



The Coach Starts for Canterbury.

IT was snowing—how it was snowing! Drifts of snow—some nearly five feet deep—lay in every corner. The chairmen carrying the sedan-chairs slipped and stumbled as they went along, and the old ladies inside screamed out in affright. Even the horses in the chaises and phaetons could hardly keep their feet, and it seemed as though the postillions on their backs would fall off any moment.

Thomas Merriewood, fifteen years of age, captain of the Remove Form at Greyfriars School, drew his great-coat about him and plodded gaily through the London streets. Whatever other people thought about it, Tom liked the snow; and even the fact that he was returning to school after the Christmas holidays could not damp his spirits. The tassel on his cap swung merrily to and fro as he walked.

It was foggy in London, and link-boys were in great demand. These ragged little boys, carrying their flaming torches, were dodging about everywhere, offering their services to old men who could not see their way. At the corner of the street a crowd of shivering men and boys were warming their fingers at a hot-pieman's stand, and blinking delightedly at the glowing coals.

Wearisome as the journey was going to school in the good old days it certainly lacked nothing in adventure—with "knights of the road" lurking along the highway.

"B-r-r-r!" said Tom, and his breath, as he said it, went up like a cloud of steam. "It's cold. And those hot pies look tempting. I expect they're made of dog, or something—but here goes!"

He bought a hot pie, and went on, munching happily. The warmth of the pie made him feel glowing all over, and he felt like jumping about in sheer delight.

The steam was rising from the horses' backs as they went along, like drying-day at a big laundry. Coachmen and footmen were almost invisible for the fog and the steam; but

everybody seemed jolly, and they called out New Year greetings as they passed.

Presently Tom reached the Borough,

and made his way into the Market Inn. Drawers and waiters were bustling about serving dinner, and Tom sat down and had a good meal.

The Canterbury coach started from the Market Inn, and every place was booked. Tom had taken an outside ticket three days previously, so he had no reason to worry. But many fat and panting old gentlemen came along for seats on the coach, and were angry when they found it was full.

"Gadzooks!" roared one old chap in a green coat with a white pigtail. "How am I going to get to Canterbury—hey? Answer

me that? 'Faith, can't you speak—a plague on ye!"

"Very sorry, sir," said the ticket clerk. "All the seats are taken. You can hire a chaise, if you like——"

"And what about the cost, drat ye?" stormed the old man furiously. "D'ye think I've got money to throw away on chaises—hey? I want a seat in the coach."

The poor ticket clerk suggested that perhaps they might manage to crowd the old gentleman inside, but all the other inside passengers sternly refused. The old gentleman finally went away grumbling, to make a voyage down river on a steamer as far as Gravesend, and then get a conveyance from there.

The coach arrived prompt to time—with four beautiful horses, eager to be off along the snowy high road. The coachman, the guard, and the ostlers, after taking a glass of punch to keep the cold out, threw themselves fiercely on the passengers' luggage, and began stacking it in the boot—a place underneath the coach specially reserved for luggage.

"Now, then, gen'lmen," said the coachman, at length, "get in, if you please. Time we were off, if we're going to make Canterbury to-day. The snow is mortal deep at some places in Kent."

Tom climbed to his seat on the roof of the coach, three stout gentlemen and one thin lady climbed inside, and five other passengers followed Tom to the outside. One of these passengers, to Tom's joy, was his special chum, Roger Bates.

"'Faith, Roger," laughed he, "'tis great to see thee again, old lad. Didst have a good time?"

"Couldn't ha' been better, Tom," answered Roger gaily. "Zooks! This coach ever going to start?"

The coachman climbed to his seat and caught hold of the ribbons. The guard blew a mighty blast from his long key-bugle, and the ostlers caught the horses' heads.

"Right!" cried the coachman, puffing after his climb. "Run 'em out, George! Who-oa! That'll do, George! Give 'em their heads!"

And away went the coach along the Borough, the guard blowing his bugle, the

two chums shouting, and the coachman cracking his whip in the air.

Hunch, the Highwayman!

FAIRLY soon London was left behind, and the coach was passing through the village of Walworth. The cottagers came out and stared at it, and waved their hands. Tom and Roger waved in reply, and with much laughter they left Walworth behind and were soon approaching Camberwell.

As they penetrated deeper and deeper into the lanes of Kent, the snow grew thicker and thicker, until the guard began to speculate whether they would succeed in reaching Canterbury at all.

"We'll be lucky, methinks," said he, blowing on his hands, "if we manage to get to Sevenoaks at this rate. Why, bless me, the snow is up to the 'orses' 'aunches already."

So it was, and the poor animals were not feeling quite as fresh as when they started. However, they stumbled and slithered along the snowy road, helped by the guard, who called out in an encouraging fashion to them and spurred them to do their best.

A rustic in a three-cornered hat which was tied on his head with a large handkerchief, stared at them and then called out:

"Hey! You be mighty careful that 'ee doan't run into Hunch, the Hoighwayman! The dratted thief be 'aunting this road somewhere, so they tell Oi."

"Zounds!" muttered Tom. "If we fell in with the highwayman here, we couldn't get away for the snow. Odds seize him! We won't let him rifle the coach, anyway!"

The coachman called out his thanks to the rustic, and urged the tired horses forward to the Lord Beverley at Sevenoaks, where fresh horses were awaiting them. Keeping a sharp look-out for the highwayman all the time, the coachman drove as fast as he dared, and was greatly relieved when they reached Sevenoaks without mishap.

They had another meal while the horses were being changed. Two of the passengers left the coach at Sevenoaks, and their places were taken by two lean, sinister men, who spoke not a word the whole time they were on the coach.

Fresh horses were put in, and the coach started off again. Mile after mile of snow slipped under the horses' hoofs and Canterbury was drawing gradually nearer. But just before they got to Maidstone the worst happened.

Hunch, the highway man, appeared.

He was not at all the type of bold, fearless highwayman of which we read in books. In appearance he was short and grotesque—he had a horrifying hump on his shoulders, which was responsible for his nickname Hunch. Two black, terribly fierce eyes glittered out from beneath his brows—eyes which neither knew nor recognised mercy.

"Hold!" he rapped out, waving a brace of pistols.

Tom and Roger experienced a thrill as the short, evil highwayman cantered up to the coach. They knew he was likely enough to shoot any one of them on sight—for the penalty of the road agent was death, and murder would not matter to him.

The coachman, quaking, drew to a halt.

"Throw out all your valuables!" commanded the robber harshly. "Waste no time!"

The thin lady inside uttered a fearful scream, and wrenched off her pearl necklace. She tossed it out of the window with such good aim that it struck the highwayman between the eyes.

The robber snarled wickedly, and levelling his pistol made to shoot her in cold blood. At that second, however, the two sinister men on top of the coach each drew a pistol and, without the smallest discomfort, fired two shots into the robber's head. The highwayman uttered a strangled yell and dropped from his horse into the snow.

"We are Bow Street runners," snapped one of the men. "We have been looking for this fellow for a fair long time. Perchance we'd



The poor horses struggled along the snowy road with much difficulty, and it seemed doubtful whether the coach would reach Sevenoaks.

have rather taken him alive; but 'tis no matter. He's out o' the way, and that's the main thing."

They got down, and the pale-faced coachman gathered up the ribbons and the coach moved off. Tom and Roger, shivering slightly as they saw the still form in the snow, were soon whirled away from the grim tragedy.

The coach was long overdue by the time it reached Canterbury. The snow had made travelling very slow work. Cheery again now, however, Tom and Roger greeted and were greeted by a score of other Greyfriars pupils. The school brake came along; they crowded in, and in a couple of hours they were once more at Greyfriars.

Such, then, was the manner in which the Removites went to school in the bad good old days.



BURIED TREASURE

*Some thrilling "finds" in the
Greyfriars district.*

By **HARRY WHARTON**

Wharton had gone to the caves in order to bury a "fake" treasure and play a trick on some of their schoolfellows by filling an old trunk full of worthless rubble. They were digging a deep hole in which to bury the trunk, when their spades came into sudden contact with the iron bands of the treasure chest. Their surprise and delight on forcing open the chest and viewing the glittering hoard may be better imagined than described.

It was not until 1910 that a further discovery of treasure was made. Some enterprising and adventurous fags, exploring the caves one half-holiday, discovered the entrance to a subterranean passage. The entrance was practically walled in, and had escaped the notice of previous searchers. When the blocked-up opening was cleared and the passage explored, it was found to lead to an underground vault, in the recesses of which two caskets were hidden. The caskets were crammed with gold and jewels, and there was a document showing that they had been buried by one Captain Peter Sankey—presumably a pirate—in the reign of George III.

Several more finds of treasure—some valuable and important, and others of less note—have been made since I came to Greyfriars, and I have taken part in many thrilling treasure hunts both in the old Smugglers' Caves and elsewhere. I have not space to tell of these adventures now, but you may be sure that the caves have not yielded up all the treasure that lies buried therein.

One of these days some patient and persevering explorer will make a find which will eclipse all the famous finds of the past. May it be myself! Failing which, may it be Billy Bunter, because he will then be in a position to square up with his numerous creditors!

THE old Smugglers' Caves at Pegg have long been a happy hunting-ground for schoolboy treasure-seekers.

Many a half-holiday has been spent, delving with pick and spade in those dark, cavernous depths, in the hope of coming across treasure-trove hidden by the pirates and smugglers of those picturesque days when piracy and smuggling were overcrowded professions.

In the majority of cases the searchers have delved in vain, and their repeated burrowings and ferretings have yielded nothing. On several occasions in Greyfriars history, however, the labours of the treasure-seekers have borne fruit.

As far back as 1895 a couple of juniors named Wynyard and Wharton (the latter was not related to me) were fortunate enough to discover a very valuable treasure. It was the traditional old oak chest, full of doubloons, pieces-of-eight, jewellery, and gold and silver trinkets. The treasure was valued at several thousand pounds, and the lucky finders received a substantial share of the spoils, the remainder being claimed by the Crown.

The curious thing about this discovery was that it was purely accidental. Wynyard and