistance. Go at once!"

"Oh! Very good, Sir William!"

Blump's ponderous tread died away down the corridor to the gallery.

Wibley was glad to hear him go.

From the suitcase he sorted out the silvery mop, the beard, the moustache, and the eyebrows that he wore as Sir William Bird. Hurriedly he set to work on the pink complexion he wore in imitation of the ruddy-cheeked old gentleman whose place he was taking.

Knock! came at the door again.

"Go away, you silly owl!" howled Wibley, supposing that it was Blump again.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, old bean!" came a cheery roar.

"Oh! Is that you, Bob, you ass?"

"Little me!" answered Bob Cherry.

"I say, Wib, the guns are going—looks like the genuine thing this time! This is where we trek for the jolly old cellars, old man!"

"Shut up, idiot! If Blump hears you gabble that name, fathead, what is he going to think, chump? Haven't you the sense of a bunny rabbit, maniac?"

"Blump's gone down! Let me in, old bean!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

Wibley finished his complexion. He worked with a swift but perfectly steady hand. Gunfire did not worry him—he hardly heard it, in fact. His attention was concentrated on the business in hand.

"Wib, old man—" came Bob's voice through the keyhole.

"Dry up, dummy!"

"But look here," urged Bob. "you'd

better not stop for the whole bag of tricks! The guns are going like billy-o!"

"Let them! Shut up!"

"Shove your gas-mask on, and make that do!" advised Bob.

"Idiot!"

"I can hear the planes—"

"Blow the planes!"

"My dear chap, if they drop a bomb—"

"It will shut you up, at any rate!" howled Wibley. "That will be something."

Bob Cherry chuckled. William Wibley did not seem in the best of tempers.

"But, old man—" urged Bob.

"You burbling blitherer!" roared Wibley. "Isn't it worry enough to have to get through this job in a hurry, because of a potty Hun in Berlin, without having a howling lunatic howling through the keyhole? Shut up!"

"Oh, all right—I'll wait!"

"No need to wait—cut off!" snorted Wibley. "Go and roll Bunter down to the cellars! I expect he's in a blue funk."

"The other fellows are rolling him down!" said Bob. "I'll wait!"

"Well, shut up, anyhow!"

Wibley finished his pink complexion. He began to adjust the silvery mop over his close-cropped, tallow-coloured hair.

Guns were roaring at a distance. The incessant boom seemed to shake the air. Window-frames were rattling with the concussion.

Amid the roar of guns came the droning of engines from the sky. The sound was almost deafening; but William Wibley gave it no heed whatever. Wibley was going to adjust his disguise with his usual meticulous care—unless, of course, he was interrupted by a bomb! But he was not bothering about bombs. He made that silvery mop on his head look as if it grew there. Then he proceeded to affix his silvery eyebrows.

There was a pattering of feet in the corridor. The other members of the Co. had arrived.

"Wibley gone down?" came Nugent's voice.

"Not yet!" answered Bob Cherry.

Bang—at the door!

"Buck up!" called out Harry Wharton.

"Rats!" yelled Wibley. "Shut up!"

"Can't you hear the guns?" shouted Johnny Bull.

"I can hear a burbling ass! Shut up!"

"Look here, you fathead, come out!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Chump!"

"Everybody's gone down, Wib—" said Harry, through the keyhole.

"Go after everybody then, and give a fellow a rest!"

Wibley, standing before the pier-glass, affixed the moustache. Then he got going on the beard.

The Famous Five waited outside the door.

Blump and the rest of the staff were already down in the cellars. Billy Bunter was with them. But

Harry Wharton & Co. were not going without Wibley—and Wibley was not going without his outfit. So they had to wait! With the roar of anti-aircraft guns filling the air with deafening sound, they waited rather impatiently. As they waited, listening to the boom of guns and the drone of rushing planes, a nearer and sharper sound came suddenly to their ears—a loud, hurried knocking at the door of the house.

THE LIGHT ON THE TOWER!

"TREACHERY!"

The man standing on the beach below the cliffs, looking up at the dim, clouded sky, muttered the word.

He was a man of slim but athletic figure, with a smooth, sleek face. Standing on the shelving sand, between the surging sea and the looming line of chalk cliffs, he fixed his eyes on the sky, where stars glimmered among the drifting clouds, and where shrapnel was bursting. Had Harry Wharton & Co. seen him they would have recognised James Soames.

Soames had emerged from the chalk cave under the cliffs, into the April night. Now he stood on the open sands, looking up.

The roar of the guns, the shifting searchlights, the knowledge that at any moment bombs might come hurtling from the clouds, did not shake the nerve of the man who had been mutineer and pirate in the South Seas. He stood quiet and calm, looking up—considering whether to go on his way or to return into the cave for shelter and wait till the alarm was over.

His eyes, gazing skyward, fixed on a bright light that shone up in the darkness, on the land.

Over the top of the high cliffs, Eastcliff Lodge was out of sight from the beach. But Soames knew that that light shone from Eastcliff Lodge. He was well acquainted with Sir William Bird's residence, where under the name of Jermyn he had been Sir William's valet until the Greyfriars fellows had spotted him, and he had had to go. From the distance and direction of the light, he knew that it was shining directly up from Eastcliff Lodge.

For a moment or two, he was perplexed.

Eastcliff Lodge, like all other buildings, especially on the south-east coast, was carefully blacked out—after the appointed time, never a gleam of light showed from one of its many windows. Sir William was away now, and the schoolboy actor of Greyfriars had taken his place, to outwit the spies who were watching for him; but the black-out rules were strictly observed by Blump in his absence, as Soames knew well—it was not long since he had been a resident in the mansion.

But it was only for a moment or two that Soames was perplexed. From the position of the light, and its direct upward glare, he could see

that it did not come from a window. It was not due to any careless hand turning on a light at an uncurtained window—it shone upward, from a roof.

"Treachery!" muttered Soames.

That bright light, shining up to the shadowed sky, could not be accidental. Soames knew what it was—a signal to aircraft. It could be nothing else.

He stood watching it from the shore with compressed lips. Overhead came the drone of planes.

Someone in the mansion—or, rather, someone who had secret access to the mansion—had placed that light in position on a high roof—the roof, as Soames judged, of the watch-tower at the corner of the building. From within the house it could not be seen—and it was not likely to be suspected. The occupants of Eastcliff Lodge, doubtless roused out by the siren, could not know, could not surmise, that a glaring light on the roof made the mansion an easy target for falling bombs.

"The work of the good Mr. Brown, no doubt!" muttered Soames. "But how——" He knitted his brows.

The man who had been a valet in Eastcliff Lodge, who in earlier days had been mutineer, pirate, freebooter, lawless adventurer in many ways, stood at a loss, undecided what to do.

He was looked on as an enemy at Eastcliff Lodge. It was only because he had been trusted by old Sir William, and knew the secret of Wibley's impersonation, that he had been allowed to go free, when Harry Wharton & Co. discovered who Jermyn really was.

But his hesitation was brief.

He turned his back on the chalk cave, where he could have taken easy shelter, and hurried along the sands to the gully that led upward through the towering cliffs.

From that treacherous light, gleaming into the sky as a signal to the raiders, Soames knew that this was no false alarm—he knew that it was an air raid, and that bombing was to come!

Somehow—he did not know how—the man who called himself Brown, the agent of the German Gestapo, who watched Eastcliff Lodge, had done this—Soames had no doubt about it—and his purpose could only be to draw the raiding bombers to Sir William Bird's mansion.

The safety of Eastcliff Lodge, and all within, depended on Soames—on the valet who had been kicked out, on the sea-lawyer of the Pacific, who was wanted by the police in half a dozen countries! And Soames was running—running hard—to give warning in time!

The gully up through the chalk cliffs was steep and rugged. But he did not pause for a moment. Several times he slipped, in the dark—but leaped up again, and ran on like a deer.

Boom, boom, boom, came the roar of anti-aircraft guns, up and down the shore. More sharply came the clatter of machine-guns, high in the sky. Deep and incessant came the droning of engines.

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The attack was coming—at any moment, Soames expected to hear the roar of exploding bombs and the crash of falling masonry as the mansion was rent by the explosives. But he ran on towards the danger-zone without a pause.

He reached the road at the summit of the cliffs and cut across it, to the wall that enclosed the estate of Eastcliff Lodge. Near the great bronze gates was a small wicket-gate—Soames hurled it open and ran into the avenue that led up to the house.

Crash!

He did not see a figure in the dark—he did not know that a man was there till he crashed into him. But, as he staggered from the shock, a grip fastened on him, and he was borne backwards.

Only for a fraction of a second was Soames taken by surprise. The sea-lawyer was swift on the uptake.

In a split second he was grasping back at the unseen man who had grasped him, and Soames' grasp was like a steel vice.

"Braun, you scoundrel!" he said, between his teeth.

But the next moment he knew that it was not the mysterious Mr. Brown. It was a bigger and more powerful man; a burly, bull-necked man.

It flashed into his mind that it was a confederate of the spy, posted to watch the avenue in case the light should be seen and some A.R.P. officer hurry to the spot. But, whoever the man was, he was an enemy, and, if he could prevent it, Soames would never give warning of the treacherous light on the tower.

The bull-necked man staggered in Soames' powerful grip. But he rallied, and forced the sea-lawyer backward.

Soames freed one hand. It shot to his hip-pocket, where he kept his automatic. In a second the weapon was in his hand and crashing on the forehead of the man with whom he was struggling.

He heard a gasping grunt, and the hold on him relaxed.

The bull-necked man dropped like a log at his feet. The blow had been a terrible one, with all the strength of Soames' sinewy arm behind it, and the rascal was stunned—he lay senseless on the earth.

Soames gave him hardly a glance. He had no further time to waste on the bull-necked man. The safety of everyone at Eastcliff Lodge depended on him.

Leaving him where he lay, the sea-lawyer ran up the long winding avenue—the automatic still in his hand. It would have gone ill with any other lurking foe who had attempted to stop him. But there was no other man on the dim avenue—only the spy at the gate, whom Soames had left senseless behind him.

Panting, he reached the door. He jammed the automatic back into his pocket, grasped the big brass knocker, and crashed it with all his force.

Knock, knock, knock!

It rang and echoed through Eastcliff Lodge, crashing sharply through the heavy boom of the guns.

Knock, knock, knock!

IN THE NICK OF TIME!

KNOCK, knock!

"What the dickens——" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton & Co. turned from Sir William's door as the heavy crashing of the knocker on the hall door below came to their ears.

Knock, knock, knock!

"Better cut down," said Harry. "It must be somebody hunting shelter——" Without finishing the sentence the captain of the Greyfriars Remove ran to the gallery over the hall and cut down the staircase.

The knocker on the door crashed and crashed, without a pause. At the same time, the bell was buzzing.

Evidently the man outside was in a hurry—he kept the bell-push pressed down with one hand, causing a continuous buzz, while he banged at the knocker with the other. It could only be, so far as Harry Wharton could guess, someone seeking shelter in the raid—and, at such a time, anyone had to be admitted. He raced to the door and unlocked and unbolted it, taking care, however, to switch off the light in the hall before opening it.

The big door swung open.

Outside was a dim, panting figure in the gloom.

"Quick!" exclaimed Harry. "Come in—quick!" Then, as he recognised the man in the dimness, he uttered a startled exclamation: "Soames!"

"Exactly—Soames!" came the reply.

Soames was panting for breath—but his voice seemed soft and sleek as usual.

"You!" said Harry, his brows knitting. But the next moment he went on hurriedly. "Come in—even you! We're just going down to the cellars—you're welcome to take shelter with us, Soames."

"Even I!" said Soames, with a sneer.

"Yes, even you—but be quick!"

Soames stepped in.

"I shall accept your kind offer of shelter, Master Wharton, with gratitude," he said. His tone and manner were those of the respectful and deferential Jermyn. "But that was not my purpose in coming here. You are not aware, of course, that a light is being shown here, which will guide any raider who is not blind!"

"A light!" exclaimed Harry. "From a window?"

"From the roof of the tower!"

Harry Wharton stared blankly at the sea-lawyer.

He was surprised to hear that Soames had come not for shelter, but to give a warning; but he was utterly astonished by the sea-lawyer's statement that there was a light on the roof of the tower.

"On the tower!" he repeated. "What rot! How could there be a light on the roof of the tower? What game are you playing now, Soames?" There was disbelief in his face. "If this is a trick to get into the house again——"

"Quite a natural suspicion in the circumstances, Master Wharton!" drawled Soames. "But if you will

step out here for a moment, you will see the light."

Wharton hesitated.

"If you are not afraid of falling shrapnel," added Soames, "or of me—I assure you that I intend you no harm, sir."

Wharton's lips curled contemptuously. He was afraid of neither shrapnel nor Soames; but he suspected some trick on the part of the man whose lawless career was one of deception and duplicity. Without answering, he stepped out of the doorway, Soames following him out.

They walked a distance down the avenue before Wharton looked up.

"Oh!" gasped Harry, as he did so.

Wharton?" asked Soames sarcastically.

"But who—who——" gasped Harry.

"Probably our friend Brown, alias Herr Braun!" said Soames. "I have reason to believe that he has his own way of entering this mansion when he desires. But may I suggest, with all respect, that we are wasting time—and life or death may be a matter of minutes, or even seconds."

Harry Wharton did not need telling that. He knew that that light was gleaming to guide the fatal bombers—that whoever had set it there had planned the destruction of Eastcliff Lodge.

He ran into the house again, Soames at his heels.

dark gallery, and the captain of the Remove rushed after him.

At the end of the gallery was a small door, that gave admittance to the stair leading up to the summit of the tower.

Someone, it was certain, had trodden that stair earlier in the night, to place the signal-light on the roof. Brown, in all probability, though how the mysterious Mr. Brown gained secret entrance to the mansion he did not know. He gave it no thought at the moment.

Soames had the door open as Wharton overtook him. The sea-lawyer pushed on ahead, Wharton close behind.

Within the doorway was a narrow



"You want me to be bombed, and gassed, and blown to bits, you beast!" howled Bunter. "If you kick me again, I'll—yaroop!" Half-dressed, the fat junior rolled out into the gallery, with the help of Harry Wharton's foot.

The watch-tower of Eastcliff Lodge was an old square brick tower, rising about thirty feet above the roofs. It was dimly outlined against the dark of the sky. From its summit a bright beam of light stabbed into the darkness, shining directly upward, evidently from a powerful lamp.

The captain of the Remove could hardly believe his eyes as he stared up at it.

That light was not merely a flagrant infraction of the law. It was obviously placed there by a treacherous hand with only one possible purpose—to guide a raider droning in the sky. Whoever had set that light-signal was in touch with the sky-raiders—probably by means of a hidden radio.

"Good heavens!" gasped Harry.

"Are you satisfied now, Master

The hall door was slammed shut.

"Leave it to me, Master Wharton," came Soames' voice, in the darkness within. "I know my way about here, as you know—go down to the cellars with your friends——"

Harry Wharton did not answer, neither did he heed. He was not likely to seek safety and leave the task of danger to an enemy. He tore up the staircase into the oak gallery.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a shout from the direction of Sir William's door. "That you, Harry?"

"Yes—get down to the cellars, you fellows—for goodness' sake, as fast as you can!" shouted back Wharton. "Tell that ass there's not a second to lose—get a move on, quick!"

"But what——"

Wharton did not stop for more. Soames was already racing along the

iron stair that wound spirally to the roof of the tower.

Soames ascended it with breathless rapidity, the captain of the Remove panting after him.

The stair was steep, and its windings made Harry Wharton giddy, as he tore upward in breathless haste. At the summit was another small door that gave on to the flat led roof of the watch-tower. Soames dragged it open, and stepped out into the night air.

Wharton was following, when a hand on his shoulder stopped him.

"Leave this to me, I tell you!" came Soames' voice. "The man may still be here—and if he is here, he is armed and desperate—with a halter round his neck! This is not school-boy's work."

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Harry Wharton wrenched his shoulder loose.

"You're wasting time!" he snapped. "Look for him while I put out the light!"

The tower roof was surrounded by a parapet five feet high. Under its shadow all was black, and it was impossible to tell whether a hidden form lurked there.

In the centre of the roof stood an electric lamp, its bright and powerful beam directed skyward. Heedless of the possibility of a shot from the shadows, Harry Wharton leaped towards the lamp.

In another moment it was crashing over, under a stamping foot.

Black darkness fell where the light had gleamed.

Harry Wharton stood panting.

The light was out—and overhead droned a plane, flying low. If it was an enemy plane, the light was extinguished only in time.

Looking up, the captain of the Remove had a glimpse of a shape that moved in drifting dark clouds.

He heard Soames moving in the darkness. The sea-lawyer—his automatic in his hand again—was searching the roof for a possible enemy. His cool voice came to Wharton's ears.

"No one here—Herr Braun did not delay! Listen!"

Wharton was listening, with beating heart.

"If that's a Hun—" he breathed.

"That," came Soames' icy voice, "is a Heinkel bomber. If the light was still on, Master Wharton, the ruins of this building would be our tomb."

"Thank Heaven we were in time!"

Soames stood beside him—a shadow in the gloom. His face was tilted up—he watched the sky with icy coolness.

Wharton caught at his arm.

"Quick!" he breathed. "Cover—"

"I think the danger is past, Master Wharton! This mansion is the bomber's objective; but it is not easy to spot at night, surrounded by trees—far from easy! Only a chance shot—hark!"

From a distance came a nerve-shattering roar. It seemed to shake the tower on which they stood.

"A bomb!" breathed Harry.

He heard a soft laugh at his side.

"On the beach!" said Soames' calm voice. "Our friend above has knocked up the sand on the beach, Master Wharton! No doubt the sudden darkness confused him a little. He has missed us by a good margin."

Soames laughed again.

Wharton dragged him towards the doorway.

"Quick!" he panted. "The next may—"

"Oh, quite!" drawled Soames. He stepped aside at the little doorway, in his half-mocking, deferential manner. "You first, sir—I trust that I know my place."

"Oh, don't be a goat!" snapped Wharton. "Quick!"

He dragged Soames through the doorway.

The sea-lawyer closed the door. As it shut, there came another shatter-

ing roar closer at hand, followed by the thunder of falling trees. The second bomb had exploded in the park of Eastcliff Lodge. The strong old tower seemed to rock round them.

They hurried down the winding stair. When they reached the gallery the beam of a flash-lamp dazzled their eyes, and Bob Cherry's voice called anxiously:

"Wharton! Where are you, you ass? Wharton!"

"Here!" panted Harry.

"Come on, fathead!"

Another shattering roar, another crash of falling trees, rent the air as they hurried down to the cellars.

— — —

WHERE IS SOAMES?

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"All serene, old fat man!"

"B-b-but I—I say, it's Soames!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

The fat Owl of the Remove blinked at James Soames through his spectacles and the eye-piece of his gas-mask in alarmed surprise.

Soames looked the part he usually played, that of a smooth, sleek, deferential manservant. But Billy Bunter had not forgotten the Greyfriars fellows' South Sea trip, when he had seen that sleek, smooth valet with an automatic in his hand, dominating a ship's deck. The sea-lawyer of the Pacific was a terrifying object to Billy Bunter's eyes.

Soames smiled ironically.

He had no gas-mask. Every other face in the deep cellar was covered—but the danger of gas-bombs did not disturb the cool equanimity of the sea-lawyer.

"Pray do not be alarmed, Master Bunter!" said Soames, with sarcastic smoothness. "We are not in the Pacific Islands now, my young friend—really, you have nothing to fear."

"But—but I say, you fellows—"

"It's all right, ass!" said Harry.

Billy Bunter did not seem satisfied that it was all right. He backed away, placing the portly figure of Blump between him and the sea-lawyer.

Many eyes as well as Bunter's were on James Soames.

The whole household of Eastcliff Lodge were in the deep cellar—fairly safe from bombs, even if they fell on the building; though, in that case, the mansion would be piled in ruins over their refuge.

Long since, that cellar had been prepared by Sir William Bird as a shelter in case of need. It was needed now!

Under Eastcliff Lodge was a range of cellars, never used by the present-day inhabitants of the mansion. In older days, it was said that they had been stacked with contraband goods by an ancient Squire of Eastcliff who had been given to smuggling.

But if that was the case, those days were long past; and the cellars were now empty and unused, and never entered, until the outbreak of war caused the old baronet to have one of them prepared as an air-raid shelter.

This was the first of the series, and it was furnished now with carpet,

chairs, tables, books, and electric light from a battery. A bomb on the mansion would, of course, have cut off the electric supply and left the refugees in the dark, for which reason Sir William Bird had had a battery installed in the shelter, to supply the lamp there.

It was quite a comfortable refuge, and as safe as any refuge could be when air raids were going on.

At the end of the cellar was a vaulted opening leading into the next cellar. This was shut off by heavy hangings to keep out the cold draught and the earthy underground smell.

Soames was standing by the hangings that shut off the entrance to the second cellar. There was a faint smile on his impassive face: he knew that he was the cynosure of all eyes there.

Gas-masked faces were turned on him from all sides:

Blump and the other members of the household staff knew him as Jermyn, who had been Sir William's valet, and had been suddenly sacked.

The Greyfriars fellows knew a great deal more about him than that.

They knew him as Soames, who had been valet to the father of the Bounder of Greyfriars in that South Sea cruise they were never likely to forget. They knew him as mutineer and pirate. They knew that when he called himself Jermyn and served Sir William Bird he was playing some strange game of his own at Eastcliff Lodge—though they did not know what it was.

But their feelings were very mixed now as they looked at him.

Unscrupulous rascal and adventurer as he was, it was likely that he had saved many lives that wild night by the warning he had given.

They knew, too, that to give that warning he had come some distance in the open, with enemy planes overhead, and he had not even a gas-mask.

His plans at Eastcliff Lodge, whatever they were, had been disconcerted by his sudden forced departure. But Soames, as they knew of old, was not a man to bear grudges. From several incidents that had occurred since, the juniors had an idea that Soames' plans, whatever they might be, were directed against the mysterious Mr. Brown and his spy associates.

Soames had striven in the most ruthless way to drive the schoolboys from Eastcliff Lodge before they had spotted Jermyn's real identity. He had failed, and he had had to go. But now that he had no reason for further enmity, his enmity was at an end.

Apparently Soames' view was that hostility without a purpose to serve was a useless waste of energy. Perhaps, too, there was a spot of good mingled with the evil in his strange nature.

It was a surprise to the household staff to see Jermyn there.

Blump eyed him with ponderous disapproval.

Harry Wharton & Co. were a little surprised, also. It was natural for any man to take shelter in an air raid; and yet, somehow, it did not seem like Soames to take shelter in the house from which he had been

turned out, and where he was regarded with suspicion and distrust.

It was in Harry Wharton's mind that perhaps the sea-lawyer had some other purpose to serve by his presence there.

He had come to the house to give warning of danger, that was certain, but Wharton would have expected him to go his own way when he had given it. He had remained in the cellar shelter; and natural as that proceeding was, Wharton could not dismiss his ineradicable distrust of the man whose duplicity had deceived so many.

Yet what secret plan Soames could have in his mind was a puzzle—unless, for some reason known only to himself, he desired to be inside Eastcliff Lodge instead of outside. But why?

“Hullo, hallo, hallo!” exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly. “Listen!”

Deep as the cellar was, the gunfire could be heard. For some time it had been slackening; now it was distant and intermittent. Faint through closed doors, but easily distinguishable, came the long-drawn wail of the siren.

“All clear!” said Nugent.

The refugees in the cellar shelter listened intently. That long-drawn, unmelodious screech told its own tale. It was the signal that the danger was past.

“O.K.!” said Johnny Bull. He looked at his watch. “By gum! We’ve been down here jolly nearly two hours.”

“I say, you fellows—”

“All clear now, old porpoise!”

“I’m hungry!”

“Oh, my hat!”

“I was going to bring that cake,” said Billy Bunter, in a voice that thrilled with indignation, “but you fellows rushed me off so quick I hadn’t time! If the house has been bombed, that cake’s a goner now!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! That beast Wharton wouldn’t let me stop for my gas-mask container, either!” hooted Bunter.

“You’ve got your gas-mask, fat-head! What do you want the container for?” demanded Bob.

“It’s got toffee in it.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Oh, cackle!” yapped Bunter. “Sticking here for two hours with nothing to eat—yah!”

“Blump!” Sir William Bird, alias Wibley, rose from an armchair. “Blump! Kindly give me your arm!”

Soames glanced curiously at the silver-haired little baronet. He was in the secret of Wibley’s impersonation; and he smiled as the portly Blump gave Wibley his portly arm to assist the venerable schoolboy up the stairs from the cellar.

The door was opened, and the crowd began to leave the shelter.

Sir William led the way, leaning on Blump’s portly arm.

Billy Bunter rolled after him, anxious to spot something to eat before he went back to bed and resumed his interrupted repose.

Then, all of a sudden, the light in the cellar went out, and all was dark.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo! What the thump—” came Bob Cherry’s voice, in the sudden darkness.

“What howling ass is larking with that lamp?” exclaimed Johnny Bull.

“What terrific idiot—”

“All serene! I’ve got a flash-lamp!” said Bob. He groped in his pocket, and the flash-lamp gleamed out over the dark cellar.

Gas-masks had been removed, and the light flashed over many faces—but not over Soames’.

“Show the light here, Bob!” called out Harry Wharton.

He stepped to the lamp, which stood on the table, and touched the switch. Immediately the light came on again.

“Was it turned off?” exclaimed Nugent.

“Yes; some silly ass must have turned it off! Some fathead’s idea of a joke, I suppose.”

“The jokefulness is not terrific!” remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh. “What terrific and preposterous chump—”

“Where’s Soames?” asked Bob suddenly.

The juniors looked round.

Soames was not to be seen.

In those few moments of darkness the sea-lawyer had vanished.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked round the cellar, and looked at one another. They hardly needed telling now that it had been Soames who had suddenly plunged the cellar into darkness. Everyone had been thinking of getting out of the cellar, and no one at the moment had had an eye on Soames.

Harry Wharton knitted his brows. His distrust of Soames revived in full force at that moment.

“What the dickens is that man’s game?” he asked. “Look here—what the thump is he up to?”

“He’s gone!” said Bob.

“Can’t have thought that we should bag him, after what he did for us to-night, surely!” exclaimed Nugent. “He had no reason to dodge away in the dark.”

Harry Wharton shook his head.

“It’s not that,” he said. “He jolly well knew that nobody here would lift a finger against him. But—”

“Well, he’s gone.”

“Has he gone?” said Harry slowly. He looked round the cellar again.

All its occupants were clearing off up the stairs, leaving the Famous Five there.

Harry Wharton stepped to the hangings that covered the entrance to the second cellar, and glanced into the darkness beyond, through the low arch.

“What the thump!” exclaimed Bob. “You don’t fancy that Soames dodged into the next cellar, do you? Why should he?”

“Goodness knows! I can’t make the man out!” confessed Wharton. “But if this is a trick to remain in the house secretly, we’ll jolly well put paid to it! Soames has done a lot for us to-night, and at a lot of risk to himself—but we can’t trust him an inch!”

“I expect he’s gone!” said Bob.

“If he’s gone, all right; if he’s

hiding in the cellars, he can knock on the door when he wants to be let out!” said the captain of the Remove grimly. “We’ll lock the door on the outside!”

The Famous Five left the cellar—the last to leave.

Harry Wharton closed the door and locked it.

If Soames, for some secret purpose of his own, had dodged into the dark cellars, he was a prisoner there until he came back to the door and knocked to be let out.

“We’ll unlock that door again in the morning,” said Harry, “unless Soames knocks to be let out before then.”

Leaving it at that, the Famous Five went up the stair.

If Soames was still in the cellars, he seemed satisfied with those cold and uncomfortable quarters for no knocking was heard from the cellar door that night.

SOAMES FINDS THE SECRET!

JAMES SOAMES smiled in the dark.

The blackness where he stood was impenetrable. But, looking back through a series of low, bricked arches, he could see the gleam of light from the cellar shelter, where Harry Wharton had pulled the hangings aside.

Those hangings dropped back into place, and the light was shut off.

Soames smiled.

He knew, from the fact that the captain of the Remove had looked through the first of the series of brick arches, that Wharton suspected him of having turned off the light and dodged along the cellars.

But he did not think it likely that the Greyfriars fellows would follow him into those dark, damp, and dismal recesses. If they did, it would not be difficult to elude them.

He waited, without stirring, and watched and listened.

Through the deep silence there came to his ears the sound of a closing door, and then the grating of a heavy iron key.

Soames smiled again. He knew quite well what that meant. Wharton suspected what he had done, though he could not feel sure, and he had locked the cellar door on the outside. If it was Soames’ intention to remain secretly at Eastcliff Lodge, he was defeated. All that he could do was to remain in the cellars, a prisoner till he chose to make his presence known.

That did not seem to disconcert the sea-lawyer in any way.

He waited another minute—till the unbroken silence assured him that all the occupants of the cellar shelter were gone for good. Then he drew a torch from his pocket and flashed on the light.

His next proceedings would have astonished the juniors if they had been able to observe them.

Soames moved back to the cellar that was used as an air-raid shelter. It was dark and deserted, the door

locked. He was not likely to be interrupted. He proceeded to explore the whole extent of the cellar—turning back the carpet that covered the stone floor, and scanning every foot of it in the light.

Whatever it was that he sought, he did not seem to find it. He passed into the second cellar and explored it in the same way.

There were more than a dozen cellars, every one with a low, vaulted roof, the walls of ancient brickwork, the floors of old stone flags.

Soames passed from one to another, and in each he examined the floor with the same meticulous attention.

Obviously, it was not for the purpose of remaining in Eastcliff Lodge, above, that Soames had played that trick. But what his purpose was in exploring the dim old cellars would have been a puzzle to Harry Wharton & Co.

Only the first cellar was ever entered, and that only on occasion of an air-raid alarm. The rest of the series had probably not been stepped in for years by any member of the household—perhaps not for a hundred years.

In ancient days, according to the legend, they had been used by smugglers to store contraband silks and brandy run into Eastcliff Bay by French luggers. But for a century, at least, they had been shut up and never visited.

Yet it was plain, from the sea-lawyer's actions, that he expected to make some discovery there.

The night was growing old, for each cellar, as he explored every foot of it, occupied a considerable time. But the sea-lawyer was patient, and he seemed tireless.

It was in the seventh cellar that he suddenly came to a halt, his eyes gleaming in the light of the torch, and ejaculated:

"Eureka!"

The light gleamed on an iron ring set in one of the stones of the floor—a flagstone about two feet square.

"I've found it!" breathed Soames.

He examined the iron ring attentively. Plainly, it was there to lift the stone, though it was so long since it had ever been used that it was forgotten and unknown. Certainly, no occupant of Eastcliff Lodge had ever dreamed of its existence.

But that, clearly, was what Soames was searching for. The air-raid alarm, and the warning he had given at the house, had given him this opportunity. That was why Soames had taken shelter with the household. He had descended into the cellar shelter, not for safety but with the intention of remaining to carry on this strange exploration.

"I think," murmured Soames, "that I have picked up your trail, my dear Herr Braun! I think I have learned why you haunt the chalk cave—and how you are able to enter Eastcliff Lodge unseen and unsuspected. I think, my dear Herr, that your game is nearly up!"

Then his brows puckered in a frown of puzzled thought.

From the fact that the man with the bushy eyebrows, who called him-

self Brown, haunted the chalk cave under the cliffs, and that he was able to enter Eastcliff Lodge secretly and surreptitiously, Soames had deduced the secret of the cellar—and now he had found it. He had been helped, no doubt, by what he had heard of the smugglers of old days, who were said to have run cargoes into the sea-cave, and to have stored their silks and brandy in the cellars of Eastcliff Lodge. The chalk cave extended under the mansion, and the mysterious proceedings of Mr. Brown had given the keen-witted sea-lawyer a clue to a connection between the two.

But how had Mr. Brown—or Herr Braun—known of it?

The agent of the German Gestapo was a keen and cunning spy. Yet how had the keenest spy learned of a secret that was known to no living person?

Soames shrugged his shoulders, giving up that problem. He bent over the ringed stone, grasped the iron ring, and lifted the stone.

It was heavy; but the strong-limbed sea-lawyer made little of it. He tilted the stone on its side and cast the light into the darkness below.

It was like looking down a chimney. A shaft about two feet by two feet, cased in stone, and with a rusty iron ladder clamped to one side, descended into the depths of the earth.

If the old smugglers had used that mode of entry, as no doubt they had, their packets must have been hauled up by ropes from above.

The light, as Soames flashed it down, did not reach to the bottom.

He stepped coolly in, lodging himself on the iron ladder.

There was another ring in the under side of the moving stone. Holding on by one hand, Soames reached up with the other, and pulled the stone down. It dropped with a dull thud into its place.

Then he slipped the electric torch into his pocket and swung himself down the ladder, hand below hand, in dense darkness.

He was not likely to show a light as he descended. That the spy of the Gestapo had a hide-out in the sea-cave, he was certain; and if Mr. Brown was in his hide-out, Soames did not want to give warning of his approach.

The man who had attempted to doom Eastcliff Lodge to destruction would not have hesitated to fire on the explorer who had discovered his secret.

Soames descended in pitch darkness—and without a sound.

The rungs of the ladder were about a foot apart, and he counted sixty of them before he felt, at last, a floor under his feet.

He stepped off the perpendicular ladder and stood, for a long minute, listening.

There was no sound, and no gleam of light.

He ventured, at last, to turn on the light of his torch—his automatic ready in his other hand. He flashed the light round him—alert, ready for a foe, ready to give shot for shot.

He was standing in a small cave, with walls and roof of solid, rugged chalk. A deep crevice in one wall was, as he guessed at once, its connection with the great sea-cave that stretched down to the beach.

Soames smiled grimly as he looked round him.

Mr. Brown was not there—no one was there—but he knew that he had found the hide-out of the Gestapo spy.

There were three suitcases on the floor; and, in a corner, a roll of blankets which showed that Mr. Brown sometimes passed the night in that hidden den.

Soames bent over the suitcases, one after another. They were all locked. But Soames had his own way of dealing with locks.

His eyes were eager as he searched them; but he frowned as he concluded the search. One of them contained foodstuffs; the others, chiefly articles of clothing and a set of disguises that would have interested Wibley deeply.

All these seemed to have little interest for Soames. It was something else that he was seeking—what, it would have been difficult to guess.

He rose to his feet at last, shrugging his shoulders. He left the suitcases locked, as he had found them. Apparently it was his intention to leave Mr. Brown in ignorance of the fact that his hide-out had been visited.

Holding the torch before him, he stepped into the crevice in the chalk wall.

It was narrow—his elbows almost touched the sides; and the roof was so low that he had to duck his head. He followed it for a dozen paces, and then came to a sudden stop—blocked by solid chalk in front of him.

For a moment the sea-lawyer was surprised and nonplussed.

Then he gave a low laugh.

The mass of chalk that closed the end of the tunnel did not adhere to the sides. He put his shoulder to it, and pushed.

It rolled back and left an opening, hardly more than three feet high, through which he passed, stooping.

He flashed his light round him, and laughed again. He knew where he was now.

He was standing on a ledge, high up the wall of the great sea-cave—and he knew that he had stood on that ledge before, when he had been seeking Mr. Brown's secret from the cave end.

He turned and rolled the chalk rock back into place, closing the opening of the tunnel.

It wedged there, as before—looking, even to the keenest eye, as if it was part of the rock wall. It was no wonder that Mr. Brown's hide-out had not been discovered when the cavern was searched.

From the high ledge, Soames swung himself down, from ledge to ledge, and rock to rock, till he stood on the floor of the sea-cave.

The tide was out.

Soames trod away down the cave towards the sea; and in a few minutes more a gleam of daylight met his eyes. He stood, at length, at the

cave-mouth, looking out over the sands where he had stood the night before, when he had seen the signal-light on the tower of Eastcliff Lodge.

But the night was past now, and Soames stood, with a sardonic grin on his sleek face, looking out over the sands and the sea, shining in the rosy flush of the April morning.

ENOUGH FOR BUNTER!

WHAT about hooking it?"

"Eh?"

Sir William Bird, alias William Wibley of the Greyfriars Remove, was standing on the avenue in the bright sunny morning. There was a very thoughtful expression on the pink face under the bushy, silvery eyebrows.

The Famous Five were with him. They had turned out rather late that morning, after the night of alarm. Billy Bunter had not turned out at all. He had breakfasted in bed, and settled down to snooze till lunch. Bunter had lost two or three hours' sleep in the night; and he was going to make up for it, and a little over.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked out, after breakfast, to look at the damage done in the air-raid of the previous night.

Owing, as they had to admit, to Soames, no damage had been done to the mansion. The sudden extinguishing of the signal-light had beaten the enemy in the sky; the bombs had crashed almost at random; and the nearest had fallen more than a hundred yards from the house. Windows had been cracked by the shock; that was all the damage Eastcliff Lodge had sustained.

But what they now saw told how narrow the escape had been.

There was a huge crater in the earth where a bomb had exploded, and five or six trees had been uprooted and lay shattered and tangled amid piles of scattered earth. The avenue was littered with broken branches.

The bomber had not had time to linger. Fighters had driven it out to sea, and followed it there; and the juniors hoped, at least, sent it down to the water. But it had left destruction behind.

The juniors' faces were grave as they looked at the havoc wrought by the explosion. But they were quite cool. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked that the missfulness was as good as the milefulness, and the other fellows agreed that it was.

"Hooking it?" repeated Harry Wharton. "What do you mean, Wibley? You can't hook it—you've promised the old Bird to carry on till he comes back."

"Ass!" said Wibley politely. "I'm not thinking of hooking it. But I'm here to oblige the old Bird—to throw the dust in the eyes of spies, while he's rooting about in Hunland. You're here for a holiday!"

"Tired of our company?" asked Bob.

"Idiot! Look here," said Wibley, "it's getting a bit serious. You can see that. That blighter Brown and

his gang knew that Sir William Bird was going on Secret Service—they'd spied that out. They've been puzzled ever since by seeing him stop at home—as they think. They don't know what to make of it."

"That's all right," said Bob. "That's what we want!"

"Yes, ass—but you can see what they're up to now. The other night Brown got into the house and nobbled me in my room. Luckily, he found Wibley of the Remove there—not the man he wanted! He can't try that game again, now I've had bolts

GREYFRIARS PORTRAIT GALLERY

No 2.—GEORGE WINGATE



Captain of Greyfriars, Wingate, who hails from Chester, has proved himself to be a born leader—ever ready to help and advise. His only fault is that he is inclined to be too kind-hearted at times. Wingate's only enemies are those of the "black sheep" variety, on whom he has a very heavy down. A brilliant sportsman, Greyfriars owes much to her skipper who has led his merry men to victory so often. All Greyfriars would do well to take its pattern from this sturdy and manly character—typical of the best traditions of school captains.

put on the doors. His game, then, was to grab Sir William and hike him off. But now——"

"Well?" said Harry.

"Now you can see what he's come to," said Wibley. "He can't make out what Sir William is up to, and he can't get hold of him. That's why the bomber came last night—and Brown squirmed in somehow, and set that signal-light on the tower. It's his idea of cutting the giddy Gordian knot—putting Sir William where he can't do them any harm."

"That's plain enough!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, I've got to stick it out, of course," said Wibley. "I can't say I exactly like bombs, but I can't go back on the old Bird! If you fellows

thought it would be healthier somewhere else——"

"Don't be an ass, old chap!" said Harry Wharton. "You're a good deal safer with your friends round you."

"I know that! But you fellows can——"

"Talk sense!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Greyfriars men don't run away from a spot of danger! You silly ass, what's the good of being at war at all, if we're going to sit up and howl whenever a bomb goes off?"

"Well, I thought I'd mention it," said Wibley. "Of course, I'm jolly glad if you'll stay on, but if Brown tries it on again—you may get it right in the neck next time, as you jolly well know!"

"The knowfulness is terrific, my esteemed fatheaded Wibley!" assented the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"The police may get hold of that blighter Brown!" remarked Nugent. "It's queer' how he keeps loose, hunted for as he is. He must have a jolly deep hiding-place somewhere."

"Blow him!" grunted Wibley. "It was rather a lark playing the old Bird here—but there's no lark in this sort of thing. The old Bird, of course, hadn't the faintest idea they'd try this game on—his stunt was just to make them believe that he was still at home, while he was rooting in Hunland. Still, a chap's got to stick it out."

The juniors walked back to the house for lunch, in rather a thoughtful mood.

Wibley's impersonation of the absent baronet had seemed to all of them rather a lark in its way, but they had to realise now that that impersonation had become a dangerous game for the schoolboy actor to play.

Mr. Brown, or Herr Braun, believed without a doubt that Sir William was still at home, as the Secret Service man had planned. The desperate measures to which he had now resorted were aimed at the old Bird. But it was William Wibley who was going to get the benefit of them.

But Wibley was sticking it out—and his friends were sticking it out along with him. That was a settled thing.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter was in the hall when they came in. "I say, I wish you wouldn't clear off when a fellow wants to speak to you. I've been down ten minutes or more."

"Taking up early rising as a habit?" inquired Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"The early bird catches the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the well, as the English proverb observes!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "And a stitch in time saves ninepence."

"Look here, what about it?" yapped Bunter.

"What about which?" asked Bob.

"I suppose you haven't forgotten that shindy last night!" said the fat Owl, blinking at him through his big spectacles. "I don't call it much of a holiday, with bombs dropping on a fellow's napper. Mind, I'm not afraid

of bombs. You saw me last night—cool as a cucumber—”

“We heard you yowling like a scalded cat, if that’s what you mean,” grunted Johnny Bull.

“Beast! I was as cool as a cucumber!” howled Bunter. “I mean, as cool as a cucumber—that is, as cool as a cumcooler—”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Cackle! If you fellows had as much pluck all round as I’ve got in my little finger, you’d do!” snorted Bunter. “What I mean is this—the West Coast is ever so much better for a holiday than the East Coast. Devon, glorious Devon, you know—”

“Lots of people, these days, think Devon glorious!” grinned Bob. “It’s got more and more glorious ever since last September.”

“Well, of course, I wouldn’t scuttle,” said Bunter. “I despise a scuttler. Stick it out, face the danger, and just laugh at Hitler—that’s my idea! All I’m thinking of is how you fellows would enjoy a holiday in Devonshire—”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Nothing to stop here for, that I know of! Why shouldn’t we go west?”

“You’ll go west fast enough, if a bomb hits you!”

“You silly ass!” roared Bunter. “Look here, Devon and Somerset are ripping. Bristol’s a jolly place! Lots of people go to Bristol—”

“Sixteen thousand, since the war started, I’ve heard!” chuckled Bob. “Go and make it sixteen thousand and one, old fat man! We’ll see you off with pleasure.”

“The pleasuredness will be terrific.”

“Well, I’m short of cash,” said Bunter. “Owing to this beastly war, I suppose, I haven’t received some postal orders I was expecting. I’m actually short of money—at the moment! I—I mean, I shouldn’t care to go without my pals! Let’s all go to Bristol—”

“Hardly room there for any more, I should think!” said Bob. “Besides, why stop at Bristol? Why not go on to Land’s End, dig a hole, jump into it, and pull it in after you?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Well, look here, I’m jolly well going!” hooted Bunter. “The only question is, who’s going to lend me ten pounds?”

“Oh, my hat! Who’s going to lend Bunter ten pounds?” ejaculated Bob Cherry. “Don’t all speak at once!”

“Echo answers who!” grinned Nugent.

“Esteemed echo replies that the whofulness is terrific!” chuckled Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh.

“Look here, you beasts, I can tell you this—I’ve had enough!” hooted Bunter. “See? I’m not afraid of bombs—I’m not funky, like some chaps—but—”

“Hallo, hallo, hallo! There’s the gong!” exclaimed Bob. “Lunch, old fat man—think of lunch, old porpoise, and forget the bombs!”

The juniors went in to lunch, Bunter rolling after them with a frowning fat face.

But it was an excellent lunch, and the frown departed from the fat brow. For the next half-hour or so, Billy Bunter forgot the bombs and gave concentrated attention to more agreeable things.

Not till he had packed away several lunches, one after another, did Bunter’s fat mind revert to the unpleasant possibility of bombs.

There would have been dry eyes in the Easter party at Sir William Bird’s mansion had the fat Owl shaken the dust of that mansion from his feet. But if Bunter’s departure depended on somebody lending him ten pounds, it looked as if that departure would be indefinitely postponed.

WHAT BUNTER SAW!

“**B**EASTS!” Billy Bunter made that remark, apparently, to the sands, the sea, and the seagulls.

It was quite a warm afternoon. The sun shone down on the sands, more like summer than spring.

Billy Bunter, plugging slowly along the shore, plugged more and more slowly, till at length he came to a halt.

That afternoon, the fat Owl had started to walk to Broadstairs, where he had heard that an attractive film was showing. He was hardly half a mile on his way when he halted and remarked—to the sea, the sands, and the seagulls—“Beasts!” He was not really addressing the sea, the sands, and the seagulls—he was thinking of the Famous Five and William Wibley.

Wibley ought to have let him have the car. Shortage of petrol did not matter, so long as there was enough for Bunter. The Famous Five ought to have gone with him—instead of sailing a silly boat—as if an afternoon in a stuffy cinema wasn’t ever so much better than a blow on the briny!

But the car had not been available, and the Famous Five had preferred a blow on the briny to a stuffy cinema. So there was the Owl of the Remove on his own!

All that the beasts did for him was to lend him half-a-crown, to see him through at Broadstairs—every member of the Co. heartily agreeing that it was worth half-a-crown to lose Bunter’s society for half a day.

It was not a very long walk to Broadstairs by the sands—and Bunter started out fairly briskly. But the sands were soft, and his feet sank into them—all the more because of the extensive weight they had to carry. The sun was hot, and Bunter gasped and perspired. Finally, he came on a ridge of the chalk cliff, high and steep, running out from the

cliffs to the sea, which had to be clambered over if he was going on.

That did it!

Bunter halted, sat down on a boulder, fanned a fat face with his hat, wiped away trickles of perspiration with the back of a plump hand, and told the sea, the sands, and the seagulls what he thought of the Famous Five.

But he did not remain long there—the sun was too hot, and there was no shade on the open beach. He blinked round through his big spectacles, looking for a shady spot.

The only shady spot, however, was the high range of cliff at the back of



Billy Bunter’s eyes opened wide at the sight of the fat junior.

the beach. So the fat Owl heaved up his weight and plugged up the sand to the cliffs.

There, at length, he found a haven of rest. A jutting bulge of chalk from a perpendicular cliff made quite a nice shady spot below.

Bunter plumped down once more, and rested his weary limbs.

Before him stretched the shelving sands, the deep sea rolling to the far horizon, the azure arch of the sky, threaded now and then by a droning plane—quite an attractive spot of scenery had Bunter cared for scenery. Bunter didn’t; but luckily he had a supply of toffee, to which he gave his attention, leaving the scenery to take care of itself.

Not a soul was to be seen on the shore. As far as that chalk ridge across the sand, it was a private beach, belonging to Eastcliff Lodge. Private beaches were all very well,

but Bunter certainly would have preferred a pier, a band, automatic machines, and ice-cream vendors.

All these delectable things were within reach of a walk—but Bunter had had enough walking. So he had to be satisfied with solitude—in the face of which, unlike the sages, he saw no charms.

Presently the solitude was broken by a hat bobbing along the beach, disappearing and reappearing among the hillocks and mounds of chalk that cropped up from the sand.

Bunter eyed it morosely.

"Cheek!" he remarked.

Although he did not like solitude,

along the beach at a good distance out from the cliffs, did not spot the fat junior lying under the bulge of the cliff.

Billy Bunter, having discovered that the man on the beach was the man from the German Gestapo, promptly shifted, so that a chalk boulder would screen him if Mr. Brown did glance in his direction.

From behind that boulder, the fat Owl peered through his spectacles, hoping to see Mr. Brown pass on along the beach and disappear from sight.

Mr. Brown, however, stopped where the chalk ridge ran down to the sea, just as Bunter had done an hour before.

It was not because he was lazy or tired, like Bunter—that was certain; he had some other motive.

Billy Bunter, watching him from a distance, wondered why the unspeakable Hun was sticking there.

The man stood where he had halted, looking round obviously to ascertain whether a chance eye was on him. Then, to Bunter's surprise, he clambered up the steep chalk ridge, stopped on the summit, and stooped there.

His hand went into his pocket, came out with something in it, and he placed that something in a crevice in the chalk.

Bunter watched him with eyes almost popping through his spectacles in his surprise.

Brown was hiding something—that was plain. Yet, at high tide, that chalk ridge was washed over by the sea, and whatever Mr. Brown was hiding would surely be in danger of being washed away.

That was so clear that it dawned on Bunter that Mr. Brown did not intend the hidden object to remain there till high tide. If he left it there, it was for someone else to take away.

This was, in fact, one of the spy's methods of communicating with his associates. The rascals, naturally, did not risk meeting when it could be avoided.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter.

Brown rose upright—and a fat head popped back behind a boulder as he glanced round.

But curiosity impelled Bunter to peep again. This time he observed Mr. Brown dragging a mass of seaweed to the spot where he had placed that something in the crevice on the ridge.

The seaweed was flung down in a heap on the spot.

Then Mr. Brown descended from the ridge, glanced round once more, and walked back quickly the way he had come.

Utterly unaware of the eyes and the spectacles that had been fixed on him, Mr. Brown disappeared up the

beach, in the direction of Eastcliff Bay.

Bunter watched him breathlessly till he was gone.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured the fat Owl. His eyes were shining with excitement behind his spectacles.

Bunter was going to know what it was that Mr. Brown had hidden in that solitary spot. But he waited till he was quite, quite sure that Mr. Brown was at a safe distance.

At length, however, the fat junior heaved himself to his feet, rolled down the beach, and clambered on the chalk ridge at the spot where Mr. Brown had clambered on it.

TREASURE TROVE!

"OH!" gasped Billy Bunter.

He fairly gasped.

What it was that the mysterious Mr. Brown had hidden on the chalk ridge, Bunter could not guess; but he surmised that it was some sort of a communication to be picked up by the spy's confederates.

Whatever it was, Bunter's idea was to bag it and hand it over to the officers of the law who were looking for Mr. Brown.

But—

The fat Owl dragged aside the mass of seaweed. He revealed the crevice in the top of the chalk ridge in which Brown had hidden that mysterious something. He discerned that it was a little oilskin packet. He grabbed it and jerked it open, and then—

Bunter could scarcely believe his eyes, or his spectacles! The former almost popped through the latter as he gazed at his prize.

It was not a letter—not a written word of any kind. The oilskin packet contained a wad of engraved slips of paper.

They were green in hue, with the words "Bank of England" and a big figure "1," and a number in red. They were, in fact, pound notes.

"Oh!" repeated Billy Bunter. "Oh crikey! Quids! Oh crumbs!"

It was an utterly unexpected discovery!

Brown might have left a message there for some other rascal to sneak along and pick up; but Bunter had never dreamed that he had left money there.

But he had!

How many pound notes there were in the wad, Bunter could not tell without counting them; but he could see that there were at least forty or fifty.

He blinked at them with popping eyes.

"Oh jiminy!" said Bunter.

For several minutes the amazed fat Owl stood blinking and staring at that utterly unexpected treasure-trove.

Forty or fifty pounds—and Bunter had a half-crown in his pocket! That beastly, sneaking spy had fifty quids to chuck away! Bunter was glad that he had been on the spot!

How long he might have been there, gloating over that astonishing prize, cannot be said; but it suddenly occurred to Bunter that it was



of engraved slips of paper. "Oh!" gasped
crikey! Quids!"

Bunter regarded it as a cheek of some tripper to come walking along a private beach.

But as that hat came nearer and he discerned the face under it, the fat Owl gave a little jump, and concentrated his eyes and his spectacles on that face. He noted the fact that it had a pair of thick blond eyebrows.

Visibility was never good to Bunter! But the Owl of the Remove realised that he knew that face—and that it was the face of the mysterious Mr. Brown, the spy who watched Eastcliff Lodge, and who was suspected of having fixed up the signal-light for the Hun bomber a few days ago.

The fat Owl caught his breath.

He had met Mr. Brown before, and did not want to meet him again! The bare idea of meeting Mr. Brown in that solitary spot made him quake.

Fortunately, Mr. Brown, walking

not a healthy spot on which to linger.

Brown, obviously, had not left such a sum of money there without an object. This was his way of conveying funds to some other scoundrel who was working in collusion with him.

It was some hours yet before high tide was due; the sea was far out. Probably it might be a long time before the other rascal came along, for plainly the schemers did not want to risk being seen together. Nevertheless, Billy Bunter realised that it was only wise to go while the going was good!

He jammed the oilskin bag into his pocket, and scrambled down from the ridge.

No one, as yet, was in sight from either direction; and Bunter's idea was to get safe off the spot before anyone was in sight.

He rolled away towards Eastcliff Bay. That was the way Brown had gone—and Bunter had no doubt that the other man, when he came, would come from the other direction.

There was no danger of overtaking Brown. He had been gone some time, and he had been walking quickly; and it was fairly certain that he would not linger on the open beach longer than he could help.

Billy Bunter plugged on for a quarter of a mile without a halt.

Then he stopped—partly because he was out of breath, and partly because he was eager to give his capture from the enemy a closer examination.

Having blinked round cautiously and ascertained that no one was in sight, the fat Owl sat down on the sand under the cliffs and drew the little oilskin bag from his pocket.

He drew out the wad of currency notes and proceeded to count them, his fat fingers almost trembling with eagerness.

There were exactly fifty.

Fifty quids!

In the Greyfriars Remove, Billy Bunter often told the tale of the wealth of Bunter Court, where money was spent like water, according to Bunter. Nevertheless, the sum in his fat hands fairly dazzled him.

In spite of the vast wealth of Bunter Court, Billy Bunter did not often have a whole pound note—and not very frequently even a ten-shilling one.

Since the war, currency notes had been rarer than ever with Billy Bunter! Mr. Bunter had told him that, with income-tax at seven-and-six in the pound, he had to cut down everything else with a ruthless hand. Billy Bunter would have preferred him to cut down the income-tax, or even the income-tax collector! But there it was—currency notes were little more than a sweet memory to Billy Bunter.

And now he had fifty!

Bunter had a notecase. He had nothing in it—but he had a notecase. Now he took it out, and crammed it full.

It was a fat and wealthy-looking notecase by the time he had crammed it. He got twenty-five pound notes into it.

He grinned with glee over that notecase. It was rather shabby out-

side. But it was all right inside—now. It looked as podgy as its owner, with all those pound notes crammed into it.

The other half of his plunder the fat junior packed in a trouser-pocket. The oilskin bag he threw away in the sand.

Then, for some minutes, the Owl of the Remove sat in thought.

This cash was his—a fact that admitted of no question. It was a capture from the enemy—and a specially nasty and nauseous specimen of the enemy—a spy. On the other hand, was a fellow in such circumstances expected to hand over the plunder to the authorities?

Bunter decided not.

He had a lurking misgiving that that was exactly what a fellow was bound to do. But he quelled that misgiving. It was true that he had no accurate information on the subject.

Among all the instructions issued by the Government, Bunter did not remember any on such a subject as this! The poet has remarked that where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise. Bunter decided at once not to be guilty of that folly.

The man from the Gestapo was the poorer by fifty pounds—which was undeniably so much to the good, from every possible point of view. Bunter was the richer by that sum, which was equally to the good, if not more so!

Billy Bunter decided that a still tongue shows a wise head.

His tongue was seldom still—even more seldom was his head wise. But circumstances alter cases.

Bunter rose at last and rolled on his way. He grinned as he rolled.

That holiday in the West, far from the bursting bomb, was practical politics now. A fellow with fifty pounds in his pocket could choose his own funk-hole.

Likewise, it would be ripping to let those beasts, who had simply chortled at the idea of lending him ten pounds, see that he was in no need of their measly tenners—if they had any.

It was a happy, almost an hilarious Bunter that rolled homeward.

And at the sight of five fellows beaching a boat, Billy Bunter headed for those five fellows.

Harry Wharton & Co. had come back from their sail, and Billy Bunter had a surprise for them.

THE CO. TAKE A HAND!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Just in time to lend a hand with this boat, old fat man," said Bob Cherry cheerily. "Grab hold!"

"Blow the boat!" grunted Bunter.

"It's had a blow!" explained Bob. "Now we want to get it up to the boathouse."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Let's use Bunter for a roller, and roll it up!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ready, Bunter?"

"I say, you fellows, talk sense! I say, how would you like to catch a Hun spy?"

"What?"

"Which?"

The Famous Five turned from the boat and gave Billy Bunter their particular attention.

Certainly, they would have liked very much to catch a Hun spy! Chances like that did not often come a fellow's way.

"What is the fat ass burbling about?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Do you mean that you've seen that blighter Brown?" asked Bob.

"Oh, yes, I've seen him! But I don't mean Brown! I mean one of the rotters he accomplishes with."

"He whatters?" ejaculated Bob.

"One of his accomplices, do you mean?" asked Harry Wharton, staring at the fat Owl. "If you've seen anybody—"

"I haven't exactly seen him. But I know all about it!" said Bunter mysteriously. "While you fellows have been loafing about in a boat, I've been tracking the villains down, see?"

"Was that on the film at Broadstairs?" asked Bob.

"I haven't been to Broadstairs, after all. I got tired—I mean, I threw it up, for patriotic reasons!" said Bunter loftily. "It's a fellow's duty to nobble spies, ain't it? I suppose you know that, with me, duty always comes first—knowing me as you do."

"Help!"

"Look here, you beast—" roared Bunter.

"Carry on, old fat man!" chuckled Bob. "If you've spotted any Hun spies, we'll snaffle them all right. Quite sure it's a Hun spy? We mustn't collar any harmless and innocent tripper, and run him in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly at the Famous Five. They did not seem to be taking his Hun spy with proper seriousness.

"Well, if you're going to cackle, all right!" snorted Bunter. "Let him get away. Let him rip. Let him send his news over to old Goebbels in Germany! Yah!"

"Well, it wants some swallowing, old fat man!" said Bob. "I suppose there are plenty of Hun spies about—but they ain't to be picked up on the beach like sea shells. Tell us just where he is, and we'll jump on him so suddenly that it will make his head swim!"

"Well, if you like to walk along the beach, about half a mile, you'll see him!" said Bunter. "You know that chalk ridge that runs down from the cliffs to the sea—"

"Have you been so far as that, on your own legs, and lived to tell the tale?" asked Bob.

"Yah!"

"But what the thump do you mean, you fat ass?" asked Harry. "I suppose there isn't a Hun spy sitting on that chalk ridge, admiring the scenery, is there?"

"No, you fathead! But one's coming!" said Bunter. "I don't know exactly when, but it will be before high tide, of course. The water will be over it when the tide's in. If you fellows like to go along the beach

and keep watch, you'll see him coming."

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at the fat Owl. They could see that Billy Bunter knew something, or fancied that he knew something. But it was rather difficult to make head or tail of it.

"Is that so? How do you know?" demanded Nugent.

"I told you I'd been tracking the villains!" said Bunter. "I can tell you, I jolly well know. Suppose I saw that villain Brown leave something there, hiding it under a chunk of seaweed—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Never mind what it was," said Bunter hastily, "I'm not going to tell you that—I—I mean, I don't know! I expect it would be a letter—nothing in an oilskin bag, or anything of that sort."

"Something in an oilskin bag!" said Bob blankly.

"Oh, no! Nothing of the kind! Something or other—goodness knows what!" said Bunter astutely. "But when Brown hides something or other under a heap of seaweed, what do you think it means?"

"Left till called for, I suppose!" said Bob. "Can't have left it there to be washed away on the next tide."

"Well, I thought I'd tell you!" said Bunter. "I'd have stopped and nobbled the brute myself, only—only I mean to say, a fellow wants his tea. Besides, I've got some arrangements to make this afternoon—I shall be leaving shortly, I expect."

"Look here, did you really see this, or are you pulling our leg?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"I jolly well did! And if you like to keep an eye on that chalk ridge, you'll see somebody come along from Broadstairs, before the next tide, and hunt for something on top of that ridge! Mind, I don't know what Brown hid there," added Bunter cautiously. "All I know is that it was nothing in an oilskin bag—nothing of that kind at all."

And with that the fat Owl rolled off towards the gully, to clamber homeward, leaving the Famous Five staring after him blankly.

"That fat ass really has seen something!" said Harry Wharton slowly. "It was something in an oilskin bag—that's plain enough! A letter, perhaps—"

"Looks like it!" said Bob. "Goodness knows why he's telling whoppers about it—but I suppose he can't help telling whoppers! But he's seen what he told us."

The Famous Five had no doubt about that. The mention of the oilskin bag was convincing. Such an article could hardly have entered Bunter's fat head by chance; it was clear that he had seen an oilskin bag!

"What about it?" asked Bob. "Nobody seems able to bag that blighter Brown—but it would be something to bag one of his gang. If Bunter's got it right, that's the way Brown passes on news of some sort."

"We'll go and see!" said Harry at once. "Shove the boat up—we can

get it to the boathouse later. Leave it in the gully now."

"Good egg!"

The boat was dragged up out of reach of the sea.

Bob Cherry picked up the boat-hook and put it under his arm. If, by happy chance, a Hun spy was spotted on the chalk ridge, the boat-hook was likely to be a useful article.

The Famous Five hurried along the solitary beach. They were not feeling by any means sure, but they meant to look into the matter, at all events.

It did not take them long to cover the distance to the chalk ridge, barring the beach. Its height hid the farther beach from their eyes.

Bob Cherry stepped on a boulder and glanced over the top.

"Nobody in sight yet!" he announced.

"And there won't be anybody if you stick up there ornamenting the landscape!" remarked Johnny Bull. "Bet you the man will sheer off, if he sees anybody about."

"True, O king!" Bob jumped down. "This is where we take cover, my beloved 'earers! Lots of it about."

It was easy enough to find cover in a beach strewn with great chalk rocks.

The Famous Five picked a spot where they were screened from sight by a pile of boulders and whence they could keep watch on the chalk ridge.

There they sat in the sand and waited—wondering whether they would see some mysterious unknown come along from the direction of Broadstairs, and wondering, too, how late they were going to be for tea.

HOOKED!

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

Nearly an hour had passed since they had arrived at the chalk ridge.

The Famous Five still waited—with growing doubt, more than ready for their belated tea, and half-disposed to kick themselves for having taken any heed of the fat Owl's strange tale.

The tide was coming in and already washing over the lower end of the chalk ridge. It was creeping up the sand, and the juniors realised that, if they waited much longer, they would have to sprint to get back to the gully in Eastcliff Bay before it pinned them against the cliffs.

Bob was peering round the edge of a big chalk boulder, when he gave a little start and whispered to his comrades.

"Sister Anne, Sister Anne, do you see anybody coming?" yawned Johnny Bull.

"Quiet, ass! Look!"

"Somebody coming?"

"Yes!"

Five heads were moved cautiously. Keeping carefully in cover, and taking advantage of a mass of seaweed draping the heap of boulders,

the chums of the Remove looked out, scanning the chalk ridge.

It was no longer solitary. A figure was visible on it—that of a man in a stooping attitude.

It was an ordinary-looking figure enough, in tweeds. At any other time they would have passed it unheeded. But the man's occupation riveted their attention now.

Stooping, he moved along the top of the chalk ridge, obviously in search of something. They saw him grope in some crevice, and a grunt floated to their ears as if he was disappointed at finding nothing there.

Then he dragged aside a mass of seaweed and peered at the spot where it had lain. Three or four times this performance was repeated.

Plainly enough the man in tweeds was searching on the chalk ridge for something that he could not find.

"By gum!" breathed Bob. "That settles it! What?"

Harry Wharton nodded. What the juniors now saw bore out what the fat Owl had told them. Evidently the man in tweeds was looking for something he expected to find there—and there could be no doubt that it was the something that Bunter had seen Mr. Brown conceal.

He had not found it yet—but it was quite plain that he expected to find it.

The man rose upright at last, and the juniors saw him more clearly. He was a burly, heavily built, bull-necked man, with a harsh, ruddy face. The juniors had never seen him before, though, if they had only known it, Soames had, on the night of the air raid.

The man stood staring about him with an angry and puzzled expression on his face, plainly at a loss, and quite unaware that eyes were on him. He glanced at the incoming tide, creeping closer and closer. Then, with another angry, irritated grunt, he stooped and resumed searching over the rugged, broken surface of the chalk ridge.

"That man's not getting away!" whispered Harry Wharton. "It's pretty plain that he's hand-in-glove with Brown—we've a right to make him give an account of himself, at least. Mind he doesn't cut!"

"You bet!"

"Come on!" said Harry.

The juniors made a sudden rush out of cover and scrambled up on the chalk ridge.

The stooping man jerked upright, startled, staring at them. He was taken completely by surprise by their sudden appearance. If he had thought of flight, he had no time; the five juniors were round him almost in a moment.

"Looking for something?" asked Bob affably.

The bull-necked man in tweeds gave them a stealthy, suspicious glance. But his answer came at once in perfect English. If he was a German he had left his accent at home.

"Yes, I have dropped a penknife!"

Where have you boys come from? I did not see you."

"Oh, just sitting on the other side of those rocks!" answered Bob. "You've lost a penknife! We'll help you to look for it, shall we?"

"Yes, let's," said Nugent, with a grin.

The juniors watched the harsh face of the man in tweeds. That he had not dropped a penknife, they knew very well. If he was looking for something that a foreign spy had left for him to pick up, it was quite certain that he would not want assistance in the search!

"You need not trouble!" said the man in tweeds. "I have not asked for your help, and do not want it! You boys will be in danger here when the tide comes in a little farther—I advise you to go home at once."

"Oh, we'll help you find that penknife," said Bob. "Look round, you chaps, and see——"

The bull-necked man breathed hard, his eyes glinting. Five fellows searching in the crevices of the chalk ridge might have found something extremely disconcerting to the confederate of Mr. Brown.

"You will do nothing of the sort!" he snapped. "I have told you that I do not want your assistance."

"Oh, you can have it, all the same!" assured Bob. "We're frightfully obliging chaps!"

"That will do! You had better go, before I box your ears!" snapped the man in tweeds.

"Have you bought this beach?" asked Bob, still affably. "If you have, how many reichsmarks did you give for it?"

The man in tweeds gave a violent start. His eyes seemed to burn. The mention of German currency gave him a bad jolt.

"What do you mean, you young fool?" he exclaimed. "What——"

"My dear chap, I mean that we're going to help you find that penknife! Was it in an oilskin bag?" grinned Bob.

The man gave another jump. Evidently the "something" he was looking for he expected to find in an oilskin bag.

"You young scoundrel!" he shouted. "Then you have found it, before I reached here! You young rascal, give it to me at once—it is my property!"

"Haven't seen it, old bean!" said Bob. "But I fancy somebody else has. Like to take a walk with us?"

"What do you mean, you young fool?"

"We mean this," said Harry Wharton quietly. "We're going to see that you explain yourself to the police; and you can either come with us of your own accord, or we shall make you! Got that?"

The man backed away a pace, panting.

"The bobbies will be awfully glad to see you," remarked Bob, "and you can tell them where to call on your friend Brown! They'd like to know his address."

The man did not reply. He made

a sudden leap, springing down from the chalk ridge to the sand.

So swift and sudden was the leap, that he was out of reach of the juniors before a hand could be raised to seize hold of him.

But, as he cleared the ridge and landed on the sand, Bob Cherry reached after him with the boathook and hooked his leg.

In another second, the man would have been in full flight along the beach. But he was hooked in time. The sudden drag on his leg sent him spinning forward, and he crashed on his face in the sand.

"Come on!" roared Johnny Bull.

He leaped down from the ridge, landing on the man's sprawling legs. His comrades were after him in a flash.

The bull-necked man, dazed by the crash, made an effort to rise, but he was pinned by five pairs of hands. He rolled over, struggling and panting, and almost spitting with rage. But the Famous Five of Greyfriars were too many for him. He was dragged to his feet, two fellows grasping each of his arms, and, burly and powerful as he was, he had no chance of dragging himself loose.

"Coming for a walk?" asked Bob.

"Nein, nein!" yelled the man in tweeds, forgetting his acquired language in his rage as he struggled. "Das will ich nicht! Nein!"

"That rather puts the lid on!" grinned Bob. "I'm afraid we can't part with your company, Herr Hun—not till the bobbies have asked you a few questions. Just to give you a tip, it will make them suspicious if you answer them in German!"

"Come on!" said Harry. "We've no more time to lose—the tide's coming in fast!"

The man struggled savagely, and did not budge a step. The prospect of a walk with the Greyfriars fellows evidently had no attraction for him whatever.

"Get going!" said Bob. "We shall all get drowned at this rate, Herr Hun! Are you going to trot, or shall I help you with the boathook?"

The bull-necked man did not start—he struggled.

But a sudden application of the sharp end of the boathook made a lot of difference. He gave a frantic yell, and started.

And with two juniors on either side of him, holding his arms, and Bob Cherry walking behind with the boathook, he tramped savagely and furiously along the sands.

The chums of Greyfriars, at last, marched him up the gully to Eastcliff Lodge, with the tide lapping and surging almost at their heels.

TONS OF MONEY!

"I SAY, Wibley——"

Whiz!

Thud!

Sir William Bird, alias Wibley, was sitting in a deep armchair by the fireside in the library at Eastcliff Lodge.

Billy Bunter was sitting in another

armchair, with a thoughtful expression on his fat face.

Wibley was reading a "Modern Boy's Annual." He had a copy of "The Times" at hand, to spread over it, in case Blump should happen in. Billy Bunter was thinking—happy thoughts to judge by the grin on his fat face.

But when Bunter addressed him as Wibley, Sir William ceased to read, and used the Annual as a missile.

It landed on Bunter's well-filled waistcoat, and cut short his flow of speech quite suddenly.

Bunter roared.

"Oh! Ow! Beast! Wharrer you buzzing books at me for, you swab?"

"Say Wibley again, and I'll follow it up with the poker!" hissed Wibley ferociously.

"Beast!"

"Now give me my book back, and shut up!" said Sir William. "You've been quiet for ten minutes or more! Keep it up—it's such a pleasant change."

"I've a jolly good mind to chuck it at your cheeky head!" hooted Bunter. "Look here, you silly chump, I'm fed-up with this! See? I'm not staying here any longer! I'm going—see?"

"Who's the lucky man?" asked Wibley sarcastically. "Got Mauleverer on the phone at last?"

"I'm going to Devonshire for a holiday," said Bunter, with dignity. "The Easter hols will wind up pretty soon—well, I'm going to wind them up in Devonshire! Not that I'm afraid of bombs, or anything of that kind, you know—I've got pluck, I hope. But I prefer the West Country! Lots of people do."

"Lots!" agreed Wibley. "Especially your sort—in war-time! Better go on to Cornwall while you're about it, and squat at the bottom of a tin mine for the duration."

Snort, from Bunter.

Bunter was not going to admit, even to himself, that bombs had anything to do with his keen desire to finish the Easter holidays in the glorious county of Devon.

"Well, I'm going!" he snorted. "I shall catch an early train in the morning. I haven't been treated well here! You ask a fellow for Easter——"

"Did anybody ask you for Easter?" inquired Wibley. "Who was it?"

Another snort from Bunter.

"This afternoon I wanted the car," he went on. "I couldn't have the car, but those fellows have got it, to go over to Ramsgate——"

"Petrol's short, old fat bean! But they couldn't walk that Hun all the way to Ramsgate, holding on to his cars," said Wibley. "And he had to be handed over. So you're going? Mean to say that those chaps have been fatheaded enough to squeeze out that tenner, after all?"

Wibley was quite surprised to hear that Bunter was going. Obviously, he could not travel to Devonshire on the half-crown he had borrowed for the pictures that afternoon. It was, perhaps, worth a tenner to say good-bye to Billy Bunter; but

tenners, after all, were rare, and certainly did not grow on every bush.

Billy Bunter emitted a contemptuous sniff.

"I don't suppose they've got a tenner among the lot of them," he answered. "And if they had, I don't want it! I can pay my own way, I hope!"

"Eh?"

"I'm not the fellow to borrow money," said Bunter.

"My only suffering Aunt Sempronina."

"I've got lots, if you want to know," said Bunter crushingly—"tons! Mind, I never found it," he added hastily.

"I don't suppose you did," said Wibley, staring at him. "It's a bit uncommon to find tons of money. Sure it's tons, or only a hundredweight or so?"

"I think I mentioned that I was expecting some postal orders," said Bunter. "Well, they've come—that's all!"

"Well, you must have tons of money if you've got all the postal orders that I've heard you were expecting," agreed Wibley. "Rolling in oof, and no mistake! Look here, you fat ass, if you want to get off, I'll stand you your railway fare home. If that's what you want—"

"Keep it!" said Bunter scornfully. "I'm not going home, either! The pater's got a stunt about digging the garden for growing vegetables, and if I were at home I expect I should have to slog at it. I mean, I'm not going home because Bunter Court is in the hands of the decorators. I'm going to Devonshire, and I've got lots of money to see me through."

"Whose is it?" asked Wibley.

"Why, you beast!" roared Bunter. "If you don't believe that I've got lots of money—"

Wibley chuckled.

"Well, it wants some believing!" he remarked. "This afternoon you stuck five fellows for a tanner each to go to the pictures. You might have let them off if you had tons of money—or even hundredweights."

"It's come since," explained Bunter. "I'm jolly glad you didn't let me have the car, as it turned out. Not that that had anything to do with it, you know. I mean, I had a pleasant walk on the beach, and I spotted that Hun that the fellows have taken off in the car. That's why I'm glad you never let me have the car—not for any other reason."

"Well, let's see the tons of money!" grinned Wibley.

"Oh, all right—seeing is believing," jeered Bunter; and he hooked out a shabby notecase which, shabby as it was, was remarkably well supplied with that useful article, cash!

Wibley blinked at it. Seeing, as Bunter remarked, was believing. He had to believe that Bunter had, if not tons, at least a large quantity of money.

"Where on earth did you get all that cash, you fat fozler?" exclaimed Wibley, in astonishment, a little mingled with alarm. "What the thump have you been up to?"

"You see, I was expecting a good

many postal orders, and, as it happened, they all came on in a batch," explained Bunter airily. "I've told you about my rich relations more than once, Wibley!"

"If you say 'Wibley' again—"

"Oh rats! I'll say what I jolly well like!" snorted Bunter. "I'm going in the morning, and you can jolly well go and eat coke—see? You can keep your measly railway fare—I don't want it! And you can stick here to get a bomb on your nut—I'm not going to. Now I've got fifty pounds—"

"Fifty pounds!" gasped Wibley.

"Pooh! What's that?" said Bunter loftily. "It may seem a lot to you—you're poor! 'Tain't such a jolly lot to me; I'm used to wealth."

Wibley rose to his feet.

He was quite alarmed now. If a fellow who never had any money, and who that afternoon had touched five fellows in succession for a tanner each, was in possession of such a sum as fifty pounds, it was a matter that needed explaining.

"You unspeakable idiot," said Wibley. "Whose money is that, and how did you get hold of it?"

"Mine!" hooted Bunter. "Think I'd pinch it, you fathead?"

"Well, I don't think you'd pinch it—but it isn't yours, and can't be, so tell me at once where you got it!" snapped Wibley. "You unutterable idiot, do you think we want the bobbies to come here and run in a Greyfriars man?"

"Why, you—you cheeky beast!" gasped Bunter. "It's mine! You jolly well mind your own business, blow you!"

"This is my business, you fat idiot! How did you get hold of all those currency notes?" demanded Wibley.

"I had some postal orders—"

"You fat chump!" roared Wibley. "You haven't been near the post office to change postal orders, even if you had any, which you haven't."

"Oh, I—I mean, I—I had a cheque that—"

"A cheque!" gasped Wibley. "And who changed the cheque?"

"Oh! N-not a cheque! I don't mean a cheque. I mean a registered letter," stammered Bunter. "This is how it was—my pater was going to send me a cheque, but I said I preferred cash! See?"

"You gibbering idiot!"

"Yah!" Bunter rose, and gave the schoolboy actor a withering glare through his spectacles. "If that means that you doubt my word, Wibley, I decline to discuss the matter further. It's beneath a fellow's dignity to argue with a fellow who doubts a fellow's word! Yah!"

Having emitted that final scornful "yah" in tones of withering contempt, Billy Bunter turned away, to roll out of the library.

Wibley promptly grabbed him by a fat shoulder. Wibley was not letting him get away without explaining his possession of that astonishing sum of money. Obviously it could not be Bunter's; and whose it was, was a very urgent question.

"Leggo!" howled Bunter indignantly.

"You fat ass, tell me at once!"

"Will you leggo?"

"I'll jolly well bang your head on the table if you don't! Oh!" gasped Wibley.

Billy Bunter made a grab at a silvery beard.

That beard was fastened on securely enough for everyday use. But it was not fastened on securely enough to resist a sudden grab! It came off in Bunter's fat paw.

A smooth boyish chin was revealed, where that silvery beard had been attached!

"There, you beast!" gasped Bunter. "You leggo, or I'll have your mop off, too, like I did the other day! And if Blump blows in—"

Wibley grabbed at the beard!

He had to release the fat Owl to deal with that beard. Billy Bunter's mysterious possession of the sum of fifty pounds was not so important a matter as keeping up his impersonation of Sir William Bird!

Bunter shot to the door.

Wibley, in hot haste, adjusted the beard again. He was in dread of someone stepping in and seeing him without it.

Blump, the butler, would probably have jumped clear of the floor had he discovered that his master's venerable silvery beard was detachable!

"He, he, he!" Billy Bunter, with the door open, grinned back at Wibley. "Mind your own business, you swab! Think I want to stop here? Yah! I can jolly well find better places than this, where they ain't so jolly particular about sticking to the rations, either! I've a jolly good mind to tell Blump who you jolly well are before I go, too—so you can jolly well put that in your pipe and smoke it, Wibley! Rats to you! Yah!"

William Wibley gave the fat Owl a look that the fabled basilisk might have envied. The beard adjusted, he made a step towards Bunter.

Bunter promptly stepped out into the hall.

"Come on!" he chortled. "Come on, Wibley! I'll jolly well have that beard off again, and your wig, too! He, he, he! Come on!"

Wibley did not come on! The victorious fat Owl had the upper hand!

He grinned in at the doorway at Wibley, put his fat fingers to his fat little nose, and chortled.

Having thus expressed his lofty contempt for William Wibley and all his works, Billy Bunter banged the door, and rolled away, grinning—leaving Wibley with an expression on his face like unto that of the most Hunnish of Huns.

BED FOR BUNTER!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came back in time for dinner.

They came back in a very cheery and satisfied mood.

The bull-necked man had been detained for inquiries; and there was no doubt what the result of those

inquiries would be. The rascal would be unable to do further mischief. Which the Famous Five of Greyfriars justly considered was a feather in their caps.

They found Billy Bunter in a very happy mood; and Sir William with a worried look.

Billy Bunter grinned expansively over his soup. Plainly, the fat Owl was full of beans—the Co. did not yet know why.

"I say, you fellows, I'm going in the morning!" remarked Bunter. "I've told Wibley so."

The silver-haired little gentleman at the head of the table gave Bunter a look. In the presence of Blump and John, he could not give him anything more emphatic.

"Shurrup, you fat ass!" whispered Nugent.

"Eh? Why?" asked Bunter cheerfully. "I'm not going to give anything away. I can keep a secret, you know! Not that Wibley deserves it, after the way he's treated me. Still, I'm keeping mum!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at Bunter.

Often and often, Bunter mentioned Wibley's name accidentally—from sheer fatheadedness, as it were! But it was not fatheadedness this time! The fat Owl was deliberately mentioning that name to rag Wibley! That looked as if Bunter was in earnest about going in the morning. He was making himself as obnoxious as possible before he went.

"Not that I believe in keeping secrets," went on Bunter. "Bit too syrupstitionous to suit me, really. But you fellows don't object to syrupstitionousness as I do."

"We had a ripping sail this afternoon, Sir William," said Bob Cherry, by way of changing the topic.

"He, he, he!" from Bunter.

"I am glad to hear it, my young friend," said Sir William, in his throaty voice. "We are having a remarkably fine Easter—"

"I say, you fellows!"

"Topping weather!" said Harry Wharton. "And we're having a topping time!"

"Blessed if I see it!" said Billy Bunter. "I jolly well know I'm going! I'll take you fellows with me, if you like."

"Fathead!"

"I mean it," said Bunter. "I'll stand the lot of you a holiday in Devonshire, if you like! Wibley, too, if he likes to come!"

Expressive looks were wasted on Bunter. The fat Owl evidently was determined to go on talking about Wibley. He was safe from reprisals in the presence of Blump and John!

"This evening," continued Bunter. "I'm going to the pictures. I'll stand treat all round, if you fellows care to come."

"Can't afford to let you treat us, old fat man!" answered Bob, with a shake of the head.

"Yah! I'm going to have the car," went on Bunter. "I'm not walking, and I'm not rooting after a bus. I'm going to have the car! Blump!"

"Sir!" said Blump.

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"Let the chauffeur know that I shall want the car at eight."

Blump glanced at his master for instructions.

"I regret," wheezed Sir William, "that the car will not be available, Bunter."

"Won't it?" jeered Bunter. "Well, then, you'd better get this plain—that car had better be available when I want it. See?"

Blump gave a little start. John gave another. Bob Cherry stretched out his hand to a glass of water—but withdrew it. That method of silencing Billy Bunter was not suitable to the dining-room at Eastcliff Lodge.

"I shall want that car!" said Bunter. "See to it, Blump!"

Bunter said "See to it, Blump!" as Nero might have said "See to it, Tigellinus!" With fifty pounds in his pocket, and the world before him, Bunter had no further use for Eastcliff Lodge, or for Wibley. Bunter was jolly well going to spread himself just as he jolly well liked.

Blump ignored Bunter.

"Are you going to shut up, Bunter?" breathed Harry Wharton.

"No!" answered Bunter. "I'm going to have the car this evening, and Wibley had better see that I do, so yah!"

Billy Bunter furnished most of the conversation during that meal. The other fellows were glad when it was over. Bunter, in his present truculent mood, was rather difficult to deal with in the presence of the servants.

After dinner, Bunter rolled out into the hall and plumped his weight into an armchair by the fire.

The Famous Five gathered round that chair. They were able to deal with the fat Owl at last.

Bunter blinked at them with a cheery grin.

"It's eight!" he said. "Has Wibley told them to get that car ready? You'd better give him the tip to get a move on."

"You fat villain!" said Bob. "Blump must be wondering by this time who the dickens Wibley is."

"He, he, he!"

"You piffing porker—"

"Yah!"

"What do you think the servants will think, you fat cuckoo?"

"Blow 'em!" answered Bunter. "I'm fed-up with this show, and I'm going in the morning. Wibley can't expect a fellow to keep his syrupstitionous secrets if he doesn't treat a fellow decently! Go and tell him to order the car for me! Tell him that if he doesn't, I'll jolly well call him Wibley right under Blump's nose, so yah!"

"All hands on deck!" said Bob.

"I say—yaroooh!" roared Billy Bunter, as all hands suddenly grasped him and hooked him out of the armchair. "I say—leggo! Wharrer you up to? Will you leggo, you beasts?"

"Kim on!" said Bob.

Five pairs of hands swept Billy Bunter to the staircase. He roared as he was swept. Blump looked out into the hall in surprise, smiled, and retired again.

Billy Bunter went up the stairs faster than he had ever ascended a

staircase before! Spluttering, he arrived in the oak gallery above.

"Will you leggo?" he roared, "I'm going to the pictures!"

"You're going to bed!" answered Bob.

"What?" yelled Bunter.

"Bed!"

"You silly chump, I ain't going to bed! I'm going to the pictures, and I ain't coming home till twelve, and I can jolly well say, quite plainly—yooop!"

Bunter went headlong along the gallery! He went rolling into his room! There he was heaved up and plumped down on his bed, with a bump that almost shook the apartment.

"That's that!" said Bob. "Now you put your nose outside this room again this evening, and you'll be bumped in again, hard!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

The Famous Five quitted the room and shut the door.

Billy Bunter had asked for this—now he was getting it. But earnestly as he had asked for it, Bunter did not seem gratified by getting that for which he had asked.

The door flew open again, and a fat face glared out.

"I say, you fellows, if you think—" yelled Bunter.

"Bag him!"

Bunter was promptly bagged. He was swept off the floor. He gave a yell of horrid anticipation. His horrid anticipations were immediately realised.

Bump!

"Yaroooh!"

Bump!

"Oh crikey!"

Bump!

"Yurrrrooooooop!"

"Now roll him in!" said Bob. "Come out again when you want some more, Bunt. Lots more if you want it."

Bunter was rolled in and the door shut!

But he did not come out again! Bunter had had enough—and he did not want any more!

TURNED DOWN!

BILLY BUNTER came down at ten in the morning.

That was rather early for Bunter in holiday-time. But Bunter had to be a little early, with trains to catch. He had breakfasted in bed; and he came down ready for travel. Rather to his surprise, he found the Famous Five waiting for him in the hall.

He gave them a sour and indignant blink through his big spectacles. Bunter, it seemed, was peeved.

"Oh!" he grunted. "You're here!"

"Here we are, here we are, here we are again!" agreed Bob Cherry.

"Not gone out clambering over cliffs, or walking miles and miles, or shoving a boat about?" asked Bunter sarcastically.

"Not this morning, old fat bean! We want to see you, see?"

"Oh!" said Bunter.

He fixed his big spectacles on the



“Leggo!” roared Bunter, as Bob Cherry annexed one of his fat ears between finger and thumb. “If you think you’re going to borrow any of my money, you’re mistaken, see?” From behind the tree, Soames listened to every word.

Co. His gaze expressed the most withering scorn. His fat lip curled.

“I get you!” he jeered. “You’ve heard from Wibley—”

“Do you want to go back to bed?” asked Bob. “Say Wibley again, and back you go!”

“Beast! I’ll say what I jolly well like!” snorted Bunter. However, he did not say Wibley again. “You’ve been sticking in to see me, have you? You’ve heard that I’ve got lots of oof! You can be jolly civil all of a sudden.”

“Yes, we’ve heard that you’ve got lots of oof, Bunter!” said Harry Wharton quietly.

“Think I don’t know?” jeered Bunter. “Well, you’re not having any of it! I’d have taken the lot of you with me if you’d been decent! Now I won’t!”

At which the Famous Five smiled. They had heard from Wibley of Bunter’s new and sudden accession of wealth, and they viewed that amazing accession of wealth very seriously. But certainly they had no idea of helping Bunter to spend it. Their idea was that Bunter had better not spend it, or any of it, until he had accounted for its possession.

“Grin!” said Bunter scornfully. “You can stick here—bombs and all! I’m going to Devonshire for the rest of the hols! I’m going to have a jolly good time! So yah!”

“Where did you get all that tin, Bunter?”

“Find out!” retorted Bunter.

“You fat ass!” said Harry

Wharton. “We can’t let you land yourself in some awful trouble. If you’ve really got a wad of currency notes—”

“I’ve got fifty!” said Bunter coolly. “Nothing to me! I’ve told you that my people are rich!”

“Oh, don’t be an ass!” exclaimed the captain of the Remove impatiently. “Where did you get fifty pounds from?”

“I don’t mind telling you!” answered Bunter breezily. “I had a postal order—I mean a cheque—that is, a registered letter. Why shouldn’t I? I suppose my pater can send me fifty quids if he likes?”

“You had no registered letter yesterday—”

“Eh? How do you know I didn’t?”

“I’ve asked Blump!”

“Like your check!” said Bunter hotly. “No bizney of yours, Harry Wharton. You can stick your nose up in the Remove passage at Greyfriars if you like, swanking about as captain of the Form! You’re nobody here! Got that? Nobody! Less than nobody!”

Harry Wharton breathed hard.

“Are you going, you fat Owl?” he asked.

“Yes, I jolly well am!” declared Bunter emphatically. “I’m fed-up with this show! If I can’t have the car to the station, I’ll walk! See? I’m turning the whole lot of you down!”

Billy Bunter rolled across to the door.

“Stop!” said Harry.

“Shan’t!” hooted Bunter.

Harry Wharton stepped to the door and put his back to it.

Billy Bunter eyed that proceeding with almost breathless indignation.

“Why, you—you—you—” he gasped. “Gerrout of the way! What are you butting in for, you cheeky beast? Gerrout!”

“You’ve got to explain, you thumping chump!” exclaimed the captain of the Remove. “Do you want to be run in?”

“Run in!” gasped Bunter. “Why, you cheeky beast, what could I be run in for?”

“Don’t you know what the poet says?” asked Bob Cherry.

“He who snoops what isn’t his’n, Is pretty sure to go to prison!”

“Do you think I pinched it?” howled Bunter, gurgling with indignation. “Think I’d pinch quids, you beasts?”

The Famous Five eyed Bunter, puzzled and perplexed.

Bunter’s ideas on the subject of property were rather vague. Nobody’s tuck was safe from Bunter. So far as jam tarts and doughnuts went, he might have been a faithful disciple of Joe Stalin or Adolf Hitler. But even Billy Bunter had his limit—and really and truly it was impossible that he could have pinched those currency notes.

On the other hand, if he hadn’t, where had he obtained them? One thing was clear—they weren’t his!

In some mysterious way sudden
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wealth had come into Bunter's fat hands. It did not and could not belong to him. The juniors felt that they could not let him walk off with it—with the awful possibility of an officer in blue tapping him on a fat shoulder to inquire about it.

Bunter had to be saved from his own fatheadedness.

"Will you tell us where it came from, Bunter?" asked Nugent, at last.

"Yes—Bunter Court!"

"You fat, fibbing frump!" roared Johnny Bull. "Chuck it! If you came by it honestly, you can tell the truth about it."

"So it came from Bunter Court, did it?" asked Harry.

"Yes—tip from my pater!" said Bunter cheerfully.

"Do you mind if I ring up your pater on the telephone and ask him?"

"Eh? What? Don't you jolly well do anything of the kind!" exclaimed Bunter, in alarm. "If the pater knew about this, he would jolly well put his foot down!"

"If he knew about it!" shrieked Bob. "And you've just told us he sent it to you for a tip!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I mean, it—it wasn't my pater! It was my Uncle George!"

"Your uncle sent you fifty quids in a chunk?" howled Johnny Bull.

"Yes! Nothing to him—a mere trifle!" assured Bunter. "He's rolling in it! Sticky with oof, in fact! Fifty pounds is absolutely nothing to my Uncle Herbert!"

"Your Uncle Herbert?"

"I—I mean, George! Now let me pass, you beast! I'm going! If you wanted my company here, you should have been more civil about it before this! It's too late now—I'm turning you down!"

"Blessed if I can make it out!" said Harry Wharton. "He can't have pinched it, I suppose. But it can't be his—he must have found it somewhere. Somebody dropped a notecase, perhaps. He's potty enough to think that findings are keepings, till a policeman explains to him that they aren't!"

"That's it, I expect," said Johnny Bull, with a nod.

"Did you find it, Bunter?"

"That's telling!" answered Bunter astutely.

"Then you did find it?"

"Oh, no, nothing of the kind! My Uncle Rupert——"

"You burbling bloater, you never had a letter of any kind yesterday!"

"Special messenger!" explained Bunter. "Being in cash, you know, my Uncle William sent it by hand, for safety, you know!"

"Will you tell us where you got all that money, you frightful chump?"

"I've told you! It was a tip from the pater—I mean my Uncle William—that is, Herbert! Now you jolly well mind your own business, and let a fellow get out!" hooted Bunter. "Blump! I say, Blump!"

The butler came out of the service doorway and crossed the hall.

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Bunter yelled to him.

Blump glanced round.

"Yes, sir?"

"Open that door for me, Blump!"

Blump looked at him, and looked at Harry Wharton.

He had heard that Master Bunter was going that morning, and his impression was that Master Bunter's departure would be an improvement of the landscape. It was rather a surprise to Blump to see anyone impeding that departure.

Harry Wharton, compressing his lips, stepped away from the door.

Exactly what to do in the peculiar circumstances he did not quite know. He did not want to draw the general attention of Eastcliff Lodge to the fact that Bunter had a sum of money in his possession that did not belong to him.

He stepped aside—and Billy Bunter, with a triumphant fat grin, rolled out.

Outside the doorway he glanced back, with a scornful blink through his big spectacles.

"Yah!" said Bunter. "I'm turning you down—the lot of you! Yah!"

And with that valediction the fat Owl rolled away down the avenue.

BUNTER KNOWS BEST!

SOAMES stepped quickly behind a tree.

The sea-lawyer had been leaning on the trunk of that tree on the road over the cliffs that led from Eastcliff Lodge to the village.

His keen eyes under the brim of his hat were watching the road in either direction, and every now and then he glanced over the grassy cliffs and at Eastcliff Lodge at a little distance.

Anyone who had noticed Soames might have guessed that he was on the watch. Perhaps he was on the look-out for a man with blond eyebrows, for it was certain that Soames, for some mysterious reason of his own, was deeply interested in the movements of Mr. Brown, the spy who kept secret watch on Sir William Bird's residence.

But no one observed Soames on the watch, for when there was an occasional passer-by on the lonely road, he stepped behind the tree and remained there till the spot was clear again.

This time it was a fat figure rolling up the road from the gate of the lodge that caused Soames to step out of sight.

It was only Billy Bunter; and had Bunter seen Soames, probably he would have taken to his heels. But Soames did not want attention drawn to his presence, and he backed behind the tree to allow the fat junior to roll by unseeing.

From that cover he fixed a rather curious eye on Bunter as he came nearer.

Bunter had not covered much distance, so far, on his way to the railway station, but his fat face was pink with exertion, and he grunted as he rolled. At the same time, he

grinned continually, as if at very happy thoughts.

Something, it seemed, had happened to buck Bunter up. He really looked like a fellow who had come into a fortune!

He had nearly reached the spot where Soames stood watching when he paused to push back his cap and mop a fat, perspiring brow, and Soames heard him ejaculate:

"Cheeky beasts!"

Bunter, apparently, was thinking of the friends he had left behind him.

Soames, looking past him, saw five figures turn out at the gate of Eastcliff Lodge. They stood in the road, glancing round them for a moment, and then, spotting Bunter, came after him at a trot.

The sea-lawyer packed himself still more carefully behind the thick, massive tree-trunk.

Harry Wharton & Co.'s eyes were rather keener than Billy Bunter's.

There was a patter of feet on the road, and Bunter blinked back through his big spectacles. At the sight of the Famous Five, he gave an angry and contemptuous snort.

"Hold on, old fat man!" called out Bob Cherry.

"Shan't!" yapped Bunter.

He rolled on his way, regardless. But in a few moments the juniors overtook him, and Bob annexed a fat car between finger and thumb.

"Hold on!" he said.

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "Leggo! If you think you're going to borrow any of my money, you're mistaken—see? You refused to lend me ten pounds yesterday—you jolly well know you did! Well, I ain't lending you anything!"

"You howling ass——"

"Leggo my car, you beast!" yelled Bunter.

Bob released the fat car; but the five juniors placed themselves in a circle round Bunter.

He had to come to a halt. He halted under the shady branches of the roadside tree, behind the trunk of which a stealthy figure was invisible from the road.

"I say, you fellows, wharrer you want?" demanded Bunter. He was perplexed, as well as peeved. "I can jolly well tell you that I ain't lending you any of my fifty pounds. You can take that from me! You can't expect it after the way you've treated a fellow!"

"We've come after you, you fat frump, to speak to you where all Eastcliff Lodge can't hear!" said Harry Wharton. "Now——"

"I ain't coming back!" said Bunter firmly. "I've said that I've turned you down, and I mean it! I'm fed up with the lot of you! Perhaps you understand what you're losing now! Well, it's your own fault! I simply refuse to have anything more to do with you!"

"You unspeakable idiot!"

"Yah!"

"Before you go," said Harry quietly, "you've got to explain where you got that fifty pounds. We can't let you walk off with it, and perhaps land yourself in Borstal! If

you've found it, it's not yours—it must be taken to the police station!"

"Beast!"

"Can't you understand that a policeman could run you in for keeping it?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "Do you want to be taken before a magistrate?"

"I never found it," yelled Bunter—"at least, not what you'd call finding it! It's mine! My Uncle Philip can send me fifty quids if he likes, without asking you! Now let a chap pass—I've got to catch a train!"

"Will you tell us where that money came from, you benighted cuckoo?"

"Beast!"

"Bump him!" said Johnny Bull. "Keep on bumping him till he coughs it up! We can't let a Greyfriars man be run in!"

The circle of juniors closed in on Bunter.

To leave that extraordinary matter where it was, was impossible. Bunter had to explain. If the money, by some amazing possibility, was his, he could walk off with it, and the sooner the better. If it was not, the consequences of walking off with it were too terribly serious.

"Last time of asking!" said the captain of the Remove. "Cough it up, or——"

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Bump him!"

"I say—yoo-whoop!"

Bump!

"Oh crikey! Leggo!" roared Bunter. "I say, I don't mind telling you! Beasts! Will you leggo?"

"Cough it up, then, you silly owl!" growled Johnny Bull. "We can't waste all the morning on you."

"Mind your own business!" howled Bunter. "Who asked you to butt in, I'd like to know!"

"Give him another!"

"Hold on, you rotters—I'm just going to tell you!" howled Bunter. "I got it yesterday, you beasts! It's mine! That man Brown left it hidden for the other man to pick up, on the chalk ridge. Now you know, you rotters!"

"Oh!" gasped all the juniors together.

"It's jolly well mine!" declared Bunter. "That beast Brown is a spy, and would be run in if the bobbies could spot him. The other man is a spy, and has been run in. They're both Huns. Well, this is a capture from the enemy, see? I got it, and it's mine."

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at Bunter blankly.

Not for a moment had they thought of such an explanation as this.

They had supposed that Mr. Brown had left some sort of a letter for his confederate to pick up, and as the bull-necked man had not found it before they interrupted him, they had no doubt that it had been washed away by the tide.

Certainly it had never occurred to them that it was a wad of currency notes that Mr. Brown had parked there—and that the fat Owl of the Remove had annexed the same.

"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton. He remembered Bunter's mention of an oilskin bag. "That scoundrel

Brown left money there in an oilskin bag, is that it?"

"Suppose he did?" snorted Bunter. "Think I was going to leave it there?"

"So that's it!" said Bob.

"I ain't whacking it out!" said Bunter. "I captured it, and it's jolly well mine! Sort of treasure trove, see?"

"Well, my hat!" said Nugent. "It's a German spy's money—pay for the other rotters who work with him, I suppose."

"Too dirty for a decent chap to touch!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"You silly chump!" said Bunter. "Fifty whole quids!"

Bunter evidently did not think that that sum was too dirty to touch. Bunter seemed to share the opinion of the old Roman emperor, that the smell of all money was sweet.

"Now you jolly well mind your own business, and sheer off!" snorted the fat Owl. "I ain't whacking it out, and I ain't lending you any! Go and eat coke, the lot of you!"

"You've no right to keep it!" said Harry. "I don't know how the law stands in such a matter, but it's perfectly plain that it ought to be handed over at the nearest police station."

"Rot!" said Bunter.

"Have a little sense, you fat duffer!" said the captain of the Remove. "You can't possibly keep it without saying anything."

"Can't I?" grinned Bunter.

"It must belong to the Government!" said Nugent.

"The Government didn't find it—I found it!" said Bunter. "It's mine. I'm perfectly satisfied about that. Now leave a fellow alone."

"For goodness' sake, Bunter, take it to the police station at Eastcliff, and get rid of it, before you land in trouble!" said Harry. "We'll come with you, if you like."

"Who wants your company?" jeered Bunter. "I jolly well don't! All I want is to see the last of you."

The Famous Five stood nonplussed.

Not one of them doubted that money found in such circumstances ought to be handed over to the authorities at once. It did not need a knowledge of the law—only common sense. But common sense had never been Billy Bunter's long suit.

"I'm going to do just as I jolly well choose!" said Bunter emphatically. "Think you're going to boss me? I fancy I know best! Yah!"

Bunter, like the deep and dark blue ocean in the poem, rolled on.

Harry Wharton raised his hand—and dropped it again.

"This will mean trouble for you, Bunter!" he said. "If you've got a spot of sense, you'll walk into the police station and report the matter at once."

Snort, from Bunter.

"If you had as much sense in your brain-box as I've got in my little toe, you'd be ten times as clever as you are, Harry Wharton!" he retorted. "Think I don't know my way about? Yah!"

The Famous Five, quite at a loss, gazed after Bunter as he went,

Johnny Bull gave a grunt.

"Suppose we collar the fat ass and yank him along to the police station by his ears?" he suggested. "If he can keep the money, they will tell him so."

"Um!" said Harry. "Blessed if I know what we ought to do. I suppose Bunter's his own master, if you come to that. But——"

"The butfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The juniors walked slowly back to Eastcliff Lodge. Talking to Bunter was useless, and they hardly felt disposed to adopt the drastic measure suggested by Johnny Bull.

Had it been a case of "findings keepings," as they had supposed, their course would have been clear. But the case was so peculiar that they hardly knew how to deal with it; and Bunter, after all, was his own master. But it was a worried party that walked back to the lodge.

After they were gone Soames stepped out from behind the tree.

There was a smile on the seaviewer's face as he walked quickly away, taking the direction that Billy Bunter had taken.

RICHES TAKE UNTO THEMSELVES WINGS!

"MASTER BUNTER——"

Billy Bunter was grunting between warmth and exertion when that soft, sleek voice spoke. But at the sound of it, Bunter's grunt changed into a squeal of alarm.

He spun round on the dusty, sunny road, and blinked at Soames.

It was warm that morning, and sunny, and rather dusty in the wind, and Billy Bunter's thoughts up to that moment had been chiefly concentrated on the awful hardship of having to walk to the railway station. Even the fifty pounds in his pockets did not wholly console him for that hardship.

But he forgot all about hot sunshine and dust, and the fatigue in his fat little legs, as he blinked at James Soames.

"Oh crikey!" said Bunter, in a gasping voice.

"A nice morning, Master Bunter!" said Soames, in his smooth, deferential valet manner, which had a spot of mockery in it.

"Oh! Yes! Fine!" gasped Bunter. "G-g-g-good-bye, Soames!"

"You look a little fatigued," said Soames, with respectful sympathy. "Perhaps you would like to sit down for a few minutes and rest, Master Bunter, and chat with an old friend—if I may call myself such, with due regard to the difference in our positions."

Nothing could have been more urbanely respectful than Soames' manner. But Billy Bunter was aware exactly how much that was worth. When Soames was about Bunter felt rather like a fat mouse in the presence of a cat!

"I—— Oh! No! Yes! I—I mean no!" stammered Bunter. "I—I've

got a train to catch, Soames! Another time—"

"No time like the present, Master Bunter!" smiled Soames. "Your holidays will soon be at an end and at your school I could hardly hope to enjoy a chat with you. I fear that I should not be persona grata there—if it is not presumption on my part to quote Latin."

"I—I—"

"Pray accede to my request, Master Bunter," urged Soames. "I fear that it would not be consistent with the respect due to you to take you by the collar—yet that is precisely what I shall do, if you argue the point."

Billy Bunter cast a wild blink up and down the road.

But it was a lonely road by the sea, and no one was in sight. In fact, it was plain that Soames had picked his moment when no one was in sight for closing in on the fat junior.

"This way, Master Bunter!" said Soames amicably.

Bunter would gladly have taken to his heels. But as Soames' long legs could cover the ground at least six times faster than Bunter's little fat ones, that was useless as a resource.

"I—I—I say, I—I've got to catch a train!" mumbled Bunter.

"Quite so—this way!"

In a state of trepidation the fat Owl moved off the road with Soames.

A sinewy hand was ready to grab his collar, and there was no help for it.

At that point the road was bordered by a high hawthorn hedge. Soames

led the way through a gap, and stopped when the hedge hid them both from the sight of passers-by. He pointed to a grassy knoll, and Bunter sank down on it—he was glad to rest his weary legs, at any rate.

Soames remained standing, with an affectation of respect that was more terrifying than reassuring.

"I—I—I say, wharrer you want, Soames?" mumbled Bunter.

He was deeply scared by the sea-lawyer. He was puzzled, too. Soames was a dangerous enemy; but the fat Owl could not see that he had any cause for enmity now. It was plain that Soames wanted something.

"I am going to give you some advice, Master Bunter!" said Soames smoothly. "Please do not regard it as presumption—advice from a man of my experience is always useful to a young gentleman of your years."

Bunter blinked up at him.

"Wharrer you mean?" he gasped.

"You are in a somewhat difficult position," explained Soames. "Probably you are unacquainted with the law on the subject of having contact, or dealings of any kind, with enemy aliens. The money you have found—"

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered Bunter.

His eyes popped at Soames.

Soames knew. How he knew seemed like magic to Bunter—as he had not the slightest idea that Soames had been behind a tree, a quarter of a mile back along the road, during his interview with the Famous Five. But he could see that

Soames knew about that treasure-trove.

"Is it not a fact that you have found a sum of money, placed in a particular spot by one German spy, to be picked up by another?" asked Soames.

"Oh, no! Nothing of the kind!" stuttered Bunter. "Wha-at's put that idea into your head, Soames?"

"This is unworthy of you, Master Bunter," said Soames, with gentle reproach. "It is very wrong to tell untruths—as well as useless, in this particular case. The money you have found—"

"I—I—I haven't—" stammered the fat Owl. "I haven't got any money about me, Soames—there ain't any pound notes in my notecase, and the other half ain't in my trousers pocket, either."

Soames smiled genially. "I am going to give you some advice, Master Bunter, which may be useful to you," he said. "Honesty is the best policy. I have not always observed this valuable precept myself, I confess, but it may be useful to you to learn that I should have been much better off at the present time had I done so. You are welcome to the fruit of my experience, Master Bunter."

"I—I say, I—I shall lose my train—"

"In such a case as this," continued Soames, unheeding, "the money should be handed over to the proper authority without delay. You should have taken it at once, Master Bunter, to the nearest police station and reported the whole occurrence, as your friends advised you to do. You are liable to certain penalties for not having done so."

"Oh lor'!"

"The solution of this difficulty, however, is quite simple," went on Soames. "You may hand Mr. Brown's currency notes over to me—"

"Eh?"

"That will relieve you of all responsibility," explained Soames. "I—I—I don't mind the responsibility!" stammered Bunter. "I—I—I don't mind it at all, Soames!"

"I cannot permit you to act in a thoughtless manner, and incur all sorts of legal penalties," said Soames, shaking his head. "I will take the whole responsibility—and the whole sum! Do you understand?"

"Look here—"

"It is an odd thing," said Soames musingly, "that while I have been trailing Mr. Brown for whole weeks, it is an utter blockhead like you, Master Bunter, who has succeeded where I have failed. It is very odd indeed. However, if you entrust Mr. Brown's currency notes to my keeping, there is no harm done. I advise you to do so."

"T-t-t-thank you for your advice," mumbled Bunter. "But—but I—I think I'll keep them, Soames."

"I am sorry for that," said Soames regretfully. "It will be very painful to me to use harsh measures, Master Bunter. I was always a man for gentle and peaceful methods. It is not for me, however, to argue with a young gentleman in your position, and if you really prefer me to twist

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your fat neck till your eyes pop out—"

"Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter's shabby notecase came into view in a twinkling. A wad of notes from his trousers pocket followed it.

It was a wrench for Bunter. The fact that the currency notes did not belong to him was not much of a consolation.

Soames smiled at the sight of the plunder.

"You feel that you would prefer to entrust Mr. Brown's funds from the Gestapo into my keeping, Master Bunter?" he asked.

"No—I—I—I mean yes," groaned Bunter.

"Thank you very much, Master Bunter."

Billy Bunter's eyes and spectacles mournfully watched the currency notes disappear.

Soames, with a polite bow, handed him back the shabby notecase.

"I—I say, I—I haven't got two-and-six in my other pocket," gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"I—I haven't, really! The fellows never lent me a tanner each, to go to the pictures yesterday. Besides, I spent it!"

Soames looked at him. Soames, without a twinge of conscience—if he had a conscience—was taking the notes that had belonged to the agent of the Gestapo. But, really, Soames was incapable of pinching a half-crown from a schoolboy. Billy Bunter's fears for that half-crown were quite unfounded.

"I haven't got two-and-six!" gasped Bunter. "I—I spent it yesterday, Soames! The fellows never lent it to me, either. Besides, I paid them back."

Soames did not answer him in words. He took a fat ear between a finger and thumb, and jerked Bunter to his feet. By that fat ear, he led him back to the gap in the hedge.

There he released the ear, leaving Bunter standing facing the road. Then he drew back his foot, and delivered a powerful kick.

"Yoo-hoop!" roared Bunter.

He flew into the road, where he landed on his fat hands and knees.

Soames, without wasting another glance on him, walked away across the field.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter.

"Beast! Oh crikey! Wow!"

He scrambled to his feet.

Soames was gone!

Billy Bunter was left alone on the sunny, dusty road. He wriggled, and spluttered for breath. And he did not resume his way to the railway station.

That holiday in Glorious Devon was off now.

The West Country was as attractive as ever; but the landscape of Devon or Somerset was not going to be brightened by the attractive visage of Billy Bunter. He was not going to bring up the surplus population of Bristol to sixteen thousand and one! Riches had taken unto themselves wings, and flown away. A collection of five tanners obviously

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the MAGNET, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.

SOME of you may be a little tired of seeing these words: "ORDER EARLY!" yet in circumstances like the present—for there's a war on still—they are necessary.

New readers are swelling our ranks every day, and Saturday—the publication day of the MAGNET—is becoming a Red Letter Day in almost every home. The demand for the Old Paper is bigger than ever. See to it, then, chums, that you are on the safe side of the counter by placing a regular order for *your* MAGNET every week. An Order Form for this purpose has appeared frequently in this paper. Safety First, especially in war-time, is a slogan worth remembering.

Interest in the MAGNET characters grows apace. I am getting snowed under with queries about what goes on behind the scenes at Greystriars. Here's a sample, for instance: How many "bobs" has Billy Bunter borrowed? How many "stink-bikes" has Coker smashed up? How many pound notes has Lord Mauleverer changed? How many cigarettes has Vernon-Smith smoked? I'm afraid answering such questions as these is rather difficult! To tabulate all such information would take up too much valuable time. Even Mr. Frank Richards, brilliant man as he undoubtedly is, cannot be expected to keep facts like these in mind! I do my best to answer all reasonable requests for information. My working time, and, incidentally, a great deal of my leisure time, is yours, and always will be, so long as I sit in the editorial chair. But there's a limit!

Here are some

REPLIES IN BRIEF

to readers' queries, and which I really must find room for this week:

JAMES L. (Walthamstow), who says he is a fervent admirer of the Greystriars stories, asks me where Mr. Frank Richards lives. Well, James L., Mr. Richards would not, I think, thank me for publishing his exact private address here—it

would not see Bunter through his intended trip. It was Eastcliff Lodge or nothing!

Bunter had turned down Eastcliff Lodge and the Easter party there. His only resource now was to turn them up again. And, with deep feelings, the fat Owl started plugging back along that sunny, dusty road, the way he had come.

The fat junior's riches had taken unto themselves wings, and the only thing for him to do was to return to Eastcliff Lodge!

might lead to an embarrassing number of visitors and correspondents! But I will tell you this much—Mr. Richards has for many years past lived in the county of Kent.

MARY S. (Bristol) writes me a very nice letter, in the course of which she says: "I expect you will think it funny that I am a MAGNET reader, as I am a girl." Bless you, Mary, you are not the only girl MAGNET reader by several thousands. Every day my postbag contains dozens of letters from girl readers. And why not? The MAGNET is perfectly clean and wholesome in its tone, and can be read by any and every member of the family—and generally it is! Hundreds of girls have written to say that they prefer the MAGNET to any other paper published.

JOHN B. (Luton) asks how much can Billy Bunter eat? The answer is, too much. To put the matter to actual test would be rather too expensive an undertaking, I am afraid. The amazing thing about Bunter is that he can gorge himself like a bo-constrictor, take a short nap, and wake up again ready for a hearty meal!

Acknowledgments for their excellent letters go to: V. Lewis (Studley), G. Jade (Cheshunt), R. Casker (Durham), P. D. Robinson (Bournemouth), H. Ellis (Yorks), C. R. King (Cheshire), L. Edwards (Blackpool), E. Fayne (Surrey), E. Smith (Surrey), D. Burge (Eltham), and the hundred and one readers who have thanked me for the Greystriars map published in a recent issue.

Now for a word or two about

"THE NAZI SPY'S SECRET!"

By Frank Richards,

the final yarn in our present popular series of school yarns, which will appear in next Saturday's MAGNET. Alone and unaided, Harry Wharton sets out to shadow the enemy spy who is lurking within the vicinity of Eastcliff Lodge. Luck is against the plucky Greystriars junior, however, for he falls into the merciless hands of the enemy! Things are looking very black for Wharton, when Soames unexpectedly comes to his rescue. What is the spy's secret? What mysterious part is Soames playing? The answers to these questions will be found in this full-of-thrills yarn. My advice to you is, don't miss it!

YOUR EDITOR.

TURNED UP!

THE ass!"

"The chump!"

"The fathead!"

"The terrific toad!"

"The howling goat!"

"Blow him!"

Six fellows were discussing Bunter. Sir William was sitting in the library at Eastcliff Lodge, and the Famous Five were with him. And they were all worried.

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Bunter's departure, in itself, was no disaster. Devon and Somerset were welcome to Bunter—more than welcome! It was the matter of the fifty pounds that worried the Greyfriars fellows.

It was clear what Bunter ought to have done. But, apart from that, the juniors were anxious about the consequences to Bunter. All sorts of pains and penalties might be attached to what he was doing. The juniors would not, perhaps, have missed Bunter fearfully had he not turned up at Greyfriars next term. But really, they did not want him to turn up at Borstal.

"The ass—the clump—the fat-head! Blow him!" said Wibley. "Nothing we can do, I suppose—"

"Might have booted him before he went," remarked Johnny Bull.

"Well, he's gone!" said Harry. "I suppose we shan't see him again. But—"

"I say, you fellows!"

There was a general jump at the sound of that familiar voice.

Six fellows spun round, as if moved by the same spring.

The library door had opened. A familiar fat figure rolled in—dusty and perspiring. Two little round eyes blinked at the juniors through a pair of big round spectacles.

"Bunter!" said six voices, in unison.

"Blump said you were all in here," said Bunter. "I thought I'd let you know at once that I'd changed my mind—I knew how you'd miss me, old chaps."

They gazed at him.

They were, in point of fact, glad to see Bunter again—in the peculiar circumstances. But they were surprised. They had not expected to see him. Why he had returned was a mystery. But Johnny Bull put his finger on the solution of the mystery.

"Lost the money?" he asked.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"You haven't lost it!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Of course I haven't! I'm not a fellow to lose money!"

"All right, then," said Wibley. "You'll take it to the police station at once, and that's that!"

"So I would, if I still had it, if you make a point of it," said Bunter. "After all, what's money between friends?"

"If you still had it!" yelled Bob.

"You said you hadn't lost it!"

"I haven't, either!"

"Then you've still got it?"

"N-n-no, I haven't got it!" admitted Bunter. "That isn't why I've come back, of course. I've come back because I'm sticking to my old pals, like I said I would. The fact is, I like you fellows too much to leave you. I don't think you're a stuck-up ass, Wharton—"

"Don't you?" gasped Wharton.

"Not at all, old chap! I don't think the other fellows are a lot of louts. Nothing of the kind! Never saw such a really jolly crowd!" said Bunter. "If I still had the money I'd hand it to the nearest bobby, to oblige you! As if I care for money! I—"

"Where is it?" roared Bob.

"I don't know."

"You don't know?" gasped Wibley.

"No—Soames never told me where he was going with it—"

"Soames!" yelled the juniors.

"Yes—Soames grabbed it off me, the beast! That isn't why I've come back, of course—got absolutely nothing to do with it. If you fellows think it ought to be reported to the police, I don't mind. I've no objection to telling them that Soames grabbed it off me, while I was on my way to the police station with it—"

"While you were—what?" howled Bob.

"Oh, my hat!"

There was the sound of a gong from the hall.

Billy Bunter pricked up his fat ears. It denoted a meal!

"I say, you fellows, that's lunch!" he exclaimed. "I say, ain't it jolly lucky I got back in time for lunch? I might have been late, you know. But it's all right. I say, thank goodness lunch is ready! I'm famished!"

"You fat villain—"

Bunter did not stay to hear more. Lunch called—an irresistible call. He rolled away to the dining-room—first in the field. Billy Bunter had lost his new-found wealth. But it was a good lunch—there was still balm in Gilead!

The Easter party, having been turned down, had been turned up again—and they stayed up, so to speak. Billy Bunter had declared that he would stick to his old pals—and he did stick, like a limpet!

THE END.

(Don't miss "THE NAZI SPY'S SECRET!"—the final yarn in this grand series. You'll find it in next Saturday's MAGNET.)

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