

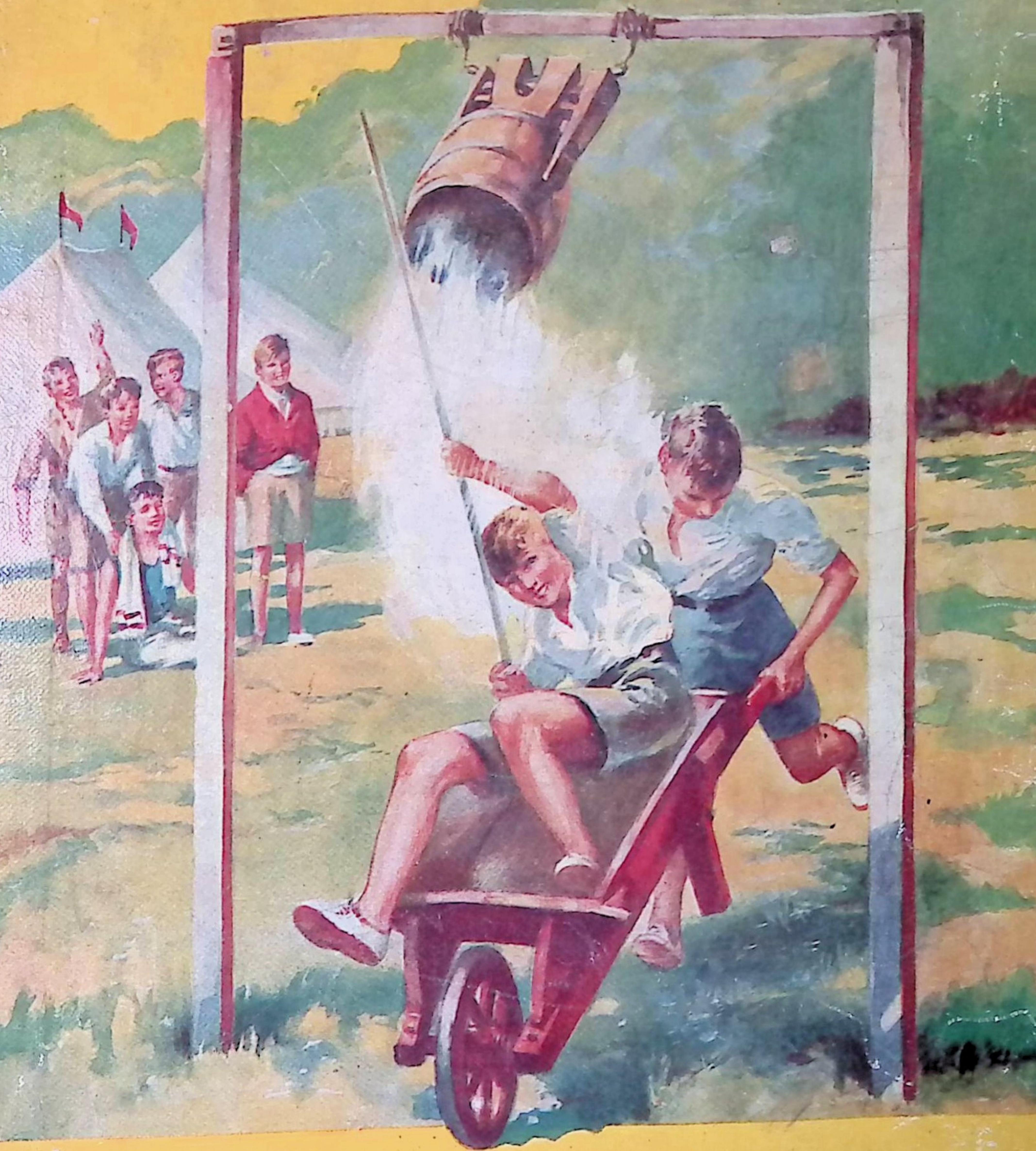
THE GREYFRIARS

# HOLIDAY

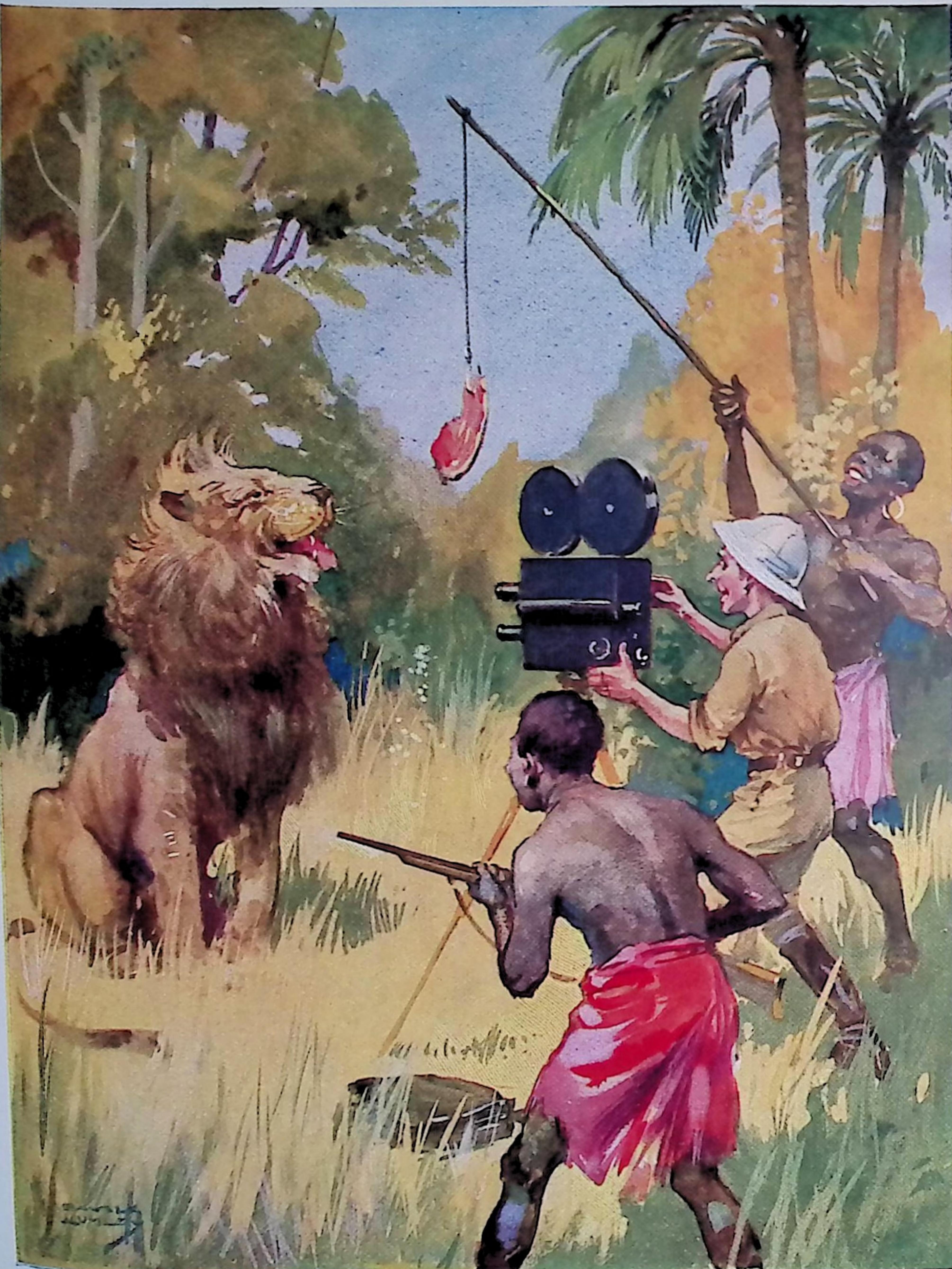
1934

ANNUAL  
FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

1934



## WILL IT COME TO THIS?



Frontispiece

HA  
So many "jungle" films have been made in the tropical forests that, as our artist suggests in this picture, the animals must be getting quite used to the movie camera!

*Specially drawn for the "Holiday Annual" by Savile Lumley.*

# *The Greyfriars* **HOLIDAY** **ANNUAL**

1934



This Book Belongs to K. H. M. CURTIS

Issued from The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

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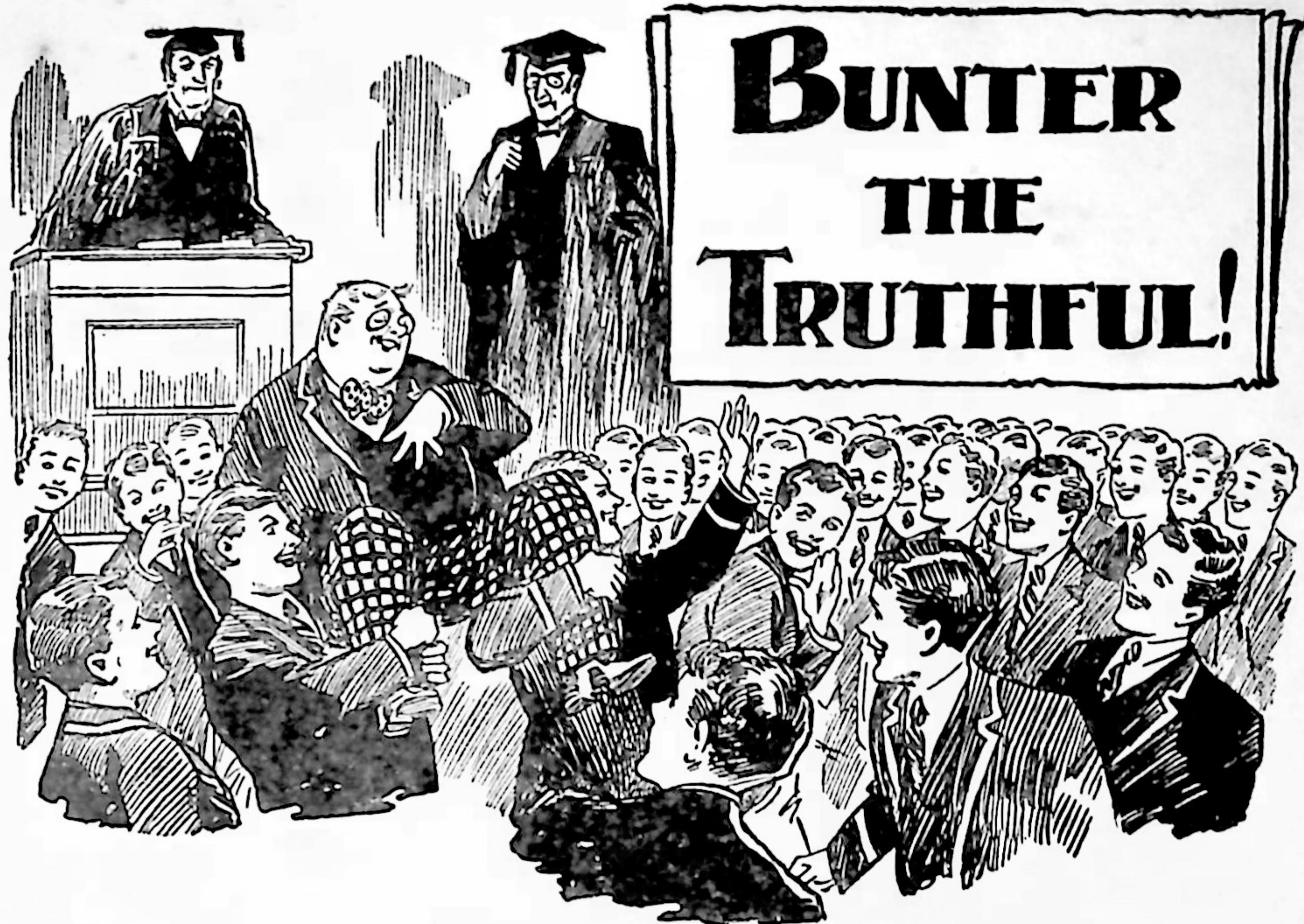
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# The Editor to his Friends

IN introducing to my host of expectant readers the latest volume of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL, I can assure them that I have taken the greatest pains to preserve that delicate balance between the various types of story which has always been the outstanding feature of successive HOLIDAY ANNUALS. Prominent as ever will be found the ever-youthful chums of Greyfriars School, whose adventures, chronicled by famous Frank Richards, have made them by far the best-known and most popular schoolboys in the world. Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, and Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, who are their only rivals in the affections of British boys and girls, also play their merry pranks in these pages. Stories of breathless adventure at home and abroad, written by authors who are masters of their craft, are here to give you a wholesome thrill. Every ingredient beloved by the reader of fiction, in short, will be found in this volume, blended with the skill that only experience can teach, to give the "H.A." just that little something that others haven't got! There is, however, one point in which this year's HOLIDAY ANNUAL differs from every one of its predecessors—the price is lower. At the old price of six shillings, the HOLIDAY ANNUAL for fourteen years maintained its position at the head of its class. At the new price of five shillings it provides an example of outstanding value which defies comparison.

THE EDITOR.

THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,  
FARRINGDON STREET,  
LONDON, E.C.4.



## THE FIRST CHAPTER AN OFFER FROM POPPER!

"**M**y Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen—" Groan !

"To repeat, for the sake of emphasis, what I have already said—"

"Oh, my hat !

Would you believe it ?" asked Bob Cherry, sotto voce.

"He's going through it all again !" muttered Vernon-Smith, in almost tragic tones. "Why doesn't the old buffer dry up ?"

Quite a number of people besides Vernon-Smith were asking that question.

It was Speech Day at Greyfriars and Big Hall was crowded with distinguished visitors.

Speech Day gave an opportunity

# BUNTER THE TRUTHFUL!

By FRANK RICHARDS

for several eminent public gentlemen to let off steam. Sir Hilton Popper, who was one of those eminent public gentlemen, never failed to do so. He had been letting off steam now for the

best part of half an hour and most of his audience were getting a little tired of the sound of his rather grating voice. Sir Hilton had an ad-

vantage over them there. He never got tired of the sound of his own voice !

"We are living in parlous times, Ladies and Gentlemen ! The ideals of past generations are ruthlessly flung aside—"

Groan !

"Throw something at him, somebody !" begged Peter Todd.

"Truth is mocked at! A generation arises to whom lying and deceit are second nature! Ladies and Gentlemen! To what institution in the land of our birth do we look to as the bright, hopeful light in the darkness that surrounds us? I suggest that that bright, hopeful light is provided only by the English public school!"

Loud cheers filled the gap which Sir Hilton thoughtfully provided at this juncture. A number of people were observed to be consulting their watches.

"I'll lay ten to one he goes on another ten minutes!" came a stage-whispered offer from Harold Skinner.

There were no takers. But Skinner would have had to pay out, as it happened, for Sir Hilton was at last nearing the end.

"Ladies and Gentlemen! As a boy at Greyfriars, I was taught to worship the truth," rasped Sir Hilton Popper. "It is my hope that the present generation is brought up in the same way." And then came Sir Hilton's offer—Sir Hilton's surprising, staggering offer!

"To stimulate the interest of the present generation of Greyfriars boys in truth-telling," said the baronet, in slow, deliberate tones, "I have decided to offer a cash prize of ten guineas."

The present generation of Greyfriars boys suddenly found Sir Hilton's speech of engrossing interest. They listened all ears to what was coming. "That prize," said Sir Hilton, "will be awarded to the boy who at the end of a week from now is judged by popular vote to have been the most truthful!"

"Oh, great pip!" The method to be used in taking the vote, I leave to Dr. Locke. I am merely concerned with the idea of the thing. That, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the offer I make in the

interests of the moral welfare of the rising generation!"

Sir Hilton Popper then sat down. As it happened, he sat, by accident, on Colonel Wharton's knee, but nobody bothered about that in the excitement.

The cheering was tremendous. Grown-ups mixed laughter with their cheers and seniors looked a little bored over the matter—but there was no doubt about the enthusiasm of the juniors.

Shortly after that, the speeches ended, the gathering in Big Hall broke up and the crowds dispersed. And among the juniors who were not engaged with parents or other visitors, there was but one topic under discussion—Sir Hilton's ten-guinea offer for telling the truth.

"I'm going to have a shot for it!" Skinner remarked.

"'Shot'" is the right word for you, old bean!" grinned Bob Cherry. "The only way I can see you getting it is by holding up the old boy with a gun!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If there's anyone in the Remove who ought to win it, it's me," declared Bolsover major. "Never was any beating about the bush with me. I tell the truth all the time, whether people like it or not. What are you grinning at, Smithy?"

"Just thinking how easy it is to do that!" answered the Bounder. "I can easily say a lot of true things about you, old chap, if I feel like it. I can say you've got the biggest feet in the Remove—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"And that your voice is like a fog-horn, and that your face gives most people a pain; and—"

"Why, you fatheaded freak, I'll—"

"I say, you fellows, no rowing on Speech Day!" came a squeaky voice

from the edge of the group as William George Bunter, the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove, rolled up on the scene. "Now, about old Popper's prize; you know how truthful I am ——"

"Ye gods!" howled Bob Cherry. "Bunter's entering, too! What chance do we stand now?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here——" hooted Bunter indignantly.

But the juniors refused to look or even to listen. The mere idea of Bunter, who had never been able to distinguish the truth from its opposite, entering for the Popper Prize was sufficient to render most of them hysterical.

Had they foreseen the course of events in the week that followed, Bunter's entry might not have provoked so much mirth among them. But they didn't foresee it. That revelation was in store for them.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER STRICTLY TRUTHFUL!

"SPARE a minute, Wingate?"

"Two, if you like!" responded George Wingate, the popular captain of Greyfriars, putting his book aside and waving Loder of the Sixth to a chair.

He was wondering what had brought the black sheep of the Sixth to his study; he had little in common with him and visits between the two of them were few and far between.

"It's about footer," Loder explained. "I see you've put me down to play against St. Jim's. I've come to ask you whether perhaps you ought not to consider one or two other chaps before me."

Wingate stared.

"But you've wanted to play for the First Eleven all the season!"

Loder nodded.

"I know that. But I feel I may

not be able to do justice to you. You see, as a matter of fact, I've been up rather late, recently. To tell you the truth, I've been idiot enough to break bounds and drop into the Cross Keys for a game or two of cards!"

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Wingate. "Have you suddenly gone potty, Loder, that you're calmly telling me all this?"

"Not at all. I'm doing it because it's only fair to you. You see, I believe in being open and honest about a thing——"

"Oh, great Scott! I fancy I see!" gasped Wingate. "You're after the Popper Prize!"

"Well, as a matter of fact, between ourselves, Wingate, I haven't had very good luck and that ten guineas would just about put me——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wingate. "All serene, Loder! If it comes to voting, I'll remember this; in the meantime, I'll think over what you've told me! Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder nodded and quitted the school captain's study.

It was happening all over Greyfriars!

Everybody was trying to impress everybody else with his truthfulness. Fags were striving with each other in handing over "large slabs" of truth to each other at frequent intervals. Removites, Fourth-Formers and Shellfish were sternly repressing the inclination to use those convenient though untruthful expressions that smooth over the minor difficulties of life. A veritable epidemic of truth-telling was raging over Greyfriars.

The method of deciding on the winner had been fixed. The school was to assemble in Big Hall and candidates were to be nominated. After that, a show of hands was to be asked for in respect of each candidate, the most truthful being thus selected by popular accord.

Ten guineas was well worth winning; hence the strenuous efforts that were being made in all directions.

In the Remove Form-room, the morning after Speech Day, Mr. Quelch was almost embarrassed by the truthful replies to his questions.

Even Skinner told the truth. When Mr. Quelch, after testing Skinner's knowledge of [the subject of the previous evening's prep., asked that somewhat shifty junior how much time he had devoted to it, Skinner's reply was brief and entirely true.

"Five minutes, sir!"

"Very well, Skinner," said Mr. Quelch, when he had recovered from the shock. "You should have devoted more time than that, even though you had the excuse of its being Speech Day. However, as you have told me the truth, I shall not punish you. You may sit down!"

"Thank you, sir!" murmured Skinner.

Bunter was on his fat feet before Skinner had resumed his seat.

"P-please, sir," he gasped, "I'll tell you the truth, too, only more of it than Skinner. I haven't done any prep. for a week!"

"What!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Not for a week, sir!" said Bunter earnestly. "In fact, sir, to tell you the strict truth, I've scarcely looked at prep. this term!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a roar from the Remove. They couldn't help it.

But Mr. Quelch didn't laugh. He reached for his cane, instead.

"Bunter!" he gasped. "Upon my word, boy, you are the most incredibly stupid creature I have ever met! Come out!"

"W-w-what for? I—I've told you the truth, sir, haven't I?"

"Come here at once!" roared Mr. Quelch.

Bunter went. Judging by the howls

that rent the air of the Form-room a little later, his attempts at truth-telling had not been attended by the happy results they deserved.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER THE WINNER!

"You footling fathead—"

"You chuckle-headed chump—"

"Don't all speak at once!" said Harry Wharton, the Remove skipper. "You'll make me vain if you fling compliments about at this rate!"

A disconsolate crowd of Removites had sought out Wharton that evening in the Rag to point out one or two omissions he had made in drawing up the Remove Eleven for a forthcoming match with Courtfield Grammar School. Drawing up a junior eleven was an invidious task at the best of times, when there were always forty fellows holding the opinion that they individually deserved a place in the eleven.

"Of all the skippers—" said Bolsover, who was one of the rejected.

"Of all the so-called leaders—" remarked Trevor disgustedly.

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"It's just occurred to me, you chaps, that there's a truth-telling competition going on at present," he remarked. "If you'll give me five minutes, I'll just see if I can't win the prize by telling you a few home-truths about your play! Now, you, Trevor—"

"Well, what about me?" asked Trevor interestedly.

"If you were as good at playing footer as you are at playing the giddy ox, you'd be the best man in the Remove team. But you're not!"

"Look here—"

"As to you, Desmond, your style of play is suited only to special occasions. I wouldn't dream of leav-



"Now, about Popper's Prize," said William George Bunter. "You know how truthful I am——" "Ye gods!" howled Bob Cherry. "Bunter's entering, too! What chance do we stand now?" "Ha, ha, ha!"

ing you out if we were playing a blind school. Otherwise—nothing doing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Harry! At this rate you'll win the giddy ten guineas without exerting yourself!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"If you others want to hear the truth——" went on Wharton.

"Chuck it, you cheeky ass!" grinned Tom Brown, who had been one of the protesting army. "I'm satisfied with what you've said about the others!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Make way for the cheery old porpoise!" yelled Bob Cherry. "How's the Popper

Prize going? What about seeing the Head and telling him who robbed the tuck-shop last week?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter ignored that humorous suggestion. There was an air of suppressed excitement about him, and his eyes were gleaming unusually brightly behind his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows," he said. "I was wondering if one of you could lend me five bob."

There was a yell from the Removites.

"Dry up, Fatty!"

"Change the record! We've heard that one too many times!"

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"I suppose you're expecting a postal-order!" suggested Vernon-Smith, with crushing sarcasm.

"The postal-order you've been expecting for the last three terms!" grinned Ogilvy.

Bunter's eyes glimmered.

"That's just where you're wrong, as a matter of fact," he said. "I'll be quite frank with you; at the moment, I am not expecting a postal-order!"

The Removites stared.

"You—you're not expecting a postal-order?" stuttered Harry Wharton. "You really and truly mean that for the first time in history you're not expecting a postal-order from one of your titled relations?"

Bunter shook his head.

"I'm not; as a matter of fact, I haven't any titled relations, anyway!"

"WHA-A-AT?"

It was a howl from the crowd in the Rag. From time immemorial, Bunter had insisted on the existence of titled relations. Those titled relations had taken shape in Bunter's fat mind till he almost believed in them himself. And now, he was calmly denying them!

"You—you haven't any titled relations?" gasped Bob Cherry, quite faintly. "Hold me up, somebody! I feel as if I'm swooning! He'll be telling us next that there's no such place as Bunter Court!"

"There isn't!" said Bunter.

"Eh?"

"Perhaps in the past—ahem!—I may have given you a somewhat false impression of my home," said Bunter, with a cough. "I really live in quite a small place—a villa, you know. There's no such place as Bunter Court!"

"M-m-my giddy aunt!"

"Chap's potty!" declared Johnny Bull. "When Bunter starts admitting he lives in a villa, that's the only solution!"

"No, it isn't!" yelled Squiff excitedly. "Can't you duffers see the idea? Bunter's having a cut at the Popper Prize—and he's setting about it in real earnest! He's just going to say the exact opposite to everything he's ever said before—in other words, he's going to start telling the truth!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter wrathfully. "I hope I've always been a truthful kind of fellow; but there's just the chance that you may have placed the wrong meaning occasionally on things I've told you."

"Just a chance! Oh, help!" murmured Frank Nugent.

"Well, now, what about that five bob?" asked Bunter argumentatively. "I've told you I'm not expecting a postal-order, so I can't promise a definite date for repayment; but if, nevertheless—"

"Here's a bob, Fatty—you're worth it!" said Wharton.

And, strangely enough, four other fellows followed Wharton's example.

Bunter rolled away from the Rag in possession of five shillings and a surprising discovery—that it paid to tell the truth!

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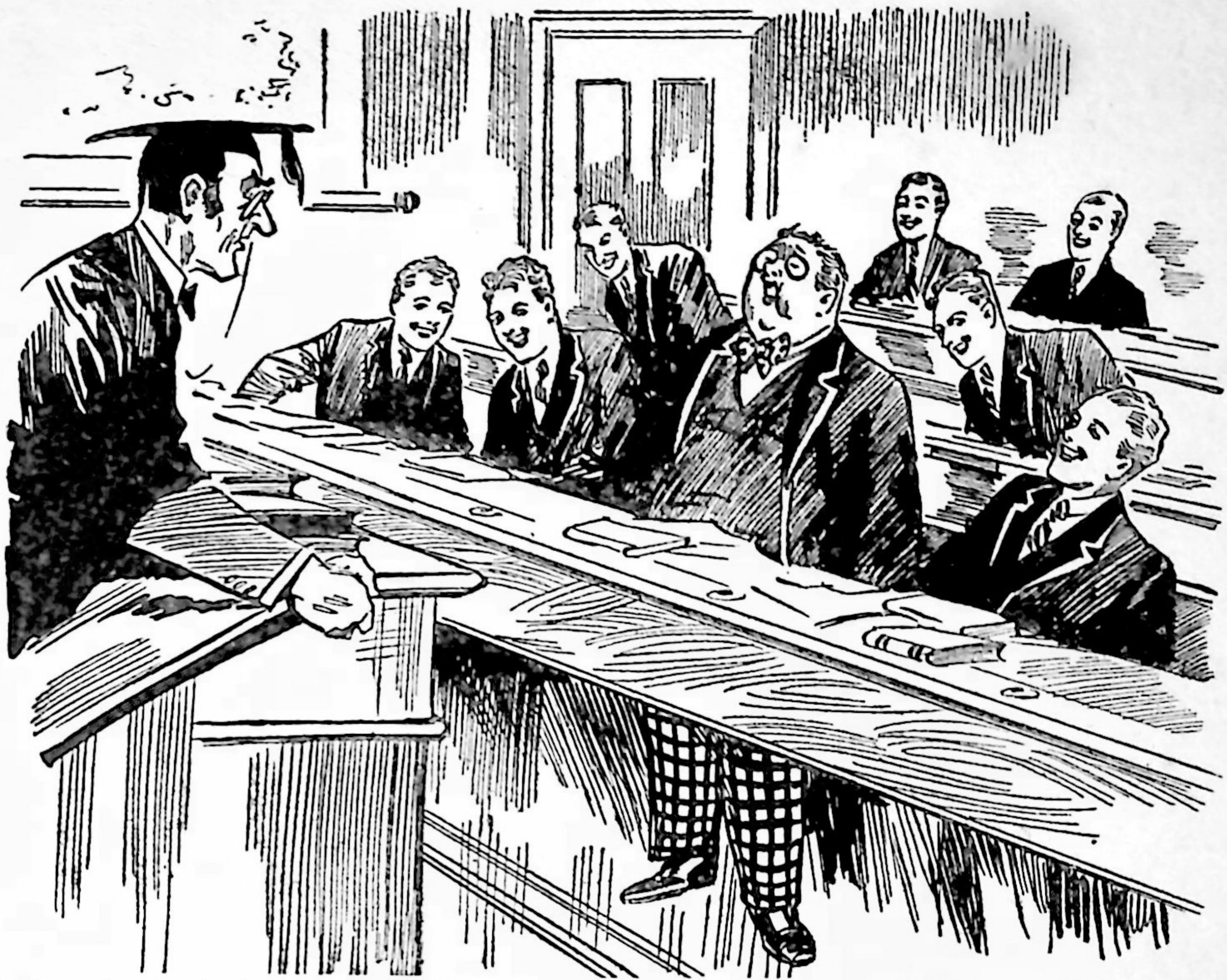
Bunter could never stick it out.

That was the opinion of most of the fellows. Even with the prospect of a splendid cash prize dangling before him, they thought, it was impossible for W. G. B. to keep on telling the truth for a whole week.

But they were wrong. Bunter did stick it out.

It wasn't that he had any more love for the truth than he had had before. But ten guineas was ten guineas, and Bunter went on telling the truth.

The story of his new departure soon spread far and wide. Fellows



Bunter suddenly stood up on his fat feet before Mr. Quelch. "P-please, sir," he said, "I'll tell you the truth. I haven't done any prep. for a week!" "What!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

belonging to other Forms came to the Rag for the special purpose of seeing the miracle with their own eyes—or rather, hearing it with their own ears!

By the time the meeting was held in Big Hall to decide the name of the winner, all Greyfriars was laughing over William George Bunter's remarkable essay in truth-telling.

The result of all this publicity was not altogether surprising. Bob Cherry nominated Bunter as a candidate for the prize; and when the vote was taken, Bunter secured an overwhelming majority.

The Head smilingly handed over the cash, and the winner, amid great rejoicing, was carried shoulder-high out of the Hall.

"Speech!" was the insistent cry of the Remove, a little later, at the celebration feed held in the Rag.

Bunter stood on a chair.

"Gentlemen!" he said. "The Popper Prize has been won by the fellow who deserved it most of all—myself! Of course, I don't really need the money—my titled relations are simply rolling in oof, and if you saw the luxury we live in at Bunter Court—"

But that was as far as he got. A roar of laughter drowned the rest.

Now that the Popper Prize had come home to roost, it was very evident that Bunter, the truthful, had promptly ceased to exist!

THE END

# THE ARTFUL DODGER!

By FRANK NUGENT.

WHEN Bunter owed to Peter Todd  
The sum of half-a-crown,  
His face, as he walked in the quad,  
Bore quite a worried frown.

For Toddy had kept on and on  
Demanding to be paid,  
And naturally the tin had gone  
On tarts and lemonade.

So Bunter had tried hard to screw  
A loan from half a dozen  
Fellows, when there hove in view  
Alonzo, Peter's cousin.

Now 'Lonzy's heart is very soft  
And ditto is his brain,  
So Billy Bunter smiled and coughed  
And started to explain :

A certain cheque was on the way  
(He meant "uncertain," rather)  
Which had been sent to him that day  
By his beloved father.

The cheque that evening would arrive ;  
But he was in a fix,  
And could Alonzo please contrive  
To lend him two-and-six ?

Alonzo took this story in  
With meek and childlike calm,  
Took out the necessary tin,  
Pressed it in Bunter's palm.

Then Bunter thanked him for the loan  
And flew—none could be fleetier ;  
He passed the tuckshop (with a groan)  
And went to look for Peter.

Next day Alonzo on his track  
At dinner trailed him down ;  
Requested him to give him back  
The borrowed half-a-crown.

Then Billy Bunter met his eyes  
Without the slightest quake,  
And said, in tones of great surprise,  
"There must be some mistake ;

I gave your money back last night ;  
I'm not a beastly cheater.  
As you yourself were not in sight,  
I handed it to Peter."

Said 'Lonzy : "I do not imply  
That you're a cheat—I'd spurn it.  
If Peter has the money, why  
I'll get him to return it."

Whether he got that half-a-crown  
Or whether he went without it,  
Bunter, at least, has never known—  
He heard no more about it.





# MYSTERY ISLAND!

## THE FIRST CHAPTER THE MYSTERIOUS LIGHT!

THROUGH the velvety darkness of night on the Pacific a solitary light glimmered and twinkled from the black mass of Ka'a Island.

From the deck of the trading ketch *Dawn*, Ken King, known as King of the Islands, glanced at it curiously. Kit Hudson, the mate of the *Dawn*, followed his glance.

Kaio-lalulalonga, the Kanaka boatswain, at the helm of the gliding ketch threading a passage between Ka'a and Lu Islands, turned his dark eyes on the distant twinkling light with a gleam of uneasiness in them. To the boatswain that solitary glistening speck of light seemed like the shining eye of an "aitoo," a devil, watching in the darkness.

It was six bells in the first watch, and Hudson was due for his watch below. But he remained on deck

while Ken King was taking the ketch through the rocky passage between the two islands. Between Ka'a and Lu the coral reefs ran far into the sea, with surf creaming over them, and few skippers would have cared to take a vessel through at night. King of the Islands did not hesitate to do so; but the passage required all his care, and the mate of the *Dawn* preferred not to go below till the ketch was through.

By  
CHARLES HAMILTON

*Van Tromp, a bullying Dutchman, has his reasons for making it hot for strangers who land on Ka'a Island. But all the reasons in the world wouldn't keep away Ken King, the boy trader!*

save the white creaming of the surf, and a hollow booming came from all directions. The deep channel between the reefs ran nearer to Ka'a than to Lu. The latter island was hidden from sight to the starboard, and to port Ka'a was only a blacker shadow against blackness.

"Somebody's up late on Ka'a,"

remarked Hudson as he watched the light from the unseen shore.

"Aye, aye." King of the Islands looked puzzled. "Looks like a signal. But I reckon old Van Tromp can't be signalling to any man on Lu."

He rapped an order, and Koko shifted the helm. The *Dawn* glided a fathom's length from a creamy jut of coral.

Ken's eyes turned on the light again.

It gleamed like a beacon in the night. But from the open sea it could not have been seen. It was visible only from the direction of the neighbouring island and the intervening channel.

"If it's not a signal, I don't get what it is," said the boy trader. "But if the old Dutchman is signalling to any man on Lu, he's changing his manners and customs a lot."

"Who's Van Tromp?"

"I've never seen him," said Ken. "I've never landed on Ka'a—very few white men have. There are pearlers on Lu—but the old Dutchman is the only white man on Ka'a. There's a big plantation, and he runs his own cargoes of copra in a cutter. They say on the beaches that he has fired on men for landing on Ka'a—it's his own island, and he's mighty rough on trespassers. I suppose he's got reasons for keeping to himself—though goodness knows what they are. There's a story of a white woman on Ka'a—a daughter or niece whom he keeps in strict seclusion in the bungalow. I don't know if there's any truth in it."

Ken stared at the twinkling light. It burned steadily, a spot in the darkness, doubtless from a window of the Dutch planter's bungalow.

"Might be a signal to his cutter, if she's at sea," remarked Hudson.

Ken shook his head.

"The anchorage is on the other

side of Ka'a. That light can only be seen from this channel and from Lu. I don't make it out. He's got no friends on Lu—there are a dozen or so pearlers there, but he's on the worst of terms with them—they're not allowed on Ka'a."

"No other white man on Ka'a?" asked the mate of the *Dawn*.

"No. Van Tromp had a brother once, years ago, but he went down in a canoe in a storm. Some say that the girl on the island is the brother's orphan daughter, and that old Van Tromp is her guardian. If she's really on Ka'a, Van Tromp keeps her pretty close—I've never come on anybody who's actually seen her. Most likely only a yarn of the beaches. I fancy—"

Crash!

King of the Islands was interrupted by the sudden crash under the bows of the ketch.

"My sainted Sam!"

"Feller canoe along sea, sar!" exclaimed Kaio-lalulalonga.

There was an excited cackle from the Hiva-Oa crew. King of the Islands shouted a command, and the ketch was instantly hove to.

A minute more and the whaleboat splashed into the water.

King of the Islands leaped into it.

He flashed a lantern into the darkness on the sea and shouted:

"Ahoy!"

The darkness was baffling.

Evidently a canoe, running across the channel between the islands, had run athwart the bows of the ketch, and had been run down in the darkness. But the boy trader could see nothing of swimming natives.

On a surge of the sea a broken fragment of a small canoe was dashed against the whaleboat. The tiny craft had been cut in halves by the sharp prow in the sudden collision.

"Ahoy!" roared King of the Islands.

But there came no answer from the blackness of the sea. Ken's face was tense.

Suddenly, from the darkness, a glimmer of white caught his eyes. He reached over from the boat and grasped a white cotton jacket.

A moment more and he had dragged the drowning man into the whale-boat.

"Feller white man, sar!" exclaimed Lompo, one of the crew.

him down into the cabin, and he was laid on Ken's own bunk in the little state-room amidships.

Evidently he had received a hard knock when his canoe was run down by the ketch. The boy trader did all he could for him, but the man remained insensible. King of the Islands rejoined the mate on deck at last. He was greatly puzzled. The ketch remained hove-to in the channel between the two invisible islands.

"It's a white man," said Ken.



Crash! There came the sound of a sudden collision as the sharp prow of the Dawn cut into a small canoe that had run athwart its bows in the darkness.

King of the Islands stared at the man he had rescued in the lantern-light. He was completely unconscious, and there was a trickle of crimson on the pallor of his face.

He was a young man, hardly older than the boy trader, sunburnt and handsome, though his white face looked ghastly in the glimmer of the lantern.

The Kanakas pulled back to the Dawn.

The unconscious man was passed up the side. Lompo and Lufu carried

"He must be one of the pearlers of Lu, going across to Ka'a. Looks as if that light was a signal, after all."

He glanced at the light on Ka'a; it was still burning steadily through the night.

"Is he badly hurt?" asked Hudson.

"He's had a hard thump on the head, and he won't come to yet. I fancy he will be all right, though. But"—the boy trader whistled—"we can't carry the man away with us, Kit. He must belong either to Lu or Ka'a, or he wouldn't have been

crossing this channel. This looks like losing time. We can't land him in his present state, unless there's somebody to care for him. If that light was a signal to him, he must have been going to Ka'a, though it beats me why he was running the channel at night. Still, it looks like it, and if the Dutchman's expecting him, we can hand him over to Van Tromp. Only—"

"What?" asked Hudson.

"I can't understand it. Van Tromp never lets a man land on his island. It looks as I've said, but—"

King of the Islands shook his head. He was hopelessly puzzled.

"What about sending the boat ashore and asking Van Tromp?" suggested the mate of the *Dawn*. "He must be still up, as there's a light burning in his bungalow."

King of the Islands wrinkled his brows in thought, but he nodded at last.

"I reckon so," he said. "Ten to one that light's a signal to the man in the canoe. If so, the poor fellow was going over to see Van Tromp. And send off a boat for him when I give him the word. I'll anchor the ketch while I run ashore and take word to the Dutchman."

Hudson stared towards the blackness of Ka'a.

"You'll land safe in the dark?" he asked.

"Ay, ay; I've run this channel like a book. There's a little cove on this side of Ka'a where a boat can get in safely, though there's no anchorage for a ship—even a ketch

Ken rapped out orders. The cable was run out, and the ketch anchored in sixty feet of water. King of the Islands stepped into the whaleboat,

and Kaio-lalulalonga and Tomoo took the oars and pulled away into the darkness.

Hudson stared after the boat. In a few moments it vanished into darkness.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### ON KA'A ISLAND

THE whaleboat grounded on soft, shelving sand at the head of a cove; no doubt the spot for which the canoe had been making when it had run under the bows of the *Dawn*. The Kanakas dragged the boat up the sand, and Ken stepped ashore on the forbidden island of Ka'a.

He had never landed on Ka'a before—few white men had—but he knew the channel and he knew the shore, and he had steered the whaleboat safely into the little cove amid coral reefs and creaming surf. Standing on the shadowy beach, he stared round him.

He could not see the light now.

"Feller light he no stop, sar!" said Kaio-lalulalonga. Koko was staring about him uneasily. "Me no likee that feller light, sar! Me tinkee he all samee eye belong aitoo."

Ken laughed. The Dutchman's bungalow, he knew, was on the high ground a good distance from the beach. Thick palm groves intervened. Out in the midway channel, and across at Lu, the light could be seen, but from where he stood on the beach of the cove the intervening woods hid it from sight.

"You stop along boat, Koko," he said. "You stop along this place, along me comey along boat."

"Yes, sar!" answered Kaio-lalulalonga.

Tomoo stretched himself on the sand to sleep while he waited for the boy trader's return. Kaio-lalulalonga sat on the gunwale of the beached boat, his eyes following his white

master as King of the Islands strode away up the beach. Ken was soon out of sight of the Kanaka boatswain. The mist still veiled the stars, though it was clearing a little, and the darkness was thick on the island.

Ken was thinking as he tramped into the palm grove. He recalled many strange stories he had heard of the mystery island, and of the lonely, surly Dutch planter of Ka'a. For what reason Van Tromp desired to keep all other white men away from the island, nobody knew, but there was no doubt of the fact. His trade was carried on in his own cutter, with a native crew and a native skipper, Van Tromp himself seldom or never leaving the island. Shots had been fired, more than once, to warn off white men who had landed, and Ken had heard of intruders who had been beaten with lawyer-canes for venturing to set foot on Ka'a.

That made it all the more strange that a beacon-light had been shown to guide the man in the canoe. Still, it seemed that there could be little doubt of it.

Ken made his way through the thick palm grove, picking a path through innumerable slanting trunks, towards the high ground in the interior of Ka'a, on which the planter's bungalow stood.

There was a glimmer of light now. The veiling mist was rolling away from the sky, and the stars glimmered faintly down on the mystery island.

Now that he was clear of the trees he saw the light again. It was still burning steadily, as he had seen it from the ketch.

The bungalow faced the other way, towards the anchorage on the western side of Ka'a. But there was a veranda at the back of the building, with two rooms opening on it. From one of these rooms the light gleamed, and

from the high position of the bungalow it shone over the tops of the palm trees on the lower ground.

King of the Islands, as he drew nearer, made out a doorway at the back of the veranda, closed by a pandanus screen. This screen was drawn partly open, and from the narrow opening the light shone.

He started suddenly, glanced round him, and listened.

A faint rustle had come to his ears.

Except for that solitary light, shining out into the night, the whole place seemed buried in silence and slumber.

In the silence the rustling sound near at hand had a startling effect, and Ken's eyes swept round him watchfully.

But the sound died away, and there was no one to be seen.

He went on his way again and reached the steps. Quickly he mounted them and stepped on the veranda.

He crossed the wide veranda to the lighted doorway.

He heard a movement in the lighted room, and the next instant the light was blotted out.

Ken halted at the doorway in astonishment.

He had taken it for granted that it was the Dutchman who was in the lighted room. There was no other white man on Ka'a, and it was extremely unlikely that a native house-boy would be sitting up late burning a light. But it was strange enough that the Dutchman should extinguish the light at the sound of a footstep on the veranda.

Anyhow, the sooner he spoke and stated his errand the better. After the first moment of astonishment, as the light went out, he opened his lips to speak.

Before a word could pass his lips, the pandanus screen in the doorway was pulled aside, a hand was laid on

his arm, and a voice whispered :  
" Silence ! "

A thrill of amazement ran through the boy trader.

It was a soft, clinging hand on his arm, and the voice that whispered was low and sweet—a woman's voice.

The " white woman " of Ka'a was no myth, after all ! Evidently this was she !

In spite of the warning word, the amazed boy trader would have spoken—but a soft palm was pressed over his lips, and the almost inaudible voice whispered again :

" Silence ! "

He felt himself drawn into the darkened room.

The pandanus screen fell into place behind him, shutting him in. The soft hand still held his arm, the slim fingers warm through his thin linen jacket.

In utter amazement Ken stood, wondering whether he was dreaming. It was the white woman of Ka'a, the mythical niece or daughter of the Dutch planter who was talked of on a hundred beaches, said to be kept in nun-like seclusion by the gruff, savage-tempered old planter. There could be no doubt of that. But what could it all mean ?

He stood silent—feeling, rather than knowing, that there was danger in the air. But what danger ?

He could not begin to guess.

But he knew it, felt it ; there was a quiver of fear in the girl's whispering voice that was not to be mistaken.

In the black darkness of the room he could see nothing, but he could feel the trembling of the unseen figure beside him.

" Silence ! " came the faint whisper again. " It is death—death—if you utter a sound—silence ! He will kill you—he will kill you—oh, heaven, if he finds that you are here, he will kill you ! "

And then, as if the girl divined that,

in spite of the whispered warning, he was about to speak, the hand was pressed to his lips again, silencing him.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER TRAPPED !

KING of the Islands stood silent, the soft hand pressing his lips.

He was dumbfounded with amazement.

It seemed like a dream to the boy trader of the *Dawn*. There was danger about him ; he felt it almost like a tangible presence. But what did it all mean ?

" Listen ! " The quivering whisper was close to his ear. " Do not speak—listen ! He suspects—my uncle—suspects—he will kill you ! Listen ! He went to bed as usual—at the usual hour—I burned the light believing that all was safe, and then—"

Ken felt the unseen figure trembling.

His lips moved, but the fingers pressed them to silence. He stood dumb.

" Listen ! Only a few minutes since, I looked out, and—and Nalasoo was watching—"

Ken made a movement.

" Oh, be silent ! Nalasoo was watching. He did not know that I saw him, but I caught a glimpse of his face under the edge of the veranda rail. He was watching. I think you have seen him—Nalasoo, the Solomon Island boy—my uncle's servant—he was watching ; he is there—at this hour ! My uncle must have set him to watch."

Ken remembered the faint rustle he had heard as he came up to the veranda steps.

" I—I—I would have put out the light then, but—but I feared you would stop. They would have killed you, out there in the darkness—"

She shuddered.

" Listen ! Nalasoo must have

heard you—I heard you. Why were you so incautious? I heard you before you reached the veranda. Nalasoo knows—and he has gone to tell my uncle. Only Otto van Tromp can have set him to watch. Philip, Philip, he has gone to wake my uncle, to tell him—”

Ken started violently.

A glimmering of the truth dawned on him now.

He had not seen the girl of Ka'a in the darkness. She had not seen him. It was another whom she was expecting—and in the blackness she had taken King of the Islands for “ Philip,” whoever Philip was.

And it flashed into his mind that “ Philip ” was the man in the canoe that had been run down under the bows of the *Dawn*.

“ Listen—not a sound! He will come—he will kill you! Once he suspects, he will guess everything. Follow me—in silence. While they are coming here, I will take you through the house—you will escape by a front window, while they are coming—but be silent—silent—if they hear you, you are lost—”

The voice broke off with a low, scared scream as a light flashed into the room from the doorway on the veranda.

The pandanus screen had been pulled aside from without, and a large hurricane lamp shone into the room, held up by a grinning native boy.

The girl, revealed to Ken's eyes now by the sudden glare of light, turned from him, facing the man who entered from the veranda.

He saw a thick-set, thick-bearded Dutchman, with a hard, grim, heavy face, burned almost to copper by tropical suns. Little light-blue eyes



The pandanus screen in the doorway was pulled aside, a hand was laid on Ken's arm, and a voice whispered: “Silence! ”

glittered from the coppery face—little bright eyes that reminded Ken of a snake's. There was a sardonic grin on the face—a grin that was more cruel and threatening than a scowl. Ken had never seen the man before, but he knew that this must be Van Tromp, the Dutch planter of Ka'a.

The girl stood with clasped hands, overcome with terror. Her face was white as chalk.

Behind the Dutchman, as he trod heavily in, crowded five or six black boys, grinning with a flashing of white teeth.

The planter hardly noticed the terrified girl. His little glittering eyes were fixed on Ken, and he made a clumsy, mocking bow.

"Goeden avond, mynheer!" he said gutturally. "But—I see that you are English, my young friend. I speak that tongue, though not so well as my niece, whose mother was English. I have never had the pleasure of seeing you before, and I heard your name a moment ago for the first time. Mynheer Philip—I do not know your other name—you are very welcome to my poor house."

Evidently the Dutchman had overheard the girl's whispering through the thin pandanus screen at the doorway.

The spying Solomon Island boy had not gone to waken him; the planter was already wakeful, and himself on the watch.

"My little Stella is alarmed for you, Mynheer Philip—not without cause," went on the Dutchman, with the same sardonic grin on his harsh face. "Do not approach that door, through which my dear niece would have guided you—it is secured on the other side. I did not leave an outlet to this trap when I trapped you, mynheer."

The girl found her voice.

"Uncle!" she breathed.

"You may leave us, Stella!" said the planter. "I have something to say to Mynheer Philip which you need not hear."

King of the Islands spoke for the first time.

"You are making a mistake, Mr. Van Tromp," he said quietly. "My name is not Philip, and this young lady has made a mistake also."

The girl spun round at the sound of his voice. For the first time she saw King of the Islands, and her blue eyes opened wide in amazement.

"It is not Philip Grahame!" she exclaimed.

"I am sorry for the mistake, Miss Van Tromp," said Ken. "But you gave me no chance to speak."

The colour flushed into the girl's face in a wave of crimson.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "I—I thought—I supposed—I believed—But you are not Philip! How came you here, then?"

Without waiting for an answer to the question, she turned to the grinning Dutchman.

"This is not Philip. I have never seen him before, uncle. I know nothing of him."

"Good!" grinned the Dutchman. "Clever! Very good! You do not expect me to believe you, Stella? But very good."

"I tell you, I have never seen this man before!"

"You may tell me so a thousand times, Stella, but I am not a child," said the planter. "No doubt Mynheer Philip Grahame will tell me the same."

"Ay, ay," said King of the Islands. "My name is King—Ken King."

"Your name is quite indifferent to me, my young friend," said the Dutch planter. "There are many men in the Pacific who have more than one name, and perhaps you are one of them. But, whatever your name may be, mynheer, let me tell you one thing: you will never own this island of Ka'a."

Ken stared at him.

"Ach! You do not understand?" grinned Van Tromp. "You would like me to believe—ach!—that you think only of my niece, and not of my plantation! Tell me, if you please, that you did not know that Stella was the daughter of the elder brother, that this plantation belonged to the elder brother, that now she is of age it belongs to her, and must be handed over to her husband by her faithful guardian. You did not know all this, mynheer? You did not think of calling in the English law of the English Commissioner to put you in possession of Ka'a,"

once you had secured it by marriage with my niece? Ach!"

He chuckled gutturally.

"I am not the man you take me for," said King of the Islands coldly.

"This young lady is a witness——"

"No doubt! No doubt!" grinned the Dutchman. "The young lady will bear out all you say, to save your life. Ja, mynheer! But I am not a child! Stella, you will leave us."

"I will not leave you!" panted the girl. "I tell you, uncle, this man is a stranger to me. Let him go."

"Nalasoo!"

A grinning Solomon Island boy stepped forward. The Dutchman's thick, stubby finger pointed to Stella Van Tromp.

"You take feller white Mary along room belong him, Nalasoo."

King of the Islands made a step forward as Nalasoo stretched out a black hand to grasp the girl's arm. The heavy Dutchman strode in his way, his hand on a revolver at his hip.

"Seize him!" he snarled. "You feller boy, you hold along this feller."

He turned to Ken.

"Lift a hand, mynheer, and—ach! Gott!"

The Dutchman suddenly broke off with an oath and staggered back, with the boy trader's fist crashing in his coppery face.

At the same moment the crowd of blacks rushed on the boy trader, and King of the Islands, struggling desperately, was borne to the floor.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER

##### IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH!

**K**EN KING struggled furiously. One of the blacks was still holding up the hurricane lamp, shedding light on the scene. Nalasoo was grasping the arm of the terrified girl, but the rest—and there were five of them—had hurled themselves in a

body on the boy trader, grasping him on all sides with sinewy black hands. Ken was strong and sturdy, but in the grasp of so many powerful hands he had little chance.

Twice he released an arm and struck with clenched fist, and a black man rolled, panting and howling, on the floor. But the others held on like bulldogs, dragging him down.

Once he almost succeeded in dragging the revolver from his pocket. Had his gun reached his hand, matters might have gone very differently that wild night on Ka'a.

But they were too many for him.

Hard he fought, with set teeth and glinting eyes, but they had him down and piled on him, and his struggling died away in breathless exhaustion.

The Dutch planter stood watching, passing his hand over a mark on his face where Ken had struck and muttering oaths in guttural Dutch. He had his revolver in his hand, and there was little doubt that he would have used it had Ken succeeded in getting loose.

But it was not needed. Strong and sturdy as he was, King of the Islands was soon a helpless prisoner in the hands of the Solomon Island boys.

Meanwhile, Nalasoo was pulling the girl away to the door on the veranda. She clung with one hand to the palm-wood door-post and shrieked.

"Uncle! Uncle Otto! I tell you he is not the man! He is a stranger here—I have never seen him——"

"Of course not!" grinned Van Tromp. "You feller Nalasoo, you take away white Missy, or me tan your black hide plenty too much."

"Yes, sar!" gasped the houseboy.

And exerting his strength, Nalasoo dragged Stella Van Tromp from the door, out into the dim starlight of the veranda.

King of the Islands heard another door, farther along the veranda, close. The girl had been shut in an adjoining room.

The boy trader lay panting. He was powerless in the grasp of the blacks, but his eyes gleamed defiance at the menacing face of the planter.

"Ach Gott!" said Van Tromp. "You are a fighting man, it seems—ach! It is well that I had force to deal with you, Mynheer Grahame."

King of the Islands panted.

"Fool!" he snapped. "My name is not Grahame—my name is King! I have never set foot on Ka'a before—"

"Lies will not save your life, mynheer!" The Dutchman growled an order to the panting blacks. "You feller boy, you put feller rope along foot, along hand, belong that feller!"

Tapa cords were wound round the boy trader's wrists and ankles and knotted tightly.

Then the blacks released him and crowded back to the veranda.

Otto Van Tromp rubbed the mark on his face again, his little, evil, light eyes glinting at King of the Islands.

"You came to see Stella, my friend," he said. "You have seen her—for the last time. The missionary of Lu is waiting—he will wait long." He grinned savagely. "I did not know your name—all I knew was that you were one of the pearlers on Lu, and that you crossed the channel in the dark, when my niece showed a light to tell you that all was safe! Hound! Do you hope for help from your friends on Lu? They will never learn your fate."

King breathed hard.

"I tell you that you are mistaken, fool and scoundrel!" he said. "If you will listen—"

"Enough, mynheer! It is you that are the fool, to dream that you

can delude me with such lies. You have walked into the trap that was prepared for you—and now you would tell me that you are not the man for whom it was laid! Ach!"

"I came—"

"Ach! Do I not know why you came, mynheer?" grinned the Dutchman. "Luister—listen, you! How long this has gone on, I know not, neither do I care. It is only lately I have discovered it! Stella has always repined—ach! she did not like the lonely life on Ka'a—but I was her guardian, even by your English law. Now she has reached an age when, by your English law, I should hand over to her my brother's estate, and all Ka'a belonged to my brother, and now belongs to the daughter of his English wife! Ach! All the more carefully, mynheer, I have guarded her."

He grinned down at the scornful face of the boy trader.

"How you made acquaintance with my niece, I know not," said the planter, watching his face keenly.

"I am curious to know, if you care to tell me. More than once, men have landed on Ka'a, but they have been driven off. But you, it seems, made acquaintance with my niece—"

"I tell you I have never seen her before—I—"

"You may tell me all the lies you choose, mynheer; they will not save your life," said the Dutchman coolly.

"But to save your breath, I will tell you that I know all. I have suspected for some time that there was something—Stella was less sad—her eyes were brighter—she seemed to hope! Ach! I set Nalasoo to watch! So I learned, mynheer, that after I slept in my room on the other side of the bungalow, Stella would set a lamp sometimes at her door, as a signal to you that all was safe—and you would cross the channel from Lu in a canoe."



"Seize him!" snarled Van Tromp. "Lift a hand, mynheer, and—ach! Gott!" The Dutchman suddenly staggered back, with Ken King's fist crashing in his coppery face.

Ken thought of the canoe that had been run down under the bows of the *Dawn*, of the insensible man who lay in the state-room of the ketch.

It was fixed in the Dutchman's mind that he was the man who had come from Lu under cover of darkness.

The mistake was natural; indeed, in the strange circumstances, the Dutchman could hardly have believed anything else.

And he was not likely to believe the denials of the man he had trapped to his death.

Ken would have spoken, but the planter waved him to silence again.

"Three nights ago," he said, "you came—and Nalasoo was watching. He did not see you—but he was watching, and he heard. All that he heard was told to me when you had gone. Now you know why I was aware that you were coming to-night—that you were to take Stella away in the canoe

—to Lu, where the missionary waits! Once you had made her your wife, mynheer, she would have been safe from my pursuit, and the English law would have taken from me my brother's estate—ach!"

He swore in Dutch.

"That is why I let you come to-night, mynheer—it was easy for you to come, but—ach! it will not be so easy for you to go. From this night, Stella shall be more closely guarded—this shall not happen again! Neen! Neen! I shall take care, mynheer!"

He turned from the bound boy trader.

The planter growled an order in bêche-de-mer, and Nalasoo and another black boy entered the room and lifted the boy trader in their strong arms.

Van Tromp picked up the hurricane lamp.

He led the way from the room, the

two blacks following him with King of the Islands carried between them like a sack of copra.

They crossed the veranda to the steps and descended, the planter leading the way with the light.

Ken's heart was beating fast. His face was white and set. It seemed to him that the rustle of the wings of the Angel of Death was in his ears.

Nothing could shake the Dutchman's conviction that it was his niece's lover who had fallen into his hands. And he had planned the death of the man from Lu.

Where were they taking him? They passed the yam fields, and entered the palm grove—the way King of the Islands had come. The Dutchman, without once glancing back, led the way with the hurricane lamp down the sloping ground. Behind him the two Solomon Islanders marched in silence, carrying the boy trader. Where they were taking him Ken did not know—but he knew that they were taking him to his death!

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### ON THE BEACH

**K**AIO-LALULALONGA trembled.

In the darkness beside the beached boat, Tomoo lay fast asleep, his breathing deep and regular. But Koko was not sleeping while he waited for the return of his little white master.

To King of the Islands and to Kit Hudson that solitary shining light on Ka'a had been a signal-light, but to Kaio-lalulalonga's superstitious mind it seemed much more like the shining, less "devil-devils" that haunted the darkness of night.

On all other subjects, the opinion of the boy trader was a law to the faithful Kanaka, but on the subject of "aitoos," Koko knew things that white men could never know.

Koko, as he often said, was no common Kanaka, but he had his full share of the superstitions of the natives of the Islands.

He sat on the gunwale of the boat and watched and waited, and rather envied Tomoo sleeping soundly in the sand. Koko could not sleep like the Hiva-Oa boy because his thoughts followed his little white master through the dark woods, towards the hidden interior of the island where the mysterious light gleamed.

It was a comfort to Koko that the light could not be seen from the little beach at the head of the cove. But he started and trembled when from the blackness of the palm grove a light twinkled.

The Kanaka's heart thumped against his brown ribs.

The mist was clearing from the stars, and there was a glimmer of faint light on the beach. But in the grove of thick palms that extended between the shore and the distant bungalow all was black—until the winking light came from the blackness.

It appeared and disappeared from moment to moment, like a light carried by someone who was winding a way among the slanting trunks of the palms.

But to Koko's startled eyes, it was not a light carried by a human hand. Who should be carrying a light through the palm groves of Ka'a at midnight?

It twinkled far distant, a mere speck at first, growing more clear and steady as it approached.

It was the gleaming eye of a devil of the dark night—that devil was coming through the palms towards the cove.

Kaio-lalulalonga, brave as a lion, trembled. He had faced a horde of cannibals without a tremor; he had fought with a shark in deep waters

and never known fear, but he was shivering now. His black eyes fixed, as if fascinated, on the light that twinkled, appearing and disappearing, among the trunks of the palms.

That was the way King of the Islands had gone ; that was the way he would return, when he came. But King of the Islands had no lantern ; it could not be he. Yet as the light came nearer and nearer, it dawned even on Koko's dismayed mind that it looked like the light of a hurricane lamp.

It reached the edge of the palm grove, a hundred yards from the spot where the Kanaka boatswain sat on the gunwale of the beached boat.

Then, after glimmering for a few moments from the trees, it was suddenly extinguished.

If it was the eye of an " aitoo," that eye was closed now. But Koko's superstitious terrors were almost gone by this time. He realised that the light was that of a hurricane lamp, carried to light the way through the darkness of the palm grove, and that it had been extinguished as soon as the bearer reached the beach, where the stars gave him sufficient light.

Against the darkness of the palms, the Kanaka's keen eyes could now pick out moving shadows. Faintly to his ears came the sound of heavy feet tramping on soft sand. The night wind brought a faint sound of a guttural voice to his listening ears.

He sat and watched.

The tramping feet in the gloom were crossing the sand to the sea, but not in a direct line towards the boat. Whoever was coming did not know that the *Dawn's* boat was there. It was not King of the Islands returning. His canvas shoes would not have caused that heavy tramping sound ; it was the tramp of thick sea-boots that came to Koko's listening ears. And King of the Islands would have

come direct to the boat, while the unseen man in the darkness was heading for the shore at a distance from it.

Kaio-lalulalonga watched, and wondered. Faint as was the glimmer of the stars, he made out a heavy bulky figure crossing his line of vision, from the palm grove towards the water's edge.

Following it came two other figures, carrying something between them that looked like a large sack in the gloom.

The two followers were natives, whose bare feet made hardly a sound on the sand as they followed the heavily tramping white man.

The three figures, with what they were carrying, reached the water's edge, at a distance of twenty yards or more from the spot where the *Dawn's* whaleboat was beached.

There the object that the two natives carried was laid down on the sand. What it was, Koko did not know.

In the silence that was broken only by the murmur of the surf in the channel, a sound of voices reached his ears.

And then suddenly, as if he had been electrified, Kaio-lalulalonga leaped from the gunwale of the boat, his eyes almost starting from his head as he stared towards the group on the shadowy beach.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER

KOKO'S K.O. PUNCH !

"Ach ! Where did you leave your canoe, mynheer ? "

The Dutchman bent over King of the Islands. His little glittering eyes scanned the white face of the boy trader. His harsh, heavy face was distorted by an evil grin.

King of the Islands looked up at the evil face, his heart beating hard.

His eyes gleamed with hope.

In the darkness, flung across the shoulders of the two Solomon Island boys, the boy trader had seen nothing, known only that he was carried away through the woods, behind the Dutchman with the lamp.

When they emerged on the beach he had little doubt that he was to be flung into the sea, and when he was laid on the sand, at the water's edge, he realised that his last hour had come.

But as the Dutchman bent over him and questioned him he understood. He had been carried back to the cove where he had landed—where the man of Lu would have landed, had not his canoe been run down. The Dutchman's question could mean nothing else.

Ken panted.

From the depths of utter despair, from the instant expectation of cruel death, he came back to hope—to life.

The Dutchman saw the change in his face, in the dim glimmer of the stars, without understanding it.

"Ach! You hear me?" he grunted. "You came from Lu in a canoe, mynheer. On this side you could only have landed in this cove—also I know from Nalasoo that this is where you are used to land. Ach! I do not choose to search in the darkness for your canoe. Where did you leave it?"

Ken's heart was beating too fast for him to speak for the moment. He knew where he was now—on the sands of the cove where he had landed. Somewhere in the darkness along the beach was the whaleboat of the *Dawn*, and Tomoo and the faithful Kaiolalulalonga. Out in the channel was the anchored ketch; but for a jutting cliff he could have seen her riding lights. And the Dutchman did not know. Believing that Ken was the man who had come alone from Lu in a canoe, he could not know.

The Dutchman's threatening voice growled again.

"Speak, you dog! Your canoe is beached somewhere along the cove. You came in a canoe, as you came before. Did you think that I should blow out your brains, and bury you on Ka'a? Ach! Do I not know that you have friends on Lu—especially the missionary—and we are not far enough from the High Commissioner at Fiji? Neen." He gave a hoarse chuckle. "Neen, neen! I have only one neck, my friend, and it is not destined to be stretched by an English rope."

Ken watched him, silent.

"Neen! Neen!" said Van Tromp, chuckling again. "Do you not understand yet, mynheer? My black boys will hold your head below the water—as long a time as you need—ach! Then the ropes will be removed from your limbs, mynheer. The morning tide will land you on the beach of Lu—drowned! Your canoe will float ashore with you, bottom up! Do you see, mynheer? This is a dangerous channel, between Lu and Ka'a—many a canoe has come to grief in it, especially at night! Yours will not be the first. But I must know where you have left your canoe—you have beached it somewhere in the darkness. Speak, before your neck is twisted to make you speak."

Ken drew a deep breath.

Had the man from Lu fallen into this demon's hands, as the Dutchman believed, the fiendish scheme would have been carried through without a hitch. When a drowned man, with no signs of violence, was washed ashore on Lu, with an overturned canoe, who was to suspect that anything had happened but one of the chances of the sea?

And the murderer would have been safe from justice. The Dutchman of Ka'a had calculated cunningly.

Ken's eyes flashed.

" Speak ! " growled Van Tromp savagely. " Where is the canoe ? I must set it adrift with you, mynheer. Speak, or——"

Ken gathered all his strength for a shout. That he intended to shout the Dutchman did not dream. So far as Van Tromp knew there were no ears to hear. But the shout came out with all the force of Ken's lungs, and it rang and echoed along the beach, and far across the darkness of Ka'a.

" Koko ! Help ! Save me, Koko ! Kaio-lalulalonga, ahoy ! King of the Islands calls you ! Help ! "

" Ach Gott ! Are you mad, then ? " gasped the astonished Dutchman. " Do you fancy there are ears on Ka'a to hear you ? Ach ! You are out of your senses with fear ! Nalasoo, twist this feller him neck till he

speakee along canoe—but leave no marks——"

" Koko ! Help ! "

There was a tramp of rushing feet on the sand. The two Solomon Island boys stared round in amazement.

Van Tromp spun round, amazed, enraged, grasping at the revolver in his hip-pocket. King of the Islands, struggling in his bonds, shouted again. But his call was not needed. Koko, electrified by the sudden sound of the voice of his little white master shouting for help, was racing to the spot. Van Tromp had a glimpse of a towering form in the gloom, of a fierce brown face from which two enraged eyes burned like fire—and then a giant fist crashed on him, and he went senseless to the sand.

Kaio-lalulalonga, with a yell of fury, turned on the Solomon Island boys. But they did not wait for his



Van Tromp had a glimpse of a fierce brown face from which two enraged eyes burned like fire—and then the giant fist of Koko crashed on him, and he went senseless to the ground.

attack. Yelling with consternation, Nalasoo and his companion tore away up the beach and vanished into the darkness.

Van Tromp lay motionless where he had fallen.

"Little white master!" panted Koko.

He was on his knees beside the bound boy trader. His knife slashed through the tapa cords.

King of the Islands leaped to his feet—a free man! In silence, his heart too full for words, he grasped the brown hand of the boatswain and wrung it.

• • •  
"Suffering cats!"

That was Kit Hudson's ejaculation when he was told on the deck of the *Dawn*. He thumped Kaio-lalulalonga energetically on the back, and the brown boatswain chuckled.

Otto Van Tromp, still insensible, lay in irons in the cabin of the *Dawn*. He was booked for Fiji, and trial for attempted murder. There was a bitter awakening for the Dutch planter of Ka'a when he came to his senses. But he was still lying like a log when Philip Grahame, in the state-room of the *Dawn*, opened his eyes in the morning light.

The *Dawn* was under way. King of the Islands had run the ketch out of the channel to the anchorage on the western side of Ka'a, in sight of the Van Tromp bungalow. The ketch was sailing into the anchorage under the rising sun when Philip's eyes opened, and through a porthole he had a glimpse of Ka'a and the bungalow on the high ground. He started up in the bunk, with throbbing head. He heard the cable run out, and as the ketch swung to her anchor, King of the Islands came down.

An hour later the man of Lu, with a bandaged head and a pale face, but a face that was very happy in

spite of its pallor, was going ashore in the whaleboat. He had told Ken the simple story—how he had landed one day on Ka'a, curious to see the mystery island, and had met Stella Van Tromp by chance in the palm woods, and how one meeting had followed another—kept carefully secret from the savage old Dutchman. That Stella was the heiress of Ka'a Philip did not know; he only knew that her surly, savage uncle kept her practically a prisoner on the island. Her fear of the brutal planter was so great that he had arranged to take her to Lu in the canoe, where they were to be married by the missionary, unknown to Otto Van Tromp till it was too late for him to intervene. He had not suspected that Van Tromp had made the discovery, and that he was going to his death when the ketch ran his canoe down in the darkness of the midway channel. That collision in the dark night had saved his life.

A pale-faced, sad-eyed girl was looking wearily from the bungalow as the whaleboat pulled ashore. But the sadness faded from Stella Van Tromp's face, and her eyes brightened, as she recognised the bandaged man. Philip Grahame leaped ashore and ran up the coral path to the bungalow.

From the deck of the *Dawn* King of the Islands watched them with a smile.

"That's the white woman of Ka'a, Kit," he said. "Not a myth, after all. She is owner of Ka'a—and young Grahame is a lucky dog. And I think we'll run the ketch across to Lu and fetch the missionary here—all's plain sailing now that we've got that scoundrel Van Tromp safe below in irons."

And when King of the Islands put to sea again, he left happiness behind him on Ka'a—once, but now no longer, Mystery Island.

THE END

# PRESENCE OF MIND



*Arthur Edward Lovell was born to find trouble, mostly of his own making, and once again, in this thrilling story of the chums of Rookwood School, he lands himself in the soup!*

By OWEN  
CONQUEST

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

PANKLEY AND CO. ON THE WAPATH

"WHAT the thump——"  
"What the dickens——"

Jimmy Silver and Arthur Edward Lovell spoke simultaneously. Raby and Newcome did not speak. They merely stared.

The Fistical Four of Rookwood were strolling amiably down Coombe Lane early one bright winter afternoon. It was a half-holiday that afternoon, and Jimmy Silver & Co. had obtained permission to travel over to Lantham.

Jimmy's Uncle John was at Lantham Barracks, and Jimmy's father was visiting his brother that afternoon. And he had asked the headmaster

to permit Jimmy and his friends to go over and join him at tea, which the headmaster had graciously consented to do. So the Fistical Four were in high spirits as they strolled along Coombe Lane. The train left Coombe Station at five minutes past three, and they had plenty of time to catch it.

They had reached the stile leading off into the wood when suddenly a frightful figure smote their eyes.

The figure was that of a fat youth, with his hands and his feet tied together, wearing a hideously grinning Guy Fawkes mask over his face. The object jumped dolefully along the road, uttering a moan with each convulsive leap.

"Ow! Groogh! Wow!"

"What is it?" stuttered Raby blankly.

"Looks like a guy escaped from the bonfires last week," Jimmy remarked. "But judging from the dulcet tones of its voice, I should say it was Tubby Muffin."

A plaintive voice came from the thick grinning lips of the mask.

"I say, old chaps! Cut a fellow loose! Groogh!"

"You fat chump!" snorted Lovell. "What are you charging about the lane like that for?"

"I didn't do it, you ass! Ow! It was the Bagshot bounders. Groogh!"

Jimmy Silver produced a pocket-knife and cut the cord which bound Tubby Muffin's hands and feet. Then he jerked the mask off Tubby's indignant face.

"Bagshot bounders!" repeated Newcome. "Are Pankley and Co. on the warpath this afternoon?"

"Ow! Yes, about a dozen of the brutes. They've got a large stock of masks and cord, and they're waylaying all the Rookwood men going to the village. I say, old chaps, you go and pitch into them. I'll stay here and—and keep cave, you know."

"We'll soon do that," Jimmy said grimly.

"What-ho!" remarked George Raby, thoughtfully tucking up his sleeves as he spoke. "Where are they, Tubby?"

"They were just along the end of the lane when I ran into them. Groogh!" Tubby groaned dolorously. "I say, old chaps, there's a hamper for me at Coombe Station, and I can't get at it while those beasts are hanging about."

"Come on!" said Jimmy briefly.

"Half a minute," said Lovell, pausing. "How many of them are there, Tubby?"

"Ow! Thousands of the rotters!"

"Thousands! Why not make it a million, while you're about it?"

"Well, about a dozen, you know," said Tubby, coming down a bit. "They're on the look-out for Rookwood men."

"They'll find some!" George Raby prophesied grimly. "Get going, you chaps!"

"Hold on!" Arthur Edward Lovell was not in a hurry. Lovell always believed in being different from other fellows, and he was going to be different now. "Our train goes at three-five, you know," said he.

"If we get into a shindy with Pankley & Co., and get bumped over and tied up somewhere, we shall miss the train."

"Can't be helped," said Jimmy. "We've got to go to Coombe, anyway, and if we fall in with Pankley & Co. we'll try to give as good as we get."

"But why not take the path through the woods?" urged Lovell, nodding at the stile. "It's rather longer, but we shall get the train all right."

"What rot!" Newcome snorted. "We're not going to run away from Pankley."

Arthur Lovell's back went up at once.

"We're not running away," he sniffed. "It's presence of mind, that's all."

"Presence of piffle!" grunted Raby.

"Presence of mind!" repeated Lovell firmly. "We can't tackle a dozen Bagshot men and get to the station without a scratch. It's not to be expected."

"Well, perhaps that's so," admitted Jimmy grudgingly, "but still—"

"I say, you know," put in Tubby at this point, "don't be funks, you know!"

"What?" roared Lovell.

"I've got to get my hamper from the station, you see. If you fellows

go and mop up Pankley & Co., it will be all right."

" You fat idiot! We're not going over to Lantham looking like pieces of wreckage just because your hamper is at the station. If it comes to that, you can walk through the path with us."

" Look here," said Raby restively, " I don't see why we should go miles out of our way just because a few measly Bagshot fellows are hanging about the road. I'm going through the village."

" Same here!" said Newcome emphatically.

Jimmy Silver hesitated. The cheery Fistical Four were never backward in looking for trouble. They rather welcomed it. But Jimmy could see that Lovell was going to be obstinate.

" We may as well go the straight road," he said persuasively. " Quite likely we shan't meet Bagshot at all. Pankley may have gone into the wood, in which case we should be as likely to meet him on the footpath as in the road."

" Rot!" said Arthur Lovell.

" My dear chap——"

" Utter rot! You've no presence of mind, Jimmy Silver. I'm going through the footpath. You fellows can stick to the road if you like."

" We're going to!" snorted Raby.

" What is it?" asked Raby as a fat figure, wearing a Guy Fawkes mask, jumped along the road towards the Juniors, uttering a moan with each jump. " Judging from the dulcet tones," said Jimmy Silver, " it is Tubby Muffin."



" And if you turn up at Coombe Station with your eyes bunged up and your collar on backwards——"

" You'll say ' I told you so! '" murmured Newcome sarcastically. " You're far more likely to meet Pankley & Co. in the wood than we are on the road. If they're ambushing Rookwood men, the footpath would be the best place."

" That really is so," Jimmy pointed out. " Look at it sensibly, old bean."

" I'm going through the footpath," Lovell answered doggedly.

"Then go, and be dashed!" snapped Raby.

"We'll see you at the station, old man," Jimmy said pacifically. "Is Tubby going with you or coming with us? He'd better go with you as he's not much use in a scrap."

"Oh, really, Jimmy! I'd come with you, old fellow, but I've already had a terrific scrap with the rotters, and I'm feeling a little tired, you know. Not that I funk them. I hope that's beneath me."

"Come on, and don't jaw!" snapped Lovell. "We haven't any time to waste if we are to get to the station by three o'clock."

Without another word, Lovell turned his back and climbed over the stile to the footpath. Tubby followed him, stopping only to fling his Guy Fawkes mask into a ditch.

"Silly obstinate ass!" murmured Raby. "It would serve him right if he fell in with Bagshot and got tied up and masked."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Fistical Four, now reduced to three, stepped gaily along the road to the village. They kept a wary eye open for Pankley, Poole or Putter of Bagshot, but if those cheery youths had been "straddling the road" like Apolyon, they had thought better of it and gone elsewhere.

Quite unmolested, the three juniors entered the small High Street of Coombe, and tramped into the station, just as the clock showed ten minutes to three.

"Quarter of an hour to wait," said Jimmy, as they passed on to the platform. "I wonder what time Lovell will show up."

Newcome purchased a copy of the "Gem," and sat down on a seat to read. Jimmy, Silver and Raby fed pennies into various slot machines, just to see what came out of them. Three o'clock struck from the church

tower across the square, and still Lovell had not made his appearance.

Four more minutes elapsed, and Jimmy peered out anxiously into the High Street. Lovell was nowhere to be seen.

"Blow him! Bother him! Dash him!" grunted Jimmy. "What can have happened to the ass?"

"Perhaps he's fallen in with Pankley and has bolted through the footpaths to Redcliffe," suggested Raby. "If the Bagshot bounders are blocking the way to the village, he would most likely go over to Redcliffe and pick up the train there."

Jimmy grunted again. Soon there was the shriek of a whistle and a train rattled into the station.

"Redcliffe, Lantham, Dunbridge, Dean and Salisbury," bawled the porter, waking up from his after-dinner sleep.

"Pile in!" said Jimmy. "I expect we shall see the ass at Redcliffe."

But, as it happened, they were destined to see him long before they got to Redcliffe.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### LOVELL IN PERIL!

ARTHUR EDWARD LOVELL whistled in a satisfied tone as he tramped along the path. He had not the faintest doubt that Jimmy Silver & Co. would be duly mopped up by the crowd of Bagshot fellows. It was their own fault, of course. Lovell had presence of mind, and they had not. They had made their bed and they must lie on it.

The dead leaves and twigs which carpeted the footpath squelched under his feet as he trod along. Tubby Muffin panted along in the rear. Tubby had rather more weight to carry than Lovell.

"Don't hang about, you ass!" admonished Lovell, glancing over his

shoulder at the perspiring Tubby. "We've no time to waste!"

"I say, old fellow," panted Tubby, "there's no hurry! I can get the hamper at any time up to ten o'clock."

"Bless your hamper! My train goes at three-five!"

"That's all right. You can take the next."

"You fat dummy! Get a move on!"

Tubby plodded along breathlessly. Suddenly there was a roar of laughter some distance ahead of them.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lovell started. Tubby jumped.

"I say, that's Pankley!" he gaped.

"He's on the footpath."

"Rot! Come on!"

"But, I say, old chap——"

"Come on!" bawled Lovell. "Don't stand there talking rubbish like a fat frog!"

Lovell was finding some misgivings. That laugh had a Bagshot ring in it. He thought he had detected the cackle of Putter. This, of course, only made Lovell all the more determined that he was right.

But soon his doubts became certainties. As they rounded a corner by a large elm, a startling sight met their eyes.

Seated on a mossy old milestone, struggling furiously with his bonds, was another amateur Guy Fawkes. A long black moustache ornamented his mask, and the face wore a feeble grin quite out of keeping with the fury of the figure's energies.

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Lovell.

The hideous figure looked up on hearing his footsteps.

"Rescue, Rookwood!" bawled the tones of Putty Grace of the Classical Fourth. "Come on, you ass! Don't stand there staring like a sheep, you dummy! Cut me loose, you potty piffler!"

Evidently Teddy Grace was annoyed.

Mechanically Lovell produced a knife and cut the bonds of the ill-used humorist of the Fourth. As soon as Putty was free, he wrenches off the mask and jumped on it.

"Those Bagshot villains!" he gasped furiously. "There's a whole crowd of them just ahead. Look out for them!"

"Which way did they go?" asked Lovell, with a sinking heart.

"Just along the path towards the village, bother them! I'm going to collect a mob of the Fourth and come back and mop them up!"

"I say, old chap——" bleated Tubby, but his bleat changed into a cry of alarm. "Yaroooooh! Bagshot bounders! Bunk!"

Lovell looked ahead and saw a crowd of juniors coming through the trees.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That Rookwood guy is free!" whooped Pankley.

"And there's dear old Lovell and our old pal Tubby!" chuckled Poole.

"Three more guys!"

"Wait for us, my dears!" croaked Putter. "We've plenty more masks. We bought 'em specially for Rookwood. They make you much more handsome, you know."

The Bagshot fellows charged merrily along the path.

Tubby didn't wait for them. Neither did Lovell nor Putty Grace.

Tubby plunged into the wood with Lovell at his heels. Putty tore back along the path towards Rookwood. The Bagshot fellows went after the chief prize, which was Arthur Edward Lovell, a member of the famous Fistical Four.

Gritting his teeth furiously, Lovell dodged round trunks of trees, dived through bushes, squelched through pools of mud, and climbed over ditches. Tubby Muffin, very much in the wars, kept near to him.

"Make towards the railway,"

panted Lovell. "We can edge back to the path alongside Little Wood Cutting."

Tubby nodded without speaking. Loud whoops were still ringing out close behind them. They were leaving tracks easily followed, and the noise of their flight could be heard a very long way.

A ditch with steep clay banks, overgrown with bushes and wild plants, led towards the higher ground by the Cutting. Lovell worked his way cautiously along the top of the bank, clinging where necessary to bushes and the branches of trees.

Tubby was not so lucky. He threw his weight on the branch of a bush to keep himself from falling, and his weight broke the branch. Tubby's heels threshed wildly on the slippery clay bank. Then he went into the ditch with a tremendous squelching slide.

Squi-i-i-sh! Squash! Splash!

"Whoooop!" he shrieked as the ditch, with stagnant water, rotting leaves and mud, received him into its bosom.

"Shut up!" hissed Lovell. "Don't make that row! Pankley will hear you!"

"But look at me!" yelled Tubby, climbing out in a garment of mud. "Look at me!" he shrieked. "Ain't I a sight! Oh, lor'! Ow-wow!"

Lovell caught him by the shoulder and ran with him through the bushes to where a high stone wall cut off further flight. There he stopped and panted.

Loud whoops and shouts were still echoing close at hand. Presently he heard Pankley shouting to his followers.

"Stop here! They can't go any farther because of the railway! We've got them trapped, my sons!"

Lovell groaned. Tubby stuttered with dismay.

"Oh, corks! How can we get to the station now?" he moaned. "There isn't any way except through the wood where Pankley is."

Lovell's eyes gleamed.

"Yes, there is," he said desperately. "There's a straight road to the station."

"What? Where?" gasped Tubby, blinking about him in amazement.

"Over the other side of this wall, fathead!"

"But—but that's the railway!"

"Well? Doesn't that go to the station?"

"Ye-es, but you can't walk along the permanent way, can you?"

"Why not?" asked Lovell coolly.

"Because of the trains, old fellow. Besides, it ain't allowed."

Lovell sniffed.

"You want presence of mind, old fat bean! The railway is the quickest way to the station, so we shall go that way. Let me give you a bunk up the wall."

"But—but, I say, you know—"

"Don't talk! Sit on my shoulders."

Groaning and gasping, Lovell lifted the weighty Muffin and helped him to climb astride the wall. Then he deftly climbed up the trunk of a tree growing near by, swarmed along a branch and joined Tubby on the wall.

Tubby looked down and shivered. Far below them, shut in by the sides of the steep cutting approaching Fieldhall Tunnel, ran four shining ribbons of steel.

"I—I say, I can't climb down there," he groaned.

"Then you can stay there and let Pankley have you," replied Lovell callously. "I'm going."

He dropped from the wall to the ground, and then slithered cautiously down the embankment until he stood in the middle of the permanent way, just where the points enable the cross-country Southampton trains to

go across to the main line at Eastleigh.

He blinked at the small form of Tubby perched on the wall high above him.

"Come on!" he bawled. "It's as safe as houses!"

"No fear!" came back the distant tones of Tubby Muffin. "I'd rather chance Pankley any day."

"You fat funk! I tell you it's

Lovell broke off as Tubby suddenly disappeared from sight on the other side of the wall. Perhaps Pankley was drawing near to him.

"Silly ass!" sniffed Lovell. "There's nothing—Whoohoooo! What—what—Ow!"

Lovell shrieked as something suddenly clutched his foot with a terrific grip. A spasm of throbbing pain shot up his leg. He blinked downwards in agonised amazement. Then he saw!

The signalman in the box at the entrance to the tunnel—which was out of sight around a bend—had just changed over the points. And that iron prong gripped Lovell's foot to the metals of the down line.

Lovell struggled and panted, but his foot was crushed close in that iron embrace. He could not even move it an inch. Perspiration of fear broke out on his forehead.

"Help!" he shouted frantically. "Help!"

There was a sudden clatter behind him. He turned his head and saw that the signal for the down line to Coombe and Winchester had just fallen. Then he remembered that the train to Winchester arrived at Coombe at three-twelve.

He had no idea of the time, but he judged that it must be three o'clock or after. A wild blink along the rails towards the tunnel showed him the position.

The cutting, at that point, took an acute curve, which gave a view ahead of no more than thirty-five or forty yards. In other words, as Lovell

told himself with a groan, the driver of the Winchester train would be about forty yards away from him before he saw him. This train always came up to Coombe at a fair pace, for it was a non-stop from Lantham.



To save himself from falling, Tubby threw his weight on the branch of a bush, his feet threshing wildly on the slippery bank. But the branch broke and Tubby went into the ditch with a squelching slide.

There would be no chance for it to pull up in time. Lovell knew that. He groaned in terror and wrenched so furiously at his leg that he felt he must have dislocated his ankle.

"Help!" he shrieked hopelessly.  
"Help!"

### THE THIRD CHAPTER "PRESENCE OF MIND."

"HELP!"

Lovell covered his face with his hands.

It was his last effort to make the man in the signal-box hear him. It had to be the last, for on the air was the rumble of an approaching train. It echoed back and forth in the deep clay walls of the cutting until the whole earth seemed to shake with it. Then came the clank of the engine and the puffing of steam.

Lovell stared eagerly ahead. Judging by the sound, the train was not travelling so fast as usual; it seemed, indeed, to be getting up speed after a halt. And as he stared with terrible eagerness at the curve before him, the rumble suddenly smote him from behind, and he realised that it was an up-train, and not the down-train, which was approaching.

At this fact his heart beat wildly. There was the barest possible hope, the faintest vestige of hope that something would be done for him before the Winchester train thundered out of the tunnel. He half turned and saw the engine rounding the bend—a fussy little tank engine.

He threw himself sideways across the down line in order to be out of reach of the train. He did not dare take his eyes from the curve ahead, for the rattle of the up-train now blotted out every sound, and the other might come on him unprepared. Not, as he told himself with a shudder, that it would make any difference. Indeed, it would be almost better for

death to strike unperceived than for him to watch its swift approach.

The driver of the tank engine gazed blankly at Lovell as it snorted by.

"Get off the track, you young fool!" he shrieked, not perceiving that Lovell's foot was caught.

Lovell gave him a haggard blink, and attempted to call attention to his foot, but the engine swept on.

Then suddenly a loud cry rang above the clamour.

"Lovell!"

He stared at the carriages above him, and saw Jimmy's white face being carried past at the window of a third-class compartment. Through the glass he could glimpse Raby and Newcome.

"Jimmy—my foot—" he shrieked wildly.

Jimmy took in the situation at a glance, and an icy hand clutched his heart. He remembered that the Winchester train was due at Coombe at three-twelve. It was three-ten at that moment.

Almost mechanically his grasp closed over the communication cord. He pulled it frantically.

"Jimmy—what—" gasped Raby, white-faced.

Jimmy set his teeth. He perceived the signal-box floating past them, and knew that the train would not stop for perhaps a hundred yards or so. With one bound he sprang across the carriage, upsetting his chums. He wrenched open the other door and leaped out towards the bed of ferns and gorse on the embankment.

"Jimmy!" shrieked Newcome and Raby, clutching each other with terror.

Crash!

"Ooooh!" gasped Jimmy.

The landing knocked all the breath out of his body. Winded and bruised he rolled down the slope and bumped on the gravel at the side of the track. Feeling half dazed, he staggered up,



With a shrieking of brakes,  
the locomotive rushed on,  
as it seemed to Lovell's  
horrified eyes, with  
tremendous speed. Nearer  
and nearer it came—rock-  
ing and swaying!

stumbled across the metals and waved his hand fiercely to the signalman who was regarding him with wide-open, terrified eyes.

"Stop the down-train!" shrieked Jimmy fiercely. "Stop it! Stop it!"

"Get off the down track, you fool!" screamed the signalman.

He pointed wildly as he spoke, and Jimmy was in time to see a large engine leap fiercely from the tunnel amid a cloud of sparks.

He sprang on the embankment and waved his arms above his head. For

one second he glimpsed a red face goggling at him from the cab of the big locomotive, then there was a screaming and tearing as the powerful brakes were applied. The train seemed to shiver from end to end.

Then Jimmy raced to the signal-box.

"Switch over the points!" he yelled, and promptly collapsed in a stupor at the foot of the steps.

Arthur Lovell heard the screaming before the engine appeared in sight. When it breasted the corner, it was rocking on the metals with the force

of the brakes, but was still rushing on as it seemed to Lovell's horrified eyes, with tremendous speed. Nearer and nearer it came — rocking and swaying with a shrieking, clangng and hissing as its speed diminished. Then there came a jolt which rocked the train from engine to guard's van, and the giant buffers of the engine came to rest within three yards of Lovell's pallid face.

At the same moment, the points shifted over and Lovell fell across the metals and crawled to the grass on the embankment.

"Thanks aw-awfully!" he stammered feebly to the astonished driver. "You—you can go on now."

"It was presence of mind!" said Lovell firmly.

He was sitting in the patient's chair in the Rookwood sanatorium, while the nurse, grinning covertly, bandaged his ankle. Seated on three other chairs, and looking fit to eat him, were Silver, Raby and Newcome.

The chums, abandoning their afternoon trip, had returned to Coombe in the down train. A motor ambulance, kindly lent by the Cottage Hospital, had conveyed Lovell back to Rookwood.

"It was presence of mind!" repeated Lovell. "If I hadn't had the presence of mind to get down on the railway track, Pankley & Co. would have tied me up and masked me, like they did Tubby Muffin after he left me. Think of that, you men!"

Jimmy Silver and his chums were

thinking of it. And only the presence of the matron saved Lovell from common assault.

"You—you—you frabjous owl!" gasped Jimmy.

"Luckily," said Lovell firmly, "I had the presence of mind to dodge them by climbing down the embankment. And so I wasn't caught and Muffin was."

"Oh, great pip!"

The nurse coughed.

"Master Lovell," she said, "the injury to your ankle appears to be more as the result of your wrenching than the grip of the metals."

"I shouldn't wonder," Lovell agreed. "I struggled pretty hard."

"What I mean is," said the nurse, with an innocent look in her blue eyes, "if you had unlaced your shoe, you might have freed your foot. Why didn't you do that?"

Lovell's jaw dropped in consternation. He gaped blankly at the nurse.

"Gug-great Scott!" he gurgled.

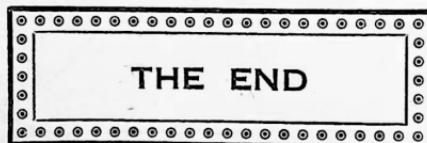
"I never thought of that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Jimmy Silver & Co.

Clasping each other gleefully, the three chums rose and staggered out of the sanatorium. In ten minutes all Rookwood knew the story of Lovell's "presence of mind."

Lovell soon got over the severe caning the Head thought fit to bestow on him. But he did not so soon get over the chaff of the juniors. And to this day he blushes whenever he hears anyone utter the words:

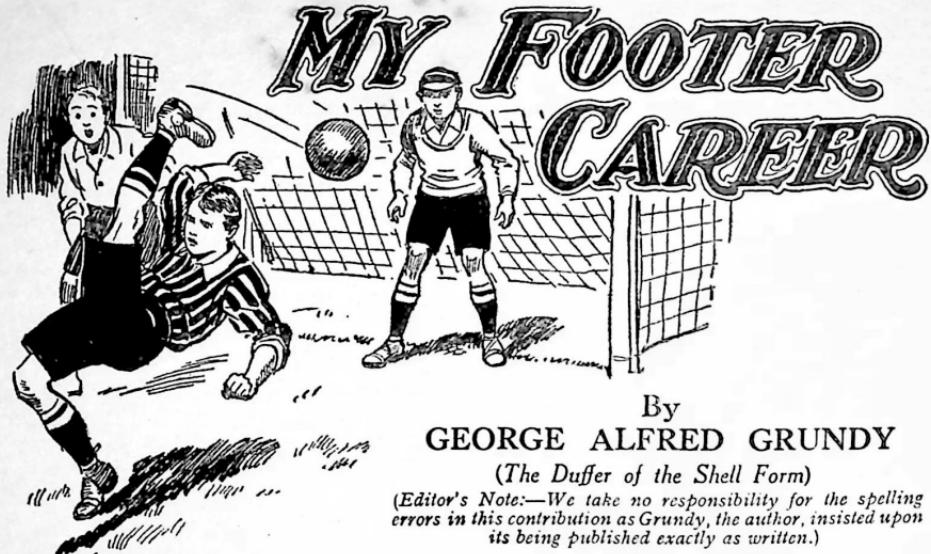
"Presence of mind!"



# AROUND ROOKWOOD



**I**N Hampshire's lovely woods there stands  
A building grey and hoary,  
And many a sage  
In every age  
Has witnessed to its glory.  
The fame of Rookwood School demands  
High place in song and story.  
The Abbey Ruins are close by,  
Now overgrown with brambles ;  
There, so they say,  
On Christmas Day  
A ghostly Abbot rambles.  
If he is seen by passers-by,  
There follow shrieks and scrambles.  
By Stuckey Croft, the Governor's place,  
A little stream meanders.  
The turf is soft  
At Stuckey Croft,  
But he who on it wanders,  
A master's " jaw " may have to face,  
With possibly six " handers."  
On summer days a little copse  
To Rookwooders gives shelter ;  
In there it's cool,  
Though at the school  
They all perspire and swelter ;  
And when the hated lesson stops  
They rush off helter-skelter.  
Down lower is " The Bird in Hand,"  
Where Carthew comes to anchor.  
He tries to win  
A pot of tin  
At billiards or at banker ;  
But, as a rule, he loses and  
His pleasure turns to rancour.  
On every side are rolling hills  
With little clumps and hollows ;  
And when the cows  
Go there to browse  
The fearsome bullock follows ;  
And there the little wheatear trills  
Among the darting swallows.  
The sunset with a touch of fire  
On Rookwood's walls is gleaming ;  
Then sinks from sight,  
And it is night :  
The lady moon is beaming  
In silver on this lovely shire—  
And Rookwood lies a-dreaming.



## By GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY

*(The Duffer of the Shell Form)*

*(Editor's Note:—We take no responsibility for the spelling errors in this contribution as Grundy, the author, insisted upon its being published exactly as written.)*

**I**t's an old saying and a true one that a profit is not without honner save in his own country.

Judging by the way they treat me at St. Jim's, you'd think I couldn't play footer for toffy. Yet the fact remains that I'm far and away the best player in the skool.

You can't beleeve it? Let me tell you something, then, that will make you sit up and take notiss. Here it is: *A prominent League team once asked me to sign on for them as a professional!*

Now, what about it?

I shall never forget the incident. I'd been playing my usual brilliant game in a Shell trial match, finishing up by scoring a sensational goal a minnit before fool-time. Some of the fatheads were a bit critical beawse it was a goal against my own side; but nobody denied that it was well scored.

As we came off the field, a crowd of chaps hailed me. They had an old bearded gentleman in their midst and they were all grinning—why, I don't know.

"So this is the grate Master Grundy!" cride the old gentleman. "Allow me to introduce myself. I am Mr. Monty Codd, of the Wayland Wanderers F.C. If I may say so, sir, you have just played a very brilliant game of footbawl."

"Well, you're right there, Mr. Codd!" I smiled, shaking hands with the jenial footbawl manager—for that was evidently what he was. "Not many chaps at St. Jim's can touch me when it comes to skill on the footer field."

"Has it ever occurred to you to turn professional, Master Grundy?" Mr. Codd arsked me.

"I'm a rattling good player, of corse," I answered modestly. "But I can't say I ever thought of turning pro."

"Then I should seriously advise you to think it over," said Mr. Codd. "A player of your marvellous ability ought to make a fortune out of the game."

"I don't doubt it for a moment," I said, with a nod. "Come to think of

it, in fact, it's not at all a bad idea. But how could I set about it ? "

" Set about it ? " echoed Mr. Codd, with a harty larf. " Why, you need only say you were thinking of becoming a pro. and half the footbawl managers in the country would be tumbling over each other to get in first."

" Something in that," I admitted thoughtfully. " But aren't you a footbawl manager yourself ? "

" I am. And if you are prepared to honner my humble club, the Wayland Wanderers F.C., by signing on for them, I shall be only too pleased to perform the necessary formallities ! "

" Then I'll do it ! " I cride. " The Wayland Wanderers shall have the bennefit of my marvellous footbawling ability ! "

" Thank you a thousand times, Master Grundy ! " beemed Mr. Codd. " Unforchunately it will take a few hours to get the papers drawn up, but if you will turn up to-morrow somewhere about midday at our offices underneeth the grand-stand, I will see that everything is ready for you. It's a prommisse, of corse ? "

" Why, of corse ! "

" You won't go and sign on for Aston Villa or the Arsenal in the meantime ? "

" My word is my bond," I answered proudly. " I have said that I'll play for the Wayland Wanderers and I'll jolly well do so ! "

And I meant it !

Natcherally, there was a good deal of eggsitement at St. Jim's. Everywhere I went I was cheered, and the fellows seemed to larf like anything when they saw me, out of sheer good humer.

After morning skool on the following day, I trotted down to Wayland.

Quite a crowd followed me, and there was much larfing and chaffing on the way. I was the centre of

attraction, of corse, and altogether we made quite a jolly party.

Up we rolled to the Wayland Wanderers footbawl ground.

" Well, good-luck, old been ! " said Monty Lowther, who had been diskussing my footbawl future with me coming along the road. " By the way, if they tell you old Codd's not in or something, don't beleeye them. They'll probably be trying to keep you out on account of jellusy about your brilliant play."

" Leave it to me ! " I said, and in I walked.

An ugly-looking fellow wearing flannel trowsers and a sweater met me in the passidge inside.

" What d'you want ? " he arsked.

" I'm Grundy. I've got an appointment with Mr. Monty Codd ! " I said kertly.



I felt myself fly through the air and land with a fearful bump on the pavement outside.

The fellow in the sweater stared.

" Mr. Monty Codd ? And who's he when he's at home ? "

" Your manager, of corse ! " I answered sharply. " Don't try to fool about with me. Just tell Mr. Codd I'm here, instantly ! "

The fellow skowled.

" I tell you there's nobody here of the name of Codd. And who d'you think you're talking to, anyway ? "

" That's enuff ! " I cride. " Out of my way ! "

I strode past him and neerly cannoned into another chap.

" Want someone ? " this second chap arsked.

" I want the manager."

" Well, I'm the manager. What can I do for you ? "

I larfed.

" Don't talk rot ! I want the real manager—Mr. Monty Codd ! "

" Never heard of him in my life ! " declared the fellow. " My name's Sam Smith. I'm the manager here."

" Bosh ! Let me pass. I've got an appointment with Mr. Codd about signing on for the Wanderers and I'm jolly well going to keep it ! "

They both seemed tickled to death, for reasons that weren't clear to me.

" Haw, haw, haw ! Going to sign on for the Wanderers, are you ? " roared the first fellow. " That's the latest, that is. Haw, haw, haw ! "

" Looks to me like someone's been having you on a bit of string ! " the second fellow said. " Take my advice and go back to skool."

" Keep your blessed advice ! " I snorted. " I'm jolly well going to see Mr. Monty Codd, whatever you say ! Stand back ! "

I gave one of them a biff on the chest and the other a flick on the nose.

They yelled.

" That's done it ! " roared the

fellow who called himself Sam Smith.

" Chuck him out, Bill ! "

" What-ho ! " roared Bill.

The neckst moment a wild and whirling scrap was in progress.

I don't mind telling you that I gave those two rotters something to go on with before I finished with them that morning. I must have come very near to mopping up the floor with them. But somehow, at the last minnit, the tide turned in their favour and they mannidged to overcome my resistance.

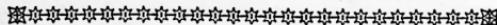
" Now chuck him out ! " Sam Smith said vennomously.

And though I struggled desprityl, they did it. I felt myself fly through the air and land with a fearful bump on the pavement outside.

I've tried to get in many times since ; but there's always a small army of bruisers to stop me. I've never seen or heard anything of Mr. Monty Codd again ; but I fansy he'll turn up one of these fine days. Monty Lowther, who's a very sensible chap sometimes, is equally certain he will.

The chaps all roar every time I mention the matter. I'm dashed if I know why, but they do ! Tom Merry still larfs, too, every time I arsk him for a place in the Junior Eleven. Potty, I fansy !

Anyway, I've got the sattisfaction of knowing that I'm the only chap at St. Jim's that was ever offered a place in a professional team. And even if the chaps continue to blind themselves to the facts, this article should at least make the jeneral public realise my true worth.



# THE JUNGLE RAILWAY!



By  
HOWARD  
TRACEY

*Upon the successful bridging of a jungle river depends the future of the Barongo Railway . . . And success rests with the ability of young Peter Tanner to defeat the scheming of a gun-runner seeking to ruin the railway!*

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

AT GRIPS WITH A MAN-EATER!

**B**WANA ! Bwana ! If the demon lions come again, we will not stop here. They have eaten five of our brothers. Wow ! This place is bewitched !

The angry roars came from the entrance to the thorn-fenced "boma" in the Barongo Railway construction camp, where big Allen Tanner and his young brother Peter faced a terrified gang of Kavirondo "boys."

"They will eat no more, mud-heads !" roared Allen, waving his heavy rifle. "Have I not shot two of the man-eaters ? To-night I and the young bwana will sit outside your 'boma' with rifles, and shoot the last one if he dares to come."

The uproar died down.

"But the work on the bridge is too hard, bwana," growled the black head-man, flashing his teeth. "There are not enough of us."

"At dawn to-morrow the construc-

tion train will bring a hundred more 'boys,'" Allen snapped angrily. "Enough ! No more talk of desertion, Gobo. I will shoot the last demon."

"Phew ! Supper, Peter !" he gasped, swinging round to his young brother. "Then we'll hustle back here and sit up for the man-eater all night, if need be. The 'boys'" desertion now would fairly put the lid on the railway and smash the company. We must calm 'em down and keep them together at all costs."

The brothers hurried away from the big "boma," wherein were the thatched huts of the Kavirondo "boys" and Hindu craftsmen, about a hundred in number. Through the deepening dusk they made towards the group of green tents used by themselves and Boss Hanson, guarded at night by armed native sentries.

The swift Congo night was at hand.

All around the large construction camp towered a green wall of jungle, feathery bamboos, queer palms, huge

cedar trees with masses of wild vines and creepers hanging matted from their boughs. Somewhere in the depths of the forest hyenas moaned.

Peter, not long out from school in England, was beginning to grasp the immense difficulties of building a railway in Central Africa. The lad could see the shining metals stretching far away into the gloom between walls of dense jungle. It had taken months to drive that track through from the distant base. Beside it ran the rough road, used at first for motor-lorries.

A glance back showed the part-completed bridge across the Nchanga river, which now lay sunken in its deep bed between high, jungle-clad banks.

The bridge was the main trouble, for it had to be completed in double-quick time. Directly the rains started the river would flood. Then all work on the railway, intended to open up a rich gold region, would be stopped for months.

"It would mean ruin for the company, Peter," Allen, second engineer and gang-boss, said. "The Government contract includes a heavy fine for every day we're overdue completing. The company can't pay it, so it will go bust if the river holds us up. We must bridge it before the rains, which are due in a few days."

Peter mopped his face.

"We'll keep on hustling the boys," the lad said. "It's a thumping good job we've got a hundred more coming up from the base to-morrow."

"It is, old lad," replied Allen. "We've about seven days to finish the bridge. Confound the lions! Boss Hanson is one of the best railway engineers in Africa, but he will be beaten if the 'boys' bolt. They are scared stiff, and would stampede the new lot. But we'll put paid to the last man-eater to-night, by thunder!"

A moment later the brothers

reached the biggest of the three green tents, near which stood a couple of motor-lorries, now little used. They ducked through the doorway and entered. Boss Hanson, the chief engineer, was seated at supper with a gaunt, black-bearded stranger, who wore a khaki shirt and shorts, a revolver in his belt, and who looked like a hunter.

"Hurricane" Hanson—so called because of his driving force—was a broad-shouldered man with a determined jaw. Beside him lay a huge yellow dog the size of a mastiff.

"Hallo, lads! Late for supper," he said in his genial fashion. "This is Mr. Thorp—Sam Thorp, an American hunter. He's camped close here to-night, and just looked in—"

Suddenly Hanson broke off, and his eyes glared as he half rose. Then he crashed forward across the table, scattering crockery and food in all directions.

"What the deuce!" roared Allen, in dismay.

Instantly the brothers sprang towards the stricken man as he rolled to the ground. They lifted him up and placed him on his bed, and Allen was quick to notice that Hanson's face had gone pale and that he breathed stertorously.

"Jungle fever," he said; "or perhaps sunstroke. I never saw anything so rapid before. Quick, Peter, the brandy is in my—"

Peter leaped away, but before he reached the tent door, he stopped with a gasp of horror.

"Look! The dog!"

Allen whirled round. He was in time to see Hanson's great hound, which had just eaten some fallen buck-meat, stagger on its legs. Then abruptly the dog collapsed, quivered, and lay motionless.

"Great guns—poisoned! Hi, hold hard, Mr. Thorp! Not so fast.

"This wants looking into."

With the words the muscular Allen launched himself across the tent, seeing the bearded stranger about to make off. Then things happened like lightning.

Peter saw Sam Thorp duck past Allen, then come for him, tugging at his revolver. Without hesitation the lad dived, collared the man low, and then followed a savage struggle.

"Bully for you, youngster!" cried Allen. "Stick to him!" And he waded in to the help of Peter.

Sam Thorp fought ferociously, with fists and boots. He crashed his knee into Peter's eye, half-blinding him, but not before the lad had wrenched away the man's pistol and sent it flying. Next moment, however, in quick succession, three of Allen's sledge-hammer punches landed on the stranger and stretched him out half-senseless. Allen helped his brother to his feet.

"I'll fix him," Allen said, and snatched up cord from a corner. "See to the boss, Peter. What the deuce is this hunter blackguard's game?"

By his effort to escape, it seemed plain that Sam Thorp had deftly inserted poison into the food on the table. But why? Had he intended to kill both brothers and Boss Hanson? None of them had ever seen the man before, and knew of no enemies. It was a mystery.

Allen lashed the man's ankles and



Peter saw Sam Thorp come for him, tugging at his revolver. Without hesitation the lad dived and collared the man low.

wrists together, and roared for their native cook-boy to come and attend the boss.

"He seems better, old chap," Peter said, holding brandy to Hanson's lips. "He can't have had much of the poison, and he's in no danger."

"Which is lucky for Mr. Thorp," Allen put in grimly. "But this beats me. I'll question the blackguard pretty closely when he comes round."

Allen dragged the half-conscious hunter into a low chair even as the native cook, an old, trusted servant, came running to answer the summons. Then they held a hurried consultation over Hanson, who certainly seemed easier. But the thought that the boss might be unable to continue to direct work on the bridge dismayed both brothers. Every day on the Nchanga river bridge was now vital, with the rainy season at hand.

"That ruffian shall tell us something, anyway," said Allen as he turned towards the captive.

But that moment, from the boys' boma, came a sudden yell :

"Simba ! Simba ! "

The cry rang through the African night, becoming a frantic chorus of howls and screams of terror. High above the pandemonium rose piercing shrieks of agony.

"Great guns ! The man-eater again !" Allen shouted, grabbing up his heavy rifle. "Come on, Peter ! We must get it at all costs. Two rifles are better than one. Never dreamed the brute would show up so soon after dark."

And, ordering the cook-boy to watch the bound prisoner and attend to Hanson, Allen dashed away with Peter at his heels.

The brothers loaded as they ran. Peter thrilled in every nerve as he heard the din from the boma, saw the whole of that thorn-fenced enclosure lit up by torches. The yells of agony told that this was no false alarm. It was evident that the man-eater, the last of a trio that had terrorised the boys for weeks, had actually dared to creep under the bristling fence of thorns to select a victim.

"There he is ! "

It was Allen's voice above the din.

Bang ! Bang !

"Got him ! No ! Look ! "

Peter thrilled with excitement as, in the torch-lit gloom, he glimpsed a writhing black shape, and the bushes thrashing.

Bang ! Bang !

The brothers fired together.

"There—in the shadows ! "

They raced forward, on the alert, seeing a shadowy monster distinctly. Allen had hit the brute once, but it was still intent on removing its victim, gripped between its jaws.

Peter could just make out black trailing limbs, and heard a desperate scream for help as the monster made a bound for the jungle.

"Let him have it !" shouted Allen.

Again their rifles rang out, and whip-like reports awoke the echoes. A deafening roar came from the man-eater, and Peter got a glimpse of the wounded brute dropping its victim—then it charged straight at them !

Like most man-eaters it was mangy, with a thin, scraggy mane, but it was plainly immensely powerful and recklessly bold.

Things happened like lightning. Whipping his rifle to his shoulder, Peter drew trigger, then gasped :

"A misfire ! "

Desperately the lad stood his ground and tore at his rifle-bolt. The brute was almost on him ; he saw its blazing eyes and flashing teeth, and its roars deafened him. Then, just in time, Allen's rifle rang out, and the lion crashed down in a heap, roaring, and clawed the ground for a few moments before lying still.

"Crumbs !" gasped Peter. "That was a narrow shave—"

"Got the last of the brutes !" cried Allen delightedly.

That instant, fresh yells sounded from the boma :

"We go, bwana ! This place is bewitched ! It is full of demons ! "

The brothers spun round as a

mob of furious, terror-stricken boys came swarming out of the boma, waving clubs and tools, their eyes gleaming in their black faces.

"Bewitched nothing!" Allen's deep voice boomed above the din. "Here lies the last of your demons! And we have rescued your comrade."

Glad shouts came from several Kavirondoes as, led by Peter, they ran to pick up the man-eater's victim, who was more scared than hurt. But it took all Allen's mastery over natives to quell the panic.

Native-fashion, the boys fiercely laboured the dead lion with picks and shovels. At last they were persuaded that they had nothing more to fear from lions. They returned to their huts on the brothers' repeated assurance that a large gang of boys would arrive with the construction train at dawn, to help rush the work on the bridge.

Allen and Peter returned hastily to Boss Hanson's tent, to discover that the bound stranger, Sam Thorp, had vanished! So had the long-trusted cook-boy!

"The boy cut the ropes and freed the ruffian!" Allen took in the scene at a glance. "Thorp must have bribed or scared him into doing that."

It looked like bribery, for it seemed that the vanished boy, with still a spark of loyalty for Boss Hanson, had obviously insisted that the sick man should not be further molested. Hanson still lay on his bed, unharmed, but very ill.

The brothers decided that they must somehow complete the bridge without him. They spent the night watching the chief engineer and periodically visiting the boys in the boma to reassure them that the construction train would arrive soon. They wrongly thought they had finished with the hunter, Sam Thorp!

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### THE MISSING TRAIN.

"It's long overdue, isn't it, old chap?"

Peter asked the question as he stared down the gleaming railway track.

The sun was high above the jungle, whence sounded the wild chatter of parrots and monkeys. But there was no sign of the construction train, and a deep murmur of discontent and dismay could be heard from the boys' boma.

"It's hours overdue, Peter," Allen replied. "Never late before. This beats me. What can have happened? A train-load of muscular Kavirondoes can't vanish into thin air. There's been an accident somewhere. But, of course, our boys will put this down to demons and witchcraft!"

The boys did.

They swarmed up from the boma in an ugly mood, vowing that the jungle was haunted, and that the missing train had been bewitched. They declared that they would not stop another day, or do any more work on the bridge.

The position seemed desperate, with only about six days left before the annual rains turned the Nchanga river into a raging flood. Even Allen seemed unable to quell the panic this time.

"I'll go down the line in one of the old lorries," Peter said suddenly. "Can you hold these fellows here if I promise to fetch their pals? I'll soon find out what's happened to the train. If it's broken down I'll rush some of the missing gang here in the lorry."

Allen hesitated. He knew the pitfalls and dangers of the African jungle far better than did his young brother. But no other scheme seemed possible, with the Kavirondoes on the point of deserting in a mob.

"All right, Peter; do your best,"

he agreed at last. "I'll talk to these bone-heads. I think I can hold 'em here until dawn to-morrow — no longer."

"Right! I'll be back before to-night, you bet!" Peter exclaimed; and he ran to one of the disused motor-lorries near the tents.

Allen succeeded in quietening the Kavirondoes and Hindu craftsmen, and in coaxing them to continue work on the bridge for one more day, when they learnt the young bwana's intention.

Peter started the largest motor-lorry, and drove off without loss of time. His eyes sparkled as he accelerated, steering the lurching and swaying lorry down the rough track beside the metals, and he thrilled in every nerve as he glimpsed the green wall of jungle swimming past on either hand.

As the lorry thundered along at full speed, he bounced in the driver's seat like a pea on a drum. Beside him lay his rifle, although he did not expect to have to use it.

He stared ahead, his eyes narrowed beneath his sun-helmet. The heat was intense, and a haze shimmered above the lorry's bonnet.

At every bend the lad feared to come on the missing construction train, possibly wrecked. The fierce heat often buckled the metals, and at times elephants and other wild animals interfered with them.

Mile after mile the lorry roared on, Peter looking anxiously ahead all the time, entirely alone in a world of mysterious jungle.

The thought that his brother could only hold the scared Kavirondoes in camp for a limited time made him drive all out. But he was watchful and alert.

And suddenly, as the lorry thundered up a stiff gradient, Peter glimpsed something lying near the

track that brought a gasp of surprise to his lips. It was a water-bottle with a strap, such as are carried by African native labourers.

"I wonder how that got there?" muttered Peter, slowing the lorry and reaching for his brake.

Then he thought better of stopping to examine a stray water-bottle which might have been dropped off a construction train several days since, and made to drive on.

That instant a whistling shriek sounded from the jungle. It was followed by a crashing of undergrowth.

Next, from the corner of his eye, Peter glimpsed a full-grown rhinoceros charging from the jungle at him. The monster burst out on his left, to charge head down across the metals.

"Crumbs! The brute'll wreck me!" gasped Peter, and accelerated quickly.

The lorry gathered speed again, and the screeching rhino almost shaved the tail with its horn as it drummed past.

Glancing back, Peter saw the crazy monster plunge straight across the lorry-road. Like most charging rhinos, the beast thundered on blindly, having missed its quarry, to plunge into the jungle on the farther side.

Peter laughed, driving on; but the next instant his face changed as, from the jungle, there came the sound of a terrific metallic impact.

The rhino had met something made of metal in its wild headlong charge.

There came another whistling screech from the beast, followed by a drumming of feet and a crashing of undergrowth that quickly grew distant and faint. Then once more the jungle was silent.

"Well, I'm hanged!" muttered Peter.

The lad stopped the lorry. He remembered the water-bottle, and wondered what on earth the rhino

could have met to make such a strange crash.

"Worth looking into!" Peter told himself. "It won't take a second, anyway."

Grabbing his rifle, the plucky lad jumped from the driver's seat. The jungle wall loomed up dark and mysterious before him, and there was no knowing what lay behind that leafy screen.

But without hesitation, rifle in hand, Peter ran to the spot where the rhino had vanished. The beast had left no sign of its passage, for the springy shrubs and boughs had whipped back into place behind it.

It was dense jungle through which Peter forced a way into green gloom, straining his eyes.

Suddenly, something loomed up black and mysterious that made his eyes bulge. A moment later the lad was speechless with amazement—for there, in the dim jungle before him, was the missing construction train!

He made out the three wooden trucks, their iron wheels entangled in a riot of weeds, and the little locomotive, its funnel festooned with vines and creepers. A large dent on the side of the engine showed where the rhino's horn had struck.

The missing train was utterly deserted, and there was no track outside the jungle to show how the abandoned train had got here.

"Gosh, this is strange!" muttered Peter. "I wonder how the train got here. And where have all our boys disappeared to?"

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### FIGHTING THROUGH!

By pure luck Peter had discovered the missing train, which, but for the rhino, he would have passed by, to drive on in the lorry uselessly.

But he was utterly at a loss to understand what could have happened to the boys on the train and the engine-driver and fireman.

"But I must find 'em somehow, and jolly quick, too," Peter said.

Recollection of Allen anxiously awaiting the missing gang at the bridge-camp, now many miles distant, made him get into action.



Peter, his nerves thrilling, crept silently up behind the squatting sentries who barred the way to the prisoners . . .

He had no time to lose, for he realised that he was up against some strange mystery. Swiftly he searched deeper into the jungle, beyond the stranded train, for tracks.

"Our missing gang didn't fly from here," the lad muttered, forcing his way in the gloom. "Ah, here! Footprints, by gosh!"

The lad had suddenly come across the tracks of many natives leading away into the jungle. He followed them breathlessly, and his heart leaped with excitement when he found that the natives' tracks led into a broad elephant path.

"I can jolly well drive the old bus along that!" Peter told himself excitedly. "I'll track down our vanished gang somehow or other, and then—"

The lad broke off, unable to imagine in what strange circumstances he might find the missing gang. And what could he alone do when he had found them? It must be something very powerful that could spirit away a hundred boys, and shift a train without trace.

But Peter lost no time in getting back to the lorry. He started up the engine again, and jumped into the driver's seat. Then he turned the lorry round, drove back a little way, and turned off the road into the jungle.

The springy screen parted to admit him, closing up behind him again with a swish and crackle, as it did when the rhino plunged into it, leaving no trace behind.

But it took Peter a long time to get the lorry down to the elephant path. Dense weeds got entangled in the wheels, and many times he had to get out and hack them free. The deeper he smashed through, the darker it became, until he could hardly see. Losing his bearings, he crashed into a great baobab tree, but fortunately

no damage was done to the sturdy lorry.

At last, with a sigh of relief, the lad drove into the wide elephant path, after half an hour's struggle.

He sent the lorry on down the trail, pulping weeds under his wheels, with the gloom of the forest making it difficult to keep a straight course.

He was wary, too, of obstacles, and several times in that nightmare journey he barely escaped disaster, and had continually to clear rocks and fallen trees from his way. But each time he had to descend he saw the tracks of natives, which gave him encouragement.

"A mighty lot of tracks," he muttered again and again. "Must be our chaps. - Where the thump were they going?"

At last, Peter saw that it was getting lighter, and before long he reached the jungle edge, where a grassy plain covered with thorn trees met his eyes.

The sun was now setting and the swift African night would soon descend. Peter looked out across the wide expanse of yellow grass, which was tinder-dry and about three feet high, and he gasped at sight of a native kraal.

The lad could just see thatched domed huts above a fence of thorns. He heard cattle lowing, and he saw the smoke of cooking fires curling upwards. The tracks he had followed down the elephant path pointed towards that kraal, where they vanished in the stiff, tall grass.

"Can our missing chaps be there?" muttered Peter.

He dashed back to the lorry, fetched his rifle, then started towards the kraal on his hands and knees.

High grass and bushes gave the lad excellent cover. He had only three hundred yards to go, but it seemed miles. His heart thumped against

his ribs as he heard the harsh voices of natives singing a triumphant war song. He could not imagine what had happened to the vanished gang, nor what to do if he found them.

He got within a few yards of the kraal, and there waited until night shut down completely and stars spangled the sky. He rose to his knees then, but he could see no natives, until with a gasp he spotted two brawny savages armed with spears and shields.

The two ebony warriors sat talking at a gateway of a thorn boma in the middle of the kraal.

"They're not guarding cattle," gritted Peter. "Prisoners? By Jove, I believe all our missing chaps have been kidnapped. They must be inside that boma!"

Peter's nerves thrilled. He realised that discovery would mean death. He was no doubt butting against the schemes of some powerful savage chief.

But he thought of his brother awaiting the boys, so he took the chance and crawled forward.

The kraal entrance was unguarded, showing that no attack from outside was feared. Peter was soon amongst the thatched, circular huts, with the smell of goats, cattle, and wood-smoke in his nostrils, the raucous songs and laughter from the huts in his ears.

Hugging the shadows the lad crawled towards the squatting sentries at the boma entrance, which was closed by a high thorny barrier. Unsuspecting, the two brawny sentries chatted.

Soon Peter was right behind them, rifle in hand.

Nerving himself, the lad leaped and struck.

It was done like lightning. Twice, wielded with all his strength, his rifle barrel cracked down on two woolly

heads, whose owners grunted, half rose, then pitched forward, to lie still. Every nerve a-thrill, the lad jumped for the thorn barrier and opened it quickly. And there, as he expected, he saw the missing gang of boys, with whom were the missing Hindu engine-driver and the black fireman of the stranded train.

Peter entered the boma, and motioning to the startled prisoners for silence, beckoned them to follow him. The prisoners had been cowed by threats of a terrible death if they tried to escape, and they knew that the huts were full of armed warriors.

At sight of the white lad, however, with his rifle, they came surging forward excitedly.

"Follow me," breathed Peter. "That singing will drown our footsteps. Make for the jungle and the railway. I'll pick up all the fellows I can with the lorry yonder."

Leaping out of the enclosure, the lad dashed away with the rescued prisoners swarming silently at his heels. But before he reached the kraal gateway the door of a large hut was abruptly flung open, and out burst a white man.

Peter gasped in surprise, recognising the gaunt, bearded American hunter who had tried to poison Boss Hanson.

"Thorp! It's Sam Thorp!" Recognition was mutual.

"Gosh! Th' railway kid—rescuing th' prisoners!" Thorp roared, and drew out his revolver and yelled an alarm.

"Sahib! That is the white scoundrel who captured us all—and the train," the Hindu driver shouted in Peter's ear.

"Down with him!" Peter yelled. "We must collar him. And he shan't escape again!"

Peter charged forward on the instant, knocking up Thorp's pistol

with his rifle. The lad was followed by his desperate boys, and so quick was the attack that Thorp was stunned and overpowered before the warriors in the huts guessed what was up.

Strong brown hands gripped Thorp and bore him swiftly out of the kraal. A second later, however, scores of savages came bursting from the huts. They saw the two senseless sentries near the boma and the crowd of boys, led by the white lad, speeding away across the dim plain, and dived back to their huts for weapons.

Then with savage yells the black warriors came storming in pursuit.

Quickly Peter realised that, burdened with his captive, he could not escape. But the plucky lad did not mean to lose Sam Thorp again. Ignoring the terrified yells about him, he suddenly stopped, snatched matches from his pocket and swiftly set fire to the tall yellow grass.

In a second the flames rushed away in all directions. With a crackling roar up leaped a wall of fire. It was a flaming barrier between pursuers and pursued which, fanned by the wind, began to rush away towards the kraal.

"Beaten 'em!" whooped Peter as the flames gushed up twenty feet high and smoke billowed to the stars. "Now, come on, lads! And bring that white ruffian along!"

The savage warriors seemed to be beaten. Howling in baffled fury, they began to race back towards their kraal, desperate to burn a "fire-break" to save their huts.

On towards the motor-lorry, with Thorp carried by four lusty boys, ran Peter, leading the gang he had rescued. Behind him half the grassy plain was now burning furiously.

"What happened to the train, Raja?" the lad shouted to the Hindu engine-driver.

"Sahib," was the gasped reply,

"that white man is chief of those black dogs back yonder. He tore up the rails with his warriors, stopped the construction train, and made us descend. He forced us to lay those rails so that the train ran into the jungle and was swallowed up. Then he made us replace the rails, so that nothing would ever be noticed. And then he dragged us all here to become slaves."

"I found the train, though," Peter cried, "and followed your tracks through the jungle. What a cunning dodge of Thorp's. But—slaves! What's his game?"

"The bearded one is a gun-runner and slave-trader, sahib!" panted the Hindu driver. "Having made himself chief of yonder tribe, he did not want the railway completed, knowing that it would put an end to his crimes by bringing many white men up here."

"Crumbs! What a blackguard I!" Peter gasped.

The lad realised now why Thorp, not really a hunter, had tried to poison Boss Hanson, and had no doubt meant to poison both the brothers, too.

Thorp was determined to stop the Barongo Railway. And so he had decided that the bridge across the Nchanga river should not be completed before the rains. He knew that floods would stop the work, and thus put an end to the line; for the brothers' company had not enough money to survive a delay of months, being bound to a time-limit by their contract with the Government.

The lorry was reached and the bound Thorp was thrown into it and many boys leaped in after him.

Peter had the engine started and the lorry, crowded with boys, surged forward. Away dashed the remainder into the jungle, heading for the line.

A few minutes later, Peter discovered that they had not yet escaped.

As Peter reached the elephant path the jungle around suddenly burst into violent life. There sounded roars and howls, and spear-armed savages attacked the lorry from all sides.



Even as the lorry ran into the elephant path, the jungle about it burst into violent life. There sounded roars and howls, and spear-armed savages came leaping at the lorry from all sides.

About fifty warriors had raced full speed round the fire, determined to rescue their white chief.

Of a sudden Peter saw dark forms ahead of him, as well as on both sides. He heard weapons whistle about him, thudding on the lorry's sides.

Full speed Peter sent the heavy lorry crashing at his foes. Vaguely he heard howls of pain, saw dim figures knocked flying by the lorry's bonnet, and hurled aside by the wheels.

But many of the savages leaped aboard the lorry. Then followed a grim hand-to-hand combat. The

rescued boys fought desperately against the attackers.

Peter drove onward, seeing blurred figures leaping at him, to be knocked aside and left behind. The jungle rang to the hideous din of howls of pain and fury, as the lorry swayed and rolled along the elephant path.

Through the last of the savages the lorry charged, hurling black shapes in all directions, while a fight raged at the back. It was touch and go for several seconds, however. But Peter got through with little more than a few bruises and cuts. As the lorry gathered speed the boarding savages were hurled off, and then were quickly dropped behind.

"Beaten 'em at last!" Peter gasped.

Several hours later the blood-grimed lad rolled up triumphantly to the construction-camp at the river. He was just in time. The Kavirondos in camp had given him up for lost, too, and not even Allen could have detained them much longer. Sight of the grinning lad, with his battered lorry, his white prisoner, and the battle-stained boys he had brought along, caused roars of delight and admiration.

Peter's story was soon told.

"You've saved the line, my lad! Go and tell your tale to Boss Hanson, who will be O.K. again in a day or so," Allen shouted gleefully, as Peter ended. "The rest of the missing gang is on the way afoot? Then we'll soon have that train back on the metals, and I bet we get the bridge finished before the rains, after all."

They did, with one day to spare. Peter received the thanks of the company and a substantial reward, while Sam Thorp, who had long terrorised the region and had terrorised the vanished cook-boy into freeing him before, also got his deserts.

THE END

## GREYFRIARS RHYMES

### JOHNNY BULL

(a member of the Famous Five)



FEW "H.A." heroes are so fine  
And strong as stalwart Johnny,  
Who in the Famous Five doth shine,  
A youngster bright and bonnie.  
Like Britain's typical "John Bull,"  
He is the soul of honour;  
With zealous pride he serves his school,  
And brings no shame upon her.

When Wharton leads his merry men  
At footer or at cricket,  
In raids upon some prefect's den  
Or scouting in the thicket,  
Our Johnny's always on the scene,  
To Wharton strictly loyal;  
And foes feel where his fist has been  
In many a battle royal!

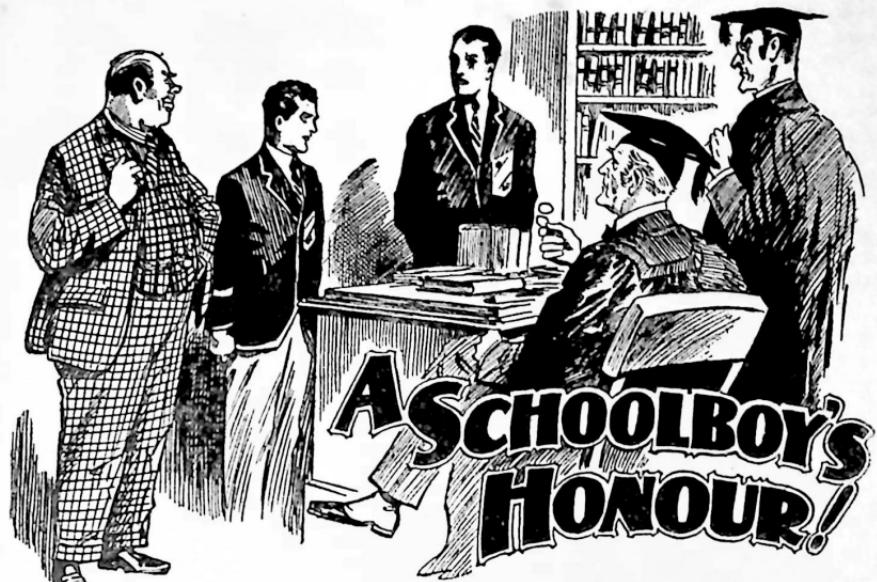
With Fish the study he must share,  
For thus the Head arranges;  
The business man from "over there" effects some drastic changes;  
The humble room has had to serve  
As pawnshop to the pirate;  
And Fisher's cool, unbounded nerve  
Made all the fellows irate.

The "three brass balls" displayed without  
Caused everyone to wonder;  
But Bull produced a hammer stout  
And smashed them all asunder.  
He next pursued the artful Yank,  
An explanation needing;  
But though the Shylock he did spank,  
Fish went his way unheeding.

But soon his schemes were foiled by Fate  
And shattered; and the fact is,  
That boys of Britain always hate  
Suggestions of sharp practice,  
But Johnny Bull and Dicky Rake  
Were anything but pleasant;  
And rudely Fisher did awake  
From dreams which once were present.

Fat Bunter follows after frocks  
Of damsels by the dozen;  
Yet he received the worst of shocks  
When courting Johnny's cousin.  
The way she put the porpoise down  
Was really quite a "thriller,"  
And Bunter's lost the rich renown  
Of champion lady-killer.

Both Johnny and his cousin boast  
The pluck which marks our nation;  
A gift which graced the English host  
For many a generation.  
The noble Wharton must be proud  
Of such a staunch assistant,  
Whose praise is chanted long and loud  
By readers near and distant.



## THE FIRST CHAPTER

A VISITOR FOR HAZEL!

"**G**REAT pip! Who's that merchant?"

Bob Cherry uttered that ejaculation. A group of fellows belonging to the Remove were chatting on the steps of the School House at Greyfriars, when the "merchant" came in sight. Harry Wharton & Co. stared at the stranger in surprise.

He had come in at the school gates, and was advancing across the Close towards the School House, when the juniors spotted him. A slight tendency to zigzagging in the "merchant's" walk hinted that he had partaken of the cup that cheers, not wisely, but too well. He was a florid

gentleman, with a loud waistcoat and a louder watch-chain, and a bowler hat set at a rakish angle upon his head. His whole appearance was of the horse-horsey, as Frank Nugent put it.

He was certainly a most remarkable visitor for Greyfriars School, and he was favoured with inquiring stares from all the fellows who saw him.

"Looks like a giddy bookmaker," said Harry Wharton. "One of Smithy's friends come to pay him a visit, perhaps."

"Smithy wouldn't be idiot enough to have him here, I should think," said Bob Cherry. "I wonder what he wants?"

"Good heavens!"

That ejaculation came from Hazel-dene of the Remove, who had just

By  
**FRANK RICHARDS**

*Not many fellows would risk expulsion from school to prevent that fate overtaking another. Yet that is the sacrifice Harry Wharton is prepared to make—to save the honour of a black sheep of Greyfriars!*

come out of the School House. The juniors looked quickly at Hazel. All the colour had fled from his face, and his eyes were fixed upon the "merchant" with the rakish hat, wide-open with terror.

"Do you know him?" asked Wharton.

"It's Rawlings!"

"And who may Rawlings happen to be?"

Hazeldene did not reply. He turned quickly and ran into the House, and the juniors heard his footsteps die away on the stairs within.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged looks of surprise and dismay. It was evident that Hazeldene knew that exceedingly flashy-looking gentleman, and equally evident that he was very unwilling to meet him.

"The ass!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The silly ass! He has got himself into a fearful pickle this time! That man's come here to see Hazel."

"Oh, the ass!" said Wharton, between his teeth. "To let the man come here, of all things!"

"He doesn't seem to want him here," said Nugent drily. "It's pretty clear Hazel owes him money, and he's come for it. The duffer was trying to borrow quids in the Remove this morning—and that's what he wanted them for—to keep his friend Mr. Rawlings away."

Harry Wharton nodded. He knew that Hazel had been making desperate attempts to borrow money for the last two days. But as Hazel was an exceedingly bad debtor, and had no prospect whatever of repaying the sums he borrowed, he found it difficult to raise loans. He had not succeeded in raising the sum he wanted—and this was the result! His creditor had come to the school.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and there was a senior football-match going on. Most of the prefects were

in the First Eleven, and so were fortunately off the scene. But the football-field was in sight of the Close and Wingate or Loder or Walker might easily catch a glimpse of the merchant during a pause in the play. The Head might look out of his window—Mr. Quelch or another of the masters might come out of the House at any moment. And if that man were seen, there was only one possible result for Hazel—he would be called into the Head's study for a stern inquiry, and he would be immediately expelled from the school.

"It means the sack for him!" said Bob in a low voice.

"Serve the silly ass right!" said Johnny Bull. "We pulled him out of just such a hole as this not long ago, and he promised to chuck it for good."

"Serve him right, right enough!" said Bob. "But—"

"But what?" growled Johnny Bull. "I'm fed up with him. If he can't be decent, the sooner he gets the order of the boot, the better."

"Yes; but—but—Marjorie!" said Bob.

"Oh, hang!" said Johnny Bull uneasily.

That thought was in the minds of all the Co.—how Marjorie would feel if her brother were "sacked" from Greyfriars. For that reason they had stood by Hazel many times when they were disgusted with him and tired of his folly. Wharton remembered the anxious look he had seen on Marjorie's face the last time she had come over to Greyfriars. He realised now that the girl knew that her brother was in trouble again, and that all that had been done for him had been done in vain.

"We can't do anything now!" said Nugent. "Why, the Head must see him if he happens to look out of his window. The rotter's just in front of it!"

"And Quelchy may come out any minute!" said Johnny Bull.

"It's all up now!"

"I say, you fellows"—Billy Bunter, the fattest junior in Greyfriars, came puffing up the steps—"do you see that chap over there? I know him! He's Rawlings the bookie! I saw Hazel talking to him the other day in the lane—"

"Oh, you shut up!" growled Johnny Bull.

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles.

"Oh, really, Bull! I shouldn't wonder if he's come to see Hazel. I know Hazel owes him money, because I happened to hear them talking—"

"You happened to be eavesdropping, as usual!" snapped Wharton.

"Shut up!"

"Shan't!" said Bunter. "I think this kind of thing is disgraceful, you know. After all I've done for Hazel, too!"

"Lot you've ever done for anybody, you fat porpoise. What have you done?"

"Well, I—I stood by him!" said Bunter virtuously. "I felt I was bound to, you know, considering that Marjorie is rather mashed on me, and—Ow, ow!"

Bump!

At that point, Bob Cherry had introduced his boot into the conversation, and Billy Bunter rolled down the steps and sat on the ground gasping.

"Ow! Cherry, you beast!" Bunter blinked furiously at the group of juniors, and as he saw Bob coming down the steps towards him, with face aflame, he picked himself up and fled, without waiting to conclude his remarks.

Meanwhile, the "merchant" had zigzagged himself across the Close, and he reached the steps of the School House as Bunter dashed off.

He turned a fishy eye upon the juniors.

"Afternoon!" he said thickly.

"What do you want?" asked Harry Wharton curtly.

"I've come to collect a little debt," said Mr. Rawlings affably. "Young gentleman of the name of Hazeldene. Owes me five quid. Where is he?"

"You oughtn't to come here," said Harry sharply. "You know it will get him into trouble."

Mr. Rawlings nodded. He had been drinking, but he was not intoxicated, and the juniors guessed that he had inspired himself with "Dutch courage" for that visit to the school.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Mr. Rawlings. "Wot I know is, that I want my money!"

"What does Hazel owe you the money for?" asked Harry.

"A little flutter on a 'orse," explained Mr. Rawlings.

"You know you can't collect gambling debts; they're illegal," said the captain of the Remove; "you know that as well as I do."

"I'm goin' to collect this one, or there will be a row!" said Mr. Rawlings emphatically. "I've got his paper 'ere—I O U five quid. And that five quid is goin' to be paid on, on the nail, or there will be trouble for Mr. Swindler Hazeldene. If I don't see him, I'm going to see the 'Ead."

"You'd better clear off—"

"I ain't clearing off without my money," said Mr. Rawlings, raising his voice. "Now, I ain't come 'ere to jore. I want five quid! Where's that young swindler?"

The juniors looked at Mr. Rawlings, and at one another helplessly. They shivered at the thought of what would follow if Mr. Quelch should hear the man's voice and come out. They knew that the Remove master was in his study.

And there was no getting rid of Mr. Rawlings. He had evidently come there with the special intention of making a scene unless his claim was met. What was to be done?

It was no business of theirs, certainly. Hazel had brought it upon himself by his folly, and he had to face the consequences. But—there was Marjorie—and Wharton had not forgotten that he had promised the anxious girl to look after her brother as much as he could.

Wharton thought the matter over quickly, and made up his mind. To have any dealings with this disreputable blackguard might be dangerous to himself; but for Marjorie's sake he was prepared to run the risk.

"We've got to stop the brute's mouth," he muttered quickly. "Let's do our best—for Marjorie."

And the other fellows nodded. They were prepared to take the risk, too. Mr. Rawlings had not been seen, so far, by masters or prefects, and there was a bare chance that the situation might be saved if he could be got rid of.

"Where's Master Swindler Hazel-dene?" repeated Mr. Rawlings, raising his voice still louder. "I want to see 'im! Where's my five quid?"

"Hold your tongue," said Wharton savagely. "Look here, clear off, and you shall have the money, I promise you."

Mr. Rawlings grinned sceptically.

"I come here for money, and not for gas," he remarked. "You 'and over the five quid, and I'll get off quick enough. But I ain't going without my money."

"Do you think I've got five pounds in my pockets, you fathead?" said Wharton angrily. "I give you my promise."

"Promises is like pie-crusts," said Mr. Rawlings sententiously. "Made and broken, you know. I want my money."

"You shall have it to-morrow, if you'll clear off now," said Wharton desperately.

"I'll have it inside five minutes, or I'll raise a row 'ere that will make Master Hazel sorry he tried to swindle me," said Mr. Rawlings. "I'm an honest man. I pay up when I lose. The young swindler has had money outer me. Now he's goin' to pay."

"He can't."

"Then he can take the consequences. And who are you to interfere, anyhow. I'm going to see Hazeldene."

And Mr. Rawlings tried to push his way through the juniors into the House.

Harry Wharton and Co. were strongly tempted to seize upon him and hurl him bodily down the steps. But that would only have precipitated the scene they dreaded. He had to be got rid of quietly, if Hazel was to be saved. And he would not go without his money, and the juniors had nothing like five pounds about them. Five shillings would have been nearer the mark, so far as their financial resources were concerned.

Wharton's brain worked quickly. Time must be gained, and, meanwhile, the man must be got out of sight.

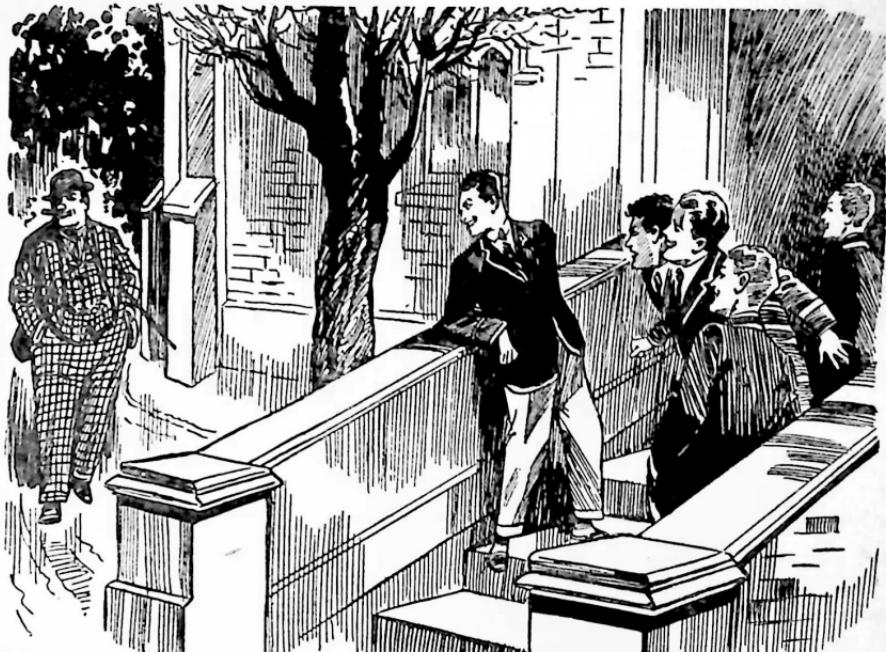
"Well, come in," said Wharton. "You shall see Hazel. Come up to my study."

His chums stared at him aghast.

"To the study!" Nugent muttered in dismay.

"It's the only thing to be done, before he's seen, too," said Wharton hurriedly. "Come on—this way, Mr. Rawlings."

Wharton prayed fervently, as he led the bookmaker into the hall, that nobody would be there to see him. There were two or three Removites, and Coker of the Fifth, and Temple of the Fourth Form, and they all stared curiously at Mr. Rawlings.



"Great pip! Who's that merchant?" Bob Cherry uttered that ejaculation as a florid gentleman, dressed in a loud suit, advanced towards the steps of the School House. "Looks like a giddy bookmaker," said Harry Wharton.

But fortunately there was no master and no member of the Sixth Form in sight. And Wharton hurried the bookmaker up the stairs at top speed, Mr. Rawlings grunting in a dissatisfied way as he went. In the Remove passage Peter Todd met them, and he stared blankly.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Todd. "Who's your friend, Wharton?"

But Wharton did not reply. He hurried Mr. Rawlings into No. 1 Study, and breathed more freely when the door had closed upon him there.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

BUNTER CONSIDERS IT HIS DUTY

MR. RAWLINGS sat down in Harry Wharton's armchair and stretched his legs out comfort-

ably, with the evident intention of making himself at home. He had not taken his hat off, and Wharton could hardly restrain himself from knocking it off. The insolence of the rascal was growing. The anxiety the juniors displayed to keep him out of sight showed him the power he had in his hands.

"Well, where's Master Hazeldene?" demanded Mr. Rawlings, taking out a big black cigar and snipping off the end with his teeth. "Produce 'im!"

"Wait here a bit, and I'll fetch him," said Harry.

"I ain't goin' to wait long," said Mr. Rawlings, lighting his cigar. "You run along and fetch 'im quick, young shaver, or there'll be trouble."

Wharton trembled with rage, but this was not the time to resent the

rascal's mode of address. He whispered to Nugent.

"Stay here, Franky, and see that he doesn't get out of the study, while I look for Hazel, will you?"

Nugent nodded.

Harry Wharton left the study, closing the door behind him. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull had remained in the passage. They were on guard to see that no one entered Study No. 1 while Mr. Rawlings was there. To have that half-intoxicated, disreputable blackguard found in the study would have meant very serious trouble for the chums of the Remove.

Harry Wharton hurried along the Remove passage to Hazel's study. He guessed that the wretched youth had taken refuge there. He was right. He saw Hazel as he opened the door. With a face like chalk Hazel sat there, and his eyes turned with a terrified gaze upon the door as it opened.

"Has that man gone?" he panted.

"No; he wants to see you."

"I—I can't see him! I can't let anybody know I know him! I—I should be expelled from the school!" stuttered Hazel.

"You can't deny that you know him."

"I will—I shall!"

"I won't say anything about that being a lie," said Wharton quietly. "But you can't deny that you know him, when he's got your I O U with your signature on it."

Hazel groaned.

"I'm ruined! Oh, what a fool I've been!"

"Have you got any money to pay him?" asked Wharton.

"No, none. I—I owe the beast five pounds. He—he said that Blackamoor was certain to win!" groaned Hazeldene. "It was a dead cert! And—and I had information, too—from a tipster who often gives really good things. Only—only the rotten

horse came in sixth, you see, and—and I was done in."

"And you betted on credit, without the money to pay if you lost?" demanded Harry.

"Well, you see, I was so certain of winning," said Hazel weakly.

Wharton's lip curled.

"Do you know what that was?" he asked. "It was swindling—swindling, pure and simple! Rawlings is no worse than you are."

"I—I believe he knew I couldn't pay, but he thought I'd get it from my friends," said Hazel miserably. "He knows Marjorie has helped me more than once. Only—only Marjorie hasn't any more money, and—

"You've had it all, you mean," said Harry, in disgust. "I must say you're a pretty specimen. Anyway, you've got to see Rawlings, whether you can pay him or not. He's in my study, and he's waiting for you."

Hazeldene started up.

"I—I can't see him! What's the good? I can't pay him anything."

"If you don't he's going to see the Head."

"He threatened that he would. He said he would come here if I didn't square up, and—and I've been in torment the last two days. I'm ruined."

"Come along."

Hazeldene allowed himself to be led from the study. His knees were knocking together as he accompanied Wharton down the passage. From of old it was said that the way of the transgressor is hard. Hazel was finding it so. He had plunged into the scrape with utter recklessness, and now that the time had come to "face the music," the emergency found him without nerve, and without courage. He threw himself helplessly upon others, and if they did not save him he was ruined. Yet, angry and

scornful as he was, Wharton could not help feeling compassion for the wretched, white-faced boy, whose folly had led him to this terrible pass.

"See that nobody comes in, you chaps," Wharton muttered, as he passed Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry at the door of No. 1 Study.

"Right-ho!"

Harry Wharton went in with Hazeldene. Johnny Bull and Bob, looking very grave, remained on the watch outside. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, their Indian chum, joined them there. Fellows looked at them curiously as they passed. Most of the juniors of the House knew who was in Wharton's study, and only the Co. knew that the man had come to see Hazeldene. That Wharton should have such a disreputable acquaintance amazed the Removites, and they could not understand it. Several fellows asked questions, but the questions were not answered. The chums were not in a mood for chatter. But when Billy Bunter rolled upon the scene, he was not to be denied.

Bunter blinked at the three juniors and put his hand on the door of No. 1 Study. Johnny Bull shoved him back roughly.

"You can't go in," he said.

"Oh, really, Bull, I'm going in, you know. I want to see Wharton."

"You can't."

"Why can't I?" demanded Bunter warmly. "What right have you got to keep me out of Wharton's study—my old pal Harry's study? Like your rotten cheek, I think. I'm jolly well going in."

"If you come near that door again, I'll boot you down the passage," said Johnny Bull in a concentrated voice.

"Oh, all right! I know who's in there. Rawlings, the bookmaker. I thought he had come to see Hazel, but it turns out he's come to see

Wharton. My hat! And Wharton always pretended to be a giddy model! He, he, he!"

"Clear off!" shouted Bob Cherry.  
"He, he, he!"

Bob made a rush at the Owl of the Remove, and Bunter scampered down the passage. As Bob returned to the study door, Bunter came cautiously back.

"I say, you fellows, I'm sincerely sorry, but I can't have this!" he said. "I consider it a disgrace to the school, Wharton entertaining bookmakers in his study. I'm sorry, but it's my duty to speak to a prefect."

"If you dare to sneak, you fat cad—"

"I don't call it sneaking. I regard it from a point of view of duty," said Bunter loftily. "I'm sincerely sorry, but I've got my duty to do."

And he rolled away to the stairs. The juniors exchanged glances of alarm. If the Owl of the Remove told tales to a prefect, whether from a sense of duty or not, all the fat would be in the fire with a vengeance. Bob Cherry seemed to gulp something down, and he called after the fat junior as Bunter reached the head of the stairs.

"Bunter, come here!"

Billy Bunter looked round.

"Sorry I can't stop, Cherry," he said, stopping all the same. "You see, it's half-time now, and I must speak to Wingate."

"Come here, you fat beast!"

"No larks?" said Bunter suspiciously.

"No larks!" said Bob.

Billy Bunter rolled back.

"You're to keep your silly mouth shut about Rawlings, Bunter," said Bob in a low voice. "Do you understand? You'll be scragged if you say a single word!"

"I'm sincerely sorry," said Bunter loftily. "You fellows don't quite

understand what it is to have a keen sense of duty. You don't quite come up to my standard. But I can't allow these things to go on without chipping in. That's how I feel about it."

Bob glared.

To be preached at by a young rascal like William George Bunter was a new and painful experience for Bob Cherry, and it was very hard to bear. But just then the Owl of the Remove held the whip-hand, and he knew it, and he intended to make the most of it.

"I suppose you're expecting a postal-order, Bunter?" Bob asked as calmly as he could. "You generally are."

Bunter's eyes glistened behind his big spectacles. The discussion was reaching the point he had intended it to reach all along.

"Yes," he replied. "I'm expecting a remittance from one of my titled relations."

"I'll lend you a couple of bob in advance upon your postal-order, if you like," said Bob Cherry.

Bunter shook his head.

"The postal-order will be for ten shillings," he explained. "Perhaps you'd better hand me the ten bob, and take the postal-order when it comes. Then I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go and have a snack in the tuckshop, and consider whether I could possibly hold my tongue about these disgraceful proceedings in No. 1 Study. I'd like to do anything I could for old pals, even though I can't help regarding their conduct with contempt, you know."

Bob Cherry's fists clenched convulsively. The negotiations were in great danger of ending with Bunter sprawling on the floor. But Bob held his temper in check.

"I can't bargain with the rotter," said Bob in a choking voice. "Lend me some tin, you fellows."

"We'll stand our whack," said Johnny Bull, with a furious glance at Bunter. "Here's three bob towards it, anyway."

"And here are three honourable bobs," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Bob Cherry found four shillings in his pocket. They were his last, but they had to be sacrificed for the good of the cause, so to speak. Bunter's little, round eyes glistened behind his spectacles as he received the coins in his fat palm.

"Thanks!" he said airily. "Of course, I'm going to settle this out of my postal-order—when it comes."

"Clear off!" said Bob.

"And I'll think over Wharton's conduct, and decide whether I can possibly allow him to go on without reporting him," said Bunter. "I'll do my best. But if you fellows were as sensitive as I am, you'd understand how painful it is to have to struggle against a sense of duty for the sake of friendship."

"Will you clear off?" said Bob Cherry in a sulphurous voice. "I shan't be able to keep my hands off you much longer."

And Bob looked so dangerous that the Owl of the Remove decided to clear off, without giving any further expression to his sense of duty. He rolled away, and made a direct line for the tuckshop—where his new and oppressive sense of duty was forgotten for the time in the joys of ginger-beer and jam-tarts.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER HARD TERMS!

HAZELDENE had entered the study with Harry Wharton, and the door had closed immediately. Mr. Rawlings had removed his hat and made himself comfortable. He looked at Hazel and gave him a nod.

"Afternoon!" he said.

"Good-afternoon!" faltered Hazeldene.

"I've got your bit of paper here," said Mr. Rawlings. "Five quid it is. Of course, you're going to settle up."

"I told you last night that I couldn't," said Hazeldene, his face as white as chalk. "You must give me time, Mr. Rawlings."

"I've given you all the time I'm goin' to give you," said Mr. Rawlings.

"I'm going to ask him for your father's address."

"My father! He wouldn't pay a gambling debt."

"I reckon he would make you pretty sorry you 'adn't paid it, though, and so would the 'Ead," said Mr. Rawlings, with a chuckle.

"I should think it was worth more'n five quid to you not to be kicked out of your school - But I dessay you



"I'll think over Wharton's conduct," said Bunter, "and decide whether I can allow him to go on without reporting him." "Will you clear off?" said Bob Cherry. "I shan't be able to keep my hands off you much longer!"

"Now, I'll tell you wot I'll do, and it's a good offer. I'll give you until I've finished smoking this 'ere cigar to find the money. Then, if I ain't paid, I'm goin' to the 'Ead."

Hazeldene leaned one hand on the table to support himself.

"That wouldn't do you any good," he said. "The Head wouldn't pay you."

know best. 'Ave your way. Don't mind me. *I give you till I've finished this 'ere cigar.*"

"How can I pay you when I haven't any money?" said Hazeldene helplessly. "Do be reasonable, Mr. Rawlings."

"You 'ad not the money when you laid the bet," said Mr. Rawlings. "You said you could raise it from your friends."

" I—I hoped——"

" You're friends ain't so anxious to shell out—wot ? " asked the bookmaker, with a grin. " I s'pose so—friends are often like that. Well, that's your look-out. If you try to swindle me, you'll suffer for it. That's all ! "

Hazeldene turned a haggard look on Wharton and Nugent, who were looking worried and uneasy.

" Can you fellows help me ? " he muttered. " You—you see what's at stake ! I shall be able to raise the money some time—Marjorie will help me. I'll let you have it back, on my word—only help me now to get that man away."

" That man ain't goin' away till he's paid," chuckled Mr. Rawlings through the thick smoke of his cigar.

" 'E knows a trick worth two of that."

" It's impossible," said Wharton curtly. " I haven't more than a few shillings, and Nugent is nearly stony."

Frank Nugent nodded assent.

" The other fellows—" muttered Hazeldene.

" I don't suppose we could raise more than a quid among the lot of us," said Harry. " Dash it all ! Where do you think we are to get five pounds from ? "

" You—you might borrow it of Lord Mauleverer," faltered Hazeldene. " You're on good terms with him, and he's got lots of money."

" I'm not on cadging terms with him," said Wharton sharply ; " and Lord Mauleverer has gone home to see his people this afternoon."

Hazel groaned.

" Then it's all up with me," he said hopelessly. " That man will go to the Head and show him the paper with my signature on it. I can't deny that. I shall be sacked—and my father——"

His voice broke.

" Comes 'ard on a bloke when he tries to swindle and can't get away

with it, don't it ? " said Mr. Rawlings blowing out a cloud of smoke. " Honesty is the best policy, young feller. You bear that in mind and don't you try to swindle again—especially a downy bird like yours truly."

But Hazel was too scared and wretched to care for the insolence of the rascal in the armchair. He was thinking only of his danger and the apparent impossibility of escaping from it. His eyes were turned beseechingly upon Wharton. Instinctively, he turned to that stronger nature to help him. Wharton exchanged a glance with Nugent. They would save the wretched boy if they could. But how was it to be done ?

" Look here, Mr. Rawlings," said Harry, in as conciliatory a tone as he could adopt, for his hands were itching to be laid upon the insolent rascal ; " if you'll give us time to raise the money, I'll see that you are paid. You can take my word."

Rawlings stared at him insolently.

" And who are you ? " he demanded.

" I am Harry Wharton, and if you knew a decent chap when you saw one you'd know that my word was good enough."

" Well, Master Harry Wharton, I'll tell you what I'll do," said Mr. Rawlings after some reflection. " I don't want to lose the money. I'll take 'arf of it down and your I O U for the other 'arf to be paid this week."

Hazel looked imploringly at Wharton.

" I haven't the money," said Harry.

Mr. Rawlings was eyeing him keenly. The rascal was a keen enough judge of character, and he could see easily enough that Wharton was a very different sort of fellow from Hazeldene. The handsome, frank face of the captain of the Remove was a guarantee that his word was as good as his bond—not

that Mr. Rawlings had any intention of taking his word when he could get his bond. As he noted Wharton's anxiety to save the wretched black sheep of the Remove, a cunning scheme outlined itself in the rascal's brain. His manner became less insolent.

"I'm sure I don't want to be 'ard on a young gent," said Mr. Rawlings. "Look 'ere—and this 'ere is my rock-bottom offer. I'll take two quid down, and your note of 'and for three quid, Master Wharton, and clear out. Wot price that?"

"You can raise two pounds, Wharton," said Hazel. "You can do that; the fellows will lend it to you, though they won't to me. And—and I'll settle up—I get my allowance on Saturday—and Marjorie will help me——"

"I don't want Marjorie's money!" said Wharton savagely. "If I pay this man I don't expect ever to see the money again!"

"I promise——"

"You promised to have nothing more to do with fellows of this sort," said Harry angrily; "and you promised to repay the money we paid for you when you were in a scrape before. What was that promise worth? You haven't paid a penny!"

"Oh, pile it on!" said Hazel bitterly. "I'm down now and you can hit as hard as you like!"

Wharton relented at once.

"I don't want to pile it on," he said, more gently. "But don't talk rot about repaying the money! You know you can't do it, and you know you'll forget all about it as soon as you're out of danger! Look here, Mr. Rawlings; I'll undertake to pay the money if you'll clear out!"

"Two quid down," said Mr. Rawlings. "I'm 'ard up. To tell you a secret, I've got to settle my bill at the Cross Keys or get out. I've 'ad bad luck. Two quid down, an' your

note of 'and for the rest, and I'll travel. And I stay 'ere till the two quid is paid!"

"I'll try to raise the money," said Harry. "But get out of here. Can't you understand what it would mean if you were found here? You wouldn't get paid, for one thing; and Hazel would be kicked out of Greyfriars, for another!"

"I don't leave this 'ere room without two quid in my 'and!"

The man was evidently determined, and it was useless to argue with him. He had drunk just enough to make him quarrelsome and obstinate, without clouding his faculties. He settled himself back in the armchair and pulled at the cigar.

"Stay here a bit, and see that nobody comes in," said Wharton in a low voice to Frank Nugent. "I'll get along and see what I can do."

And he quitted the study with a frowning brow. Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry and the Nabob of Bhanipur met him with anxious, inquiring glances in the passage.

"You fellows got any tin?" asked Wharton.

"I have an esteemed half-quid," said Hurree Singh, producing it. "It is quite at your service, my esteemed chum!"

"Thanks! And you chaps?"

"Stony!" said Bob.

"Broke!" said Johnny Bull.

"Then I want thirty bob more. That rascal won't go without two pounds down," said Harry. "I'm going to try to raise it. Keep your eyes open here!"

"Right-ho!"

Mark Linley of the Remove met Wharton in the passage. Linley was in football rig, with a coat and muffler on and a footer under his arm.

"I've been looking for you, Wharton," he said. "Have you forgotten the match?"

"The match!" exclaimed Harry.

He had, as a matter of fact, forgotten it. There was a Form match on that afternoon between the Remove and the Upper Fourth, and Harry Wharton was skipper of the Remove eleven. Mark Linley looked at him in astonishment.

"The fellows are waiting," he said. "Temple & Co. have been on the ground some time. Is anything the matter?"

"Yes," said Harry; "and something jolly serious, too. Hazel is in trouble again!"

Mark raised his eyebrows. He was not surprised to hear it.

"There's a man come to see him—a disreputable sort of bookmaker," said Harry. "We've got him in the study out of sight; but he won't go without his money!"

"My hat!"

"I can't play—and the other chaps can't. Tell Smithy I want him to captain the team this afternoon, and to fill five places."

"Phew!"

"There's nothing else to be done. We can't keep the Fourth waiting any longer. Buzz off, there's a good chap!"

"Right-ho!" said Mark. "We'll do our best."

And the Lancashire lad went down to the football-ground, while Harry Wharton hurried off on his borrowing expedition.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER COKER IS TOO GOOD!

HARRY WHARTON tapped at the door of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

He had come to a resolve that was almost desperate; but it was the only thing to be done. He could not go about asking the Remove fellows for money; the presence of the bookmaker in the study had attracted enough attention as it was. Vernon-

Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, could probably have lent it to him, but it went against the grain to ask him, and it was quite possible that Smithy would refuse. Besides, Smithy was on the footer-ground with the other fellows, beginning the match with the Upper Fourth.

Wharton had met Bulstrode and Ogilvy in the House, but both of them proved to have resources limited to a few shillings. Lord Mauleverer, who would have lent him the money at once, was absent. There was nothing for it but to get an advance from his Form-master, if he could—without, of course, acquainting him with what he wanted the money for.

"Come in!"

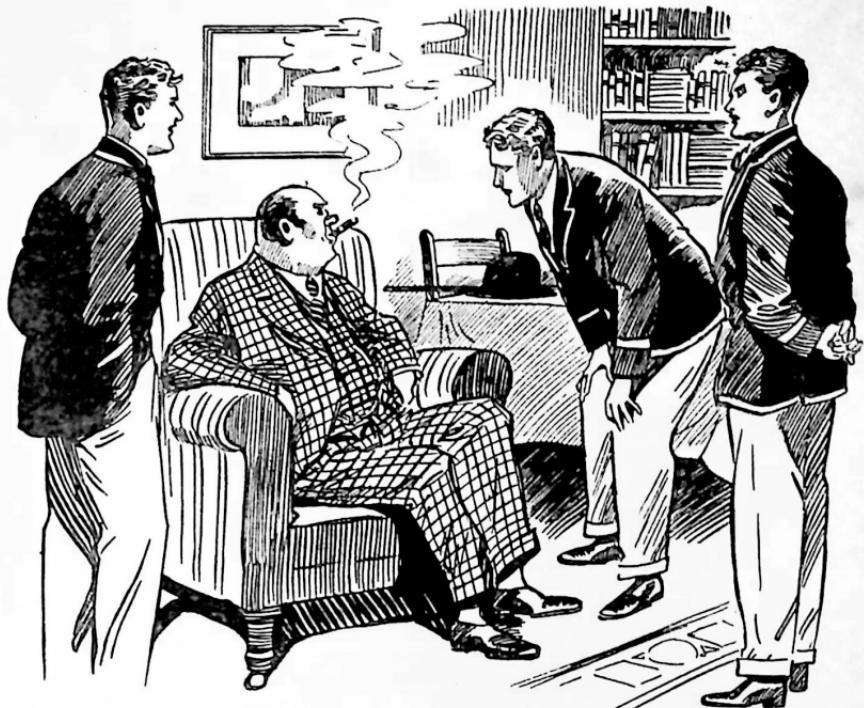
Mr. Quelch was seated at his table, with a typewriter before him, engaged upon the literary work that occupied most of his leisure hours; but he paused, and glanced kindly enough at Wharton as he came in, noting the unusual colour in the face of the junior.

"Well, Wharton?" he said.

"I've come to ask you a favour, sir," said Harry. "I want thirty shillings to settle a debt. I can get it from my uncle in a couple of days, but I want to pay to-day. Would you have the very great kindness, sir, to let me have it?"

Mr. Quelch smiled good-naturedly. If Billy Bunter or Snoop or Skinner had made such a request, Mr. Quelch would have refused with cutting curttness; but with Harry Wharton it was different. He had never asked a favour before; and Mr. Quelch knew, without inquiring, that any debt Wharton might have contracted would be of an honourable nature, that he would not be afraid to explain, if necessary.

"Ah, you have been outrunning your resources!" said the Remove-master indulgently. "If you were a



"I should think it was worth more'n five quid to you not to be kicked out of your school," said Mr. Rawlings to Hazeldene. "And I give you till I've finished this 'ere cigar to find the money!"

reckless or extravagant boy, Wharton, I should certainly decline to oblige you; but, knowing you as I do, I shall have no hesitation in the matter. You may certainly have the money!"

Wharton drew a breath of relief. The Form-master did not intend to ask him what he wanted the money for. He concluded that it was for payment of some expense of the Remove football club—nets or goal-posts, or a new match ball, or something of the sort—and he did not want it to be explained.

"You're very kind, sir," said Wharton as Mr. Quelch unlocked his desk and extracted thirty shillings from a drawer inside it.

"Not at all, Wharton. I am very glad that a boy in my Form should look upon me as a friend as well as a master," said Mr. Quelch kindly.

But Wharton thanked him warmly as he received the money. He left the study with a lighter heart.

The sound of voices raised in warm argument met his ears as he returned to Study No. 1 in the Remove passage. Coker of the Fifth was standing there, and Bob Cherry and Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were lined up outside the study door. Coker turned a frowning glance upon Wharton as he hurried up.

"What's the trouble?" asked Harry.

"Coker wants to meddle, as usual," said Bob. "He's come here asking to be chucked downstairs!"

Coker frowned majestically.

"You've got a bookmaker in that study!" he exclaimed.

"Mind your own business," said Johnny Bull.

"I think it's everybody's business to stop that sort of goings on," said Coker of the Fifth. "I'm interfering for your own sakes. What do you think would happen if a prefect spotted you?"

"You don't understand," said Harry. "And, anyway, it's no business of a Fifth-Form chap. You get out of our passage!"

Coker shook his head. Coker was a good-natured fellow in his way, but he had an idea of his own importance that was quite out of keeping with the facts. Coker believed in keeping a firm hand upon juniors and he sometimes assumed more airs and graces, as Bob Cherry expressed it, than a prefect of the Sixth.

Coker had decided that it was his duty to interfere in this matter and, after turning it over in his mind, he had come to No. 1 Study to eject the bookmaker—with a complete misunderstanding of the state of affairs there, of course. His idea was that the Famous Five were recklessly entering into things that would cause their disgrace and expulsion from the school, and Coker of the Fifth meant to chip in in time.

"That man's going to be chucked out," said Coker firmly. "Why, I know him by sight. He's Rawlings, a regular blackguard. Decent bookies won't have anything to do with him, and he's been warned off the racecourses for swindling. He's got an awful reputation. You kids are simply asking for the sack!"

"You don't understand," repeated Harry.

"Do you deny that you've got Rawlings the bookie in your study?" demanded Coker.

"No; but—"

"Well, I'm going to chuck him out!"

"Fathead!"

"What do you think Wingate would do if he knew he was here?" said Coker. "He'd boot him out of the school and report you young rascals to the Head. I'm not going to report you as I'm not a prefect, but I'm going to boot that scoundrel out. Let me get in!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Wharton gritted his teeth with annoyance. Coker's interference was a new complication in a matter already sufficiently dangerous. Once Mr. Rawlings was settled with, there would be great difficulty in piloting him out of the school unseen. With Coker of the Fifth on the warpath, the matter was ten times more difficult.

"Be a good chap, Coker," said Wharton. "It's not as you think. The man's going in a few minutes, but if you touch him he'll kick up a row here."

"Let him!" said Coker.

"It will make trouble for all of us."

"Serve you right! If you haven't sense enough to do the decent thing, you must take the consequences," said Coker. "I suppose you knew that it was dangerous when you let such a man come into your study?"

"You don't understand," said Wharton helplessly.

"I understand that that man's going to be kicked out of Greyfriars as a warning to him not to come again!" said Coker.

And Coker strode towards the study door.

Wharton sprang into his way.

"Stand back, you silly ass!"

"Bosh!" said Coker.

And he shoved the junior aside.  
"Collar the fool!" said Johnny Bull.

"Hands off!" yelled Coker. "I'll wipe up the floor with you! I'll—Ow—ow—ow!"

Bump!

Horace Coker went down on the floor, with the four juniors clinging to him. He gasped and roared under their weight.

"Gerooh! Lemme gerrup!" he roared. "I'll smash you! I'll—"

"Chuck him downstairs!" said Bob.

"Yarooh! Leggo! Hands off! Yah!"

Coker was rolled along the passage to the stairs and bundled down. Several feet helped him to go, and he did not stop till he reached the first landing. There he arrived in a dusty and dishevelled heap. He sat up, with his collar hanging down his back, his hair ruffled and his face very red.

"You—you young rascals!" he howled. "I'll pulverise you for this! I'll—"

Words failed Coker, and he sprang to his feet with the evident intention of charging up the stairs at the chums of the Remove.

Harry Wharton & Co. lined up at the top of the stairs, waiting for him. They looked so grim that Horace Coker paused. He realised that he would be at a great disadvantage if he charged upstairs at four determined juniors. He paused in time.

"Get off and mind your own business," said Wharton.

Coker snorted.

"I'm going," he said. "But I'll get Potter and Greene, and wait outside for your precious pal, and we'll duck him in the fountain when he comes out!"

And Coker strode away.

Harry Wharton and his chums



By DICK PENFOLD.

WE have some pretty birds at Greyfriars,  
And some of them, like parrots,  
often speak.

There's the Fish, or Lanky Yank,  
Which is something of a crank,  
And which utters rummy noises through  
its beak;

But everyone admires the zest  
With which it feathers its own nest.

We have some nasty birds at Greyfriars,  
And the worst is the Great Loder, or Daft  
Kite.

When the college is asleep  
You may see the Loder creep  
From its eyrie and fly out into the night;  
And while the moon upon it smiles,  
It has a "flutter" on the tiles.

We have some weighty birds at Greyfriars;  
There's the Bunter—an extremely heavy  
fowl;

But our experts simply can't  
Call this bird a Cormorant  
As it's something like a Cuckoo and an  
Owl;

But after every stolen feast  
It pipes a note which sounds like "Beast!"

We have some downy birds at Greyfriars;  
The Quelchy-Bird is one—and it will  
snap.

Every morning, dull or fair,  
It goes up into the air  
And it comes down on the head of some  
poor chap;

Then vainly does the victim shriek,  
His head is snapped off by the Beak.

looked simply horrified. There was no doubt that the enraged Fifth-Former would keep his word. They could already hear him calling to his chums, Potter and Greene, in the Fifth-Form passage on the next floor below.

"Well, all the fat's in the fire now," groaned Cherry. "It'll all come out now, and we've only made matters worse by having the rotter in the study. Why, the blessed fountain is right in front of the Head's window and Coker means business."

"What awful luck that that silly ass should take it into his silly head to meddle with us now!" said Wharton between his teeth.

"The awfulness of the luck is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh with a doleful shake of his dusky head.

"We shall have to get the bookie out by the back way, somehow," said Johnny Bull quickly. "Get settled with the beast as quick as you can, and we'll manage it. But buck up."

"Right-ho!"

Wharton hurried into the study.

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER

IN BLACK AND WHITE!

No. I Study was thick with smoke.

Mr. Rawlings had lighted a second cigar, and was blowing out thick clouds of a pungent smoke that made Nugent and Hazeldene cough, and caused Wharton to cough too, as he came into the study. The room was simply reeking with it, and Frank Nugent had opened the window wide.

"Have you got the money?" Hazeldene asked anxiously, turning to Wharton as he came in.

"Yes; two pounds."

"Oh, good luck!"

Harry Wharton laid the money upon the table. Mr. Rawlings looked a little discontented.

"You've got that easy and quick enough," he grunted. "I reckon you could 'ave got the rest if you'd wanted to."

"I suppose you are going to keep your word?" said Harry sharply.

"I'm a man of my word, I am," said Mr. Rawlings. "You 'and me the two quid, and your note of 'and for the other three, and I'll travel."

Wharton hesitated.

"I don't want to put anything into writing," he said. "You know you can take my word. Let it go at that."

"Wot's the 'arm of putting it into writin', if you mean business?" asked Mr. Rawlings. "I don't take nobody's word in money matters."

"Give him the paper, Wharton," urged Hazeldene. "Where's the harm? You'll get it back when you pay the other three pounds."

"Yes, but—"

"I ain't leavin' 'ere without it," said Mr. Rawlings.

There was nothing else to be done. After all, where was the harm? Wharton was certain of getting the money by Saturday, and then he could pay and recover the paper.

"Very well!" he said. "Tell me what you want."

"You write: 'I promise to pay Mr. 'Enry Rawlings the sum of three pounds on Saturday in full settlement,' and put the date," said the bookmaker, "and sign your name."

Wharton dipped a pen in the ink, and wrote it upon a sheet of impot paper. He signed his name, and showed it to Mr. Rawlings.

"Is that all right?" he asked.

"That's all right," said Mr. Rawlings, with a peculiar gleam in his cunning eyes. "Give me that, and the two quid, and 'ere's Master Hazeldene's bit of paper in exchange."

"There you are!"

Mr. Rawlings placed Wharton's note in his pocket-book and the two pounds in his waistcoat pocket. Then he produced Hazeldene's I O U promptly enough.

"There's your bit of writin', Master Hazeldene."

Hazeldene pounced upon it.

"That's mine," he said. "It's all right."

"Put it in the fire," said Harry.

Hazeldene obeyed gladly enough. His face brightened as if a weight was lifted from his mind, as the paper crackled up in the flames and was consumed. His burden was gone—shifted upon the shoulders of another!

Mr. Rawlings rose to his feet.

"Glad we've come to a friendly settlement," he said. "I'll come 'ere on Saturday, if you like, for the rest, and 'and you back your note of 'and."

"You can't come here," said Wharton sharply.

"Then you can send it by post to the Cross Keys," said Mr. Rawlings, "and I'll let you 'ave your paper by return of post."

Wharton paused and bit his lip. To send this rascal the money and trust to his honour to return the paper was too great a risk. What was to prevent Mr. Rawlings from pocketing the cash and keeping the paper all the same? That he was rascal enough to do it Wharton had no doubt whatever.

"You don't like that idea?" asked Mr. Rawlings.

"No," said Harry uneasily. "I'd better hand you the money personally."

"All right—come to the Cross Keys on Saturday——"

"I can't come there; it's out of bounds."

"Master Hazeldene has managed it often enough, and I s'pose it's out of bounds for 'im, too," said Mr. Rawlings, with a grin. "Howsumd-

ever, I'm an accommodatin' gent. I'll meet you somewhere if you like on Saturday."

That, too, was exceedingly disagreeable to Wharton. He knew that he might be seen speaking with the bookmaker, and if it were reported at Greyfriars it would mean inquiry and trouble. But there were difficulties on both sides. Meeting Mr. Rawlings and handing him the money in return for the paper was the least objectionable manner of settling the matter, Wharton considered.

"Make it after dark, then," he said. "It gets dark soon enough now, and I can get out of gates, say, about six o'clock."

"Anythin' to oblige," said Mr. Rawlings.

"I'll come to the old barn—you know it—on the Friardale road," said Wharton, "soon after six on Saturday. Will that suit you?"

Mr. Rawlings nodded.

"Done!" he said. "Don't forget to bring the money with you, for if you do I shall finish my little walk by coming up to the school."

"I shall keep my word," said Wharton sharply.

"Right-ho! Don't get ratty at a word of friendly advice. Only, raising three quid in three days ain't always easy for a boy of your age, you know."

"I shall ask my uncle for it."

"I've applied to my uncle in times of difficulty," grinned Mr. Rawlings. "Uncle Solomon—three brass 'balls, you know."

"I don't mean that!"

"Must be a very accommodatin' uncle to let you 'ave three quid for the askin'," said Mr. Rawlings, with a curious look at the junior. "Plenty of money—what?"

Wharton gave him a freezing look. Mr. Rawlings' personal interest in his private affairs was the last word in impertinence.

" My uncle is very well off," he said. " But that doesn't matter now. You will have your money, and that's all you need worry about."

" Right-ho," said Mr. Rawlings. " I'm goin'."

" Hold on a minute; it's not so jolly easy to go," said Harry. " It's got out that you are here, and there are some fellows waiting for you in the Close. They intend to rush you as you go out and duck you in the fountain."

Mr. Rawlings looked ferocious.

" If a 'and is laid on me, I'll yell for 'elp," he said. " Then we'll see what your 'eadmaster has to say!"

" We can't help it," said Wharton. " The fellows I speak of are seniors, and we can't stop them. We've tried to. We just chucked one of them downstairs because he wanted to come in here and start on you."

" I 'eard a row," admitted Mr. Rawlings. " Well, I don't want to make no rumpus if it can be 'elped. Wot am I to do?"

" We must smuggle you out the back way somehow," said Harry, knitting his brows in thought. " If you go down by the back stairs you may be able to slip out by the tradesmen's gate. The sooner the better, so come on."

" I'm ready!"

Wharton led the bookmaker out of the study.

" Coker & Co. are waiting outside the House," said Johnny Bull, who had stationed himself at the passage window overlooking the Close. " They've got Fitzgerald with them now. There's four of them. Coker looks excited."

" I think we can dodge them," said Harry.

He led Mr. Rawlings along the passage towards the back of the House. There another passage gave admittance to the servants' staircase. There was no one in sight on

the staircase, and Wharton led the bookmaker down it and into a passage leading into the kitchen garden. Just as they reached the door, Trotter, the page, came in from the garden. He stopped at the sight of Wharton and his companion, surprised at the sight of a junior in that part of the House, and still more surprised by the sight of Mr. Rawlings, with whose face he was well acquainted.

Trotter's astonished stare brought a flush to Wharton's cheeks.

" Mum's the word, Trotty!" said Harry hastily. " Look here, I want to get this chap out of the House without his being seen. Don't say anything."

" Cert'nly, Master Wharton."

" 'Ow do you do, Trotter?" said Mr. Rawlings affably. " When you want a bob each way on a geegee, you know where to come."

" Thank you, Mr. Rawlings. I leave that to my betters," said Trotter sarcastically; and Harry Wharton's flush deepened. He could see that the page supposed Mr. Rawlings to be his visitor, but he did not care to explain and mention Hazel's name.

" I'll get him out for you if you like, Master Wharton," said Trotter obligingly. " You mustn't be seen with 'im if 'e's spotted. It was awful risky having him here, sir."

" I didn't want him," said Harry. " He didn't come to see me. I shall be awfully obliged if you can get him away, Trotter."

" I'll do it, sir."

Trotter led the bookmaker into the kitchen garden, and piloted him carefully and cautiously away, and finally got rid of him at the tradesmen's gate. Mr. Rawlings indulged in a deep chuckle as he walked away towards Friardale. He took Wharton's note of hand from his pocket-book, and looked at it, and chuckled again.

"Three quid!" he murmured. "Three quid! Thirty's near the mark, I fancy—or a hundred, for that matter."

And Mr. Rawlings restored the paper to his pocket-book and walked on, still chuckling, evidently in a great state of satisfaction.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER UNEXPECTED!

HARRY WHARTON returned to Study No. 1 as soon as the bookmaker was clear of the House. Hazeldene was still there, and the Co. were in the study. They all turned inquiring glances upon Wharton.

"Is he gone?" asked Hazel eagerly.  
"Yes."

Hazel drew a deep, deep breath. "Thank goodness! And he's not been seen?"

"Only Trotter."

"Oh! Trotter may jaw about it," said Hazel anxiously. "I wish you could have got him out of the House without Trotter seeing him."

"Well, I couldn't," said Harry shortly. "And I think we've had good luck. He's got away without a master or a prefect spotting him. We've been luckier than we could have expected, and I only hope this is the end of it."

"It's the end of it as far as I'm concerned," said Hazel, with unusual earnestness. "I won't say anything about repaying the money—I mayn't be able to do it, I know. But this is



"Chuck him downstairs!" said Bob Cherry. "Yaroh! Leggo! Hands off!" roared Horace Coker as he was carried along the passage to the stairs. Then he was bundled down, several feet helping him on his travels.

the last time I'll ever get into a scrape like that. I thought my heart would stop beating when I saw that villain in the Close. I shan't forget it in a hurry."

"You'll keep clear of him and the other rotters like him if you've got any sense," said Harry. "We've saved you this time and we don't know that it's all over. Lots of the fellows know that he was in this study, and it may mean trouble for us yet."

"I—I hope not," said Hazel uneasily. "I—I say, I'm awfully obliged to you chaps, and I swear I'll try every way I can to get the money to repay you!"

"Don't ask Marjorie for it," said Wharton grimly. "I'd rather lose it than take it from her."

Hazel flushed.

"I suppose you needn't interfere between my sister and me," he said. "That's a matter that concerns me personally."

Evidently Hazel was becoming himself again now that the danger was passed. The old obstinacy and the cool "cheek" were reappearing.

"That's all rot!" said Wharton directly. "You've planted your personal affairs on us, and forced us to interfere, and you can't grumble if all the interference isn't to your liking. I tell you I won't have you asking Marjorie for money to pay me with! I'd rather lose it! And don't gas any rot about your personal affairs. I don't like it. If you want to set up your independence, you can keep your personal affairs to yourself all the time, and not plant them on us when you're in difficulties. Excuse me speaking plainly, but I'm fed up!"

"Well, I shall pay you," said Hazel sullenly.

"Where did you get the tin to settle with that ghoul?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Inky stood half-a-quid, and I borrowed thirty bob from Quelchy," said Wharton.

Hazel started.

"From Quelchy!" he exclaimed.

"Yes. There was no other way."

"Good heavens! You've let Quelchy know—"

"Fathead! If I'd told him what the money was for we should all have been yanked into the Head's study before you could catch your breath, and flogged—the lot of us!" said Wharton savagely. "I told Quelchy I had to pay a debt, but I didn't tell him what debt."

"It was awfully risky. You ought not to have gone to Quelch—"

"I had to find the money, and there was no other way."

"Well, I suppose you know best," growled Hazeldene. "I shouldn't have advised going to Quelch. If anything should come out, he will remember that you had the money from him to-day to settle a debt."

Wharton's eyes flashed. To be reproached now, and by Hazeldene, for the way in which he had managed the affair was really the last straw.

"Can you suggest any other way I could have raised the money?" he demanded.

"You might have tried Smithy—"

"I'm not on the terms with Vernon-Smith to borrow money of him, and besides, he might have refused. And besides that, he was playing footer, and I should have had to ask him before a crowd of fellows."

"Well, I think it was risky to go to Quelch," said Hazel. "I shouldn't have done it. But perhaps you know best. Thanks, once again, for what you've done! I'll let you have the money back as soon as I can."

And Hazel left the study.

The Famous Five looked at one another, and Wharton drew a deep breath.

" If it wasn't for Marjorie——" he muttered.

" The ungrateful rotter ! " growled Johnny Bull. " Pity we didn't let the bookie show him up, after all. He'll come to it sooner or later."

" No ; I'm not sorry we saved the silly ass, but—but it's a bit hard to have him ragging me for the way I managed it," said Harry. " I suppose he can't help being a fool. I couldn't have got the money from Smithy."

" Of course you couldn't," said Frank Nugent. " Don't think about that cad and what he thinks. We're done with him now, anyway."

Bob Cherry glanced out of the window.

" Coker's still waiting," he remarked.

" Ha, ha, ha ! "

The study door opened as the juniors burst into a laugh, and a fat face and a pair of large spectacles glimmered in. Billy Bunter blinked round the room, evidently in search of the visitor, and seemed surprised not to see him. There was a shiny look upon Billy Bunter's face, and a smear of jam on his fat chin. They were signs that he had already disposed, in the tuckshop, of the four shillings which his sense of duty had compelled him to extract from the chums of the Remove.

" I say, you fellows, where's the visitor ? " he asked. " Hidden him under the table—what ? I say, I've been thinking it over."

" Thinking what over, fathead ? " said Wharton crossly. Wharton's temper had suffered, and he was not in a humour to be bothered by the Owl of the Remove.

" I told Bull that I couldn't allow these goings on," said Bunter, with dignity. " I said I'd think it over, and I've thought it over. I can't permit it. I shall have to let Wingate know about that man being here. Wingate will come and turn him out. It's my

duty. I'm sincerely sorry, but there you are ! "

The juniors grinned. They understood that Bunter, having expended his bribe, had come back for another. But he had come a little too late, as Mr. Rawlings was gone, and was at a safe distance by that time.

" How much do you want now ? " asked Bob Cherry.

" Oh, really, Cherry, that's a rotten way to put it ! " said Bunter, blinking at him. " Of course, I'm only thinking of my duty from a point of view of—of a sense of honour, you know. I've said before that you perhaps haven't my fine sense of honour, and I say it again. I'm sincerely sorry, but I can't allow these disgraceful goings on. It's no good hiding your bookmaker friend. I know he's here."

" As a matter of fact, he's gone," said Bob Cherry. " He's jolly nearly at Friardale by this time, you fat rascal ! Get out ! "

" You can't stuff me up, Bob Cherry ! I've been keeping one eye on the House to see if he went," said Bunter with a chuckle. " Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'm expecting a postal-order——"

" You're expecting a postal-order which you won't get, and you're not expecting a hiding which you will get," remarked Johnny Bull. " Collar the cad ! "

" Ow ! Hands off ! Yah ! "

Billy Bunter was promptly collared and slammed face downwards on the study table. Then Johnny Bull found a slipper and commenced operations upon Bunter's fat person. The roars of Bunter were like those of a wild bull.

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack, whack !

" There ! " panted Johnny Bull.

" Now you clear off, and don't try blackmail any more as a means of raising the wind."

"Oh! Ow! Yah!" roared Bunter.  
"One second to get out of the study, or you'll have another dose," said Wharton.

One second was enough for Bunter.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

### HAZEL'S SISTER !

HARRY WHARTON & Co. came down to the football-ground. The match with the Upper Fourth was in the second half now, but they wanted to see the end of it. Without the Famous Five in the team the Remove eleven was much weaker, of course, and Temple, Dabney & Co. had a better chance than usual. They were making the most of it. The score was level, one all, and the match was still very keen. Vernon-Smith and Mark Linley, Tom Brown and Penfold, were doing great things for the Remove, and Bulstrode was very strong in goal. But the reserves who had been played in the place of the Famous Five were not up to the form of the Upper Fourth, and it looked like finishing in a victory for Temple, Dabney & Co.

Johnny Bull grunted with dissatisfaction as he watched the Fourth-Formers bearing down upon the Remove goal in great force.

"Looks like a licking!" he growled.  
"That's another thing we've got to thank Hazeldene for! Blessed if I think he's worth it!"

"Marjorie is, though," said Bob Cherry.

"Well, we don't want to be licked. It will count in our record for the season. Look at Temple! He's getting through!"

There was a yell of delight from the Fourth-Formers watching the match.

"Go it, Temple!"

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

The ball was in the net.

"Two up for the Fourth! Rotten!"

"Well, it was a good goal," said Wharton, trying to be good-humoured about it. "I don't grudge Temple his goal. But it's rotten to be standing here looking on, when we might be wiping up the ground with them."

"The Bounder isn't in his best form, either," said Nugent.

Wharton had already noticed it. Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, was one of the finest footballers in the school—when he liked. Now that he was captaining the Form team in Wharton's place he had an opportunity of showing himself at his best. His play was splendid, but he was evidently out of condition. The Bounder, who was as hard as iron when in form, had "bellows to mend" now, and several times he had failed in the brilliant rushes for which he was famous in the Form. Wharton knew only too well what the matter was, and he frowned.

"Smoking again!" he growled.

But the Bounder, out of form as he was, played up well, and just before the call of time he put the ball into the net. There was a bare chance of victory for either side, and both teams played up hard. The Famous Five looked on with keen interest, but Bob Cherry's eyes wandered away from the ground towards the school gates every minute or two. And suddenly Bob darted away from his companions and rushed to the gates.

Two girls had walked in at the gates, and Bob recognised Marjorie Hazeldene and Miss Clara from Cliff House School. Marjorie had promised to come over and see the match if she could get away in time, expecting, of course, that her friends would be playing in the Remove team. She looked surprised as Bob ran up in school clothes.



Billy Bunter was promptly collared and slammed face downwards on the table. Then Johnny Bull commenced operations with a slipper on his fat person—whack, whack, whack, whack, whack, whack ! And the roars of Bunter were like those of a wild bull.

"Jolly glad to see you!" exclaimed Bob. "Come on; it's not quite over!"

"I am sorry we couldn't get here earlier," said Marjorie. "I hoped to be able to see the second half; but Clara was detained."

"Lines!" said Miss Clara, with a grimace. "Rotten!"

"You're not playing?" asked Marjorie as she walked towards the football-ground with Bob.

"No; we're standing out this time," said Bob.

"Why, Harry said that you would all be in the team for certain."

"Yes; but—but something happened to make us change our minds," explained Bob, reddening a little. He did not mean to explain to

Hazeldene's sister what the "something" was. "But Smithy is going great guns. Come and see the finish!"

The match was almost over as the girls arrived on the ground and joined the Co. But the Remove forwards were attacking hotly, and Vernon-Smith was well to the fore. The Bounder caught sight of Marjorie Hazeldene as she stood with Harry Wharton & Co., and he made tremendous efforts. He wanted very much to perform feats, with Marjorie Hazeldene looking on.

"Time!" said Frank Nugent, looking up at the clock in the tower.

There was a roar !

"Bravo, the Bounder!"

"Goal!"

Almost on the stroke of time Vernon-Smith had put the ball into the net. The Removites roared applause, and Marjorie clapped her hands. The match was over, and the Bounder's face was glowing as he came towards the group.

"That was a jolly good goal, Smithy!" Harry Wharton exclaimed heartily. He had intended to have something to say to the Bounder about his "bellows-to-mend" condition in private. But after that brilliant goal he felt that he could not very well find fault with the fellow who had pulled the game out of the fire. And the goal had certainly been a superb one.

"It was ripping!" declared Miss Clara.

"First chop!" said Bob Cherry, giving the Bounder a slap on the shoulder that made him wince. "I was afraid the match was a goner."

"I wish we had seen more of it," said Marjorie. "Is my brother here, Harry?"

"In the School House, I think," said Wharton. He had not seen Hazeldene since the latter left No. 1 Study. "We'll find him somewhere."

They walked off the football-ground. The juniors grinned at the sight of Coker & Co. standing in a group by the fountain talking together. The Fifth-Formers were still waiting for Mr. Rawlings to come out of the House.

They met Hazeldene in the hall. Marjorie greeted him warmly, and Hazel gave her rosy cheek a perfunctory kiss. Hazel was still looking worried and disturbed, haunted by the fear that the consequences of Mr. Rawlings' visit were not yet over.

Harry Wharton & Co. drew aside a little while brother and sister were speaking. A new and troublesome problem had dawned upon their

minds. As usual, when Marjorie and Clara came to Greyfriars, there was to be tea in No. 1 Study, and the whole available funds of the Co. had been expended in satisfying Mr. Rawlings. Inky's ten shillings, and the shillings extracted by Bunter, represented the whole of their financial resources. And the study cupboard, like the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard's, was bare. It was a serious situation, and the juniors wondered how it was to be met.

"Is it all right now, Hazel?" Marjorie asked in a low tone.

"Yes," said Hazel.

"But you told me you needed five pounds—"

"It's all right now."

"Then you have found the money?"

"Oh, don't ask questions, Marjorie!" said Hazel irritably. "I've been worried enough about the rotten affair. I tell you it's all right."

"I won't ask questions, Hazel," said Marjorie patiently. "I only hope, Hazel, if it's all right now, that you won't let it come to pass again."

"And don't start that, either! I've had enough of that from Wharton," said Hazeldene bitterly. "I'm fed-up with sermons."

"Then it was Harry who helped you out of the difficulty?" Marjorie asked.

"I suppose you must know all about it. Yes, it was."

"Did he find the money?"

"I suppose so."

"Then it must be repaid, Hazel."

"Well, if you can pay it, you're welcome," said Hazel. "I can't; I'm stony. Wharton says he doesn't want it."

"We are not beggars to take his money," said Marjorie, her lip quivering. "It will have to be paid, and as soon as possible."

"Well, I can't do anything. For goodness' sake let the matter drop.

I tell you I'm fed-up with it. I suppose you're going to have tea with the fellows. I'll get out on my bike, I think."

"Aren't you coming?"

"Thanks! I don't want any more sermons."

And Hazel swung away sullenly. Marjorie compressed her lips a little. Her affection for her wayward brother was very strong, but sometimes he tried her patience to its limits. Vernon-Smith, having changed after the football match, came down, and stopped to speak to Harry Wharton & Co. He noticed the earnestness with which they were consulting, and smiled grimly, guessing what was the matter.

"Will you fellows come to tea in my study, and bring your friends?" he asked. "I've got a rather ripping spread."

"Corn in Egypt!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Wharton hesitated a single moment. But it was a way out of the difficulty, and the Bounder was making himself so agreeable that it was difficult to refuse his invitation.

"Thanks!" said Harry. "We'll come with pleasure. I'll ask Marjorie."

"Her brother's coming," said Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, good!"

Marjorie and Clara accepted the Bounder's invitation, as they saw that the Co. wished them to do so. The Bounder looked very pleased.

"Ready in a quarter of an hour," he said. "I've got Bunter there getting it ready, and it will be really very decent."

"Thank you very much!" said Marjorie.

The Bounder walked on, looking very cheerful. His attempts at friendliness with Miss Hazeldene had generally been repulsed, and he felt

that he was getting on better this time.

"I want to speak to you, Harry," Marjorie said in a low voice.

Wharton looked worried. He guessed what it was about.

"Let's get up to the study, then," he said.

Marjorie gave a little start as she entered Study No. 1. The rank smell of a strong tobacco was still thick in the air. The two girls coughed a little.

"You've been smoking!" exclaimed Miss Clara, pointing an accusing finger at Bob Cherry.

"No fear!" exclaimed Bob promptly, with an alarmed look at Marjorie. "I haven't!"

"Somebody has!" said Miss Clara oracularly.

"It was a chap we had here," said Wharton. "Not a Greyfriars chap—a man, you know. It will clear off in time. He smoked beastly strong cigars."

Miss Clara sniffed a little, and walked out of the study with Bob Cherry. The other fellows lounged into the passage, understanding that Marjorie wanted to speak to the captain of the Remove.

"I want to know what you have done about Hazel," said the girl, looking at him with her clear, steady eyes.

"We've made it all right," he said.

"You paid the money for him?"

"Yes; part of it!"

"And the rest?"

"The man's agreed to wait till Saturday for the rest."

"Hazel said he would not wait," said Marjorie.

Wharton smiled a little.

"Well, I suppose he knew that Hazel couldn't raise the tin. But I've promised him, and he knows that I can pay, I suppose."

"Then you have seen him?" exclaimed Marjorie.

"Well, yes!"

"Did he come here?" exclaimed the girl in alarm. "Was it that man who smoked those horrid cigars here?"

"Ye-es!"

Marjorie drew a quick, terrified breath.

"He came here—here to the school! Why, it might have ruined Hazel. Was he seen?"

"We smuggled him into the study, and got rid of him as soon as we could," said Harry.

"If he had been found here——"

"It's all right—he wasn't found!"

"You ran a great risk."

"Oh, it wasn't so much!" said Harry, with a carelessness he did not feel. "Nobody was likely to look into my study, you know."

"That is why you missed the football match?"

"We were rather late for it, when the man had gone."

"It is a shame that you should be troubled like this by my brother," Marjorie said, her bright eyes filling with tears. "I don't know how to thank you for your kindness."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Harry. "Marjorie, dear, don't cry! Hazel's all right now—it's all over and finished!"

"I'm not going to cry," said Marjorie, with a rather tremulous smile, "and I'm not thinking of Hazel just now, but of your kindness. He does not deserve that you should take so much trouble about him. But—at all events, you shall not lose the money—that shall be repaid."

"I wish you wouldn't bother about it," said Harry. "Hazel is a Greyfriars chap, you know—and we wanted to stand by him."

"All the same, we cannot remain in your debt," said Marjorie. "We owe you enough without that. I shall contrive it. I——"

"Wharton, you young rotter!" Coker of the Fifth strode into the study, with Potter and Greene and Fitzgerald behind him. "We've waited long enough for your precious friend. We're going to boot him out——" "Ow—oh—ah! I—I didn't see you, Miss Hazeldene! I—I'm sure I beg your pardon!" stuttered Coker as he caught sight of Marjorie.

And the burly Fifth-Former backed out of the study so quickly that he trod heavily upon Potter's feet, and there was a gasp of anguish from Potter.

"Ow! You ass!"

"Clear off!" muttered Coker.

And the four Fifth-Formers cleared off, very much disconcerted at having rushed ferociously into the presence of Miss Hazeldene.

Wharton grinned. But Marjorie's face was very grave.

"They know that that man was here?" she asked.

"Yes; Coker took it upon himself to interfere. He never can mind his own business!"

"But he thinks the man came to see you!"

"Let him think so!" said Harry, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I don't care what Coker thinks. Coker can go and eat coke!"

"But it is a shame that you should be supposed——"

"I'm not going to explain to Coker. It doesn't matter. Don't think any more about it, Marjorie."

And Marjorie said no more. Her look was very troubled, and her pretty face remained clouded throughout tea, despite the Bounder's attempt at gaiety.

A depression fell upon Vernon-Smith's tea-party, and no one was sorry when it broke up.

The juniors walked home with the two girls to Cliff House, and then they returned to Greyfriars.

Wharton sat down in the study to write to his uncle and guardian, Colonel Wharton. His uncle was very generous to him, and Harry had no doubt whatever that he would send the money required, but he disliked very much having to ask him to do so. But there was no help for it.

"We're all going to stand our whack in this," said Johnny Bull. "I'll get thirty bob from my aunt to

I can have ten bob extra if I ask for it. I wish I could take a full share, but I can't."

"I've got ten bob coming on Saturday," said Frank—"that goes in. Ask your uncle for two quid, Wharton. It's not fair you should have to stand it all."

"Well, it was my idea to deal with the beast, after all," said Harry;

"Oh, rats! We're all in it!"



"Wharton, you young rotter!" Coker of the Fifth strode into the study, with his chums behind him. "We've waited long enough for your precious friend. We're going to boot him out— Oh, ah! I—I didn't see you, Miss Hazeldene. I—I beg your pardon!" gasped Coker in some confusion.

pay Quelchy. I can get it before Saturday."

"And my esteemed half-quid was contributed to the goodfulness of the cause, with hearty goodwill-fulness," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Then I'll ask my uncle for three quid," said Harry.

"Two!" said Bob. "Nugent and I can stand ten bob, at least. My pater isn't rolling in filthy lucre, but

"Marjorie wants to repay the money for Hazel, but we're not going to let her," said Harry. "It's too beastly for her money to be spent on paying a beast like Rawlings. You fellows agree to that?"

"Yes, rather!"

So Harry Wharton crossed out the "three" in his letter, and wrote "two" over it, and was very glad to make the change. And the next

day the remittance arrived from Colonel Wharton, without a single question as to what it was wanted for—a piece of kindness for which Wharton felt duly grateful.

On Saturday morning, the other remittances having come to hand, Wharton handed the thirty shillings to Mr. Quelch. That part of the debt was easily settled; but the settlement with Rawlings was a more troublesome matter. The more he thought of meeting the bookmaker the more Wharton disliked the idea—but there was no getting out of it, and he had to make up his mind to the ordeal.

### THE EIGHTH CHAPTER HAZEL'S GRATITUDE!

ON Saturday the Remove were playing an out match with Redclyffe School. Wharton intended to leave the brake on the homeward journey and call in at the old barn on the Friardale road to see Mr. Rawlings. He had the money in his pocket, and he was very eager to have the interview over and done with. The thought of it had been weighing upon his mind ever since the bookmaker's visit to Greyfriars. Hazeldene came to look for him just before the team started for Redclyffe. Hazel had hardly spoken to Wharton since Mr. Rawlings' visit. He had been sullen and depressed every time Harry had seen him. Whether his conscience was at work, or whether he was simply in fear of further consequences of Mr. Rawlings' visit, Harry did not know. Probably it was both.

"Is it all right?" asked Hazeldene.

"Quite all right," said Harry as cordially as he could.

"You've got the money?"

"Yes, in my pocket."

"I'm sorry I've got you into this, Wharton," Hazel said, with an effort.

"I've no right to bother you with

(Continued on page 81.)

## A Hero of Waterloo!

ONE of the youngest British soldiers in the epic Battle of Waterloo was one Gordon Campbell, who had run away from his Scottish home to join a Highland regiment. Yet despite his youth, and the nickname his companions gave him of the "baby of the regiment," Gordon was a soldier to the backbone. On the fateful day of June 18th, when the despairing Emperor of the French rallied his Imperial Guard for a final onslaught on the Duke of Wellington's army, the losses of the British troops were severe. Among those who fell sorely wounded was a veteran Hussar who had carried himself with conspicuous bravery in a dashing cavalry charge which had taken heavy toll of the enemy. In the retirement that followed young Gordon Campbell slipped away from his comrades, against orders, and raced back to where the Hussar was lying. The oncoming Frenchmen, espousing him, dashed forward, their leader falling on one knee with upraised musket. Regardless of them young Campbell coolly hoisted the wounded man over his shoulder and started to rejoin his comrades. Shot after shot was aimed at the plucky youngster, but as steadily as if he were on the parade ground he carried on until he had safely deposited his unconscious burden out of danger. Gordon was wounded in two places, but he stoutly refused to leave his comrades. He knew that every man was needed in the great rally and counter-attack the Duke of Wellington now ordered. The British squares re-formed, the advance of the French was repelled, and the "baby of the regiment" set such a courageous example to the more experienced soldiers about him that, after the battle, he was presented to the Iron Duke.

## A HERO OF WATERLOO!



Facing page 80.

With the courage of a seasoned veteran the "baby" of the Regiment carries a wounded cavalryman to safety, in the face of a deadly fire from the advancing French infantry.

*Specially drawn for the "Holiday Annual" by T. Cuneo.*

my affairs. You're not exactly a pal of mine, either."

"I'm quite willing to be," said Harry.

"You don't like the sort of people I like," said Hazel uneasily. "You don't get on with Skinner and Snoop, nor with Smithy, as a rule. I didn't mean to plant my troubles on you; but you really chipped in of your own accord when Rawlings came here, didn't you?"

"I did."

"And I should never have advised you to go to Quelchy for the money," said Hazel irritably. "Now Marjorie wants me to put aside my allowance every week to pay you that five pounds."

"Well, you ought to do it, without Marjorie asking you," said Harry bluntly.

"You said you didn't want the money."

"I said you needn't trouble to pay it—and you needn't," said Harry Wharton. "That doesn't alter what you ought to do."

"I suppose you mean that I've got to pay it, if you come down to facts?" said Hazel. "Well, I'll do my best. I can't expect you to pay my debts, I suppose. If I only had some luck—"

He paused abruptly as a steely glitter leapt in Wharton's eyes.

"You were going to say?" asked Harry.

"Oh, nothing!"

"We'll have this out, Hazel. You were going to say something about having luck with some more of your silly foolery—betting on horses. Do you mean to say that you're thinking of playing the fool again in the same way, after what's happened?"

"I've promised not to have anything more to do with Rawlings, and I'm going to keep my word," said Hazel sullenly.

"Nor with any other fellows of his kidney?" said Harry.

Hazel was silent.

"Now, look here, Hazeldene," said Wharton in a low, hard voice. "You're going to stop this. You're going to keep clear of Rawlings, and all that set of rotters. You've given us, and Marjorie, trouble enough."

"Has my sister asked you to look after her?" said Hazel with a sneer.

"No; but if I haven't the right to look after her, I have the right to look after myself, and I'm going to do it. You're going to keep clear of this rotten blackguardism."

"Take care what you say to me, Harry Wharton. I'm not bound to put up with your rotten insults because you've paid a debt for me."

"I'm not going to mince words with you. You've got into trouble and simply forced us to mix up in your dirty proceedings, and have dealings with low blackguards like Rawlings!" said Wharton hotly.

"How do you know I may not be seen speaking to him this very afternoon? What would happen then?"

"Then you could explain, and get me the sack!" snapped Hazeldene.

"You know I shouldn't do that. I should have to let it be supposed that I was the rotter, and not—"

"Not me!" sneered Hazel. "Pile it on. You've paid for the right to slang me, I suppose. Take your money's worth."

Wharton clenched his hands hard. It was all he could do to keep them off Hazeldene at that moment.

"I mean what I say!" he said between his teeth. "You're going to keep clear of this kind of business. You won't be allowed to play the giddy ox again."

"Who's going to stop me, if I choose?"

"We are! Begin anything of the kind again, and as soon as we find it

out, we'll rag you till you wish you'd been decent!" said Wharton angrily. "I'm fed-up with your fooling. What you want is a good hiding, and for two pins I'd give it to you, here and now. You don't seem to have any sense of common decency! I tell you we're fed-up, and if you haven't sense enough to keep out of a scrape like this, we'll try to knock some sense into your head!"

"I think that's about the five-pounds' worth!" said Hazel cuttingly. "Now, I've had enough of it. Go and eat coke!"

Wharton's eyes blazed, and his hand was raised—but just then Bob Cherry joined them, and he caught Wharton by the arm.

"Easy does it!" said Bob cheerily. "No rags in the family circle, you know. Time to get into the brake, my son!"

And Bob Cherry marched his chum away, leaving Hazeldene standing with an ugly sneer upon his face. Wharton was breathing very hard.

"No good rowing with him, you know," murmured Bob.

Wharton nodded.

"I know. But—but—well, I'm glad you came up, Bob. I don't want to lay hands on Marjorie's brother, if I can help it," said Harry. "Let's get off!"

And mounted into the brake, with coats and mufflers on over their football garb, and started for Redclyffe.

Harry Wharton's clouded brow had cleared before they arrived on the Redclyffe ground. It was a fine clear winter day, just the weather for football, and the Remove eleven were in great form. Only Vernon-Smith looked a little off-colour. His face was somewhat pasty in complexion, and he looked generally seedy. Wharton gave him more than one sharp glance. He guessed that the

Bounder had been having one of his secret smoking-parties in his study the evening before.

But when the ball was kicked off, the Bounder played up very well. He was not at the top of his form by any means, but he was quite as good as any reserve that could have been played in his place, and he was lucky in getting a goal in the first half.

With the Bounder far from being at his best, and with Wharton worried by the thought of the coming interview with Rawlings—a thought he could not dismiss from his mind in spite of all his efforts—the Remove team did not play up so brilliantly as they had intended. Indeed, but for a goal by Mark Linley, almost at the finish, they would have counted a defeat that afternoon. As it was, the match was a draw—two goals to two.

"Never mind," said Bob Cherry as they climbed into the brake for the homeward journey. "Redclyffe visit us next week, and we'll simply wipe up the ground with them."

And the Removites all agreed that they would.

A cloud settled darkly and more darkly upon Wharton's brow as the brake neared Greyfriars. The wretched interview with the bookmaker was close at hand now. The nearer it came the more Wharton shrank from it.

"Better let us come with you, old chap," Bob Cherry said in a low voice, seeing the trouble in Harry's face, in spite of his attempt to conceal it.

But Wharton shook his head.

"No, I'd better go alone. We don't want to run any risk of attracting attention, Bob. It's rotten enough as it is. I'll drop off the brake in Friardale, and walk the rest of the way across the fields."

"Get in as soon as you can," said Nugent anxiously. "I shan't feel

easy until that paper of yours has been burnt."

"I shan't be long after you," said Harry.

The brake rolled on from Friardale without him. When it was out of sight Wharton left the village and crossed the fields in the deep winter dusk towards the old barn. It was almost dark when he arrived there; but the red glow of a cigar, and a strong smell of tobacco, announced that Mr. Rawlings was already upon the spot to keep the appointment.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER THE BIT OF WRITING!

MR. RAWLINGS was walking to and fro outside the old barn, to keep himself warm. It was a bitterly cold winter evening, with a keen wind from the sea. The bookmaker took the cigar from his mouth, spat, and nodded to Wharton.

"I've been waitin' for you," he said.

"It's only just gone six," said Harry.

"I'm an early bird," said Mr. Rawlings, with a chuckle. "The early bird catches the worms, young gentleman. I'm after the worms. He, he, he!"

Wharton did not quite see the joke, and he did not smile. He was not in a humour for smiling. He felt in his pocket for the three pounds.

"You've got the spondulicks?" said Mr. Rawlings.

"I have the money."

"Right you are," said Mr. Rawlings. "And it over."

Something in the bookmaker's manner made Wharton vaguely suspicious. Mr. Rawlings did not seem quite at ease with himself. He looked, indeed, like a man who was planning some act of extra rascally iniquity, and was not quite at ease with his conscience about it. And if that was

the case, Mr. Rawlings' intentions must have been very bad indeed, for his conscience was a decidedly tough one, and could stand most things quite easily.

"Give me my paper," said Harry.

"Your paper?" said Mr. Rawlings.

"Yes; and I will hand you the three pounds."

Mr. Rawlings coughed. He returned his cigar to his mouth and blew out a cloud of smoke, and took the cigar out of his mouth again. He seemed to be pulling himself together for an effort.

"Well, now, as a matter of absolute fact, we've got to 'ave a little talk about that there bit o' writin'," said Mr. Rawlings.

"I don't see anything to talk about. I've got your money, and you're to give me my acknowledgment in return for it," said Harry sharply. "What is there to talk about?"

"The fact is," said Mr. Rawlings slowly, "I've an idea that there bit of writing is worth more than three quid."

"What do you mean? There are three pounds still due on what Hazeldene owed you, and I'm going to settle it now."

"You ain't settled it yet."

"Give me my paper, and I'll settle it fast enough."

"Can't trust the money in my 'ands, eh?" said Mr. Rawlings truculently.

Wharton watched his face in the deep dusk with growing uneasiness. Rawlings was trying to work himself into a temper—for what?

"Please give me the paper, and let me get off," said Harry. "I shall be late for calling-over if I don't return to the school at once!"

He showed the three pound-notes in his hand. They showed clearly in the glow from the bookmaker's cigar.

Mr. Rawlings hesitated, and then drew a folded paper from his pocket and held it out. Wharton caught at it eagerly, and the three pound-notes changed hands. Mr. Rawlings promptly transferred the notes to his pocket.

Wharton was about to thrust the paper into his coat, but he paused and unfolded it. It hardly seemed possible that any man could be base enough to trick him in such a way, and he was ashamed of the suspicion, but Mr. Rawlings was such a tricky customer that he felt that he could not be too sure. He opened the folded paper, and struck a match and looked at it. The paper was blank!

Wharton was almost stunned for the moment by that sudden discovery of the rascal's treachery. The bookmaker had handed him a blank and worthless sheet of paper, and Wharton's note of hand was still in his possession.

The junior uttered a startled cry.

"This isn't the paper."

"I told you we'd got to 'ave a little talk about that there bit of writing," said Mr. Rawlings. "Don't get excited about it. I'm going to play you fair and square."

"Then give me my paper."

"As a matter of fact, I ain't got it with me," said the rascal coolly. "I left it at the Cross Keys, as it 'appens."

"Then give me my money back."

"That's all right. I ain't parting with any money. We're going to 'ave a little talk—"

"I'm not going to talk to you, you thief and scoundrel!" Wharton burst out furiously, trembling with rage.

"Will you give me my paper?"

"That's wot we've got to talk about. I've an idea that that there bit of writin' is worth more than three quid."

"How can it be worth more when Hazel only owes you three pounds?"

"I thought that a young gentleman with a nice uncle rolling in money might be willing to pay a bit more than face value!" chuckled the bookmaker. "I've 'ad a lot of trouble over this matter; you can't deny that —comin' up to the school, and dodgin' out of back stairs, and all that. I've got to be paid for my trouble."

"I have another five shillings," said Wharton. "I'll give you that, if you like, if you'll hand me my paper."

"Five quid would be nearer the mark."

"What!"

"That bit of paper is worth five quid, I should say. You don't want to be kicked out of your school, any more than Master Hazeldene," grinned Rawlings.

Wharton gritted his teeth.

"I'm in no danger of that, you villain. The Head would lecture me for getting mixed up with a scoundrel like you, but if it all came out, he would sack Hazel; but he wouldn't be hard on me for trying to help a chap in my Form. I might get a licking—nothing worse than that. You can't threaten me as you did Hazel."

"Can't I?" said Mr. Rawlings. "We'll see about that. You see, it won't all come out; it'll come out that I came into your study at the school, and it'll come out that I came there to see you."

"To see me!" gasped Wharton.

"Yes, you!" said Mr. Rawlings coolly. "It was your study, wasn't it? And Trotter thought as I was your visitor, didn't he? And you've given me your note of 'and, haven't you? You can't deny your own signature, I s'pose?"

"That was for Hazel. You know it was."

"P'r'aps I do, and p'r'aps I don't. The question fur you to answer is,



"Easy does it," said Bob Cherry. "Time to get into the brake, my son." And he marched Harry Wharton away from Hazeldene. "No good rowing with him, you know."

will the Head know it?" grinned Mr. Rawlings. "My opinion is that he'll fancy you gave me that paper for your own account. Fellers ain't, as a rule, anxious to give their little notes for other fellows' debts."

Wharton drew a deep breath. He understood now the bookmaker's scheme, in the whole of its cunning duplicity, and he saw how he had been caught in the trap. He understood, too, why Mr. Rawlings had so suddenly become reasonable and conciliatory that afternoon in No. 1 Study. This unscrupulous scheme had undoubtedly come into the rascal's head then. Wharton was almost dazed as he realised what he had fallen into in his attempt to help Marjorie's brother out of his scrape.

"Do you mean that you will accuse me of owing you money for a gambling debt?" he asked thickly.

"That's about the size of it," said Mr. Rawlings calmly.

"It will be a lie—a horrible lie!"

"Never told one yourself?" asked Mr. Rawlings facetiously.

Mr. Rawlings was evidently one of those persons who believe that lying is a natural human gift, like speaking or smelling. Mr. Rawlings would not have taken the word of George Washington himself—indeed, he would have characterised George's celebrated statement to his father as the biggest "whopper" in George's career.

"You can't do it," muttered Wharton.

"Can't I? You'll see."

"You can't—you can't!"

Rascal as he knew the man to be, the junior could not realise yet that he would do this. It seemed impossible that any man, however rascally, could do such a thing. Even Mr. Rawlings had had to make an effort, as it were, to screw himself up to the right pitch. But he was screwed up now, and he was quite determined. Rascality was a new thing in Harry Wharton's experience; but Mr. Rawlings was well acquainted with it in all its forms.

Mr. Rawlings tossed away the stump of his cigar.

"I reckon I'd better be going," he remarked. "It's pretty parky 'ere. When you want that paper, the price is five quid."

"It is my paper. I have given you your money."

"Five quid will fetch that paper outer my desk at the Cross Keys in Friardale," said Mr. Rawlings. "Not a penny less."

"You thief!"

"'Ard words break no bones, and likewise soft words butter no parsnips," said Mr. Rawlings. "Still, don't you go callin' me names, or I may raise the price to ten quid."

Wharton drew his breath hard. He had been dazed at first, but his brain was clear now. He understood that he had to deal with an utterly unscrupulous man. The man had stolen the three pounds, since he had taken them without handing over the paper in return, and Wharton did not intend to let him get away with them if he could prevent it. Mr. Rawlings might have the paper about him; his statement that it was at the Cross Keys might be another falsehood. And if so—

Wharton measured the bookmaker with his eye.

He was fat, clumsy, unwieldy, and

in the worst condition owing to his dissipated mode of live. But he was a big and muscular man, all the same; and Wharton's heart sank as he rapidly thought it out. He was no match for the bookmaker. And Mr. Rawlings, too, as if in anticipation of possible trouble, had brought a thick stick with him, and he was keeping it quite handy. Mr. Rawlings could not see the junior's face in the dark, but the tenseness of Wharton's attitude betrayed his thoughts, and the bookmaker drew back a pace or two and half raised the stick.

"No, you don't!" he said grimly. "You try to lay a 'and on me and I'll lay you on your back with a cracked skull afore you can say Johnny Walker!"

Wharton clenched his hands till his nails dug into the palms.

"You scoundrel! You say you want five pounds for that paper, after I have paid you the whole of the debt, and you have the money in your pocket?"

"Five quid is the price."

"Where do you think I am to get five pounds from, then? Do you think I have an allowance anything like that?"

"Our kind uncle who shells out money," grinned Mr. Rawlings. "Try him again."

"So that is why you wanted to know whether my uncle was rich?" said Harry between his teeth. "You had this scoundrelly scheme in your mind then?"

"P'r'aps," said Mr. Rawlings. "I've warned you agin callin' me names. I put a pound on fur that. The price of that 'ere paper is six quid now."

"I have paid you all that is due. I shall not pay you one shilling more."

"Then we'll see what the 'Ead of Greyfriars has to say about it when I make my claim to him," said Mr. Rawlings.

"The first thing that would happen would be that you would be kicked out of the place!" said Wharton savagely.

"And the next thing would be that you would be kicked out arter me," chuckled Mr. Rawlings. "And it would be a bit more serious for you than for me. I ain't got nothing to lose in the way of reputation. You 'ave."

"You couldn't prove a lie to be the truth. The Head would not believe you!" said Harry desperately.

"Put it to the test, if you choose. I've your name to the bit of writing."

"It was for Hazeldene. You know it!"

"Prove it!"

"Hazeldene would come forward and say so, if you tried to plant it on me."

"Would he?" said Mr. Rawlings with another chuckle. "P'r'aps you know that young gentleman better'n I do. My opinion is that he wouldn't."

Wharton's heart sank again. Mr. Rawlings was quite right—there was no possible inducement that could make a weak and selfish fellow like Hazel come forward to take the punishment of his own misdeeds, if it were possible to leave that punishment to be borne by another. Wharton had nothing to hope from Hazel.

"But I've got a witness!" he exclaimed suddenly. "Frank Nugent was in the study when I signed the paper, and he knew it was for Hazel."

"He might say so, but p'r'aps he wouldn't be believed," said Mr. Rawlings coolly. "One thing I know—Master Hazeldene would deny it."

"He—he wouldn't!" muttered Wharton.

"He would; and you know it as well as I do."

There was a silence.

It occurred to Wharton that this, after all, was to no purpose. Even if,

with Nugent as a witness, he could prove that it was Hazel, and not himself, who had had dealings with the bookmaker—did he want to prove it? Did he want to level an accusation against Marjorie's brother, and to see him expelled from Greyfriars? For that was what it amounted to. If Mr. Rawlings betrayed Wharton to the Head, and made a lying statement against him, Harry Wharton could clear himself only in one way—by giving Hazeldene away, and proving that Hazel was the guilty party.

And every principle of honour forbade him to do anything of the kind. He could not betray Hazel. Even if the worst happened, he could not betray him.

"Well, I'll be going," said Mr. Rawlings. "I'll tell you wot. I'll come 'ere on Monday evenin', the same time, for the six quid. You bring the money, and you'll 'ave the paper."

Wharton ground his teeth.

"And how do I know that you will not cheat me again, as you have done to-night?"

Mr. Rawlings hesitated.

"You shall see the paper in my fist afore you pay over the money," he said finally. "If you see your own signature that'll be enough, I reckon."

"But I have not the money. I cannot get six pounds in two days."

"Try," said Mr. Rawlings grimly. "One thing's sartain—if I don't get paid when I come 'ere on Monday evening I will go straight to the school and see the 'Ead."

"What will you gain by that, if you do?" said Wharton desperately.

"I'll gain this," he said venomously—"I'll make you smart for the names you've called me, and for your high-and-mighty airs, Master Stuck-up Wharton! That's wot I'll

gain. And I'd almost as lieve 'ave that as the money. So you take care, and bring the spondulicks on Monday evening, or you'll get it 'ot and 'eavy."

And, with that threat, Mr. Rawlings turned and walked away. And Wharton, his face pale, his eyes gleaming, strode away towards Greyfriars.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER

### THE SCAPEGOAT!

**H**ALLO! hallo! hallo! Here he is!"

"Tea's ready, old man!"

"Lovely muffins!" said Nugent.

"The goodness of the esteemed muffins is terrific, my worthy chum!"

Tea was ready in No. 1 Study. Bob Cherry, Nugent, and Inky, and Johnny Bull had prepared it ready for Wharton's return. The study looked very cosy and cheerful, with the fire glowing in the grate, and the well-spread table, and the cheery faces of the juniors.

But the cheery looks faded from their faces as they caught Wharton's expression. Harry was still in his overcoat and muffler; he had come directly to the study on coming in.

"What's the trouble?" asked Bob anxiously. "It's all right about calling-over as we were playing out, you know. I told Quelchy you were following us home."

Wharton nodded. He had forgotten all about calling-over.

"Has the rotter cut up rusty?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes," said Wharton, sinking into a chair.

"You paid him?"

"Yes."

"And the paper—"

"He's keeping it."

"Keeping it—after you've paid him?" exclaimed Nugent in astonishment.

"Yes."

"Great Scott! The awful rascal!"

"But didn't you get hold of the paper before you handed over the money?" asked Johnny Bull.

"He handed me a folded piece of paper, and I paid him. I looked at the paper, and it was blank. He spoofed me."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"But what does he want to keep the paper for?" asked Nugent. "He can't expect you to pay him another three quid on it."

"He wants six pounds for it."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Or else he is going to take it to the Head, and represent to him that I gave it to him for a gambling debt—make out that I have been betting, and not Hazel at all."

The chums of the Remove looked utterly aghast.

"Well, that takes the biscuit!" said Johnny Bull, with a deep breath. "I never heard of such an awful scoundrel! Why, that's blackmail! He could be put in prison for that!"

"Only we couldn't prove it," said Wharton. "He's got my signature on his paper. If he showed that to Dr. Locke, what could I say?"

"You could tell Dr. Locke exactly how it was."

"Would he believe me? There's my signature," said Harry hopelessly.

"A fellow who would gamble with a blackguard like Rawlings wouldn't be above telling lies about it afterwards. That's how the Head will look at it. Besides—"

"You've forgotten one thing," said Johnny Bull; "we all know it was Hazel, and we'd all roll up and say so."

"Only Nugent was in the study when I signed the paper."

"Well, my evidence is worth something," said Frank. "I'd tell the Head—"

"All the evidence is against me. Quelchy will remember my borrowing



Harry Wharton opened the folded paper, struck a match, and looked at it. The paper was blank! Wharton was almost stunned by the sudden discovery. The treacherous bookmaker had handed him a worthless sheet of paper for the three pounds!

the money of him. Many of the fellows know that he was in the study, and it will come out that the man was there. Most of the fellows think he came to see me. How could I prove that it was all on Hazel's account? Besides, I can't."

"Why can't you?"

"Can I give Hazel away? We did it all to save him. Suppose I clear myself, and plant it on him, what's going to happen?"

"He will be sacked, I suppose," said Johnny Bull, "and serve him jolly well right. He's brought all this on us. I suppose you're not going to face the sack yourself, and let the guilty party sit snug in his study all the time."

"I can't give him away."

"But he'll own up," said Bob Cherry. "Dash it all, Hazel isn't such a fearful rotter as to sit tight while you're sacked in his place."

"Own up, and be sacked! Not Hazel!" said Harry bitterly.

"We'll make him!"

Wharton shook his head.

"It can't be done, you chaps. I'm not going to give Marjorie's brother away to save myself. I chipped in to save him, and now I'm in the hands of that scoundrel instead of Hazel. I can't round on him now to save myself."

"But he must own up, if it comes to that—he must."

"He won't!"

There was a grim silence. All the juniors knew in their hearts that Hazel would not own up. Far from that, he was more likely to deny any knowledge of the transaction at all. Rawlings' accusation against Wharton would clear Hazel, so far as the bookmaker was concerned, and Hazel would wash his hands of the affair. Between Rawlings' statement on one side, and Hazel's denial on the other, Wharton was hopelessly caught, even if he tried to put the guilt where it belonged. And that he would not do. He felt that he was bound in honour not to betray Hazel.

"What about letting the villain have the money, then, and getting the paper?" said Bob Cherry. "The money can be found, if we're sure of getting the paper."

"I suppose we could raise the money," said Wharton slowly. "I could borrow it of Lord Mauleverer, and pay him back later—sell my bike, if necessary. But the rotter may cheat us again, and take the money and keep the paper."

"He won't do that," said Johnny Bull. "Where are you to meet him?"

"Same place on Monday evening."

"Then we'll all be there out of sight, and if there's any trickery, we'll jump on him and take the paper by force."

Wharton's face brightened.

"Good egg—if he brings the paper with him; and he's undertaken to show it to me before I hand over the money. Of course, I shouldn't part with the money again without seeing the paper and making sure of it."

"Then it's only a matter of letting him squeeze six quid out of us," said Johnny Bull, "and we'll all stand our whack in settling with Mauly, if he stands us the tin now."

"It's awful to think of letting that villain make money out of us in this

way," said Nugent thoughtfully. "But it's the only thing to be done. Under the circs., we shall be lucky to get clear of him for six quid."

There was a knock at the door of the study, and Hazeldene came in. He was anxious to know the result of the interview with Mr. Rawlings.

"Is it all right?" he asked.

"No, it's all wrong," said Wharton. Hazel changed colour.

"What do you mean? Tell me!" Wharton explained.

"Oh, the awful scoundrel," said Hazeldene, "the awful villain! You shouldn't have parted with the money till you had the paper safe."

"He tricked me, as I've told you."

"You shouldn't have let yourself be tricked. Now he will have to be paid again, and paid double," said Hazeldene. "I think it's all rot about his accusing you to the Head. He wouldn't gain anything by doing that."

"He would do it out of spite, if he couldn't get the money."

"Well, you must have made him jolly savage to make him feel like that," said Hazeldene. "I don't see why you couldn't be civil to him. Fair words don't cost anything."

"I haven't any fair words to waste on your precious friends," said Wharton, "and I can't help fearing that he'll trick us somehow yet. And if it should come to the worst, what are you going to do?"

Hazeldene started.

"I? What have I got to do? I've got nothing to do with it now. You've taken it into your hands, and you've managed it in a way I didn't like. It's your business."

"You wouldn't own up?" said Johnny Bull.

"Are you dotty? Own up and be sacked!"

"You'd rather Wharton were sacked in your place, I suppose?" said Bull scornfully.

"Wharton took this into his hands of his own accord. I didn't ask him to. I was against his going to Quelch for the money. I wanted him to be civil to Rawlings. He's only got himself to thank for it," said Hazel sullenly. "That man's got a bad temper, and Wharton should have been careful not to irritate him."

Wharton's lip curled.

"I'd rather be sacked, or hung, for that matter, than fawn on a filthy cad like Rawlings," he said.

"Well, you'll have your choice, then," said Hazel angrily. "Anyway, I'm out of it now. Mind that. And if you try to drag me into it again, I'm prepared to deny knowing anything about the matter at all. I'm not going to be sacked from the school because you're too high and mighty to be civil to a man."

Wharton pointed to the door.

"Get out!" he said.

"Are you going to give me away?" demanded Hazel.

"No! Whatever happens, you're safe as far as I'm concerned. But I can't stand the sight of you. Get out!"

Hazel left the study. The contempt in the faces of the juniors stung him, but his chief feeling was relief that he was safe. His concern for the scapegoat who was to bear the burden of his sins was quite secondary. Indeed, his chief feeling towards Wharton was one of irritation—the bitterness of a weak and selfish nature towards a strong and manly one.

"And that's Marjorie's brother!" said Bob Cherry. "If Marjorie knew!"

Wharton made a quick gesture.

"Marjorie's to know nothing—nothing at all! Take care of that, you fellows. Not a word to Marjorie!"

And the chums of the Remove agreed to that.

# THE LAST JAM TART

WAILED BY  
W. G. BUNTER



A lone and silent on thy plate,  
Last remnant of Bob Cherry's tuck,  
How can I leave thee to thy fate,  
When I could gobble thee—with luck!  
O last jam tart!

'Tis true I've eaten quite a score  
Of buns, some toffee, and a cake,  
Tarts, dough-nuts and meat patties four—  
Full though I be, I yet can take  
One last jam tart!

Quickly, brave Bunter, do not waste  
A moment—time is fleeting on!  
Soon Cherry will return, so haste,  
Finish thy stuffing and begone!  
Leave not the tart!

Scrunch! My jaws are slowly grinding,  
Slower than for many a day.  
Scrunch! But it's hard work I'm finding!  
There, now 'tis gone, and I can say  
Farewell, jam tart!

Towards the study door I reel,  
Pale-faced and glassy in the eye.  
Alas! Too ill to move I feel!  
Chairwards I sink, quite o'ercome by  
The last jam tart!

Ow! Grrh! Groo-hoosh! Oh, lor'! Yaroo!  
Pains, red-hot and unrelenting,  
Stab my plump figure through and through!  
Help! How sorely I'm repenting  
That last jam tart!

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER COMING TO BLOWS!

MONDAY morning found the juniors more anxious and worried than ever. Mr. Quelch, in the Remove Form-room, could not help noticing that Harry Wharton was not quite himself, and he gave the Remove captain more than one sharp glance. He remembered the loan he had made him on the previous Wednesday, and he could not help connecting it with Wharton's worried and absent-minded manner. He could not help suspecting that the junior was in money difficulties, and money difficulties for a boy in the Lower Fourth meant some kind of shady conduct.

Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, cheerfully made the loan that was required of him, and he parted with six pounds with perfect unconcern. Wharton hated the task of borrowing, but certainly Lord Mauleverer was the easiest fellow in the world to borrow of. Wharton found him in his study, reclining on the sofa and yawning over a book, after dinner, and Lord Mauleverer gave him a friendly nod when he came in, flushing and uncomfortable.

"I want to borrow some tin off you, Mauly," said Wharton, his colour deepening. He was ashamed of his errand.

"Right-ho, dear boy!" said Mauleverer. "How lucky!"

"Lucky that I want to borrow your tin?" asked Harry, forcing a laugh.

"No; lucky that I'm in funds," said the dandy of the Remove. "How much, my dear fellow?"

"Six pounds!"

Any other fellow in the Remove would probably have fallen down if he had been asked for a loan of six pounds; but the money was nothing to the schoolboy millionaire. Lord Mauleverer did not even look surprised.

"Certainly, dear boy!" he said.

"I can let you have it back in a week's time, Mauly," said Wharton. "I give you my word. It's for all of us, you understand, and we'll raise it among us and repay it in a week."

"As long as you like, old chap!"

"And—and it's not awkward just now to lend it?"

"Not at all—I shan't have to get up," said Lord Mauleverer innocently. "There are some bank-notes and things in the table-drawer. Help yourself!"

Wharton laughed and helped himself.

"I've taken six quid," he said.

"Until next Saturday, Mauly!"

"Yaas!"

"You're a good chap, Mauly!"

"Yaas!"

"And I'm very much obliged."

"Yaas! I mean, don't mench!" yawned Mauleverer.

And Wharton left the study with the money in his pocket.

It was dark at six o'clock, and the school gates were always locked at dark; and so it was necessary for the chums of the Remove to get passes out, or to leave the school unseen. They did not want to draw attention to themselves by asking a master or a prefect for passes; but it was easy enough to get out of bounds. At a quarter to six, the Famous Five sauntered across the Close in the dark and met at the school wall, and in a couple of minutes they had clambered over it and dropped into the road.

They ran most of the way to the old barn.

The juniors reached the rendezvous very quickly, but the red glow of a cigar showed that Mr. Rawlings was already there.

The juniors paused in the dark shadow of the trees.

"Don't show yourselves if it's all

fair and square," said Harry in a whisper. "But if I call out, rush on the rotter and see that he doesn't get away."

"Right-ho!"

And leaving his chums in the shadows, Wharton walked on to the barn to meet the bookmaker.

Mr. Rawlings nodded to him affably.

There was a strong odour of rum about Mr. Rawlings, and he looked a little more disreputable than usual. The three pounds he had obtained from Wharton had probably all passed over the bar of the Cross Keys by this time.

"Got the tin?" asked Mr. Rawlings in a hoarse voice, wafting the smell of rum and tobacco upon the junior as he spoke.

Wharton tried to conceal his disgust.

"Yes," he said. "Have you got the paper?"

"Course I 'ave!" said Rawlings indignantly. "Do you think I am a welsher?"

Wharton did not offer his opinion on that point. It would not have been agreeable to Mr. Rawlings. He took the money from his pocket without replying, and the bookmaker's eyes glistened at the sight of it. There was greed in the bookmaker's eyes—in his whole look. Why had he not demanded more?—that was the thought in his mind. The junior's resources were evidently greater than he had supposed. He had brought six pounds at two days' notice—and how he had obtained it, and what anxiety the payment might cost him, did not matter in the least to Mr. Rawlings. The rascal was only thinking of what further sums he might succeed in extracting from his victim.

"And it over," said Mr. Rawlings, holding out an eager and exceedingly dirty hand.

"Give me the paper at once!"

"Not till I 'ave the money!"

"Show it to me, then!"

"Well, you can see it!" said the bookmaker, and he fumbled in his pockets, and produced a paper, which he unfolded carefully. He held it out for the junior to see, and Wharton read the words by the glow of the cigar: "I promise to pay Mr. Henry Rawlings the sum of £3—Three Pounds—in full settlement.—Harry Wharton."

"Ere's your paper, and now 'and over the cash!" said Mr. Rawlings.

Wharton was about to do so, but a sudden suspicion flashed into his mind. He had been caught once—he did not mean to be caught again.

"Wait a minute!" he said. "That doesn't look like the paper I gave you!"

"Wot do you mean!" demanded Mr. Rawlings in a bullying tone.

His manner convinced Wharton that his suspicion was well-founded. It was not the genuine paper—it was not written upon the impot paper of Greyfriars, as the original note had been. It was a copy—one more of the cunning tricks of the blackmailer. The genuine paper was to be kept back!

Wharton trembled with rage as he made the discovery.

"You thief! You thief! That is only a copy to take me in, and make me part with the money! Give me the real paper, or——"

Mr. Rawlings, with a very ugly look upon his face, tore the paper into four and scattered the pieces on the wind.

"Mighty smart young gentleman, ain't you?" he said, with a sneer. "There ain't no pulling the wool over your eyes—wot?"

"Give me my paper!" said Wharton in a choking voice. "Here is the money! Give me the paper, you villain!"

"I ain't parting with that paper!" said Mr. Rawlings, driven to showing his whole hand at last. "I'm keeping this paper. That bit of writin' is worth more'n six quid—nearer sixty, I should say."

"You won't give it to me?"

"No; I won't!"

"Then I won't hand you a penny!"

Mr. Rawlings' eyes glittered.

"You'll 'and over that six quid," he said, "and you'll come 'ere regular once every week, and 'and over a couple of quids—do you understand? And the fust time that you don't pay up, I go straight to your 'eadmaster with this paper."

It was out at last—the whole cunning, unscrupulous scheme, in all its bare wickedness. It was blackmail pure and simple—and the blackmailer meant to bleed his victim white. Wharton understood, and he called out sharply :

"Come on, you chaps!"

Mr. Rawlings jumped.

"You ain't alone?" he ejaculated.

He soon had proof that Wharton was not alone. There was a rush of feet in the darkness, and the rascal was surrounded.

"Now we'll talk business to him," said Johnny Bull, "and we'll begin by giving him a hiding! Collar him!"

Mr. Rawlings backed to the wall of the old barn, and raised his stick menacingly.

"Don't you lay a 'and on me!" he blustered.

"Look here," said Wharton quietly. "I've got six pounds here—and you can have it for my paper. Will you give it up?"

"I ain't got it with me!"

"I don't believe you. Will you take the money and hand over the paper—or shall we take it by force, without paying anything for it?"

"If you dare to lay a 'and—"

"Will you give up the paper?"

"I ain't got it!"

Wharton deliberately placed the six pounds in his pocket again. That money could be returned to Lord Mauleverer intact. It was open warfare now, and he was determined that not a shilling more should be paid to the blackmailer, whatever happened. The debt had been paid once—and the paper belonged to Wharton. Mr. Rawlings watched him with growing uneasiness.

"Very well!" said Harry. "Now, I shall pay you nothing. Not a penny! Now I give you a chance to hand over that paper quietly, before we take it!"

"I ain't got it!"

"We'll see whether you've got it! Collar him!"

"You don't dare—"

But Mr. Rawlings saw very soon that they did dare. The five juniors rushed right at him. Mr. Rawlings slashed out furiously with his stick, and Johnny Bull caught it on his arm, and gave a grunt of pain. But Mr. Rawlings did not have time for more than one blow. The next instant, he was gripped by the indignant juniors, and he went rolling and sprawling on the ground, with the Greyfriars fellows clutching him and heaping over him.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER RAGGING A RASCAL!

"HOLD him!"

"Sit on the cad!"

Mr. Rawlings struggled fiercely for a few moments and then collapsed, helpless and breathless, under the scrambling juniors.

"We've got him!" said Johnny Bull.

They had him; there was no doubt about that. Bob Cherry was kneeling on his loud check waistcoat, and Johnny Bull was standing on his legs.

Nugent and Inky were holding him by the collar of his coat. The stout rascal wriggled and panted under them.

"I'll make you pay for this!" he stuttered out. "I'll make you sorry for it!"

"Will you give up the paper now?"

"I ain't got it; but if I 'ad it, I wouldn't give it up. I'll ruin you—

pockets were drawn blank—and then they searched through his clothes for a secret hiding-place—but they found none.

Wharton's face became very clouded.

The man had told the truth when he said that he had left the paper at his inn. He had been too cunning to carry it about with him, perhaps fearing some desperate attempt on



"I've taken six quid," said Harry Wharton, "until next Saturday, Mauly." "Yaas!" "You're a good chap, and I'm much obliged." "Yaas! I mean, don't mench!" yawned Lord Mauleverer.

arter this! I won't 'ave any mercy on you. You wait an hour or two, that's all!"

"If you don't hand it over we shall search you for it!"

"Search and be blanked!" said Mr. Rawlings.

They took him at his word. Holding the rascal securely they turned out all his pockets, pitching the contents into the damp grass. The

Harry Wharton's part to regain possession of it. The bit of writing was too valuable to be risked.

The bookmaker was pretty roughly handled in the process of searching, and he swore savagely and muttered threats of vengeance.

The search ended at last; the paper was not there.

Wharton felt a chill at his heart. He had not succeeded in recovering

the paper with his signature upon it ; and, after what had happened, there was no doubt that Rawlings would do his worst.

Yet it must have come to it sooner or later. Even if Wharton had yielded to his extortion and paid what he demanded, sooner or later the junior would have come to the end of his resources, and then the bookmaker would have betrayed him—as soon as he could extract no more money for his silence. The exposure, if it was to come, might as well come soon as late—and better before the black-mailer had profited by his rascality.

It was better to have it over than to live in fear under the rascal's thumb. Whatever might happen, Wharton would not regret that he had taken sharp measures with the unscrupulous rascal.

"Well, he's not got it," said Bob Cherry dismally. "I was sure the beast would have it about him, but he hasn't. Where is it, you brute ?"

"Find out !" said Mr. Rawlings.

"Very well," said Bob Cherry, picking up Mr. Rawlings' stick. "Turn him over, you chaps ! We'll find out !"

Swish—swish—swish—swish !

Bob laid on the lashes heavily across the fat shoulders of Mr. Rawlings, and the bookmaker roared and struggled like a bull.

Wharton looked on grimly. He was to suffer from the man's rascality, and there was some satisfaction in seeing him well thrashed in advance.

"Now will you tell us where the paper is, or will you have some more?" panted Bob.

"It's in my desk at the Cross Keys," gurgled Mr. Rawlings. "Oh, I'll make you pay for this !"

"I suppose we can't get it from there ?" said Bob dubiously.

Wharton shook his head.

"No ; and if we made this scoundrel

promise to bring it, he wouldn't keep his word. We're done. But I'm glad he hasn't had any more money out of me. That's one comfort."

"What can we do now ?"

"Punish that scoundrel for blackmailing," said Harry. "He's going to the Head to tell lies about me. He shan't do it for nothing. There's a ditch on the other side of the hedge. Pitch him into it !"

"Good egg !"

"You let me alone !" shrieked Mr. Rawlings. "Don't you dare to pitch me into no ditch ! I'll 'ave the law on you ! I'll complain to your 'ead-master ! I'll——"

Splash !

The ditch was full, from recent rain. Mr. Rawlings disappeared into it, and he came up spluttering and snorting and coughing.

His hat had been trampled out of shape already, and was left in the field ; his collar and necktie had been dragged off, his coat torn up the back. Now, as he scrambled out of the ditch, wet and muddy from head to foot, he looked a fearful object.

He was stuttering with cold and with rage. He shook a muddy fist at the juniors as he squelched out into the lane.

"I'll make you suffer for this. I'll——"

"Pitch him in again !"

Splash !

The juniors walked away towards Greyfriars, leaving the bookmaker struggling out of the ditch for the second time. They half expected him to follow them towards the school, and if he had done so they were ready to handle him again. But Mr. Rawlings had had enough of them for the time being, and he limped away towards Friardale, squelching water and mud out of his boots and breathing vengeance as he went.

The juniors walked home in silence.

They climbed the school wall and dropped into the dusky Close unseen, and reached No. 1 Study in the Remove passage. They found Hazeldene waiting for them there. The excited looks of the Co. showed Hazel that matters had not gone well.

"Did you get your paper back?" was his first question.

Wharton explained what had happened. Hazel uttered a cry of dismay.

"You licked him! You ducked him! You must be mad! Why, he'd do anything now to make you suffer for that! If you offered him a hundred pounds for the paper, he wouldn't take it now. You've done for yourself!"

"You've done for me, you mean, you cad!" Wharton cried savagely. "It all comes of your betting with him, you fool! And now you've got me into this horrible scrape you haven't the decency to own up and get me out of it!"

Hazel gritted his teeth.

"I thought it would come to that," he said. "I knew you'd round on me in the long run! Own up! I might as well have done that, if I was going to, before you meddled in the affair at all. If you didn't want to see it through you shouldn't have interfered in the first place."

"Quite right," said Wharton bitterly. "I shouldn't. Next time I shall know better than to help a coward and a cur!"

"Pile it on if you like; only don't expect me to take this on my shoulders because you've meddled and bungled it!" exclaimed Hazel passionately. "If you try to get me into it I shall deny every word, and you'll have to prove it, remember that!"

And he swung out of the study and slammed the door furiously.

"If he wasn't Marjorie's brother,"

said Wharton, between his teeth, "I'd go after him and smash him! But—"

"You're not going to stand the racket for what he's done?" said Nugent. "If Rawlings really goes to the Head—"

"He will; I know that!"

"Then you'll have to let him know it was Hazel."

Wharton shook his head.

"But you can't be sacked for him!" yelled Bob Cherry angrily.

"What Hazel said was quite right—if I wasn't willing to see it through, I shouldn't have interfered," said Wharton quietly. "I've got to see it through now."

"And you won't say a word?"

"No!"

"Then we will!" said Bob. "If you don't tell the Head the facts I shall go to him and tell him. I warn you!"

"You won't, Bob," said Harry. "I may get out of it all right; but—but I shall have to face the music, and you fellows are not to say a word. I want you to promise me that. We can't round on Hazel because I've got myself into trouble trying to help him. I've brought it on myself, and I've got to face the music!"

The juniors flatly refused to promise, but in the end they gave in. Harry Wharton was right—he had tried to help Hazel of his own accord, and he had brought this terrible trouble upon himself by so doing. He had no right to betray the fellow he had undertaken to protect to save himself. What Hazel ought to do was clear; but he did not intend to do it. What Wharton ought to do was also clear, and he did intend to do it; that was the difference.

And Wharton, with his mind made up, waited grimly for the arrival of Mr. Rawlings. He knew that it would not be long delayed.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER CONDEMNED—FOR ANOTHER!

WINGATE of the Sixth opened the door of No. 1 Study when Wharton and Nugent were doing their preparation that evening.

The captain of Greyfriars was looking very grim.

"You're wanted, Wharton," he said abruptly.

"The Head?" asked Harry, rising to his feet.

"Yes."

"Very well."

"Hadn't I better come, too, Harry?" Nugent asked.

Wharton shook his head.

"You couldn't do any good, Franky. Wait here."

Wharton followed the Sixth-Former to the Head's study. Wingate took him in, and Dr. Locke made the Greyfriars captain a sign to remain. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was also in the study. Dr. Locke had evidently sent for him, Wharton being in his Form.

Standing in the middle of the Head's study, with his bowler hat deposited on a chair near by, was Mr. Rawlings. His flushed face showed that he had been drinking before he paid that visit. Without that, he would probably never have found the courage to face the Head of Greyfriars.

Dr. Locke was looking stern and severe.

"You know this man, Wharton?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "His name is Rawlings."

"Have you ever had any betting dealings with him?"

"No, sir."

"Do you owe him any money?"

"No, sir."

"I was sure that Wharton would be able to deny it, Dr. Locke," said Mr. Quelch, with a breath of relief.

"I am assured that he is incapable of such conduct."

"I trust it will prove to be so, Mr. Quelch. Wharton, this man makes a claim upon you for a debt of three pounds. He has a paper here with your signature, promising to pay the money on Saturday—last Saturday, by the date of the paper. Do you deny that the signature is yours?"

"No, sir," said Harry quietly. "It is mine."

"Then," said the Head, raising his voice a little, "what do you mean by saying that you do not owe that man any money if you have given him a written promise to pay him three pounds?"

"I paid him the three pounds, sir, and he tricked me by giving me a blank piece of paper instead of that."

"It's a lie!" growled Mr. Rawlings at this point. "There ain't no money been paid to me!"

Wharton did not trouble to make a rejoinder. He took no notice of the bookmaker's presence at all. Mr. Rawlings might not have been there, for all the acknowledgment Wharton made of his existence.

"Then it comes to this, Wharton: that you have owed this man money?" said the Head. "That is as serious as owing it at the present moment. What did you owe him money for?"

"I put it on a 'orse for 'im," said Mr. Rawlings. "I did it to oblige the young gentleman, never thinking as he would refuse to pay up afterwards."

The Head looked at him.

"If you helped a boy of Wharton's age to bet on horses, Rawlings, you are an unmitigated scoundrel!" he said. "I am not sure whether you cannot be punished by the law. At all events, you shall not be paid. A man who would do as you have done is quite capable of tricking a boy as

Wharton describes, and I have no doubt that his statement is correct, and that you have cheated him. You will not get any money here."

"Don't you call me names——" began Mr. Rawlings blusteringly.

Dr. Locke cut him short with raised hand.

"Silence!"

Wingate made a slight movement nearer to the bookmaker. The stalwart captain of Greyfriars could have tossed him out of the window if he liked, and Mr. Rawlings, after a glance at him, subsided into sulky silence.

"I am waiting for your explanation, Wharton. I am quite prepared to believe that you have already

paid this man, and that he has attempted to obtain more money from you, and has betrayed you because he has failed to do so. But what did you owe him money for? He says it was for a betting transaction."

"It was not, sir."

"Then what was it?"

Wharton was silent.

"You must explain to me, Wharton. You have denied that you owed the man money, but your signature to this paper bears out that part of his statement. I would not accept his word on any matter, of course, but there is your signature. You owed him money, yet you have denied it."



Mr. Rawlings slashed out furiously with his stick, and Johnny Bull caught it on his arm and grunted with pain. But the bookmaker did not have time for more than one blow, for he was gripped by five indignant Juniors, and he went sprawling on the ground.

"I didn't owe him money, sir," said Wharton at last.

"Then why did you give him a written promise to pay him money you did not owe?"

"It was for another fellow," said Harry. "The rotter was driving a chap hard, and I tried to help him out of the scrape. That's all I can say, sir. I never had anything to do with the man myself."

"The man says he came here to see you in your study. He has described your study, and there is no doubt that he was there."

"That's true, sir. He was there last Wednesday."

Mr. Quelch uttered an exclamation.

"Was it to pay this man that you borrowed money of me?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. I paid him two pounds, and gave him my written promise for the rest. It was five pounds in all."

"And you declare that it was not your own debt?" said the Head, looking at Wharton very hard indeed.

"It was not mine, sir."

"Why did you have this man in your study if you do not know him?"

"I smuggled him there to keep him out of sight, sir. I knew it meant the sack for the fellow he came to see if any of the masters saw him about."

"Undoubtedly," said the Head. "Your statement, then, is that you planned to shield some boy, who had acted in a disgraceful and blackguardly way, from his just punishment?"

Wharton flushed. That was not the way he had looked at his action in helping Hazeldene.

"I—I didn't mean it like that, sir. I felt that I was bound to stand by a Greyfriars chap—a silly fool, too, who doesn't know how to look after himself."

"I could excuse you for that," said the Head. "I understand a feeling of

schoolboy chivalry—indeed, your conduct was generous and noble if it is as you have stated. But your statement is so extraordinary, Wharton, that I cannot take it without some proof. This boy you speak of; is he a very close friend of yours?"

"Oh, no, sir."

"It is not one of your intimate chums?"

"Not at all, sir."

"Then, Wharton, how am I to believe you?" exclaimed the Head sternly. "You tell me that you took this man to your study for another boy's sake, that you signed a promise to pay him this other boy's debt, that you placed yourself in danger of being expelled from the school if the matter should come to my knowledge—and all this for the sake of a boy who is not even your personal friend? Can you expect me to credit such a statement?"

"I suppose it sounds rather thick, sir," faltered Wharton; "but it's true, all the same."

"It is preposterous, Wharton!"

The junior was silent.

"There is, however, an easy way of putting it to the test," said the Head. "Whatever boy it is who has had betting transactions with this man will be expelled from the school. I cannot allow such a boy to remain at Greyfriars. Give me his name."

Wharton did not speak.

"You cannot, Wharton?"

"I can't, sir. It wouldn't be decent to give him away."

"This is too important a matter for considerations of that sort, Wharton. I command you to give me his name!"

"I promised him not to give him away, sir."

Dr. Locke frowned.

"I cannot credit you, Wharton. You make a preposterous statement, and shelter yourself behind a story of

a promise not to reveal the real guilty party. Your explanation is simply absurd."

"I—I suppose it sounds so, sir."

"I am glad you can see that." The Head turned to Mr. Rawlings. "Mr. Rawlings, was it with Wharton or with another boy that you had this transaction?"

"With Master Wharton, sir," said Rawlings, with a malicious grin at Harry.

"Have you had dealings with any other boy at Greyfriars?"

"Cert'nly not!"

"Wingate, will you kindly show that man out? If he is ever seen near this school again, I should be very pleased to hear that he had received the thrashing he deserves."

"Look 'ere——" began Mr. Rawlings wrathfully.

But Wingate's iron grasp on his shoulder cut him short. Mr. Rawlings cast one furious glance at the athletic Sixth-Former, and then he went out of the study as quietly as a lamb.

There was a short silence. The Head was thinking deeply. When he spoke, it was to Mr. Quelch, not to the junior.

"Will you give me your opinion?" he asked.

"I suppose it looks very bad for Wharton, sir," the Remove master said. "I can only say that I have always known him to be strictly truthful and honourable, and that this matter comes as a terrible surprise to me."

"You are evidently of my opinion," said the Head. He turned to Wharton. "Wharton, give me the name of the boy you have spoken of!"

"I can't, sir."

"This boy—if your statement is true—is he likely to confess and save you from being punished for his sin?"

Wharton smiled bitterly.

"Not likely, sir. He's thinking of his own skin, that's all."

"And for such a boy you have made this sacrifice? You have made yourself the scapegoat to bear the burden of what he has done?"

"I didn't mean to do that, sir. I couldn't foresee that Rawlings would be such a rascal. I thought he would give me back the paper when I paid him, and that the matter would be ended."

"But now, as it has turned out——"

"I took the matter up of my own accord, sir. I told the chap I'd stand by him. I can't give him away now."

"I wish I could believe you, Wharton. But you will see for yourself that this statement you have made could be made by any accused person, however conclusive the evidence. If such statements were accepted, there would be an end of all justice. I would willingly believe, Wharton, that you are acting from a sense of mistaken devotion. But it is impossible."

Wharton grew very pale.

He could see what was coming, and he braced himself to meet it. Punishment was easier to bear than self-contempt, and he would have despised himself for ever if he had betrayed the fellow he had promised to protect. There was another silence. The Head seemed at a loss.

"I shall not decide hastily, Wharton," he said at last. "Considering your honourable record in the school, I wish to give you every opportunity of clearing yourself. If this boy you speak of has a spark of decency, he must confess—if your statement is true. I will leave the matter over for two days. During that time you may consider your position, knowing that unless you can clear yourself I shall write to your uncle to take you away from Greyfriars."

Wharton's quivering lips tightened.  
"Very well, sir."  
"Now you may go."  
And Wharton went.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER MARJORIE CHIPS IN.

**B**ILLY BUNTER stopped in the lane and blinked through his big spectacles at a graceful form coming up the lane. Morning lessons were over on Tuesday, and Billy Bunter was waddling disconsolately down to the village. Bunter was in his usual state of impecuniosity, and he was yearning for tarts. His recent conduct had made it impossible to raise a loan in No. 1 Study, and Mrs. Mimble, at the school shop, was very decided on the subject of "tick," with so doubtful a customer as Bunter. Bunter had rolled forth on a forlorn hope, to attempt to soften the hard heart of Uncle Clegg at the tuckshop in Friardale, without much hope of success. But his fat face brightened, and his little round eyes glistened behind his spectacles, at the sight of Marjorie Hazeldene coming up the lane. He stopped in the road, and raised his hat to Marjorie with a manner that was intended to be graceful and courtly.

Marjorie gave him a curt nod and walked on. She did not like Bunter, and she had no time to waste on him. She was going to Greyfriars to see Hazel, and she had to be back at Cliff House in time for afternoon lessons. The girl was in a very anxious frame of mind.

It was a trouble to her that Harry Wharton should have been drawn into the meshes of Mr. Rawlings' net on account of her brother, and she was anxious to know whether the matter had come to an end. Little did she dream how it was turning out. It had been understood that Wharton was to cycle over to Cliff House, and

tell her all about it when it was over, but he had not come. And the girl had an uneasy foreboding that matters had not gone well.

"Hold on a minute!" said Bunter, puffing along beside Marjorie. "I say, Miss Marjorie——"

The girl did not pause.

"I've got some news for you!" puffed Bunter.

Marjorie stopped.

"News for me?" she asked.

Bunter nodded.

"Yes; quite exciting, you know. Come along to the village—it ain't far off—and I'll tell you all about it at Uncle Clegg's. I'm going there."

"I have no time," said Marjorie.

"Better come and have a ginger-pop," urged Bunter, whose active brain had already formed a scheme for consuming "tuck," and leaving Miss Hazeldene to pay for it. "Uncle Clegg has jolly good tarts, too."

"I am going to Greyfriars," said Marjorie. "If you have anything to tell me, tell me now."

"Better come to Uncle Clegg's, and I'll tell you all about it. It's quite exciting, you know. We don't have a fellow sacked at Greyfriars every day."

Marjorie's heart stood still.

"My brother——"

"Oh, it ain't Hazel!" said Bunter. "Hazel's all right. It's Wharton."

"Wharton!" exclaimed Marjorie, in astonishment.

"Yes; he's bowled out at last," chuckled Bunter. "I can't say I'm sorry for him. He was always mean about money. When I was in his study I never used to have enough to eat."

"What has happened?"

"He's found out," explained Bunter, trotting along beside Marjorie. The girl was walking towards Greyfriars again, at a pace the little fat junior found it difficult to equal.



"Pitch him into the ditch!" said Harry Wharton. "I'll have the law on you! I'll—"

"Don't you dare pitch me into no ditch!" shrieked Mr. Rawlings. "Splash! The bookmaker sailed into the muddy water and disappeared."

"It's come out about his having a bookie in his study the other day, you know, and it turns out that he owed him money for betting and things, and the man came up to see the Head as Wharton wouldn't pay him. The whole school's buzzing with it. Your brother looks pretty sick about it, too. Don't know why. I know he doesn't like Wharton. In fact, I happen to know that they had a row the other day, and Wharton was going to punch his head when Bob Cherry stopped him. I say,

Miss Marjorie, there's no hurry. I—I'm rather out of breath, you know."

"Do you mean that Wharton is supposed to have owed money to Mr. Rawlings, and that he is to be expelled for it?" said Marjorie, her face very white.

"That's it."

"What does my brother say about it?"

"He hasn't said anything that I know of."

"But Wharton has denied it, surely?"

"Yes. He wants to make out that he was acting for another chap, but he can't give the chap's name. All bunkum, you know. As if a fellow would get into a fix like that for another fellow! I know I wouldn't."

"No, I'm sure you wouldn't," said Marjorie, with a quiet scorn that was quite lost upon William George Bunter.

"No fear. I'm not quite such a mug as that," said Bunter, with a satisfied grin. "Of course, I don't believe it. I suppose Wharton thought that yarn would go down. But if it was true, why can't he give the chap's name? He's going to be sacked to-morrow. His uncle's coming down for him. Of course, if he could get out of it, he would. Stands to reason, doesn't it?"

Marjorie did not reply. She was walking so quickly now that Billy Bunter fell hopelessly behind, though his fat legs were going like clock-work.

Marjorie entered the school gates and hurried across to the School House. Bob Cherry met her in the doorway. Bob's usually jolly face was long and glum.

"What is this about Wharton?" Marjorie exclaimed breathlessly. "I've just met Bunter, and he says —"

"The chattering beast!" growled Bob.

"I want to know about it," said Marjorie. "Is it possible that Wharton has been supposed to have done what my brother has done?"

"Tell me!" Marjorie exclaimed imperiously.

"We agreed not to say anything to you about it," said Bob reluctantly. "I—I say, shall I walk back to Cliff House with you?"

"I'm not going back to Cliff House yet. I must see to this. Is

Wharton to be sent away from Greyfriars?"

"Ye-e-es."

"Because he won't tell about my brother?"

"I—I suppose it amounts to that."

"But Hazel!" exclaimed Marjorie, her face flooded with colour now. "Has Hazel allowed it? Hasn't he owned up—?"

"Don't be hard on Hazel," said Bob, feeling called upon to say something. "He hasn't the nerve, you know. He can't face it."

"Then he is letting Wharton suffer for him, without saying a word?"

"Well, you see—"

"Tell me—tell me! Yes or no?"

"Well, yes, I suppose."

"But you others; you know all about it!" exclaimed Marjorie. "Have you said nothing and allowed this injustice to be done?"

"We couldn't prove it," said Bob.

"Do you mean that Hazel would deny the truth?"

Bob was silent.

Marjorie clenched her little hands.

"We promised Wharton to say nothing about it," said Bob. "We wanted to, but he made us promise. He thinks he's bound to see it through. You know it's no good arguing with him. I'm blessed if I know what ought to be done!"

"I know what ought to be done!" exclaimed Marjorie, her eyes flashing. And she ran into the house.

Bob darted after her.

"Marjorie!" he exclaimed in dismay. "Marjorie, where are you going?"

But Marjorie was already at the door of the Head's study and knocking on it. Bob drew a deep breath and turned away. He knew the girl's intention now, and he was glad of it.

"Come in!" said the deep voice of the Head.

Marjorie entered the study.

Dr. Locke looked up, expecting to see one of the masters, and he was astonished at the sight of the girl, with her face flushed and her eyes full of excitement.

"Miss Hazeldene!" said the Head. "Pray come in. What is the matter?"

"Dr. Locke"—Marjorie was almost panting—"is it true that Harry Wharton is to be expelled from Greyfriars?"

The Head looked distressed.

"Yes, my dear child, I am sorry to say that it is. Surely you have not come to speak to me about that?"

"Yes, yes! He is innocent!" Marjorie exclaimed.

Dr. Locke smiled patiently. He understood the girl's distress on finding that her boy chum was to be sent away in disgrace from the school, and he supposed that she had come to make some appeal to him. He could not, of course, be influenced by that, but he was sorry.

"My dear girl—"

"I tell you I know who it is, sir! I knew all along. It was because we are friends that Wharton did this!" Marjorie exclaimed, almost sobbing.

The Head looked at her keenly.

"I cannot quite understand you," he said. "But if you can tell me anything about the matter, I shall be glad to hear it, of course. Wharton's explanation is that he was acting on behalf of another boy, but it is impossible to admit such an explanation."

"But it is true, sir."

"How do you know?"

"I know who the other boy is. He's—he is my brother!" sobbed Marjorie.

Dr. Locke started.

"Your brother—Hazeldene of the Remove?"

"Yes."

It was out now.

"My dear, dear child!" said the

Head, in great distress. "Pray—pray do not cry! I—I will see what can be done. You are quite sure of what you say?"

"Yes, yes! Harry was trying to save Hazel, because he is kind and generous. It is shameful that Hazel should have let him suffer in his place," said Marjorie, almost inaudibly. "But—but now I have told you, you will punish my brother—"

"Do not distress yourself, Miss Hazeldene. I must take into consideration the fact that you have told me. I cannot allow you to be the cause of your brother's expulsion from the school," said the Head kindly. "I will consult with his Form-master, and see what can be done. It was very noble of you to come to me as you have done, Miss Hazeldene. But I must be sure of the facts. I will send for your brother."

"And—and you will not expel him, sir?"

The Head paused for a full minute, and then answered:

"No!"

He rang the bell, and sent Trotter for Hazeldene. In a few minutes the junior entered the study, looking white and scared. He started at the sight of his sister, her cheeks wet with tears.

"Hazeldene!" said the Head sternly. "I have just made a very painful discovery. Is it possible, sir, that you have been sheltering yourself behind the mistaken chivalry of your Form-fellow?"

Hazel almost staggered.

"I, sir! No—I— Marjorie, what have you been saying?"

"Listen to me, Hazeldene. Tell me the whole truth, and I will not expel you from the school. At any cost, this matter must be cleared up! Tell me the whole truth at once, and I will consider what lesser punishment will meet the case."

Under the stern eye of the Head, Hazel had not much chance of prevaricating. His conscience had made his life a misery to him since Wharton's sentence had been pronounced. It was almost with relief that he now blurted out a halting confession.

The Head listened in stern silence.

"Then it was you that Rawlings came to see here?"

"Yes, sir."

"You had been betting with him?"

"Ye-es, sir," faltered Hazeldene. "I—I somehow got into it—he talked me over, and—and—I know it was wrong, sir, but I didn't realise—I—I'll never do anything of the kind again, sir. I—I sha'n't forget what I've been through in the past few days."

"Yes, I think that is probable enough," said the Head. "You have had a lesson, I should imagine. You have acted foolishly and wickedly—but your connection with Rawlings was nothing in comparison with your baseness in allowing Wharton to suffer for your fault. Do you understand what terrible injustice would have been done if your sister had not been more honourable than yourself?"

"I—I—I couldn't own up!" muttered Hazeldene, getting the words out with difficulty. "I couldn't face my father—"

"So you left it to Wharton to bear the burden of your rascality!" said the Head sternly. "You will be punished severely, Hazeldene. I shall not expel you, for your sister's sake—considering the manner in which I have learned the truth. I feel that I cannot take that step. You will be flogged, and I trust that

this lesson will keep you in honourable paths in the future. And if you have even a little common sense, Hazeldene, you will take example by your sister, and strive to become a better boy."

And the Head made a gesture of dismissal.

In the passage outside, Hazel looked at Marjorie in an uncertain sort of way. He did not know whether to feel angry with her, or to feel relieved at having the matter over and done with—his feelings were mixed.

"So you gave me away, Marjorie?" he muttered.

"I saved Wharton," said Marjorie. "Oh, Hazel, it was base of you not to own up, when he was to be expelled for your fault. I could not have believed it of you."

"Well, it's over now," said Hazel sullenly. "You can go and tell Wharton that it's all right."

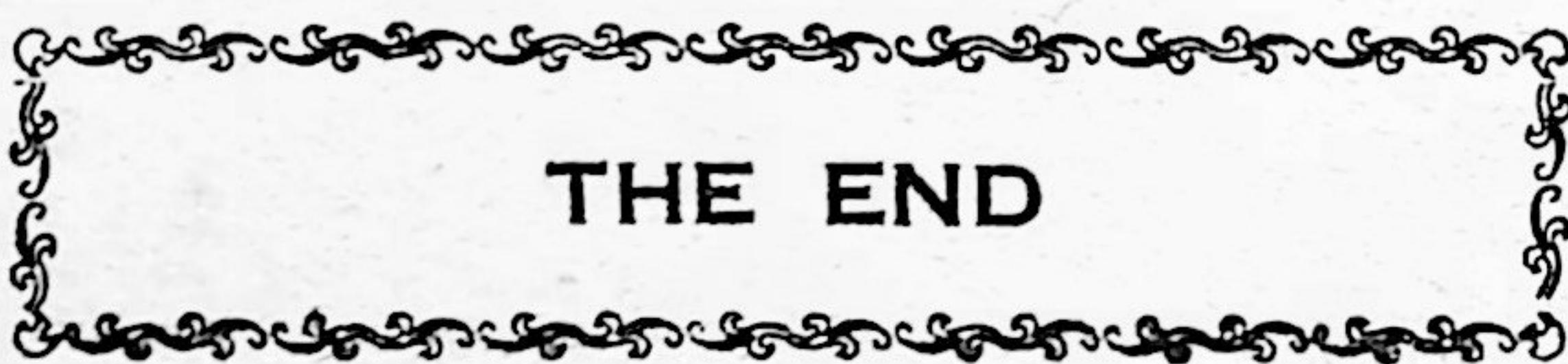
And Marjorie did. She found Harry Wharton in the Close, moodily pacing under the leafless elms. His face was dark and clouded—but it brightened as Marjorie breathlessly told what she had to tell.

"You should not have done it, Harry," said the girl, almost sobbing. "It was kind and generous—but you should not have done it! It was too much!"

But Wharton shook his head.

"I think Hazel will keep straight after this," he said. "Don't be too hard on the poor chap, Marjorie—he has been feeling this. We're going to look after him. And if he plays the giddy goat again, we'll rag him bald-headed—that's the best way."

And Marjorie laughed.



## THE END

# AROUND GREYFRIARS



BY Greyfriars School are found  
The best and choicest beauties of these realms,  
And well-known spots abound :  
The playing-fields, the cloisters and the elms,  
The sea caves, dim and dark ;  
The cliffs, the bay, the town of Pegg as well,  
The smiling River Sark ;  
Cliff House, where Marjorie and Clara dwell.

For Greyfriars is in Kent,  
The Garden County of the British Isles,  
And there in sweet content  
Old Mother Nature has bestowed her smiles.  
In spring the sea is kind ;  
It dances to the music of the breeze ;  
The river is inclined  
To linger round the mossy roots of trees.

But is this always so ?  
Are there no days on which the skies are dour ?  
When hills are white with snow  
And raging winds assail the ancient tower ?  
Yes, Nature sometimes frowns ;  
Some nights the Friars lie listening in bed  
While tempests sweep the downs  
And waves pound furiously on Shingle Head.

These are the winter days  
When elms are leafless and the winds are chill ;  
Yet we can surely praise  
The handiwork of Mother Nature still.  
For if the lake is ice,  
What matters, while there's skating to be done ?  
And does not frost entice  
To springtime, football and the heartier fun ?

And when it starts to snow,  
Whitening trees and bushes, hills and plains,  
Do not faces glow ?  
Does not the blood leap gladly in the veins ?  
Let others tune the lyre  
To drowsy summer or the springtime fair ;  
All Greyfriars men admire  
The snap of winter and the rough cold air.

Early the winter night  
Has settled over Greyfriars and the coast ;  
Each window frames a light,  
And from the House come cheerful smells of toast.  
Soft through the tingling air  
The giant clock chimes out the hour of five—  
Then let us leave them there,  
Happy, contented, busy and alive !

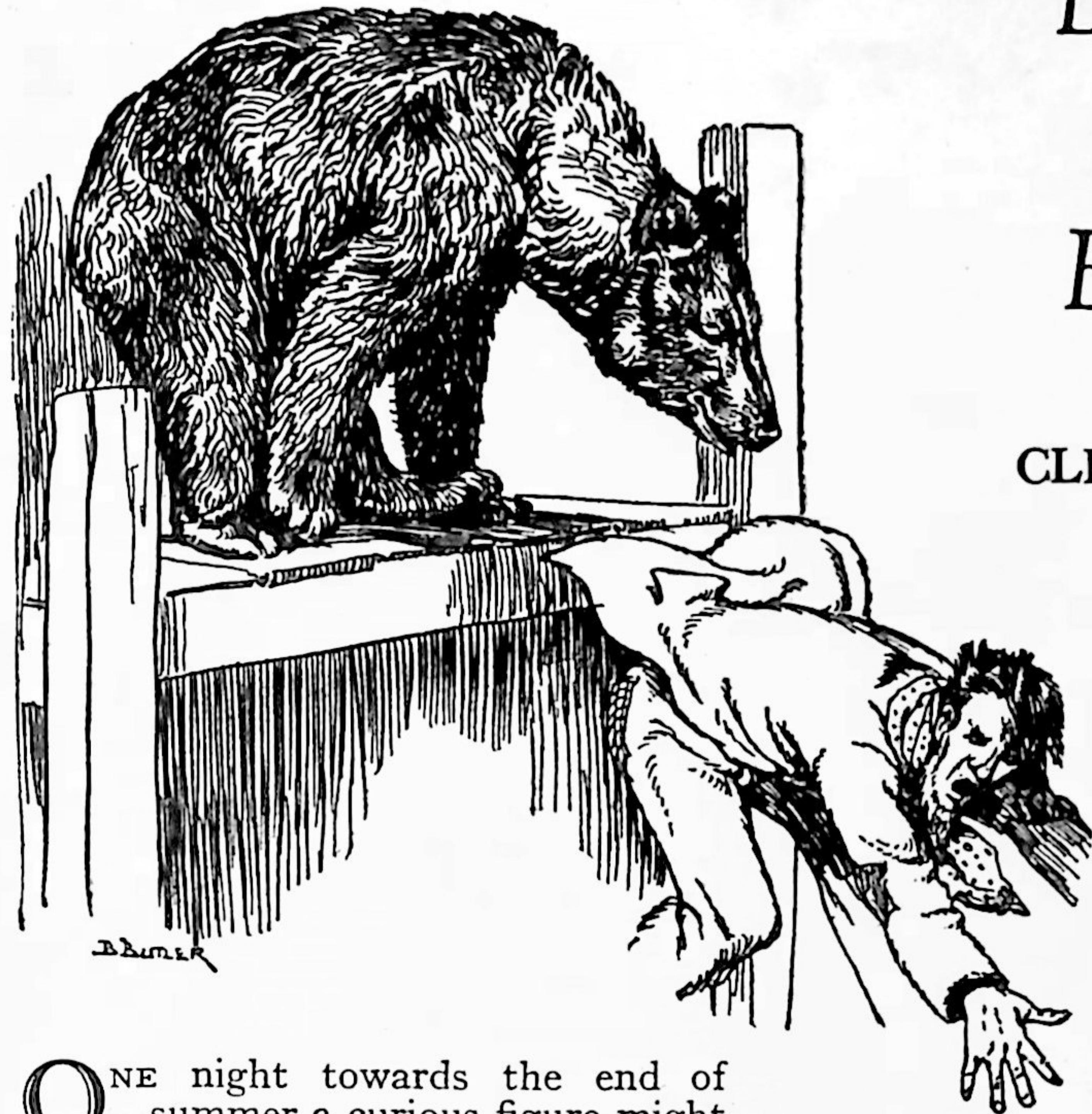
# WHERE IS SISTER BESSIE ?



The Bunter brothers, Billy and Sammy, went for a trip on the river to scoff a hamper of tuck. But their sister Bessie was not going to be left out of it ! She's near at hand. Can you see her in this puzzle picture ?

# BILLY the BEAR

By  
CLIVE R. FENN



ONE night towards the end of summer a curious figure might have been seen shuffling along down the lane, for the most part a grass track, which led through five miles of rough woodland to the farm of Mr. Topling at Tagg's End.

Actually, only one individual did spot the strange form, and that was Jarge Trimmings, as he was going slowly home to his cottage on the marsh, and the sight fair gave him the shivers, as he explained afterwards at the Wheatsheaf.

"Night, matey," said Jarge. There was no reply, and Jarge ran to get away from the visitant, which looked so mysterious. The last thing he recalled was seeing a dim, dark outline as of a big, bulky man standing and gazing at him.

Jarge went as fast as he could,

*It is unfortunate for two rascals that Billy the bear should be looking for his master on the night they intend to rob a farm, for Billy takes a well-earned rest at that farm . . . . Then the fun starts!*

for though brave in daylight, the night awed him, and there was no moon.

The stranger did not worry his head any more about the fugitive, but ambled on, now raising himself to take a look, now ambling along on all fours, stopping at a corner where there was a signpost, and squatting for a moment as if to read what the signpost had to say.

The stranger was a bear—an affable, well-conditioned bear, and it was doing its best to find Jacob Savary, its friend and owner, the traveller and artist who had brought it with him from foreign parts. The two had been separated at a seaport, and since the afternoon Billy the bear had been doing its best to trace its

comrade and proprietor, for it felt lost without him in a strange land.

Billy hitched up its lumbering legs again and plodded on through the sleeping countryside, snuffling as it went. Though the bear had not the least suspicion of the fact, it was heading straight for the pile of old buildings which were described as Topling's Farm. It had trotted so far that it was now feeling very hungry and also a sense of weariness.

As it reached the farm, the scent of something caused it to feel interested. It was the aroma cast forth from a heap of rotting apples, windfalls thrown into a corner of a yard. To a hungry bear even time-expired apples are better than nothing.

The apples finished, the bear gave a grunt and started inspecting the place. The dwelling-house had no lights, but the bear wanted no illumination to enable it to find a roomy old barn which smelt of hay. It felt its way to the bottom of some steps and pattered up these to an open door.

A number of large turkeys only gobbled drowsily from their yard, the farther side of the big barn; but the soft movements of the bear did not spoil their slumber.

These turkeys were regarded by Farmer Topling as his mainstay, for farming had been extra bad of late, with crops failing and taxes heavy. The world had not, as a matter of fact, gone any too easy with Mr. Topling, for disappointments had been tumbling over one another.

The chief one lay in the fact that his old Uncle Josh, who had lived at the farm for years until he died, leaving his nephew everything, had omitted to say where a certain box of valuable silver things had been put. The old fellow had been a wonder for hiding things.

The bear was thoroughly well satisfied with the look of the barn.

The place might have been made for him. He nosed about, then walked round in a circle before lying down to rest.

Very shortly the bear was asleep, dreaming of its travels with the professor who had made a friend of the shaggy animal.

But though all was peace inside the barn, broken merely by Billy Bruin's snores, matters were quite different in the world outside.

That very night had been chosen by two miscreants, Tinker Blake and his comrade Barney, to raid the farm of Topling, and get away not merely with the turkeys, but with the box of silverware. They had discovered the hiding-place of the treasure. The two in the guise of pedlars had paid many a visit to the farm, and they knew that the box of pots and spoons had been concealed in the flooring of the old barn.

In a field adjacent the pair of rascals had a car ready. But what they did not know was that a bear had selected the barn for its sleeping quarters on that particular night.

The bear was a light sleeper. It did not take much to wake him from his slumbers on this occasion. For a long time he had lived a thoroughly domestic life, having the daily companionship of Savary. He was thus ready to resent the unfamiliar, and the shadow of Barney cast on the barn wall by the lantern the intruder carried, was not only unfamiliar, but evil-looking.

Barney was a shaggy person singularly displeasing to the eye, for he wore a curious tuft of beard which seemed to be suspended by ropes from underneath his chin.

His shadow on the wall was simply grotesque, and the bear rose from his hay bed and growled out his dislike.

"Hurry up!" muttered Tinker Blake, putting his head above the top



Looking for somewhere to sleep, Billy ambled to the bottom of some steps and pattered up these to the door of a roomy barn.

of the stairway. "What's biting you? You know where the stuff is."

"Help!" groaned Barney, backing to the barn wall with the bear nosing him quietly.

"Haven't got cold feet, have you?"

came savagely from Tinker, who was eager to get to the turkeys.

Barney gave a smothered moan.

"It's a blessed menagerie up here!" he quaked.

"Blessed grandmother!" mocked Tinker, diving into the barn.

The bear backed into the hay as he saw the newcomer, and Tinker held up his lantern.

"Nothing here!" he rasped. "What are you scared stiff about?" He crossed the barn and deftly levered up a board, thrusting his hand into the cavity disclosed and dragging out a biggish box. "Here's the stuff!" he chuckled. "Lend us a hand. We'll get this to the car first, and—"

Something soft suddenly nudged Tinker Blake behind. He turned his head, let out a howl of fear, and tried to rise. He failed, for the bear gave him a rude shove and sent the fellow sprawling in the hay.

The two rogues thought now far less of the booty than of flight, but their luck was dead out. The bear was between them and the only exit—the door to the stairs.

Tinker gave a shriek as the bear hugged him. It was not the howl that made Bruin let go, for he was not a nervous bear, but the sight of Barney trying to slip away.

The next moment the big animal had flung Tinker back into the hay, where he lay moaning though not the least bit hurt really, and was tackling the escaping Barney, tripping him and then jumping on him.

The bear seemed uncertain in his mind as to whether the two intruders were really mischievous, or whether they had merely been sent for him to play with. He warmed briskly to the new sport, and rolled them over whenever they attempted to gain the door.

Finally he edged them to the little platform above the stairs and kicked them overboard in methodical

fashion, with the gesture of one who had perhaps had enough. Then, thinking better of it, he dropped down between the pair, ready to foil any attempt at escape.

The frightful hubbub, had stirred Mr. Topling from his beauty sleep in the farmhouse twenty yards from the scene. Taking alarm, he appeared at his bedroom window, springing a police rattle.

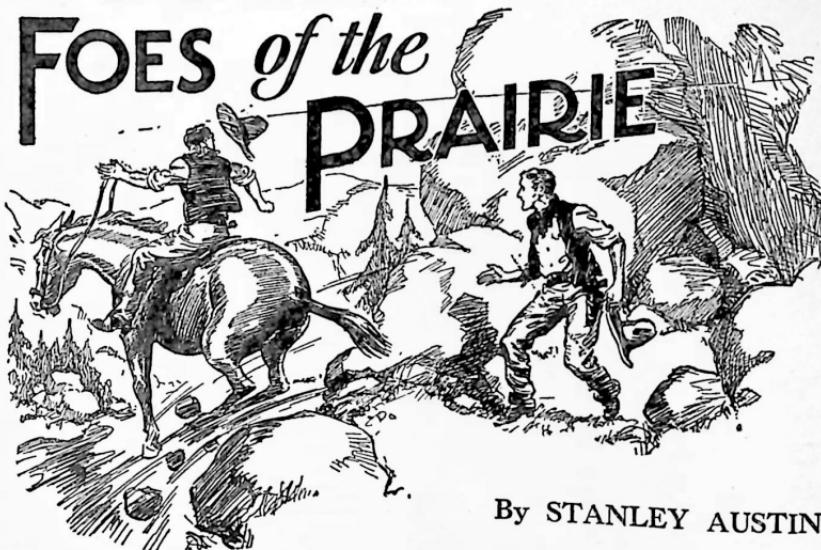
In normal circumstances it would have been as futile to sound a rattle and expect the police to hear in those solitudes as it would be to whistle for a taxi at the North Pole. But the conditions all round were unusual, for it so happened that the owner of the bear, Savary himself, had been much upset at losing his friend, and had interviewed the police, explaining that his bear was at large. Thus it was that a fast car was swinging down the road past the farm, in it a police inspector and the famous traveller, while a uniformed man drove.

"The call is from Topling's farm," said the officer of police. "I wonder what's up!"

They were soon to know. The car swung down the rough track which led to the farmhouse and the headlights revealed a strange sight.

"Why, there's my bear!" cried Savary joyfully.

The bear, apparently feeling its job was done, gave a grunt and ambled over to its master; and Topling, who had dashed out of the house, soon gathered what was happening. The two rogues were too utterly dumbfounded to offer resistance, and they were for the county gaol. The joy of Mr. Topling was extreme, for there lay his box of treasure broken open on the floor of his barn, and there, all safe, plump and sound, despite the night alarm, were the turkeys, with lots of pleasant days before them ere Christmas came.



By STANLEY AUSTIN

THE FIRST CHAPTER  
THE HIDDEN MARKSMAN!

**C**RACK! Something buzzed like an angry wasp past Jim Hardman's lean face, and spanged into the rock-face, sending splinters flying like hail.

There followed the distant bark of a rifle, and hardly had the echoes ceased ringing through the gorge than Jim had jumped clear of his plunging roan and quickly ducked behind a mass of rocks.

Then he whipped out his six-gun, his eyes gleaming angrily as he stared out, searching for a tell-tale puff of smoke that would betray the whereabouts of the unseen rifleman.

Almost at once came another distant crack, and this time Jim's keen, grey eyes glimpsed a puff of white

*A nerve-tingling yarn of a bitter feud between two ranch-owners that will grip your interest from start to finish.*

smoke above a jumbled mass of rock high up the canyon. Yet even as he glimpsed it, Jim whirled round at a sudden crashing of hoofs behind him.

Then he understood. For another horseman had appeared round a bend in the trail, and Jim realised that the newcomer was the target of the unseen marksman.

This time the zipping lead had gone nearer the mark. It had evidently wounded the stranger's horse, which was plunging and kicking furiously, whilst its rider tugged desperately at the reins.

With a startled cry of warning Jim leaped to his feet, heedless of the danger from the deadly unseen rifleman. He ran forward, realising the stranger's danger from another quarter.

But he was too late.

A last frantic scrambling of flaying hoofs, a warning yell from its rider, and then both horse and rider vanished over the edge of the bluff amid a shower of stones, a shrill, terrified scream coming from the horse.

The rifle was silent now. Jim reached the crumbling edge of the rocky bluff and peered over. In the gorge below swirled the sullen waters of the Lushwara, black and turgid. It was not a great drop, but dangerous enough none the less. At once his anxious eyes sighted the horse, swimming gamely against the stream, and making at a tangent for the opposite bank. Of the rider he could see no sign.

With grim face Jim Hardman ran back to his horse, leaped into the saddle and spurred down the rocky trail at a reckless pace. His horse, more than once, slipped perilously amid showers of rock and shale. But Jim kept his head, and a tight hand on the rein. In a matter of seconds, it seemed, they reached river level.

Jim's eyes scanned the turgid river. Next moment he was spurring his mount into the water. More than once had Jim Hardman forded the Lushwara at this spot in the dry season. But now the river was swollen with the recent heavy rains, and it was a far different proposition.

For a few yards the roan retained its footing. Then, as the water reached its shoulders, the horse struck out boldly, while Jim kicked free of the stirrups and leaned well back in the saddle to help keep his horse's head up high.

For Jim, in that brief glance, had glimpsed a dark spot floating in the water, and he knew there was just a fighting chance of saving a life. In addition to the dark head, he had glimpsed a feebly moving arm that told him the swimmer was either injured or exhausted.

"That guy hasn't a chance in a million on his own in this flood," Jim gritted. "Steady, Laddie!"

Fear seemed to have gripped the roan as he felt the pull of the current. But Jim's encouraging voice steadied his plunging. Already the dark head of the swimmer was on a level with them. Jim turned his horse's head downstream to get ahead, then swung the roan towards the man. The real fight began as the horse swam gamely against the current at an angle that should bring them in the course of the vainly struggling figure in mid-stream.

Above the roar of the swollen river, Jim's voice shouted encouragement both to his horse and the stranger battling for his life. They were in midstream now, and Jim turned the roan's head to face the current.

Nobly the animal struggled, but despite its utmost efforts he began to drift slowly in the torrent's grip. To Jim this scarcely mattered now, however, for the swimmer was almost upon them. Three yards away he went under, and Jim's heart sank. But the man's head reappeared the next instant, and swiftly Jim snatched his lariat from the side of his saddle and threw.

"Look out, stranger! Grab it!"

Fortunately, the exhausted man saw and understood. The snaking rope slapped over him, his arm jerked up, and he caught it. Jim hauled in, and a minute later the man was hanging on to one of the stirrups.

Jim turned the horse's head downstream again. They were nearing a bend in the river now, and here Jim hoped to win the final struggle.

Rapidly the bend came nearer, and soon the roan was fighting gamely again as he strove to gain the left bank. As Jim expected, the current had already taken them shorewards, and his eyes gleamed with hope as



The moment the drowning man's head reappeared, Jim swiftly snatched his lariat and threw. "Look out, stranger!" he yelled as the noose slapped over the man. "Grab it!"

he suddenly sighted a short tree stump near the water-line.

"Hold on, stranger! Steady, Laddie!"

Jim clipped out the words, and prepared to bring the lariat into use again. He found the free stirrup with his foot, steadied himself in the saddle, and made a swift, desperate cast.

Rarely did Jim Hardman miss a cast, but the distance was great and his position unsteady. Yet eye and skill did not fail him. The rope snaked out, hovered a brief instant over the blackened stump and then settled down snugly over it.

Jim pulled it taut with a grunt of

satisfaction, and took three turns with the end round the saddle-horn.

The rope tightened. The roan suddenly swung in-shore, and his head went under once. He started to plunge violently, but again Jim's voice steadied him. He struck out again, and the rope, holding the horse against the current, did the rest. Swiftly the struggling horse drew his double burden shorewards, and Jim gave a sudden whoop of joy as Laddie's feet suddenly found foothold.

He scrambled ashore, shaking water from him in showers. Jim leaped from the saddle, grabbed the exhausted man by the belt and dragged him out of the shallow water on to dry land.

He lay there, utterly spent for some moments. Then the man dragged himself to his feet and gave his rescuer a feeble grin.

"Danged close call, friend," he said, holding out a brown, firm hand. "I guess you've saved my life. I'm Ben Lewis, and if ever I can return the compliment, I sure will."

"I can see that," laughed Jim, eyeing the metal button of a Forest Ranger that the stranger wore. "Ranger, aren't you?"

"Yep! Sent down to see the new quarantine orders are enforced," was the grim answer. "Say, d'you happen to own a spread round here? You look—"

"My young brother and I run one—the Bar F—over in High Grass Valley," said Jim. "Jim Hardman's my name."

"I guess I called at the Bar F yesterday with notices about the new orders," was the smiling response. "You weren't at home, but I reckon it was your brother I saw. Nice kid, and a danged nice little spread you've got. Waal, so long as you don't get so plumb foolish as to try runnin' stock in or outer this district while quarantine orders are in force, you and me'll get on fine."

He paused, and then his smoke-grey eyes hardened like steel.

"And now we've got acquainted, what about this bit of shooting jest now?" he went on. "Those shots came from up the canyon, and I'm kinder curious to know who's so anxious to ventilate me. It's the third time lead's been pumped at me from a hidden marksman since I came into the district a week ago. Any bad men round here, Hardman?"

"None—no professional bad men, anyway," said Jim, with a puzzled frown. "Beats me who it could be."

"Huh! I weren't expectin' to be popular round here," said Lewis, his

eyes narrowing. "But—say, d'you happen to be friendly with the folks over at the Lazy L."

"Not any," said Jim briefly. "Old Hank Tanker is a coyote, and his son Del's as bad. The old man wants to buy the Bar F and he's sworn to hound us out if we won't sell."

"I know the breed," said Lewis, nodding. "Hard-fisted old land-grabber who won't be satisfied till he owns everything in sight. Any reason why he objects ter visitors?"

"Not that I know of. Why?"

"Only that old Hank seems shy at meetin' me," grinned the Ranger. "I called yesterday and the day before, but he weren't at home—though I got a sorta glimpse of the old hunkers both times. Leastways, I gotter notion I seen him in the house. Hombre with grey beard and hair, ain't he?"

"That's him," said Jim, nodding. "Queer he didn't see you."

"He did see me," said the Ranger drily, "but it weren't his at-home day, I reckon. Waal, I'll be meeting up with you again, mebbe soon."

With a friendly nod the Ranger walked away, squeezing the water from his clothes as he went. His horse had landed safely higher up, and was busy cropping grass now. Jim watched Lewis ride away, and then he mounted his own horse. Fording the river lower down where it was safer, Jim was soon jogging homewards, his mind busy with the strange mystery. Who had shot at the new Ranger? And why? He felt certain that Ben Lewis was not without his own suspicions.

He met his brother Steve on the steps of the veranda of the little ranch-house. Steve was a mere boy, little more than sixteen at most. Jim saw at once from his angry face that something unusual had disturbed him.

"What's wrong, Steve?" he asked quickly.

"Nothing much, Jim—only Del Tanker's been here again throwing his weight about," said Steve grimly. "I say, Jim, we'll have to look out—those coyotes mean business. Del came complaining about our cattle straying on his land again. Says he'll shoot any more he finds."

"Let him dare, and he'll get more shooting than he wants," snapped Jim, his eyes glinting. "Aren't they cuttin' the durned wire of th' fences themselves so our stock will stray through and give 'em chance to cause trouble? That's the game, Steve."

"I know. But it can't go on much longer, Jim," said Steve dispiritedly. "They're stronger than we are. And Del' was making threats again—says his father's going to run us off the range and mighty soon."

"Well, we've held our own so far, Steve," said Jim. "We're sticking it out, kid. But we've got to keep our eyes peeled, young 'un. Mind you watch out while I'm over at Rocksville to-night."

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### A BLOW FOR THE BROTHERS.

JIM HARDMAN started out for Rocksville after tea that evening on his usual weekly trip for odd provisions, tobacco and other small items required. It was a good thirty-mile ride, and, as darkness fell, he tethered his horse and made preparations to camp for the night, as was his usual custom.

He had selected a bunch of cottonwoods on the prairie for his camping place, and soon he was collecting dry sticks to build a fire. This done, Jim made the unpleasant discovery that he had no matches.

"Jumping snakes, can you beat that?" he grunted, speaking to his hobbled horse as he often did when the

two were alone. "No matches, and that means no coffee and no fire! Ain't I jest a tin-horn tenderfoot to go an' forget them?"

There was no help for it, however. He would have to dispense with a fire and coffee. He took his coffee-pot to the spring hard by and filled it with crystal water. It was when returning to the camp that he halted suddenly as the sound of hoofs and wheels came from the trail twenty yards away.

In the dim starlight he glimpsed the shadowy form of a buckboard drawn by two horses, while behind rode two horsemen.

The sight struck him as a strange one at that hour of the night, but, at the moment, the thought of a chance to get a match came first.

He dropped his pot and ran out on to the trail. The driver of the buckboard must have seen him at once, and could not fail to have heard his friendly greeting. Yet he came on, even lashing the horses to greater speed.

Jim would have been run down, in fact, had he not jumped backwards, his upflung hands grasping the reins and sending the horses back on their haunches.

The driver yelled furiously—and it was only then that Jim recognised him as Del Tanker.

"Yew blamed scum, get outer th' way!" yelled Tanker. "Yew all-fired galoot, let loose them reins!"

"Easy with your words, Del Tanker!" snapped Jim. "I guess if I'd known it was you—"

Jim broke off and leapt back again—but too late to escape the lash of the whip in the infuriated Del's hands. The lash curled round his shoulders, cutting through the flannel shirt. Jim's eyes went hard as steel. A quick grab, and his hand closed over Del Tanker's foot. Next moment,

with a wild yell, the rancher's son was hauled from his seat on the front of the buckboard. He fell on the trail with a mighty crash, the whip flying from his hand.

He scrambled up again instantly, blind rage in his eyes. He sprang at Jim—to meet a punch that lifted him clean off his feet. He crashed down again, and this time Jim dragged him to his feet.

"Get up, you cowardly coyote!" yelled Jim, furiously angry. "I'll teach you to lay a whip on me! I'll give you what you've been asking for for months!"

Del Tanker's fist slammed out, but Jim slid under it. His own fist landed home with a smack like a flat board on water. Del Tanker landed on his back under the hoofs of the horses. They immediately began to plunge dangerously, and Jim grabbed his enemy's leg and hauled him out of danger.

He turned suddenly as a cold circle of steel bored into his neck.

"That's enough from you, hombre!" came a cold voice. "Beat it—and beat it pronto!"

It was one of the cowpokes, who had leaped from his mount and come to Del's rescue. Jim knew better than to argue with a six-gun. Still ramming his gun into Jim's neck, the man—a hard-bitten rascal like all of Tanker's men—turned to Del as that raging youth staggered to his feet.

"Say the word, boss, and I guess I'll ventilate this hombre!" he suggested.

Del Tanker did not answer. He struck Jim clean across the face with his flat palm, picked up his quirt, and leaped into his seat again. Snatching the reins, he lashed at the horses. They plunged into motion, and both Jim and the cowpoke leaped aside just in time.

The horses broke into a mad gallop,

and the buckboard rumbled away in a cloud of dust. Without a word the cowpoke holstered his gun and leaped into the saddle of his horse. Then he and his companion rode on fast after the vanishing buckboard.

Jim Hardman stood alone on the trail, staring after them blankly.

"Well, that beats it!" was Jim's comment as he returned to camp. "Seems like as if Del was mighty feared of me pokin' my nose into his business. Has he bin robbing the Rocksville bank or what?"

As he ate his sandwiches Jim pondered over the mystery, but found no solution.

Supper over, Jim threw his slicker on the ground, rolled up in an oilskin and a saddle blanket, and speedily fell asleep, with his saddle for a pillow.

It was broad daylight when he awoke, and after breakfast and a hasty wash at the spring he resumed his long journey. The sun was high when he rode, dusty and travel-stained, into Rocksville. On the outskirts of the cow-town the trail ran past the Veterinary Service Experimental Station, and Jim drew rein and called there.

Joe Winter, who had once been a cowhand at the Bar F, worked at the station, and Jim generally stopped for a few minutes' friendly chat. Jim found him leaning over the rails of the corral staring moodily at a couple of steers which Jim could see at a glance were dying from foot-and-mouth disease.

Joe was a long, dismal-looking individual, and he did not even smile at Jim's cheery greeting.

"What's the matter now, Joe?" demanded Jim. "Shucks! Somebody been rustling yore invalids?"

Jim was joking, of course, and certainly didn't expect the reply he got.

" Seems like they hev," was the indignant reply. " Jinxed, that's what this hyer outfit is—jinxed! Say, Jim, you ain't seen nothing of a dead steer lying about th' trail when you come? "

" Gee! I ain't. Why, you ain't been and gone and turned any of yore beasts out for an airing, I hope," gasped Jim. " You wouldn't be so plumb foolish—"

" Nope! But one's gone since last night, and there's going ter be a mighty rookus about it when th' boss knows," said Joe darkly. " I tell you, Jim, this outfit's jinxed. Cows can't fly, and one couldn't hev jumped over this hyer fence—specially one as was dying. And nobody'd rustle a diseased beef-critter, would they? I arks you! "

" You'll find the beast all right, Joe," said Jim. " You're seeing things as ain't there, or not seeing things as are there."

With that Jim rode on into town, being unable to offer any suggestions or advice. He supposed Joe was making a mistake—it seemed impossible to think anything else, in fact.

Jim's first task was to get outside a steaming jugful of hot coffee, and for the next two hours he was making calls and buying the things he wanted. Then he rode out of town and made tracks for home.

The journey back was uneventful,

and just after noon he reached the ranch-house. To his surprise he found Ben Lewis the Ranger with his brother, and Jim saw from their grave faces that something unusual had happened. Steve, indeed, was white of face and he hurried to meet Jim in an agitated state that quite frightened the elder brother.

" Steve, what's wrong, lad? " de-



A quick grab, and Jim's hand closed over Del Tanker's foot. Next moment the rancher's son was hauled from his seat, and he fell on the trail with a crash.

manded Jim, catching his arm. " You look—"

" Jim, we're done," said Steve in a low, broken voice. " Something has happened—something mighty serious, old man. Here's the Ranger—he'll tell you."

Ben Lewis came up, his eyes grave, his square chin hard.

" I'm sorry, Hardman," he said quietly, " but I've durned bad news

for you. I've just found one of yore steers dead——”

“ Dead ! ” Sudden fear came to Jim Hardman. “ Dead ! You don't mean——”

“ I do,” snapped Lewis. “ It died of foot-and-mouth disease, Hardman. There ain't no doubt about it. I've seen it.”

Jim was incredulous. Yet he felt as if an icy hand had clutched at his heart.

“ You're sure it's one of our beasts, Lewis ? ”

“ Shure ! It's got yore brand, Hardman ! Better come and see it.”

The three got their horses and rode away across the pastureland. A couple of miles Steve led the way, and suddenly he stopped and pointed. In the long, lush grass lay a steer on its side—a steer with scaly hoofs and coat rough and uneven. The signs were unmistakable, and silently Lewis pointed to the brand. It was the Bar F brand. Jim gulped.

“ But—how—why—it's impossible, Lewis ! ”

“ Seeing's believing,” said Lewis. “ I'm sorry, Hardman—durned sorry, especially after what you done yesterday. But duty's duty. I've got my job to do. Orders are that if a diseased beast's found all the herd's gotter be destroyed. My job now is to shoot and burn hide an' hair of all yore stock. You'll get compensation, of course.”

Jim gave a bitter, angry growl.

“ Compensation or not, it means ruin for us, Lewis,” he said hoarsely. “ We're heavily mortgaged with Lawyer Beat at Rocksville—and that skunk Tanker's behind him. The State compensation money will come too late to save us from foreclosure. We were depending on the fall sales to see us through. And now—well, even if the money came in time, it'd

be far less than we'd have got for the critters at the sales.”

“ I reckon yore right. But it can't be helped, Hardman. I'm only here to enforce th' law, lad ! ”

Jim stared dully at the Ranger. But in the official's smoke-grey eyes he saw no weakening; no hope. They were hard and adamant. Despite the debt he owed Jim—though Jim was the last to have counted upon that—he meant to do his duty.

In silence Jim mounted his horse again. Steve followed suit, his eyes showing his misery. The Ranger mounted and rode away in the opposite direction.

The two brothers rode home without a word. All their years of work, all their slaving and sacrifices, had come to nothing. They would lose their stock, their home—the ranch they loved so much.

It was ruin.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

#### THE STAMPEDE !

CHIN Lo, the Chinese cook, brought in the brothers' dinner, but they sat down with little appetite for food. They had scarcely discussed the situation—they couldn't. Both seemed stunned by the sudden, overwhelming blow—a blow like a bolt from the blue.

Yet Jim's jaw was firm and his eyes glinted as he ate. Strange thoughts were working in his mind, and his young brother eyed him silently. Suddenly Jim pushed aside his plate with a muttered exclamation.

“ Steve,” he said, his voice trembling with sudden excitement, “ we're going to have another look-see at that steer—and right now ! ”

“ Why, Jim——”

“ Never mind why—yet ! ” snapped Jim, his voice now steady. “ Get yore horse, Steve.”

A few minutes later the brothers were mounted, riding back hard for the meadow in which the dead steer had been found. Jim forced his mount to a mad gallop. Reaching the spot, he flung himself from the saddle. As Steve joined him a few seconds later, Jim pointed to the brand on the animal.

"Look at that, Steve—look at it!"

"I—it's our brand right enough, Jim; I only wish it wasn't!"

"It's our brand. But it durned well isn't our steer!" blazed Jim, and Steve had never seen him so enraged. "It's a dirty frame-up! I knew it. Last night I met Del Tanker driving their buckboard from Rocksville—at near midnight! I thought it mighty queer, then. But—listen, kid!"

And Jim related his adventure the night before on the trail.

"And that ain't all," he finished grimly. "I spoke to Joe Winter this morning, Steve. He was all het-up because one of his invalid cows had vanished mysteriously-like. He said the outfit was jinxed. Now d'you see what I'm aiming at? Joe loses one of his sick cows last night, and I meet Del Tanker driving a covered buckboard comin' from Rocksville at midnight—and afraid of anyone stopping him."

"Jim—you surely can't mean—" gasped Steve.

"I do. Who was it told the Ranger about this beast here, Steve?"

Steve jumped.

"One of Tanker's cowboys told him—said he'd found it when hunting for a stray this morning, Jim!" he said breathlessly.

"I knew it! It's a frame-up, Steve! Tanker stole that sick beast, planted it here, and told the Ranger. Why? 'Cause he knew what the Ranger would have to do. 'Cause he knew it'd be ruin for us—Lawyer

Beat would foreclose, and he'd buy the ranch up."

"But the brand, Jim—you're forgetting the brand!"

"Forgetting nothing, kid.' Use yore eyes! That brand's been done quite recently—durned recently. And we haven't branded a single critter since branding season. Look at it!"

Steve breathed hard as he gazed at the brand. It was easy enough to see the point now Jim mentioned it. The brand was new—indeed, it was amazing the Ranger hadn't noticed it. That alone was proof enough that the animal was not theirs—that someone else had got hold of their branding-iron and branded it.

"But the durned skunks won't beat us yet, Steve!" snapped Jim. "Quick—we got to find Lewis before he starts work. I'll race for his cabin in the hills now. Case he ain't there you'd best slip back home, get the men together and send 'em out in search of Lewis. Then you follow me up in case there's trouble. I'm seeing Tanker afterwards!"

Jim leaped on to his horse and galloped away. He was not fated to reach the Ranger's cabin, however. For even as he started his horse up the steep rise leading to the Ranger's cabin beyond Crooked Canyon, four horsemen emerged from a cleft leading into the heart of the canyon itself.

The four were old Hank Tanker, his son Del, and two cowpokes. At sight of them a gust of anger took possession of Jim, and he forgot caution.

"Hi, you, Hank Tanker!" he yelled. "I gotter have a settlement with you. I've rumbled to yore durned trickery, you coyote! It was you who planted that dead steer on me—stole it from the corral at Rocksville! I got proof, and I'm going to prove it!"

Old Hank stood stock-still, his hand on the bridle of the horse he was leading. He did not deny the accusation. His blue eyes, cold and cruel, bored into Jim's.

"So yew found that out, hev you?" he said coldly. "And yew kin prove it, Hardman?"

"Yeah—you bet I can, you sneaking skunk!"

"Then," said old Hank softly, "I reckon yore as good as dead, Hardman. Put 'em up!"

The voice was steely. Jim's hand whipped down for his own gun as he sighted Hank's six-gun raised. But he groaned as he found the holster empty. He had left his gun behind!

None the less, Jim acted. Careless of bullets in his fury, he flung himself at his enemy. For his pains he got the butt of a six-gun crashing down on his forehead. His senses left him.

When he came to his head ached madly. He found himself stretched flat on his back with the burning sun in his eyes. A voice spoke near him, and he turned his head. It was all he could do, for his limbs were bound with rope.

Then he got a shock. Lying near him was another man, like himself, bound hand and foot. It was the Ranger, Ben Lewis!

His own horse and the Ranger's were hobbled a few yards away. Otherwise they were alone. Lewis was speaking.

"Listen, young 'un. We're in a tight jam. We're lying on the floor of the canyon. Tanker's going to stampede cattle down it—his little way of wiping us out, the cur! Our horses, too—to make it look as if we'd both been caught in the stampede—an accident. Afterwards, Tanker will come along and remove our bonds from what's left of us after the stampede."

"So—so that's the game!" breathed Jim, a shudder of horror going through him. "You—you know why he's putting me out, Lewis?"

"I reckon I do, lad. Tanker told me what he'd done—gloated over th' way he'd planted that steer on you. He told me 'cause he knew I wasn't goin' to live to take action." The Ranger paused, and then went on rapidly: "It was Tanker who tried to get me with a rifle yesterday. He's been trying to get me since he knew I was here."

"But why—" began Jim.

"Because the skunk knows me and I know him. His name ain't Tanker. His name's Carter, and he killed a man down in Texas years ago. I was a deputy sheriff then, and I roped him in. But he gave me the slip, and I hadn't seen him since—until I saw his face at the window of the Lazy L ranch-house less'n a week ago. That's why he wouldn't see me; that's why he's been trying to out me since. He knowed I'd put th' law on his track agen. And now—well, Hardman, 'less we get outer these ropes mighty quick you'll lose yore life as well as yore ranch. He'd have let me alone until I'd burned yore stock, but I bumped into the skunk jest by accident an hour ago. It had to come then, and he got the drop on me afore I could draw."

Lewis ceased speaking and resumed his frantic tugging at his bonds. Jim, knowing only too well the terrible peril they were in, began to struggle also—struggle until the veins stood out on his forehead and sweat poured from him.

And then the first dread sound reached their ears—the thudding of innumerable hoofs. Following it came the bawling of cattle, and the pounding became thunderous. Jim raised his head. At the far end of the narrow

canyon had appeared a black mass of moving objects. He glimpsed the tossing horns, the flying tails of the maddened beasts. Behind were horsemen, their quirts rising and falling as they flayed the terrified animals into desperate speed. In a huge cloud of dust the steers came pounding nearer, the sounds echoing like thunder in the narrow defile.

"It's the end, Lewis!" muttered Jim. "So long!"

"Not yet!" gritted the Ranger, and he resumed his efforts with savage fury. Nor was it the end. For just then Jim heard new sounds—a horse's hoofs, the clatter of stones, and a familiar yell.

"Hold on! I'm coming!"

It was Steve Hardman. Jim saw him now. His horse came scrambling down from the rocky trail that led upwards along the right face of the canyon. How any horse could have retained its footing down that steep declivity, Jim couldn't think—but Steve's did. Amid a shower of stones and flying rock, and with the clattering of flaying hoofs, horse and rider came rushing down. Jim's heart was in his mouth, for every instant



Reaching Jim and the Ranger, Steve dragged his horse back on its haunches in a hasty halt and leaped down to release them. But was he in time? The stampeding steers were thundering nearer and nearer!

he expected to see both of them plunge head over heels.

A final shower of stones, a stumble, a recovery, and then a mad gallop as Steve flogged his horse towards them, coming to a quick halt as the lad dragged the horse back on its haunches and leaped down.

Steve's knife was already out. He slashed at Jim's bonds, and then jumped to Lewis. In a matter of seconds they were free. But was Steve in time? Already stray beasts were thundering past them, tails flying, horns tossing.

Immediately Jim's horse was cut free he wheeled, snorting, and galloped away before the alarmed Steve could hold him.

But for swift, frantic action the other two would have done likewise; they were cow-ponies, and knew the terrible danger well.

"Into the saddle, Steve!" roared Lewis. "Up behind me, Hardman—for your life!"

How Jim reached the back of the Ranger's saddle he never knew, for his limbs were numbed and nerveless. But he did reach it. Steve was in the saddle of his horse now, and the three tore away.

"Make for the cleft yonder!" shouted Jim.

The Ranger nodded. Steve had turned his horse towards the cleft; he knew the spot well. Lewis didn't, but he followed instantly. The mad race only lasted a few seconds, but it seemed a lifetime to the three.

At last the cleft opened before them—a narrow, tiny gulch that led steeply upwards from the canyon floor to the trail above. The vanguard of the stampede was upon them now, and the horses escaped disaster by a miracle again and again. Above the thunder of noise sounded furious yells and then the sharp, unmistakable crack of rifles.

But the cleft was reached. The three tumbled from the horses and dived into the jumble of rocks guarding the mouth of the gulch. The horses galloped on—riderless.

"Tanker and his guys spotted us!" yelled Lewis, as they stumbled on while the horde of maddened animals roared past. "Get ready for a scrap! You got a gun, Steve?"

Steve had, and he willingly handed it over to the Ranger. They were safe now from the stampede, but they knew Tanker would never dare let them escape. The stampede began to

thin out; through the swirling dust clouds they caught glimpses of stray beasts.

"Why not climb up to the trail?" said Steve. "They'll get us—"

"Pick us off like flies if we did!" snapped Lewis. "Stay hyer. One man with a gun could hold off an army with luck. Lie low!"

They lay low, taking shelter behind rocks, and awaited the attack they felt certain must come. But none came. Instead, they heard the sound of hoofs gradually dying away until silence fell upon the defile.

Ranger Ben Lewis moved cautiously to the entrance and peered out. He sighted four horsemen disappearing up the canyon in the distance. He came back grinning.

"They've beat it," he chuckled. "I guess old Tanker knows he'd not smoke us outer hyer in a hurry, and I guess seein' young Steve turn up like that hav' put th' wind up him. He knows th' game's up fer him. Now we'll beat it. Then we'll get a few honest-to-goodness cowpokes together and make a kinder official call on Mister Tanker."

Two hours later a posse of cowboys under Ranger Ben Lewis surrounded the Lazy L ranch-house. But once again old Tanker was not at home, nor was his son, Del. But the safe was wide open and empty, and all valuables had gone. And it was very clear that old Hank Tanker—otherwise Carter, the wanted murderer—and his son had gone also.

Nor were either seen again in High Grass Valley.

Old Judge Bentley—a friend of the brothers—bought the Lazy L, so there was no risk of a further feud. Peace and prosperity came to the owners of the Bar F Ranch with the defeat of their foes.

THE END



# JUST LIKE COKER!

By

Peter Todd

(of the Greyfriars Remove)

*It is not like Horace Coker to make a success of a booby-trap—but it is just like Coker to walk into it himself!*

## THE FIRST CHAPTER COKER IN CONFLICT

**H**ALLO! Here comes Coker!" Bob Cherry made the remark, and Harry Wharton & Co. smiled. Fellows usually did smile when they sighted Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars.

The chums of the Remove were chatting together under the old archway that gave admittance from the quadrangle to the ruined part of the school. They were discussing cricket. And Coker, as he came along with his chums, Potter and Greene, was talking about the same subject.

The Famous Five could scarcely fail to know that. Coker's voice, like Coker himself, was big and strong, and he was fairly letting himself go.

"Cricket!" Coker was bellowing. "Don't talk to me about cricket,

George Potter. What the thump do you know about cricket, I should like to know?"

"Well, I'm in the First Eleven, Coker," responded Potter warmly. "And that's more than you are, or ever likely to be!"

This, obviously, should have flattened Coker, for it was true. But Coker took a great deal of flattening. His voice fairly bawled in a typical Cokerish retort:

"And why aren't I?" he asked in derisive accents. "Why, indeed! Because our cricket skipper's a born idiot and an incompetent footler; because of rank envy and ranker jealousy; because—"

Coker paused there—not because he had no more to say, but because he had reached Harry Wharton & Co.

Instead of continuing his entertaining remarks on cricket to Potter

and Greene, Coker addressed one brief, autocratic word to the Famous Five.

"Shift!" he said.

The Famous Five stared at him. There was plenty of room to pass. Potter and Greene had already strolled round the juniors and passed. But not so Coker. The great Horace was not accustomed to moving aside for mere "fags," as he termed them.

"Shift?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "What d'you mean, Coker—if you mean anything?"

"I said 'shift'—and I mean 'shift'!" said Coker. "Look lively, kids—shift!"

Coker fairly bawled that last. But it did not move the Famous Five.

"Oh, you mean you want us to get out of the way!" said Bob Cherry in surprise. "But, my dear man—why? Heaps of room to pass—even if you bring your feet with you, Coker; that is, of course, provided you bring them any way but broadside-on."

"That's cheek!" decided Coker, after thinking over Bob Cherry's remarks. "I want no cheek from scrubby fags, young Cherry. Are you, or are you not going to shift?"

"Not, old bean!"

"Then I'll jolly well shift you!" stated Coker grimly.

Being prompt in action, as well as a man of his word, Horace Coker proceeded to carry his threat into instant effect. He grabbed Frank Nugent and slung him aside like a feather pillow. Not being quite prepared for such quick action from Coker, Nugent thumped into the wall of the archway, his head coming up against the masonry with a fearful crack.

Nugent's howl was almost fiendish. But Coker had finished with Nugent—or imagined he had. He turned to Harry Wharton, evidently selecting him as the next man to be "shifted."

Harry Wharton was more prepared, however, and he stopped Coker by the effective expedient of hitting him hard on the nose.

Coker quite lost his temper, then Nugent might be hurt, but Nugent was merely a junior, and that was a small matter. A punch on the nose is decidedly painful. Coker was hurt, and Coker being hurt was a serious matter calling for drastic measures. He promptly dropped the selection of individuals, and went for the Famous Five, hitting out right and left.

What happened next, Coker least of all knew. But somehow Coker's right and left hits didn't register anywhere, and Coker himself went down in the grasp of five pairs of youthful hands.

He went with a crash that almost shook the massive masonry of the ancient archway, and his yell almost equalled the effect. The next moment a wild and whirling struggle was in progress.

As yet, Coker had made no appeal for help to Potter and Greene. It was a case of five to one, but Coker never counted the odds. They were there, counted or uncounted, none the less. And presently it began to dawn in upon Coker's mind that he had taken on much more than he could handle, so he gave a yell for help:

"Help! Yow-ow! Oh, you—you young sweeps! Gerroff! Help! Potter—Greene—pile in and help! Don't stand—ow-ow!—staring and grinning there! Rescue!"

Potter and Greene heard—they could scarcely fail to hear—but they did not heed. In their view Coker had asked for what he was getting and they were more than willing to let him have it all to himself.

Coker did have it all to himself. By the time Harry Wharton & Co. had drawn off, Coker felt as if he had



Coker turned on Harry Wharton, selecting him as the next man to be "shifted." But Wharton stopped Coker by the effective expedient of hitting him hard on the nose!

been mixed up in the revolutions of an aeroplane propeller.

"That should teach the ass a lesson, anyway!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Now into that basket with him, chaps—that's where rubbish should be shot!"

Once again five pairs of hands fell upon Coker. Feebly struggling, Coker was raised aloft and shot, head foremost, into a wire litter-basket clamped to the wall of the archway.

Leaving Coker tightly jammed by the shoulders in the basket, with legs wildly waving in the air, the Famous Five strolled on, a trifle breathless, but satisfied.

To judge by his bellowing roars,

Coker was far from satisfied. Presently his roars changed to choking gurgles, and, realising he was on the point of suffocating, Potter and Greene decided it was time to go to his rescue.

After a struggle they hauled Coker from his uncomfortable position and removed stray scraps of paper and bits of orange-peel from his person. Coker didn't seem grateful.

"You—you footling owls!" he choked, the moment he could speak. "You—you disloyal sweeps! Call yourselves pals! Why didn't you lend a hand, Potter—and you, too, Greene?"

"We—we thought you were licking them," explained Potter, with obvious

insincerity. "So—so we left it to you, Coker. You see——"

"Of course I was licking them!" To their great relief Coker accepted the explanation. "Think a swarm of grubby fags can lick me, George Potter? I'll smash them to bits! I'll pulverize the little sweeps! Where are they?"

Coker glanced around him a trifle dizzily. He was just in time to glimpse Harry Wharton & Co. as they passed through the gateway in the shattered wall of the ruins.

"Gone for a walk in the ruins," said Greene, winking at Potter. "Better let 'em rip, Coker!"

"Much better, old man," said Potter, returning Greene's wink. "The little cheeky umps will only put you through it again—that is," added Potter, correcting himself hastily, "you can finish lickin' 'em again, Coker."

Evidently Coker agreed upon that. Possibly the licking he had bestowed upon the Famous Five had proved more painful to the giver than the receivers. At all events Coker seemed to have had enough for the moment. He did not rush after the Famous Five.

"Licking! I'll give 'em licking when they come back!" he panted, ferociously glaring at the gateway in the wall. "They'll have to come back through that dashed gateway, and then—by jingo!"

Coker broke off, his eyes fixed upon the gateway in the ruins. Evidently an idea had ventured into the mighty brain of Horace Coker.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### COKER COMES A CROPPER!

"By jingo!" he repeated excitedly. "Just the very thing, you chaps! I'll teach 'em! See those turves yonder?"

"Eh? Turves? Yes, old man!"

"And that gateway?"

"Gateway? Why, yes, Coker. But——"

"Just the very thing!" stated Coker eagerly. "Those turves are simply soaked after the rain, and they'd make an awful mess of anyone if they dropped on them from that gateway, wouldn't they?"

"They would—in more ways than one, I should think!" grinned Potter. "Must be nearly a hundredweight there. But what——"

"A giddy booby-trap, of course," said Coker, nearly grinning now. "See the idea? Rather a kids' game, of course, but then it's for kids! We fix the turves above the gateway there, and fasten a rope from them to the iron gate, so that when those cheeky sweeps open the gate—well, they'll get the lot. See?"

Potter and Greene did see. They stared at Coker. That self-satisfied senior imagined it was a stare of admiration, and he chuckled.

"Good wheeze, what? Well, let's get busy! Come on!"

Coker rushed off to find a suitable rope for his purpose. As he vanished Potter looked at Greene and Greene looked at Potter. The looks were expressive.

"The—the born idiot!" gasped Potter. "Jevver see such an idiot, Greene?"

"Never! There couldn't be one!" said Greene. "A—a Fifth Form chap—a dashed senior, you know—rigging up a silly booby-trap! And as if we're going to muck up our hands with those filthy things!"

"Not likely!" said Potter. "I'm off!"

"Same here!" grinned Greene, and the two of them walked off—quickly.

But not quite quickly enough! As they turned into the archway again they almost collided with a running figure carrying a short length of rope. It was Coker. He stared

wrathfully, and Potter hastened to explain.

"Just off for a rope ourselves, Coker!" he gasped. "Oh, g-good I You've already got one, then."

"Yes—almost tripped over it outside the tuckshop!" grinned Coker. "Come on—look lively before those kids return!"

Potter and Greene groaned. Coker was quite satisfied with their "explanation," but the fact brought little satisfaction to them now. They dare not disappear after that.

None the less, they had no intention of soiling their hands on the turves. Fortunately, Coker simply didn't bother to ask them again—he was too

busy even to notice they weren't helping. He found a length of board, and tied one end of the rope round this. The other end he fastened to one of the rusty upright bars of the iron gate. This operation completed, Coker started on the turves.

These had, at some time or other, been piled against the wall by the gardener, and they were in a sodden state. But Coker didn't seem to mind. He piled some of them up on top of the wall. Then he clambered up, set the board in position and began to pile the turves delicately on top of the board. Satisfied at last, Coker jumped down again gleefully. Apparently it hadn't occurred to his mighty brain



"Into the basket with him, chaps!" gasped Harry Wharton. "That's where rubbish should be shot!" Coker was raised aloft by the Famous Five and shot head foremost into the wire litter-basket clamped to the wall.

that anyone in the ruins could have seen his burly figure easily.

"Now you'll see," Coker grinned, joining his chums. "Matter of fact, I didn't feel up to finishing licking those kids just now, and this will pay 'em out much better, what? Bright idea, eh? Now wait."

They waited. They did not have to wait long. One minute later Potter gave a grim chuckle and pointed.

"Here they come, Coker!"

Coker saw them coming—and his jaw dropped. He gave a startled gasp. For Harry Wharton & Co. were not coming through the gateway at all. They were coming along, grinning broadly, on the outside of the wall!

"You—you silly owl!" said Potter. "Didn't you realise they could easily see you on that wall, Coker? They must have spotted you, anyway, and they've climbed over the wall higher up. You've had all your silly work for nothing."

"And made yourself look silly, too!" said Greene. "Look how they're grinning—like Cheshire cats, only more so."

The Famous Five certainly were grinning. They came along cheerily, and they called to Coker:

"Cheerio, Coker old son! Still here, old bean?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Hasn't the rubbish man called for you yet?" inquired Bob Cherry, in surprise. "I thought it was his day for emptying the litter-baskets."

Coker did not reply—not in words, at least. He was dirty, he was aching from his recent exertions with the turves, he was bitterly disappointed—and he was wrathy.

He gave a roar of rage and went for the Famous Five with a rush.

He grabbed at them, and they grabbed at him. But five pairs of hands did better than one. Coker was lifted and strewn over the ground.

Only stopping to grab Coker's cap and pitch it over the wall, Harry Wharton passed on after his chums.

Coker scrambled up. He was raging. He bawled to his pals.

"Stop 'em! After the little sweeps, Potter—after 'em, Greene! Hold 'em! Wait till I get my dashed cap. I'll show 'em! I'll—I'll—"

Coker didn't stay to finish his remarks. Leaving Potter and Greene to stop the Famous Five and hold 'em, Coker rushed to get his cap. Of course, he forgot all about his booby-trap. Coker was like that; only Coker did this sort of thing!

He rushed at the gate, and the booby-trap worked beautifully.

Swoop! Thump! Flop! Flop! Floppity-flop!

The rope displaced the board, and the board let down the turves.

They came with a rush, amid a shower of soil and stones. Coker gave a fiendish howl as the end of the heavy board caught him a fearful clump on the head. His further howls were smothered as the sodden turves swooped down with a rush over his head. He went to the ground under a shower of wet and slimy turves. From beneath the heaving pile Coker bellowed for aid.

But he bellowed in vain. Neither Potter and Greene, nor the Famous Five were in a condition to aid Coker. They were all doubled up, helpless with hysterical laughter.

Once again Coker had to work unaided. At last he unearthed himself and rose to his feet, dizzy and utterly squashed in more ways than one. Choked, half-blinded, battered and bruised, and smothered from head to foot in wet soil, Horace Coker tottered away indoors for a much-needed wash and change, followed by shrieks of laughter. But apparently he had had enough of vengeance.

THE END



### THE FIRST CHAPTER THE ROBBER ROBBED!

DOWN the moonlit Great North Road thundered the London mail-coach, with a clatter of horses' hoofs and a rumble of wheels. "Faith, here it comes at last!" "Swift Nick," highwayman, chuckled delightedly, and reined his fine black horse back into the shadow of overhanging trees.

His eyes flashed excitedly through the slits in his black mask as he watched the approaching lights, and he drew two huge pistols from his holsters.

"I warrant there'll be some fat purses to lift!" Nick muttered, with a grin.

The frauds of his guardian, Sir Robert Gregory, a magistrate, now

A thrilling yarn of the romantic days of pounds on Swift the highwaymen, telling how one, Swift Nick's head—dead or alive!

Nick, forced to become an outlaw, fought to save his honour!

living at Ticehurst Manor, actually Nick's inherited property, had driven Nick on the High Toby at the age of nineteen.

The lad knew the risks he ran, for highwaymen were ruthlessly hunted by minions of the Law, and always hanged soon after capture. Already there was a reward of three hundred

However, young Nick, crack pistol-shot and splendid horseman, loved running risks for the sake of adventure. It was his proud boast that he had never shot a man. Being very generous with his plunder, too, he had countless friends on the countryside. In fact, many villagers secretly aided him, and often warned him about Bow Street Runners.

He was called Swift Nick because, on his wonderful horse Lightning, he was an elusive figure, always escaping from tight corners when capture seemed certain.

In his dark three-cornered hat, long dark-blue riding coat, and great black boots that reached almost to his thighs, the postillions of the mail-coach did not spot him under the trees.

They cracked their whips and shouted to the horses, and the coach increased speed as it drew near a long hill, at the bottom of which Swift Nick was in hiding.

That moment Nick rammed home his heels, and Lightning leaped forth from the shadows, to halt on his haunches, barring the way. Nick's challenge rang out loudly :

"Stand and deliver!"

There was instant pandemonium and confusion.

The post-boys yelled and shouted in fury. But they knew better than to defy a gentleman of the High Toby. Seeing the masked rider threatening them with his huge barkers, they reined up, with a clatter of hoofs and a jingle and creak of harness.

"How now!" yelled one. " 'Tis Swift Nick himself! I know yon horse o' his—with that white star on its forehead."

But the two guards, who wore tricorn hats, black cloaks, and were armed with blunderbusses, were tough, resolute fellows. One sat on the box-seat above the horses; the other was stationed on a small platform at the rear.

"Swift Nick, is it!" bawled the guard in front. "Here's earning t' reward for his napper!"

Up came his blunderbuss, and there was a bang and a flash.

But Nick had seen the two guards. Nimble he ducked, to hear a heavy bullet whistle past his ear. He was

leaning down across his horse's shoulder, and from under its neck he loosed a pistol.

Crack! There followed a roar from a guard as the stock of his blunderbuss was shattered. Rapidly Nick fired his other pistol at the rear guard, causing the man to drop his blunderbuss with a shout of anger and clutch his arm. Then, like magic, Swift Nick holstered his smoking pistols, and drew two others from the deep pockets of his riding-coat.

"How now, cullies!" he laughed gaily. "I've no wish to hurt anyone. Stop your nonsense and dismount."

Seeing themselves covered, the guards came down from their perches, growling fiercely; the post-boys swung to the ground, to stand at their horses' heads.

Leaving Lightning to bar the way, Swift Nick sprang from his saddle and strode to the coach-door, keeping an eye on the disarmed guards.

Yells of dismay and anger sounded from inside the coach. The shouts ceased as Nick appeared at the window, flourishing his pistols.

"Your money or your life, gentlemen!" he said pleasantly.

There were shouts of protest and anger from the four passengers.

But Nick was not a fellow to trifle with, and a menacing pistol jammed through the coach window had the desired effect. Speedily bulging purses and gold watches and chains were crammed into Nick's hand.

"I thank you, gentlemen," Nick smiled, flourishing his hat with a low bow. "The coach may now proceed."

He whistled up Lightning and swung to his saddle with a chuckle. A few seconds later, with cries of anger and shouts of vengeance coming from the passengers, the mail-coach thundered on up the hill.

"I wager I've collected fifty guineas as well as three gold turnips!" Swift

Nick muttered as the roar of hoofs and wheels grew faint. "Not a bad haul! Stand still, Lightning, old horse, while I look at the stuff."

Dropping his reins on Lightning's neck, the young highwayman started to examine his spoils. Then—

Bang! There was a sudden report from the dark hedge across the road, and the whistle of a bullet.

Swift Nick threw up his hands and fell forward, to crash down in the road and lie motionless.

"Ha, ha! Got you!" a harsh voice chuckled. "Thank you for holding up yon coach and for saving me a plaguey dangerous job!"

Out from the hedge ran a gaunt, hawk-faced man, wearing a battered cocked hat and a faded riding coat of bottle-green, a pistol in his hand.

Like Swift Nick the man was black-masked. He was a ruffianly, cut-throat Tobymen known as "Iron-face" Jackson, who never ran risks if he could help it. Having, from ambush, watched Swift Nick deal with the coach, he now ran forward to grab the lad's haul.

Nick had only been half-stunned by the ruffian's bullet, which had grazed his forehead, and recovering just in time, the lad saw Ironface

stooping over him, the man's bony hands grabbing at his plunder.

"By thunder! 'Tis Ironface Jackson!" barked Nick. "No you don't, you cur!"

The lad tried to rise, lashing out with his left fist. But he was still



Swift Nick started to examine his spoils when—bang! There was a sudden report from the dark hedge. The young highwayman, stunned by the bullet, threw up his hands and crashed down in the road.

half-dazed, and savagely Ironface knocked the blow aside and clubbed him with a pistol-butt.

"Not dead, after all!" gritted Ironface. "Take that!"

Nick gasped as he received a glancing blow on the head and fell back. Ironface grabbed up the purses and gold watches, and, seeing something

gleaming at Nick's throat, he made a grab at it and tore it free.

Swift Nick uttered a cry of fury and struggled to his knees. Ironface had wrenched away a diamond-studded clasp which Swift Nick always wore in his lace neck-cloth.

Of great value, that clasp was also a heirloom, the last heirloom that remained in Nick's possession when he was cheated out of his property and fortune by his rascally guardian, Sir Robert Gregory.

"Faith, you don't get away with that diamond-clasp, you cur!" Nick cried, and he staggered up and plunged forward.

"Don't I?" jeered Ironface, and he made to shoot Nick point-blank.

That instant, however, from down the moonlit road sounded the beat of hoofs. From the corner of his eye, Swift Nick spotted three horsemen approaching at full gallop, brandishing pistols. Ironface saw them, too.

"Zounds! Here come Bow Street Runners!" guffawed the ruffian. "I warrant you hang at Tyburn! Yon Runners'll get you!"

The ruffian fired hastily at Nick, then dashed away across the road, to go crashing through the hedge into the field where he had hidden his horse.

The bullet Ironface had fired missed Nick by a hair's-breadth. But to make sure that Nick would be caught by the Runners, he cracked off a pistol at Lightning. The great horse reared up on its haunches as its neck was stung by the grazing bullet, while Ironface galloped away across the dim fields.

"Ruffian!" roared Nick, his fists clenched. "I'll——"

The Runners were now bearing down on Nick, spurring their mounts to faster speed. They had recognised the lad, and were determined to catch him at all costs, caring nothing for

the moment about the man who had got away.

Nick hastily grabbed up his pistols from the road and leaped towards Lightning; his clever horse had stayed by him. But even as he caught the reins and made to spring to the saddle, the Runners drummed up within a few yards.

Twisting his head, Nick looked at the muzzles of three great horse-pistols.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### AT THE GREEN DRAGON

"By my life, you've not caught me yet!" Swift Nick shouted defiantly.

With that he swung to Lightning's back and rammed home his heels. The big horse bounded forward, hoofs striking sparks from flints.

The three Runners uttered roars of rage and fired their pistols. There were three deafening reports and heavy bullets whistled past Nick. But the lad was riding flattened on his mount's neck and was not hit.

Hoarse shouts burst from the Runners as they spurred in pursuit, and they pulled out fresh pistols from their holsters.

"Shoot at his hoss, cullies!" bawled the leader, a burly, red-faced man, Wat Simpson by name. "He's worth three hundred pounds—dead or alive! Zounds, he does not escape!"

Again the pistols of the trio roared. That instant, however, Swift Nick swung Lightning round, to charge at a five-barred gate with the ringing cry:

"Up and over!"

The big, black horse took the high gate with ease, landed in a moonlit meadow, and then galloped on. Glancing back, Nick saw the angry Runners smashing at the padlock of the gate with their pistol-butts.

"How now, friends!" Swift Nick shouted defiantly. "Wouldst hunt me? Come on, then! Faith, I'll lead you a merry dance!"

A few seconds later, however, the Runners had the gate broken open, and they spurred on after Nick, brandishing their pistols.

Swift Nick sat down to ride for his life. The lad knew the fate in store for him if he was captured.

His plight was entirely due to the treacherous trickery of Ironface Jackson, and Nick vowed vengeance on the man if he escaped his pursuers.

The lad led the Runners a merry dance. Lightning's long stride covered the ground at a fine speed, and Swift Nick heard the wind whistle in his ears.

Several dim fields were crossed at racing speed. Swift Nick was heading for Harley Woods, in the tangled depths of which he felt sure he could slip his pursuers. He had gained some distance at the five-barred gate, but the lad began to realise he could not shake off the Runners.

Glancing back, Nick saw they were not losing ground. Fortunately they were just out of pistol-shot, but they were obviously well-mounted, and their horses were far fresher than Lightning, who had been on the go all the evening.

"Plague take it!" Swift Nick gritted, glancing anxiously round. "Tis four miles to Harley Woods! Those fellows'll run me down before I can reach the woods. They will shoot to wound Lightning first chance they get!"

The lad racked his brains for a scheme as Lightning raced on. All about him were wide, moonlit fields, with no wood deep or thick enough in which to slip the grim Runners.

Suddenly, however, his eyes flashed through the slits in his velvet mask.

Away ahead of him loomed up a

great shadowy haystack near a gate leading into a hedged lane, and a scheme to slip the Bow Street Runners jumped to his mind. It was a desperate plan, but no alternative offered, with the hard-ridden Lightning already sweat-lathered and slowing in his stride.

"On, Lightning!" gritted the lad. "Just a spurt, old horse! We may diddle 'em yet!"

At the lad's voice Lightning put on a burst of speed, and took a hedge in his stride. The Runners were out of sight for a few moments, and Nick raced Lightning up to the big haystack and drew rein behind it.

Nick swung to the ground, and gave his horse a light slap on its flank with his tricorn hat.

"Away with you, Lightning!" he cried. "Draw 'em off!"

Freed of his rider, Lightning leaped forward with fresh energy, to clear the gate at a bound, and go drumming away down the lane. Swift Nick rapidly clambered up to the top of the haystack, and stretched himself prone as the Runners rapidly approached.

Has they spotted his ruse? The lad wondered anxiously for an instant. Then he grinned his relief, seeing the three angry men race past beneath his hiding-place. For the Runners could hear Lightning's hoof-beats fading down the lane, and they naturally concluded that Swift Nick still rode his horse.

Looking down from his lofty perch, Nick saw the Runners go charging through the gate out of the field, and a few moments later he heard the hoof-beats of his pursuers growing faint in the distance. Nick knew they would never catch the riderless Lightning, and he laughed heartily to himself.

Then he slid to the ground and listened for sounds of Lightning returning to him. Nor was it long

before that clever, well-trained horse popped over the hedge near the haystack and came trotting up to Nick, with reins and stirrups dangling loose. Lightning knew his work as well as any highwayman's horse.

"Well done!" Swift Nick grinned, patting the sweat-grimed neck. "You led them a fine wild-goose chase—not for the first time!"

Then Swift Nick's face grew serious again as he thought of the villainous manner in which Ironface Jackson had served him.

"Faith, I must get even with that rascal," Nick muttered as he remounted Lightning, "and recover my clasp and the coach-spoils!"

And Swift Nick proceeded to try to pick up the trail of Ironface Jackson.

This, however, proved a difficult task, and for two days Nick, who dared not ride the roads in daylight, stealthily inquired everywhere for news of his enemy.

Then, having learnt that the ruffian was lying low at the Green Dragon Inn, he rode to that inn quietly after nightfall.

The Green Dragon was an old roadside tavern with a thatched, gabled roof, diamond-paned windows and timbered walls. It was kept by fat Jimmy Croker, a notorious rascal who, it was rumoured, was not above robbing strange guests at his inn, first slaying them in their sleep by diabolical methods.

Swift Nick rode quietly round to the back of the Green Dragon, amongst the shadowy barns and out-buildings. He looked up at the old inn and saw a light at the window of an upper room. Smiling grimly, he rode Lightning under it, drew rein, and kicked free of his stirrups. One spring and he was standing upright on his saddle and gripping the edge of the window-sill.

Cautiously, Nick peered through the window, which was half-open, and smiled grimly as he saw the occupants of that room. It was just as he had hoped. He could see his enemy at a table with the landlord.

"Ironface and fat Jimmy!" Nick muttered, and his eyes blazed at the sight of his diamond clasp in Ironface's neck-cloth.

The lad strained his ears to listen to the conversation of the gaunt, hawk-faced Tobyman and the podgy, evil-looking innkeeper, and though they talked in lowered voices, their words came faintly through the open window.

Swift Nick nearly fell off his saddle with excitement when he heard that Ironface intended to hold up the private coach of a neighbouring land-owner that very night.

"At yon cross-roads three miles north o' this inn, Jimmy!" Ironface was saying, with his evil smile. "And I warrant I get a tidy haul off Squire Grantham!"

"Half for me," leered the fat innkeeper, "or I'll set t' Runners on your tracks!"

"Plague take you!" snarled Ironface. Then: "All right! I am wearing Swift Nick's clasp, which is well known over the countryside, so 'twill be thought that Nick did the job, if he wasn't captured by the Runners t'other night after I'd relieved him of his haul!"

Swift Nick did not wait to hear any more.

The lad knew it would be worse than useless to try to tackle Ironface and the fat innkeeper together, for the latter had many servants in his tavern.

Swift Nick dropped down into his saddle quietly, and stealthily he rode away from the Green Dragon.

"Ho, ho, Ironface!" he muttered.

"I warrant I get my own back on you to-night, villain! I know a plan to fool you!"

Once clear of the Green Dragon Inn, Swift Nick galloped fast across moonlit fields, and at last he emerged on the Great North Road about a mile above the cross-roads where Ironface intended holding up Squire Grantham's coach.

Swift Nick reined Lightning back in the shadow of towering beech trees beside the road and waited patiently, his eyes flashing through his mask-slits.

"I faith," murmured Nick, "Ironface will be sorry he played me a scurvy trick before this night's out!"

Part of Swift Nick's scheme to get even with Ironface was to hold up Squire Grantham's coach before it got down to the cross-roads where Ironface would be waiting —hence the position he had taken up.

Soon Nick heard the beat of hoofs and rumble of wheels, and saw from his hiding-place the glimmer of coach lamps. He thrilled in every nerve as the coach rolled towards him. He made out the four horses and the two postillions, who wore the livery of Squire Grantham.

The coach rapidly approached, and when it was about five yards away



Cautiously, Nick peered through the half-open window of the inn, to see his enemy, Ironface, in conversation with the landlord. The lad thrilled with excitement as he heard that Ironface intended to hold up a coach that very night.

Nick rammed home his heels. Lightning instantly sprang from the shadows, to halt on his haunches, barring the way.

"Stand and deliver!" Swift Nick shouted, levelling his barkers.

The post-boys reined up with cries of dismay. From out of the coach-window thrust a brick-red, furious face, surmounted by a flowing wig. This was Squire Grantham, who bawled his wrath at being stopped, and vowed that Nick should soon hang on Tyburn Tree.

"What d'you want, villain?" roared the squire. "I'll give you lead

in your gizzard before I let you rob me!"

"Keep your money, squire!" Nick laughed grimly, doffing his hat with a mocking bow. "I only want—your coach!"

"Plague take you!" howled the squire. "Ride him down!" he shouted to his post-boys, and with the injunction he pulled out his blunderbuss and fired.

Nick ducked down in his saddle. Then he yelled to Squire Grantham that he meant neither to rob nor hurt him. The post-boys promptly shouted to their horses, which leaped forward, and the coach rolled onward.

To avoid being run down Nick had to rein aside, but he had no intention of letting his plans be thwarted.

Even as the leading postillion lashed at him with a whip, he struck out with his fist, to tumble the fellow from his saddle into the road. Then, on the instant, Nick sprang clean from Lightning's back on to the back of the post-boy's horse.

He shouted to Lightning to get out of the way, knowing his clever horse would follow the coach at a short distance. Then Nick twisted round in the saddle to the other post-boy, shaking a pistol in his face.

"Ride, you!" he commanded, "or I'll put a bullet into you!" Then, with a laugh: "You have nothing to fear, squire! Sit tight, sir!"

The coach rumbled on down the moonlit road, piloted by Swift Nick, with Squire Grantham roaring lustily inside. The squire could not shoot at Nick on the leading coach-horse without endangering the life of his second post-boy.

Nick chuckled grimly as he took the captured coach along at a hand-gallop. His eyes narrowed with excitement as the cross-roads gradually

loomed up ahead. Was Ironface hiding close by, holding to the scheme which Nick had overheard?

He was! The villain, hiding in the shadow of trees, grinned as he saw the approaching coach. Suddenly he spurred forward, to bar the way with a hoarse shout of triumph:

"Stand and deliver!"

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

#### UNMASKED!

INSTANTLY Swift Nick reined up with a gasp of false terror, keeping his head down.

With bulging eyes, the second postillion, horrified at being held up twice within a mile, reined up too. From inside the coach came an ear-splitting yell.

"How now, Squire Grantham! Hand over all you've got an' make no bones about it. Your money or your life!" Ironface laughed grimly as he rode towards the coach-door, barking a threat at the two seeming post-boys, who both appeared to be cowed.

Hardly, however, had Ironface reached the side of the coach than a roar came from the supposed leading post-boy.

"Drop your pistols, Ironface!" was his shout. "You're covered!"

Ironface whirled in his saddle with a gasp. Then his jaw dropped in astonishment as he recognised the square jaw of that leading post-boy and now saw that he wore a black mask, and held two steady pistols in his hands.

"What the deuce!" roared Ironface. "By thunder, 'tis Swift Nick! What's the game?"

"No game at all, knave," Nick replied. "I've got you this time!"

"Who—what—"

"I heard you plotting with fat Jim at the Green Dragon!" cried Nick, his eyes blazing through his

mask at the sight of his diamond clasp at Ironface's throat. "So I hit on a scheme to trap you. Now hand over the mail-coach haul you robbed me of t'other night, and my diamond clasp! Throw 'em down in the road or, by my life, I'll put a bullet through you!"

Ironface was speechless with rage. He could hardly believe his own ears and eyes.

"And, as punishment for your scurvy trickery," continued Nick, thrusting his barkers forward, "I'll have your horse, too! And I hope Runners capture you, as you meant them to do to me!"

There was a moment's silence. Squire Grantham gaped in bewilderment, as did the second post-boy. Ironface could not imagine how Swift Nick had slipped the three Runners, but he knew now that the lad had done so, to turn the tables on him unexpectedly.

Seeing himself covered, Ironface made a motion of dropping his pistols, as ordered. But swiftly he caught them up again and ducked forward in his saddle with the howl:

"That for you, Swift Nick! You'll not have your plunder back!"

Crack! crack! The hawk-faced villain fired instantly with both his pistols. Quick as he was, however, Swift Nick was quicker, and his barkers roared a split second before Ironface's.

Came a yell from Ironface, who found both his weapons shot from his hands, their bullets flying away harmlessly, causing the startled coach-horses to plunge wildly.

Swift Nick sprang from the back of the leading coach-horse and rushed at Ironface, to seize the latter's bridle and strike at him with a clubbed pistol.

Ironface, however, whirled away

with a shout, snatching a spare weapon from a holster. Quick as thought, Nick had another barker from his coat-pocket, and there followed a rapid exchange of shots.

But even as Swift Nick fired, the coach rolled forward, and the hub of one wheel struck Nick, nearly knocking the lad off his balance and ruining his aim.

"By thunder, you don't escape, Ironface!" roared Nick, for the villain wheeled his horse and was off.

Ironface knew he was no match for Swift Nick in a fair duel, and decided to escape while he had the chance. Moreover, he glimpsed Squire Grantham about to shoot into the melee with his blunderbuss!

He wheeled away and set spurs to his nag with a mocking laugh. Just in time, Nick spotted the squire's weapon as the coach whirled past, and knocked it up, so that it only blew a gaping hole in the coach roof. Then he whistled to Lightning.

The well-trained Lightning had followed the coach at a short distance, and now the great horse dashed forward with a neigh.

Swift Nick sprang on to his back just as Ironface put his nag over a hedge and vanished.

Reaching the hedge, the lad set Lightning over it and made off at a fast pace in pursuit of Ironface, whose dim figure could be seen spurring his horse away across a field.

There followed a tough chase by moonlight for several miles, for Ironface's horse was a clever jumper and fast. But Swift Nick kept him in sight, though not yet gaining much.

Nick knew, however, that on Lightning he would run Ironface down sooner or later. He expected the ruffian to ride for the Green Dragon, to his pal, the innkeeper.

But, to his surprise, Nick found that Ironface was heading in the

direction of Ticehurst Manor, where lived Sir Robert Gregory, Swift Nick's guardian, who had, by fraud, ousted the lad from all his possessions and caused him to become an outlaw.

Therefore, Swift Nick was astonished to see Ironface riding pell-mell for the manor; and presently he saw the moonlit park and elm trees of Ticehurst Manor away below him, and then the great mansion itself loomed up in the background.

That moment he saw Ironface's horse leap over the park fence, to go thudding away through the trees, heading for the dark shrubs of the garden around the house.

"What the plague does Ironface want with my rascally guardian?" Swift Nick muttered, in surprise.

The lad followed at a gallop, with Lightning's hoofs muffled on the turf. By now, Ironface thought he had shaken off Nick, who surely would not dream of following him to the home of a wealthy magistrate!

Hidden by trees, Swift Nick was just in time to see Ironface, who had dismounted and hidden his horse, running across a lawn towards the great, silent house.

Nick saw Ironface vanish into the manor by a little side-door. He pulled up Lightning.

"Faith, what's the game?" muttered Nick. "Has Ironface gone to burgle my guardian? It seems like it. I'll look into this!"

Concealing Lightning, Swift Nick dashed across to the moon-bathed mansion, thrilling in every nerve, and soon reached the grey wall of the house. Naturally the lad knew all the secrets of this old manor, and he quickly set his shoulder to a revolving stone he knew of.

Next moment he was in a dark, narrow passage which was built inside the walls of the manor. Along this twisting passage he stole silently, a

pistol in his hand, straining his ears.

It was Swift Nick's intention to emerge from the secret passage into the manor library by way of a sliding panel that was known to him. Then he could hunt stealthily through the house for Ironface.

Even as Nick reached the panel, however, he paused with a gasp of surprise. To his ears came voices, which he recognised, and he put his eye to a crack in the panel. It was to see both Ironface and Sir Robert Gregory in the old library, where candlelight shone on rich furniture and shelves lined with priceless volumes. Ironface and the evil, bald-headed old baronet seemed to be bargaining with each other!

In Ironface's talon-like hand Swift Nick saw his diamond clasp, and he heard the ruffianly highwayman chuckle:

"How much for this clasp, Sir Robert? I meant to keep it, but 'tis too plaguey dangerous! I expect a better price than you paid for 't' spoils from the London mail-coach!"

"Where did you get it?" Sir Robert gasped, his cod eyes popping.

"From Swift Nick, who always wore it," came the reply.

"Then—Why, Swift Nick must be my ward, whom I—er—dispossessed, and I thought him dead!" Sir Robert Gregory blurted out. "Get him caught or killed for me, Ironface, and I will pay you five hundred pounds, as well as the published reward. He must hang at Tyburn!"

Swift Nick had heard enough. At once he realised that his villainous guardian, although a magistrate, actually trafficked with highwaymen, buying their plunder and giving them a safe refuge, when hunted, in the manor!

"How now!" gritted Nick, his eyes blazing; and hurling the sliding

panel aside he leaped out from the secret passage.

"Found you out, guardian!" he cried. "As for you, Ironface, 'tis you who will hang at Tyburn!"

At the startling appearance of Swift Nick, black-masked and dust-grimed, the two villains swung round with gasps of amazement. Then Sir Robert snatched up a heavy chair with a roar of fury, and swung it above his head.

Charging forward with a rush, Nick sent him flying. The man's head struck the corner of a book-case and he went down, stunned. Nick on Ironface.

There followed a fierce fight in the old library, with chairs and tables crashing to the floor. But Ironface had no pistols this time, for Nick had smashed them in the fight near Squire Grantham's coach, and he could not drag his last weapon from his coat-pocket. Swift Nick gave him no chance, and was on him, lashing out with his fists.

For a few minutes Ironface put up a fight, then suddenly he went down



"That for you!" howled Ironface. Crack! Crack! The treacherous villain fired instantly with both his pistols. But quick as he was, Swift Nick was quicker, and Ironface found both his weapons shot from his hands, their bullets flying away harmlessly.

whirled like a tiger

from a crashing blow on the temple. He collapsed senseless amidst the wreckage, and rapidly Nick proceeded to tie him up and gag him with strips of a window curtain. That done, Swift Nick gagged and secured his rascally guardian, too.

"That's settled 'em!" the lad gasped triumphantly as once more he fastened his diamond clasp in his neck-cloth. "And now to prove that my guardian was a ruffian who cheated me——"

Swift Nick broke off. That moment

he heard shouts, and the sound of feet stamping down a passage. Almost instantly the library door was burst open, and in tumbled three Bow Street Runners with roars of triumph!

"Got you this time!" shouted the foremost.

Nick recognised the Runner Wat Simpson, with whom were the very two Runners who had vainly hunted him the night he was ambushed by Ironface.

To the surprise of the Runners, however, Swift Nick neither tried to escape nor shoot at them.

Instead, he stood his ground and drew himself up with a laugh of triumph.

"Here is Ironface, whom I've caught for you, cullies!" Nick laughed. "And there lies Sir Robert Gregory, my guardian, an even greater ruffian!"

And Nick told what he had seen and heard through the crack in the panel, ending:

"I warrant if you break open yonder iron-bound chest you will find the proceeds of the last robbery of the London mail-coach, and of many other robberies. My rascally guardian has too long fooled everyone!"

The bewildered Runners kept Nick covered, while one broke open the iron-bound chest, and in it discovered just what Swift Nick had anticipated would be found.

"Zounds!" Runner Wat Simpson gasped finally. "It seems that you are right, Swift Nick. I'll see you get the King's pardon for nabbing Ironface and unmasking this rogue, Sir Robert Gregory!"

And Swift Nick did receive the pardon, and also his rightful inheritance, while his guardian accompanied Ironface to Tyburn Tree.

THE END

## GREYFRIARS RHYMES

FISHER T. FISH

(the Yankee of the Remove)



I guess you've heard of Fisher Fish,  
The enterprising Yankee?  
The juniors he has tried to "dish"  
Denounce his ways so swanky.  
He seeks to gain, in manner deft,  
The great almighty dollar,  
And calls it "biz," but it is theft  
To every Greyfriars scholar.

His business instinct made him start  
A mode of money-lending,  
In which he took the leading part—  
Both firm and fellow blending.  
But when his clients noticed how  
The interest kept jumping,  
A fearful vengeance they did vow,  
And Fish was bruised with bumping.

Not all the bumps received could crush  
His wonderful endurance,  
And Fishy started, with a rush,  
A system of insurance.  
The fellows entered with a will,  
But when, in wrath and wonder,  
They learned that benefits were nil,  
Poor Fish was rent asunder!

Do you imagine, after this,  
That Fish desisted? No, sir!  
He next began, in perfect bliss,  
The business of a grocer.  
His tea had neither form nor void,  
His coloured cakes were curious;  
The cheese was constantly annoyed—  
Its bark was fierce and furious!

To sample Fishy's foreign eggs  
Was simply suicidal;  
'Twere wise to drive them down with pegs,  
Or check them with a bridle,  
The Greyfriars chaps had bad enough—  
Fish took a fearful licking;  
To extricate him from his stuff  
Was worse than oakum-picking!

An agency for faithful fags  
Found Fishy in the centre;  
This plan, with many rows and rags,  
Returned to plague the inventor.  
Then Fish began to realise  
That British boys love fairness;  
And his behaviour, in their eyes,  
Had savoured not of squareness.

The deeds which Fishy doth declare  
He did in New York City,  
Like all the tales of "over there,"  
Are listened to with pity.  
Although the Yankees may deride  
The British race as dwindleers,  
Well might they waste their foolish pride  
On Fish, the Prince of Swindlers!

# BILLY BUNTER'S BLUNDER!



# ADVICE TO NEW BOYS

Poetically offered by some of the celebrities at Greyfriars School

## MR. H. S. QUELCH, M.A.



*DO not merely follow  
duty's track  
When inclination needs  
no sacrifice;  
However great the burden  
on your back  
The greater shall you  
find your honoured  
prize.*

*Remember that all men you cannot please,  
Yet do not seek deliberately for strife;  
Be true to your own capabilities  
In work, in play, in every act of life.*

## FISHER TARLETON FISH

The guy who keeps my  
motto  
I guess will always win;  
Take my advice: you've  
gotta  
Be vurry, vurry careful  
of your tin.



Some jays may talk of honour,  
But say, I merely grin  
And make this vow: "I'm gonna  
Be vurry, vurry careful of my tin."

No guy is ever lonely  
Whose eyes are free from skin;  
Make friends of all chaps—only  
Be vurry, vurry careful of your tin.

When knowing blades say, "Trust me!  
It's good! I'll let you in!"  
Then, take my word, you must be  
Exceptionally careful of your tin.

Your life will be most happy,  
Your joy will ne'er grow thin,  
If you're the sort of chappie  
Who's vurry, vurry careful of his tin.

## HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH

*Advicefulness I cannot give in rhyme,  
But what does honoured English proverb  
tellfulness?*  
*The empty pitcher saves the stitch in time  
From taking the long turning to the wellfulness.*

## WILLIAM GOSLING

The only advice I can give is this 'ere:  
Keep outer my lodge or you'll get a thick ear!

## PERCY BOLSOVER



*Fight on, though all your  
strength has fled,  
Fight on, with every sinew,  
Fight on until you feel half-dead  
And, even then, continue.  
Fight at your best in every  
scrap,  
Fight on, though foemen  
trick you;  
But never tackle any chap  
Who looks as though he'd lick you!*

## HAROLD SKINNER (with apologies to Kipling)

*If you can smoke, and not  
mind others jeering,  
If you can bet, and smile  
when you go down,  
If you can slack while  
Quelchy's interfering,  
And take no notice of  
his awful frown;  
If you break bounds  
without the prefects' knowledge,  
If you get back, and don't wake Mr. Prout,  
Then you will soon be famous at this college—  
Always provided that you ain't found out.*



## ALONZO TODD

Do the very best you can  
To point out to your fellow man  
That life is but a vale of woe  
And tears are all we have to show.  
When the sky is grey and drear,  
Point out that the rain is near;  
When the summer sun shines out,  
Say it is a sign of drought.  
Be a lively British boy  
Spreading happiness and joy,  
Crying everywhere you go,  
"Life is but a vale of woe!"

## WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER

*Direckly you arrive at  
skool,  
Unless you are a silly fool,  
You will stand a wacking  
grate feed  
And be sure to invite me—  
take heed!*  
*Donuts, jam puffs by the skore,  
Appel dumplingers galore,  
Tarts and pastrys, all things nice,  
Strorbury jam and strorbury ice;  
And after that grate feed, you see,  
You'll be quite poppular—at leest, with me!*



# SKINNER'S SHADY SCHEME!

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

EVERYONE knows what a rotter Skinner of our Form is. When he gets his knife into a chap, he usually thinks out some nasty plan to give him his revenge. He doesn't go up to the chap in a straightforward and manly way and knock his head off. He plots and plans and generally makes a beast of himself.

Well, here is the story of his latest scheme of revenge. You will understand that I wasn't really present when the affair started, but only in class where, later on, it all came out.

*Not for the first time does Harold Skinner try to get his own back by shady means. . . . And not for the first time does the black sheep of Greyfriars learn that the way of the transgressor is hard!*

Now all the Remove know jolly well that Skinner and Snoop use the woodshed as a smoking-room. But naturally they do it strictly on the Q.T., so when old Gossy was raking round in the woodshed one morning, he was very surprised to see some cigarette

ends and matches on the floor. He toddled off and reported it to Quelch.

Old Quelch, of course, said that he "refused to

credit that any boy in his Form had been responsible for the cigarette ends"; but still, in spite of this, he thought he would pop along and investigate it. He didn't want another Beak—Prout, for instance—nosing about and finding out that it was a

Removite after all, so he walked down to the woodshed after morning school, and gave the floor a nasty gimlet glance.

Well, it seems that Billy Bunter was after a packet of toffee which he knew was in Snoop's desk. Just as Quelchy bowled down to the woodshed, Bunter dodged into Skinner's study, "snooped" Snoop's toffee, and then suddenly unearthed a large box of cigarettes in Skinner's drawer.

Being a "bit of a dog," Bunter thought he might have the cigarettes as well while he was about it. So he took the cigarettes also, and cleared out of the study just as Skinner came along. Skinner spotted him at once, of course, and gave chase. Bunter, putting on a good burst of speed, tore downstairs, rushed through the Close and sought sanctuary in the woodshed.

As it happens, Quelchy was peering into a dark corner of the woodshed when he heard Bunter's hasty footsteps approaching the door.

"This," thinks Quelchy to himself, "is one of the secret smokers, coming along for a refreshing puff before third school. I will wait and observe him. He will probably turn out to be one of the young rotters in the Upper Fourth"—or words to that effect.

You can imagine that Quelchy's eyes took on a glare when Bunter hopped in and dodged behind the door. Bunter, of course, did not see Quelchy standing there. For one thing, the master was standing in a dusky corner and, for another, Bunter was too concerned about Skinner and Snoop to worry about anything else.

He stood there panting for a moment. All was quiet on the battle front outside, so the happy Owl thought he would have a weed before the bell rang for third school. He pulled out the box of cigarettes, extracted one and lit up.

I leave you to imagine the petrifying glare in Quelchy's eyes at this point.

He was about to step forward and drop a heavy paw on the culprit's shoulder, when other footsteps were heard outside, and he paused.

"Bunter!" roared the voice of Skinner.

"Where is that fat scoundrel?" came the dulcet tones of Snoop.

"He came this way, bother him!"

"In the woodshed, perhaps. It's unlocked."

Billy Bunter trod on his cigarette and gave a deep, dolorous and despairing groan.

"Oh, lor'! Beasts!" he groaned.

The footsteps came nearer and Bunter quaked. Then suddenly an inspiration flashed into his fat brain.

"My hat!" he murmured audibly. "I'll imitate Quelchy's voice and send the beasts away."

The Owl of the Remove is a weird and wonderful ventriloquist. There are few things that Bunter can do really well, but ventriloquism is one of them. He cleared his throat with a fat cough. All the Remove know that little cough by now. It is always the prelude to a mysterious voice coming from some unknown direction.

Quelchy looked on with almost fascinated interest.

Bunter coughed again and spoke.

"Skinner! Snoop!"

Quelch almost jumped clear of the floor. The voice was his own; his tones were imitated to the finest degree. His face grew positively awful as he glared at Bunter.

Outside the door the two young rascals paused.

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Skinner, dismayed.

"What are you two boys doing near this woodshed? You have no business here at all. Do not approach



"Skinner! How dare you?" roared Bunter, imitating Mr. Quelch's voice. "Do you venture to disobey my—ow!" Bunter made the last remark in natural tones as the door flew open and caught him on the nose.

nearer, Skinner! Stay where you are!"

"But—but—but—" stuttered Skinner.

"I desire to know what you are doing in this vicinity, Skinner. Is it possible that you are the junior who has been using this shed for smoking?"

"Bless my soul!" muttered Quelchy, giving Bunter a fascinated glance.

Skinner gasped.

"Oh, no—no, sir!" he replied. "I—I thought I saw Bunter come this way."

Bunter imitated old Quelchy's snort beautifully.

"Absurd!" he snorted. "Bunter

is not here, Skinner. Return to the House at once—both of you."

"Dear me!" goggled Quelchy, quite petrified.

Bunter coughed again.

Outside the woodshed, Skinner heard the cough. He started, and gave Snoop a questioning glance.

"I believe it's Bunter," whispered Snoop. "I know that cough."

"If it's that fat scoundrel all the time—" Skinner gritted his teeth.

"I'm going to make sure."

"But if it's really Quelchy—"

"I'll chance it."

Bunter heard with dismay Skinner's steps approaching the door.

"Skinner! How dare you?" he

roared, in his Quelchian voice. "Do you venture to disobey my—Ow!"

He made this last remark in quite natural tones as the door flew open and caught him on the nose.

Bump!

"Yoooooop!" he roared as he sat on the floor.

"You fat spoofeर!" howled Skinner furiously. "It was you all the time, you podgy fraud! My hat! I'll teach you to work your beastly ventriloquism on me. Take that—and that—"

"Whooooop!" yelled Bunter as Skinner's feet came into play. "Leave off kicking me, you beast! Ow-wow!"

"I'll smash you if you try to pull my leg again," Skinner said indignantly. "Give me back those cigarettes, you thieving villain."

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Sharp's the word!" snapped Skinner. "Unless you want a record ragging."

"They're my cigarettes—"

"Cheese it! I saw you dodging out of my study with the smokes in your thieving paw. Hand them over, or I'll jolly well— Why, what—what—"

Skinner's voice trailed away as his eyes rested on a figure standing grimly in the shadows. He stood dumb with horror. Snoop and Bunter, following his glance, remained perfectly motionless, as though turned suddenly to stone.

And then Quelchy walked out, like the ghost of Hamlet's father.

"Bunter!" he said in a deep voice.

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Bunter, wildly alarmed. "Oh, lor'! It wasn't me, sir—"

"Standing here, Bunter, I have seen and heard everything which has transpired since you entered this place. I have seen you light a purloined cigarette and I have heard you imitate the voice of your Form-master

for the purpose of playing a wicked and inexcusable trick upon your school-fellows. Never in all my career as a schoolmaster have I seen a more deliberate and studied piece of audacity."

Bunter quaked.

"Oh, scissors!"

"You are a most abandoned young reprobate, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, sir," quavered Bunter desperately. "I assure you that it wasn't me, sir."

"What? What? I was a witness of the whole occurrence, Bunter."

"I—I mean, they're not Skinner's cigarettes, sir. They're mine, sir—really they are—"

"What?" roared Quelchy.

"Oh, lor'!" Bunter gasped again as he saw how he had put his foot into it. "Nunno, sir, they're Skinner's cigarettes, sir. I took them away to prevent him smoking them, sir. I'm rather down on smoking—I can't bear it, sir. Ask Skinner, sir; he'll tell you. He's often seen me—I mean, he's never seen me—"

"There is no need for me to ask Skinner, Bunter, as I have seen you with my own eyes smoking a cigarette."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"For that, Bunter, you shall be caned severely. But that is the least of your offences. Your unscrupulous deception calls for very drastic treatment indeed. I shall administer drastic treatment to you, Bunter."

"Th-thank you, sir," stuttered Bunter. "Kik-can I go now?"

"You can, Bunter—to my study, where you will await my arrival."

"Oh, dear! I—I say, sir—"

Quelchy pointed with a long finger.

"Go!" said he, and Bunter went.

Then Quelch turned to the wretched Skinner and the shivering Snoop.

"Skinner!"

Skinny groaned.

"On your own admission, Skinner, these cigarettes are your property."

If Skinner had seen the faintest chance of denying it, he would have taken it like a shot. Unfortunately, though, there was no doubt about it.

"Yes, sir!" he groaned.

"You and Snoop, I presume, are the boys who have used this place for cigarette smoking?"

"Only—only once, sir," faltered Skinner.

Quelchy glared.

"I have found twenty-six stumps of cigarettes here, Skinner. If you smoked twenty-six cigarettes during the one occasion on which you utilised this woodshed—"



Skinner, Snoop and Bunter stood dumb with horror as their eyes rested on a figure standing in the shadows. It was Mr. Quelch, the Remove Form-master, at sight of whom the secret smokers quaked. "Follow me to my study!" he commanded, and walked out like a grim ghost.

"Nunno, sir! Some other fellows must have left them there."

"I hope what you state is correct, Skinner; but I have grave doubts, having been compelled to speak to you before about this habit. If you have not the common sense to wait until you are older before starting to smoke, you must be instructed in a forcible manner. That instruction, Skinner, I shall deem it my duty to administer at once. Follow me!"

"Oh, corks!"

They followed on in the lowest spirits.

Presently there was a sound of steady swishing from Quelchy's study. Accompanying the sound we heard

voices which we thought, at first, came from a grand opera selection on the wireless. Then we realised that Bunter, Skinner and Snoop were forming a trio, and rendering, with much "feeling," that very famous part-song called, "Ow-wow-wow! Yarooooh!"

They crawled out into the passage after a time.

"Moooooooooh!" groaned Bunter. "I'm hurt! Ow!"

"Hurt! I'll hurt you!" Skinner said, gritting his teeth. "You wait till I've got over this licking. I'll make you chuck ventriloquising once and for all."

But the only comment Bunter made was :

"Ow-wow-wow-wow-wow!"

## THE SECOND CHAPTER UNLUCKY FOR SKINNER.

SKINNER really meant what he said. He was feeling sore and savage. In the passage, where we lined up for third school, he spoke to Snoop about it.

"I'll cure that fat villain of ventriloquising," he said. "I'll make him squirm!"

Snoop, who was squirming himself at that moment, merely groaned.

"I've got an idea, too," went on Skinner. "It wants a bit of nerve, but it is a real coker—especially as Quelch has just heard the fat rotter throwing his voice. I tell you, Snoopy, the scheme can't fail."

"Ow! Do what you like to him—he's boned a huge packet of toffee from my desk," groaned Snoop. "He says he hasn't seen it. That means that he has. If you're going to smash him, I'll help."

"No good," Skinner replied. "Wharton and his set are always ready to chip in if a man starts ragging him. No; I've got a much better idea. You back me up, Snoopy, and you'll see some fun."

The story of the cigarettes had, of course, spread round the class by this time, and we all looked at Skinner with a grin as he wriggled into the Form-room. There was very little sympathy for him—everybody agreed that it served him right. So we found his squirms and his squiggles quite entertaining.

Billy Bunter was still sore, but he had a source of consolation. In his pocket was Snoop's toffee, and he intended that toffee to be in him before the lesson finished. He saw a silver lining in the clouds in spite of the fact that he lowered himself into his seat in a very delicate fashion.

Quelchy was taking English History and was dealing with James the Second. The lesson droned on, and we were just about feeling fed right up when the interruption occurred.

At the moment it came, James the Second was quietly hopping out of England after the news of William's advance. Quelchy was dealing with the abdication of James, when Skinner spoke :

"Oh, cheese it, Quelchy!" said Skinner loudly. His tones rang through the room, although his lips did not seem to move.

Quelchy dropped the book and his lower jaw at the same time.

"Wha-a-at?" he stuttered.

"Cheese it!" Skinner said tersely. "Give us a rest, old bean! We're tired!"

If a waterspout had suddenly burst through the floor we couldn't have been more startled.

We simply blinked at him—except Bunter, who was leaning back with a happy smile on his fat face. Skinner, strange to say, looked as surprised as anyone. He turned round and blinked at Toddy just behind him.

"He's gone potty!" I said to old Inky. "The heat has turned his bit of brain!"

"The pottyfulness is superb!" nodded Inky. "The flogfulness will be terrific!"

"The awful ass!" breathed Harry, in amazement.

Quelchy was recovering his breath. His eyes gleamed at Skinner like points of fire.

"Boy!" he thundered.

Skinner blinked at him blandly.

"Skinner!" gasped Quelchy. "Have you taken leave of your senses?"

Skinner looked startled.

"I, sir? Nunno!"

"How dare you, Skinner?"

"Eh?" Skinner appeared greatly amazed. "How dare I what, sir? I haven't done anything, have I?"

"Boy! Did not you venture to address me in a most insulting manner and impertinent fashion, Skinner?" boomed Quelchy, turning red with rage. "What do you mean by this conduct?"

Skinner actually staggered.

"I, sir?" he gasped again. "Oh, no, sir—I wouldn't—I didn't!"

"What?"

"I heard somebody speak, sir!" gasped Skinner. "It wasn't me, sir! I thought it came from just behind me, somewhere. I—I thought Toddy—"

"Me?" howled Peter.

"Silence, Todd! Skinner, what do you mean by this absurd denial? I heard you distinctly. It was your voice, Skinner. I suppose you will not venture to state that anybody could imitate your—oh!" Mr. Quelch pulled up sharply and gulped once or twice.

He had just remembered the scene in the woodshed, where somebody actually imitated his voice.

Very slowly he turned and fixed Bunter with a petrifying glare.

Then, as we realised what was happening, we looked at Bunter, too.

The Owl was not aware of the attention that was now fixed on him. He was still leaning back in his seat with a happy smile on his face.

There was no doubt left in our minds now. It was Bunter who had made those remarks.

Skinner's evident astonishment proved that. Bunter, smarting under a sense of injury to both Quelchy and Skinner, had used his ventriloquism to pay them both out at one stroke.

It was a cunning idea—quite in keeping with the fat rascal's character.

We simply blinked at him.

"Oh, crikey! The blithering ass!" muttered Wharton. "Look at him! He thinks nobody will suspect him!"

Quelchy obviously was thinking the same thing. He glared at Bunter as if he could have eaten him.

"Bunter!" he rapped out.

The Owl sat up with a jerk and blinked at Quelchy. He began to look alarmed—the sign of a guilty conscience.

"Stand up, Bunter!" grated Quelch.

Bunter stood up, quaking.

"Bunter! Have you dared to use your power of ventriloquism again after the exemplary lesson you received from me not two hours ago?" roared Quelch.

Billy Bunter goggled at him, but did not answer.

"Answer me, Bunter! Have you ventured to try to deceive me yet again by imitating Skinner's voice for the purpose of making an insolent remark to me, Bunter?" demanded Quelchy in scaring tones.

"Oh!" Skinner ejaculated. "That must be it, sir. I couldn't understand—"

"Be silent, Skinner! Bunter! Speak!"

But Bunter did not speak. He simply goggled wildly at Quelchy.

"Speak!" shrieked the Beak.

Then Bunter spoke at last.

" Whoooooooh ! " he gurgled.

" Wha-a-at ? "

" Moooooh ! Oooooogh ! Whoooh ! " choked Bunter desperately.

" Bless my soul ! Bunter——"

" Whooo-hoooo-hoooo-hooo ! "

" Is this some more of your insolence, Bunter ? "

" Chooooo ! " gobbled Bunter frantically.

" I—I think there's something the matter with him, sir," ventured Wharton.

" What ? What ? Bunter——"

" Moooooooh ! "

" Dear me ! The foolish boy appears to be choking ! Bolsover, kindly lean over and pat Bunter on the back."

" Certainly, sir ! "

Bolsy rose and drew back his leg-of-mutton fin. He was a heavy-handed merchant, and he let Bunter have the full benefit of his muscle.

THUMP !

" Yaroooooh ! " roared Bunter.

He fell forward and sprawled over his desk. At the same moment something shot from his mouth like a bullet, and landed on the floor of the room.

We all crowded forward to look at it.

It was a large and partly-chewed lump of toffee !

We simply goggled at the toffee.

One thing flashed into the mind of each fellow there. It was not Bunter who had implored Quelchy to cheese it. Bunter, with that toffee in his mouth, couldn't use his own voice, much less imitate the voice of another fellow.

Skinner realised that at once. He turned quite green.

Snoop's toffee had saved Bunter. But for that toffee which he had inserted—the whole jolly lump of it—into his mouth just before the interruption occurred, he would have been landed for a flogging.

Bunter, not realising his lucky escape, blinked at Quelchy with trepidation.

" I—I—I wasn't eating toffee, sir ! " he stammered. " It was my toffee, sir—not Snoop's. I—I—I——"

" Bunter ! " Quelchy's lips were in a thin and dangerous line. " Bunter, when did you place that—that sweetmeat in your mouth ? "

" Oh, lor' ! Just before Skinner told you to cheese it, sir," groaned Bunter.

" Ha, ha, ha ! "

We shrieked. Quelchy glared round the Form, and we became dreadfully solemn again.

" You will take a hundred lines for bringing confectionery into the Form-room, Bunter. Throw that—that portion into the waste-paper basket."

Bunter did so, in very low spirits.

Quelchy turned to Skinner. He looked as though he was going to bite him.

" Skinner ! "

" I assure you, sir——" groaned the wretched Skinner; but Quelchy stopped him.

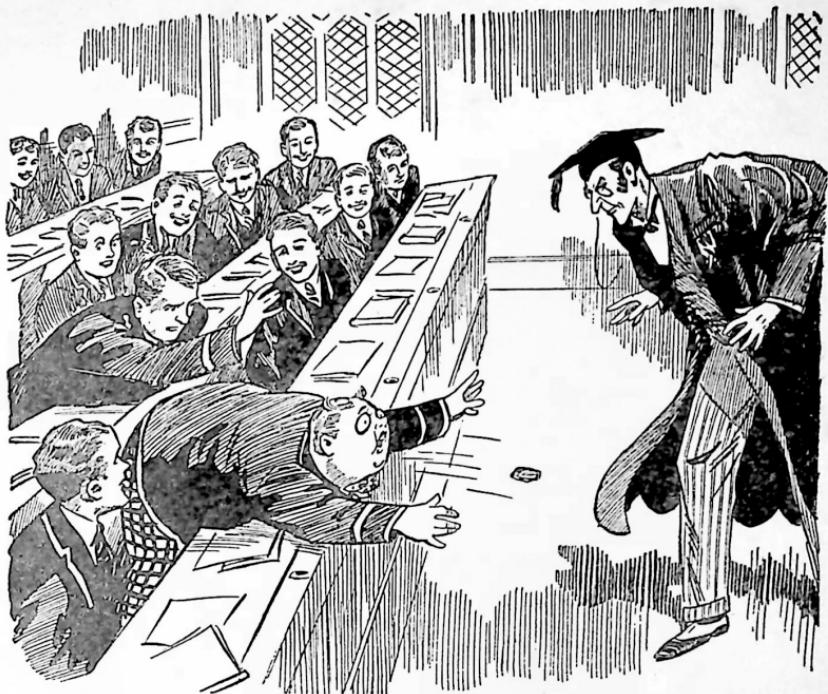
" I desire to listen to no excuses, Skinner. The facts are plain. It would be impossible for Bunter to use his vocal powers while that confection was in his mouth. You observed that he could not speak, much less ventriloquise."

" But, sir——"

" I will listen to no excuses, I say. Your wretched deception is too obvious. You have tried deliberately to force me to commit a grave injustice by punishing an innocent boy. Do you realise, Skinner, that such conduct places you in danger of expulsion from Greyfriars ? "

" I—I didn't think ! " trembled the wretched junior.

" You are fortunate that the facts have come out before, and not after, the injustice has been committed.



"Bolsover," said Mr. Quelch, "kindly lean over and pat Bunter on the back." "Certainly, sir!" Bolsover let Bunter have the full benefit of his leg-of-mutton fist, and the fat junior sprawled over his desk. At the same moment something shot from his mouth like a bullet.

Otherwise you would have been expelled at once. As it is, I shall recommend you to the headmaster for a flogging. You are a depraved and cunning young rascal, Skinner."

"Oh, scissors!"

"You will follow me after school to the headmaster, Skinner!"

"Oh, crikey!"

"And you will receive a very salutary lesson against plotting anything else in future."

"Oh, crumbs!"

That evening Skinner groaned long and loud in the seclusion of his study.

But we had no sympathy to waste on him. He deserved it all.

Billy Bunter was jubilant.

"Wasn't it lucky I managed to get hold of Snoop's toffee?" he remarked, with a beaming face. "I say, you fellows, after this I'm always going to keep some toffee in my mouth. It's safest, don't you think?"

"Providing you can get the toffee!" grinned the Bounder.

"Oh, that's all right. I've been round all the studies already, and I've got quite a large supply."

And Bunter rolled away leaving us speechless.

THE END

# DESERT WINGS



## THE FIRST CHAPTER

### THE ABSENT AIRMAN.

THE sharp, whining cry of the water-carrier was the only sound that disturbed the hot, noonday siesta of the crowded bazaar district.

In Baghdad—as in all the desert towns of Mesopotamia—life seemed to cease during the hours that the brazen sun crept across the hot zenith of the sky.

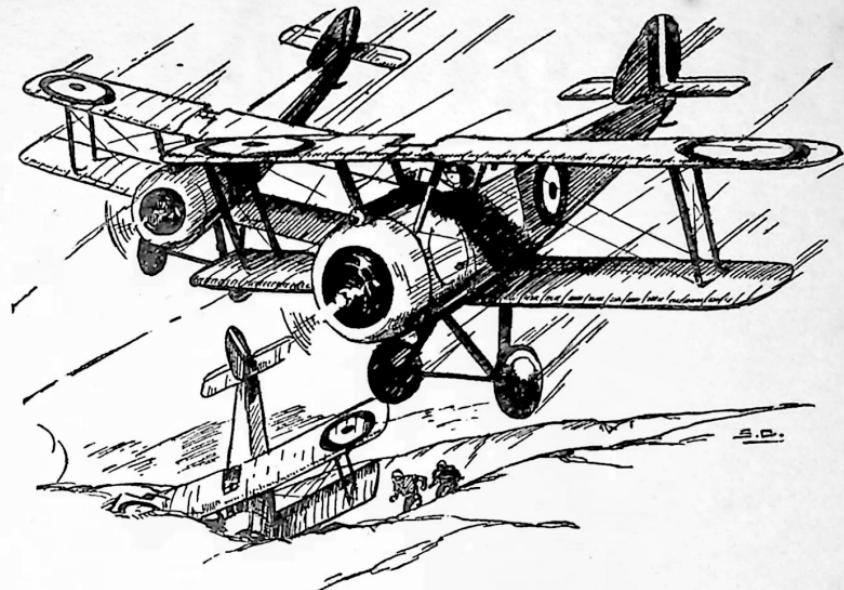
The crowded shops and stalls in the narrow bazaar streets were empty and deserted. Even the yellow pariah

dogs slept fitfully, waking to scratch lazily and snap at flies, in the deep purple shadows of the building walls.

The fact of war made little difference to the scattered city, clustering about the banks of the Tigris river. Men might be killed in their thousands, might die of the ravaging cholera that had already taken greater toll than the guns; but in the siesta, Baghdad slumbered.

All except the water-carrier.

With his drab-coloured burnous draped about his shadowed face, and with his distended goat-skin of



By  
**CAPTAIN ROBERT HAWKE**

*A grand long thrill-packed story of the Great War, featuring Baldy's "Angels," Britain's crack flying squadron, doing their "bit" in the East*

liquid hitched across his shoulder, he shuffled swiftly through the hot dust.

Copper drinking pans, clustered at his girdle, clanked musically in time with his incessant, whining cry.

"Water—sweet water! Ai, ai! Water for the Faithful! The greatest blessing of Allah, in a copper cup! Water—sweet water!"

Few there were who paid heed to his call as he shuffled through the bazaar and made for the northern side of the town, where the Union Jack floated limply over a cluster of canvas hangars.

The British aerodrome planted there made, indeed, the only sign of civilisation—or of war—in the age-old city of the desert.

When the cool of the afternoon arrived, the strange, mixed population would wake to go about its normal business, and even the occasional far-away thunder of guns from the Turkish positions would get no more notice than a shrug of the shoulders—or a curse.

Hebrews there were in Baghdad—swarthy, black-headed men from the green lands of Palestine—Egyptians and Moors, a few trading Bedouins, with their squealing, bad-tempered camels; sharp-faced little Greeks, Persians, and the lean, brown men of Syria.

All the sweepings from the far-flung deserts of the near East; superstitious, devout in their strange worship of Allah, the All Pitiful.

Chattering, squabbling thieves to a man !

The war echoed around them, sprayed them fitfully with machine-gun bullets—burnt their homes—or brought them profit ! The citizens of Baghdad shrugged their shoulders, anyway, and spat viciously into the sand at the mention of either British or Turk.

The foreign infidels made war ! It was the will of Allah ! What could a man say more than that ?

Shuffling and whining out his incessant cry, the water-carrier passed through the town, finding not half a dozen customers to drink from his goat-skin and receive his flowery blessing in return for a tiny coin.

He approached the aerodrome, his almost-hidden face running with sweat. Arrived there he halted for a few minutes at the command of a peevish-looking British sentry in a stained, khaki sun-helmet.

Fifty yards away two British flying officers, looking worried, walked up and down in front of the creaking hangars. A third officer came out to join them, and they turned to him at once.

"Listen, Baldy," said the tallest of the three ; "John Henry's been out four hours now, and I don't like the look of things at all. He said he was going straight down towards the Euphrates to take a look at the Turkish positions, according to orders. Both Bud and I have been out to look for him once, but we haven't found a sign."

Baldy Atlee, the famous little colonel who commanded the "Angels" Squadron of the Royal Flying Corps, wrinkled his brows. He was an American by birth, as was his nephew, Bud, who now stood beside the tall speaker. Both of them, however, had joined the British forces at the outbreak of war.

After a long and famous period of constant fighting upon the Western Front in France, they had arrived in Baghdad when the squadron was ordered East.

The battle here was against the Turk, who was allied with Germany. It was a scattered type of warfare, in a blazing, tropical country ridden by sandstorm and fever.

Lieutenant Langton Wagstaff, the tall, bronzed man who had spoken, spread his hands wide.

"I'm frightened to think of what that young ass has been up to," he went on, referring to the absent airman. "He wouldn't be John Henry Dent if he wasn't in some reckless scrape or another. In the ordinary way, I wouldn't mind. But the young idiot doesn't know this country. I'll bet he's been taking some potty risk and gone and crashed himself."

Bud Atlee grinned wryly.

"Well, if he's crashed, he sure must have buried himself in the sand," he said. "Visibility was good when I went out, but I didn't see or smell the slightest sign of a British machine anywhere. I spotted a Turk about thirty miles south and chased him for a bit—but he popped off home too quickly for me. Albatross, he was flyin'. Germany must be supplyin' 'em with new machines."

Baldy sighed.

"Well," he said, "we'll have to go out again, that's all. But if John Henry turns up here, safe an' sound, after havin' played some idiotic lark, I'll break his neck for him ! "

Having made this seemingly purposeless statement, he turned and bawled for a mechanic to bring out his own machine.

"You two stay here," he said. "You've done enough for to-day, an' you don't want to go down with the heat. I'll have a nose round this time."

"Aw, rot, uncle!" said Bud. "We're okay—an' you know you've been ordered not to fly more than you can help after that last crash of yours."

Baldy placed his arms akimbo, and glared at his nephew.

"Say, listen!" he said. "Who's the chief squeeze of this outfit? I'll have you know I'm as fighting fit now as I ever was. I'm in as good a condition to go nosin' about amongst the Arabs as Lawrence himself."

"Oh, yeah?" said Bud. "Well, you can shoot me for mutiny if you like, but if you try an' get in that machine of yours, uncle, I'll grab you by the scruff of your pants an' sit on you. But who is this guy Lawrence, anyhow? I've heard folks talkin' of him."

"Lawrence!" echoed Wagstaff, and there was a note almost of awe in his voice. "You mean to say you haven't heard of Colonel Lawrence—the man they're already calling the Uncrowned King of Arabia? Why, he's the bravest and most brilliant British spy who's ever lived. He goes amongst the Arabs in such a marvellous disguise that they've never found him out once. He speaks half a dozen languages as perfectly as the beggars do themselves. Why, man, that fellow carries his life in his hands every day he's on the job. And, what's more, he never leaves the job alone. He's earned the V.C. a dozen times over."

"Zat so?" said Bud. "Well, he sure seems to be a tough guy, an' I wish he was here to do a bit of sniffin' round to tell us where that prize, glass-eyed, crazy idiot, John Henry is."

## THE SECOND CHAPTER BALDY'S GHASTLY POSITION.

THE words were hardly out of Bud's mouth when the sentry from the gate appeared close behind

the group, with the dusty water-carrier marching a foot or so ahead of his bayonet.

Baldy looked at the two in some surprise, answering with a brief movement of his hand when the sentry saluted.

"Beg pardon, sir," said the man, "but this 'ere Harab speaks English, an' says he wants to talk to you."

"Hold your nose," whispered Bud, grinning, for Arabs were in the habit of taking a ripe odour with them wherever they went. This one, however, certainly did not advertise his presence in that way.

He stepped forward and, pulling his burnous back slightly, smiled at Baldy.

"Good afternoon, Colonel Atlee," he said in perfect English. "I should be obliged if you would give me a few moments, as I have to make a report of some importance."

Baldy's eyes, in that second, nearly popped out of his head.

"Great jumpin' catsnakes!" he gasped. "Say, listen—I've seen your picture. You're—you're—"

"My name is Lawrence," smiled the newcomer quietly. "But now, as the matter is urgent, may we talk?"

Baldy breathed unevenly, but, turning about, he led the famous spy into the small squadron office, where he offered a chair with something of a flourish.

"Say, Colonel Lawrence," he said, "I ain't good at makin' double-jointed speeches, but I sure am honoured to meet you. Gosh, you're the toughest guy I ever heard of! Your work out here—"

The newcomer interrupted with a laugh.

"I'm afraid you exaggerate things, Colonel Atlee," he said. "And, in any case, you've found out the meaning of fame to some considerable extent yourself! But now, I must

hurry over what I have to tell you. A squad of engineers, under the leadership of a lieutenant, set out into the desert, south of the Euphrates, six days ago. They left under secret orders, which were entrusted only to the lieutenant in charge. He, unfortunately, was killed by an Arab bullet on the second day. He had not passed the instructions on to his sergeant, and he was the only one of the entire squad who had enough experience of the desert to know where they were."

"Gosh! What a jam!" said Baldy.

Lawrence nodded.

"Yes, a nasty position," he agreed. "The unfortunate sergeant tried to make his way back, but he must have simply walked in circles at the head of his men. For anyone who had no great experience of the desert, the situation must have been awful. The squad was completely lost, and their water was running out swiftly. At last they found a half-dry oasis and made camp. But there a roving band of Bedouins found them and surrounded them. Six have been killed already in withstanding that ghastly siege. They are surrounded by about two hundred well-mounted Bedouins, and most of them must be down with the thirst-fever by now."

"We'll get out after them at once," said Baldy quickly. "Give me the direction, Colonel Lawrence, and I'll take my chaps out and give those Bedouins a good dose of machine-gun medicine that they sure won't forget in a hurry."

"Thank you," said Lawrence. "Take some extra water-bottles, too, and drop them as near as you can. I've got a camel-corps caravan started out to their relief, but they'll take some time. And there's always the danger of a sandstorm, which would obliterate the trail so that the camel-

corps people couldn't find the way."

He rose from his chair.

"Curiously enough," he said, "I thought you must have already heard of it, for a machine has crashed close by where the little party are besieged. I got the news from some Arab traders I met about fifteen miles south of Baghdad, here."

"Great gallopin' gum-boots!" breathed Baldy. "John Henry! I'll bet it's John Henry!"

He laughed uncertainly and made a gesture of apology.

"Excuse me," he said. "That machine must be one of mine. One of my boys lit out early to-day to have a look at the Turkish positions, and he hasn't come back yet. He's just the plucky sort who'd try to land on bad ground so that he could help a tough little bunch like that. But don't worry, Colonel Lawrence; I'll get my boys off right away."

"Then this is the position," said his famous visitor, taking a pencil and making a swift, rough sketch of the district. "Take that bearing, and you'll be sure to find them. They'll be easy enough to see from the air, but from the level of the desert itself a party might look for a week without finding a trace of them, especially if any sandstorm covers the tracks."

Baldy examined the sketch carefully, and then, shaking hands with the strangely disguised colonel, he opened the door.

"Good-bye!" said Lawrence. "Don't walk down to the gate with me; as a matter of fact, I'd rather leave alone, just as I came. Baghdad's full of eyes and ears, you know, and if a poor water-carrier is seen hobnobbing with a full-blown British colonel—well, there may be a little trouble."

With a final nod he shuffled out across the aerodrome, and his whining, high-pitched cry rose again as he



The Arab stepped forward, and pulling back his burnous slightly, smiled at Baldy. "Good-afternoon, Colonel Atlee," he said in perfect English. ". . . I have to make a report of some importance."

clanked his way down into the wakening town.

As was only natural, Baldy lost no time in getting to work once the great Lawrence had gone. Machines were rushed out, and the whole squadron began roaring up engines and threading fresh cartridge belts into their machine-guns.

It was then, however, that the wireless operator came running up to Baldy and thrust a scribbled message-slip into his hand.

"Just come from Central Headquarters, sir," he said. "It's marked 'Urgent, and for Immediate Action.'

Baldy read the message feverishly, but as he did so his face paled and he let out a mighty curse.

"Colonel Atlee, No. 1 Squadron, R.F.C., Baghdad," it ran. "Take full squadron and make immediate formation attack on Turkish position

at B.7. Pay special attention Turkish rear lines, and disorganise supplies. Keep going whilst petrol lasts, and return directly refilled. Continue concentrated operations until further orders.

"GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING."

"Great gallopin' gum-boots!" roared Baldy, shaking both fists wildly in the air. "Why in the name of thunder does Johnny Turk want to start playin' rough to-day for? To-day of all days! That position's fifty miles away in the opposite direction from John Henry and that stranded squad. For the love of Mike, what am I gonna do?"

He turned to Wagstaff, who had come running up and stared at the message over his shoulder. Both of them were pale, and there was a grim look in their eyes.

"We can't leave young J. H. and

that handful of men to an almost certain death out there in the desert!" breathed Baldy, almost pleadingly. "Say, Wagger, orders or no orders, we *can't* do that!"

"No," breathed Wagstaff. "But, Baldy, we can't have hundreds of English soldiers killed because we've failed to go over and prevent the Turk from getting his reserves up! If we don't go there and chase 'em to blazes, the opposing British force may get nearly wiped out in the attack!"

"I wish it were me there," he went on, "instead of young Johnny—he's such a kid. But we can't throw hundreds of lives away to save a dozen."

"Great snakes!" breathed Baldy in a soft, agonised voice. "Was ever a feller in such a ghastly position as this? I gotta murder my best an' bravest boy! An' if I don't, maybe I'll kill a thousand!"

### THE THIRD CHAPTER A SUDDEN ATTACK!

THE squadron roared away off the ground with a mighty thunder of exhausts. Behind it, a cloud of sand rose in the tremendous draught, half-choking the mechanics, who scattered and ran back towards the billowing hangars.

In the leading machine, Baldy sat white-faced and tense over his controls. He had received express orders—orders of the utmost importance and the greatest urgency.

As colonel of the squadron, he could not possibly disobey. The honour of the Flying Corps, as a whole, would be at stake if he did so. The lives of a host of fighting men hung in the balance, and he could not possibly let them down.

Flying to the left and right of him in the two key positions were his nephew Bud and Langton Wagstaff.

They kept perfect formation for about two miles after the squadron had left the aerodrome itself.

Then suddenly, Wagstaff's engine began to choke and sent back whiffs of whirling black smoke. He dropped down and out of the formation, as though he were trying to make his unwilling motor come back to life.

In that same minute, however, mysterious trouble seemed to afflict Bud's engine also. He, too, dropped down, his head bending forward in the cockpit as he apparently fiddled feverishly with his controls.

The squadron, according to usual orders, closed up in the places of the two missing men, and the formation roared on.

But Baldy was laughing wildly.

"The young skunks!" he muttered. "Engine trouble—my eye! I didn't dare give 'em the actual orders, an' they knew it. I'd have had to report 'em officially if they'd told me what they were goin' to do. But I guessed they'd do it! I *guessed* they'd do it!"

Still with laughter bubbling up in his throat, he roared on ahead, and did not even turn round to watch where the two absent machines had gone. If he didn't know anything, he couldn't report anything! His one feeling was that of wild gladness that Bud and Wagstaff had taken matters into their own hands in order to save John Henry's life.

Meanwhile, there was grim business ahead for himself, and he made up his mind to do extra good work to compensate his carefree disregard of this breaking of orders.

Within half an hour, the Turkish positions were in sight—a ragged, irregular line of trenches cutting like a scar across the hot brown face of the desert.

Already a bombardment had started, and it was clear that the Turks were preparing for a mass-

attack against the badly-battered British line.

Baldy set his teeth and led the remaining seven members of the squadron down in a screaming dive.

It was even as that dive started, however, that he had a vague impression of something moving against the sunlight above his head. The instinct of a born aerial fighter made him glance up—and it was that instinct which saved his life!

For a mixed squadron of German Halberstadts and Fokker triplanes were roaring down out of the "eye" of the sun—nine of them, howling down out of the yellow glare, where they had been hiding to await the arrival of a British squadron! Nine pairs of guns were dancing and flaring vividly, like eyes behind the spinning propellers of those machines!

Baldy rolled over in a magnificent Immelmann turn, which was, at the same time, the signal for break formation. Even in the second that he did so, his centre-section thudded and rattled—sunlight starred through it in a dozen places. His engine cowling rang sharply, and something like a vicious hornet whined a few inches past his nose and crashed through the flimsy cockpit-fairing.

His turn brought him in the reverse direction, and he dived at once, taking, as his mark, a camouflaged Fokker triplane whose pilot seemed to have lost sight of him for a moment.

Baldy dropped like a stone. He got the triplane squarely behind the tail, and his two guns jerked thunderingly, their Aldis sights rimmed in livid fire.

Wafts of acrid, cordite fumes and smoke whipped back into his face as he saw the triplane pilot rear up convulsively, and then disappear entirely in a splashing cloud of black smoke which blossomed out of his shattered petrol-tank!

Colonel Atlee went into a spin directly he saw he had scored, and for a thousand feet he accompanied that blazing, whirling Fokker in its downward path. He was dodging any counter-attack.

Then he straightened up, climbed like a rising wasp, and rejoined the whirling, diving battle that had started above. One of his own machines was out of the fight, too, but as it blazed earthwards he had no chance of making out exactly which one it was.

Of the seven men with him, there was none who was not a first-class fighting pilot. But as Baldy watched that battle during the climb he gained a solid respect for the Turks who were flying those German machines.

Turkey, fighting on the side of the Germans, of course, relied on the Kaiser's Imperial Air Service to supply them with both machines and instructors. It was quite evident that the Eastern allies of the Germans had proved very apt pupils. For the British squadron was not by any means gaining a walk-over in the fight.

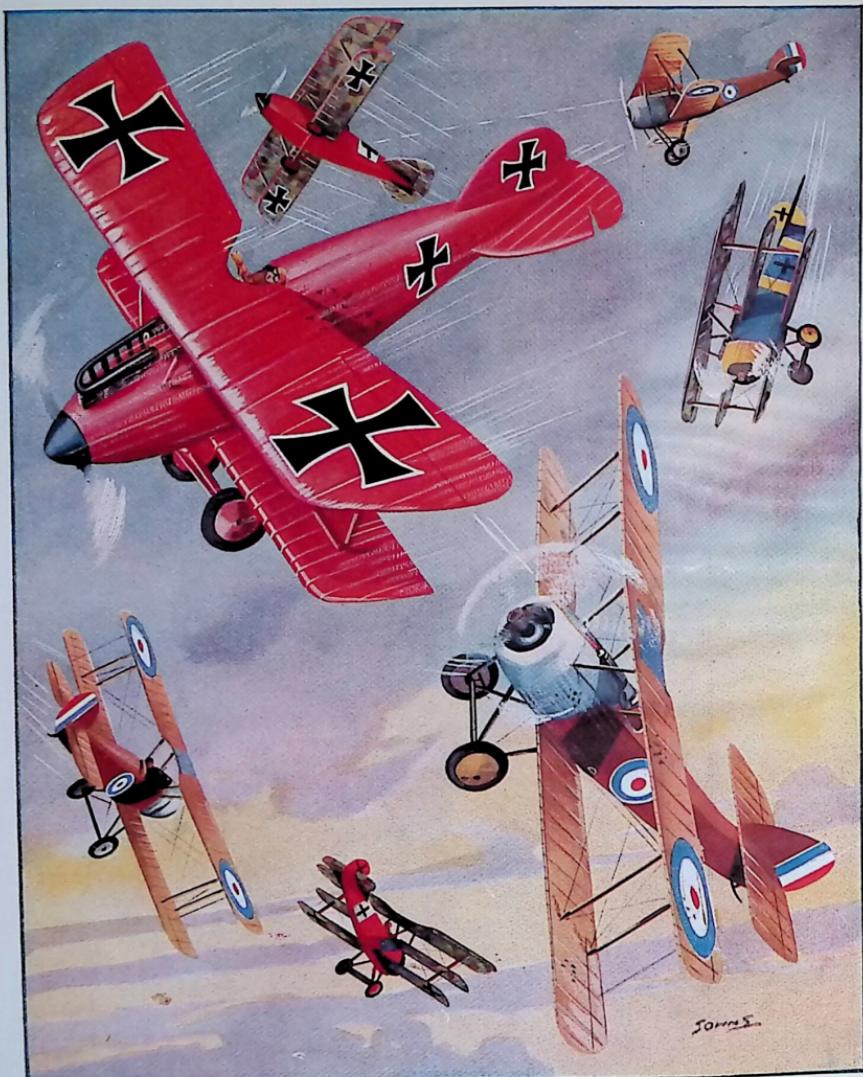
Two Halberstadts dived simultaneously on a British Sopwith "Pup," with their guns spitting. The Pup whirled over, spun out of control, and roared earthwards. With a howl, Baldy and three of his men went for the black-crossed machines.

The Halberstadts separated. One, camouflaged in a dozen different colours, howled away for the heights, trying to gain the protection of the sun, but it was headed off by a soaring Pup, which thundered after it in vicious pursuit.

Baldy shot after the other—a black-crossed machine, painted vivid red. He got it dead in his sights for an instant, but his bullet-burst merely ripped through the tail planes as the red pilot side-slipped frantically.

Baldy dived down beneath it and

THE DOG - FIGHT !



*Facing page 161*

Diving, rolling and banking furiously, British Sopwith "Pups" and German Halberstadts and Fokker Triplanes engage in a battle to the death!

*Specially drawn for the "Holiday Annual" by W. E. Johns.*

then wrenched his machine up on to its tail, whipping a burst of tracer bullets out as he did so.

Above him, he had a fleeting glimpse of the second Halberstadt reeling over giddily as its attendant Pup planted fifty bullets clean through the back of the pilot's seat.

Baldy watched his own tracers streaking out in a faint, livid line, and saw them nailing into the side of the red Halberstadt fuselage just above.

He saw the goggled pilot grimace wildly and crumple up. Then his own dashboard shattered, and the control stick split off short where he was holding it in his right hand.

For an instant, his machine wavered uncertainly as those bullets whipped down into it from above. He gave the rudder-bar a frantic kick; was almost blinded as a bullet clipped his goggles away from his face in a shower of broken glass.

He rolled clean upside-down, the red Halberstadt passing him in a spread of flame at no more than half a dozen feet.

Then, and only then, did Colonel Baldy Atlee get a full view of the Fokker triplane which had dived on him and come within a hair's breadth of bringing him down.

It was roaring up again now, anticipating his move as he rolled back on to an even keel. Tracer bullets were flying in a white hail from its flaring guns. But Baldy jammed over his broken control stick and dropped sickeningly in the opposite direction.

For a moment the two machines were almost head-on, but Baldy had the advantage of an unexpected move. In the next instant the Fokker's propeller had smashed into a cloud of fragments, and its pilot, badly wounded, was fighting dazedly to regain control.

Baldy left him and swerved away to join a chase after a remaining Fokker

which was now running fast from a relentlessly pursuing Pup.

But the chase was useless. Only that Fokker and one disabled Halberstadt remained in the sky now, and both were diving fiercely for the protection of their own guns.

Of the British squadron of seven, four, including Baldy, remained on the wing. And so the little commander jerked a Verey pistol from its clip and fired a red flare, which was the signal for his men to form up at his tail.

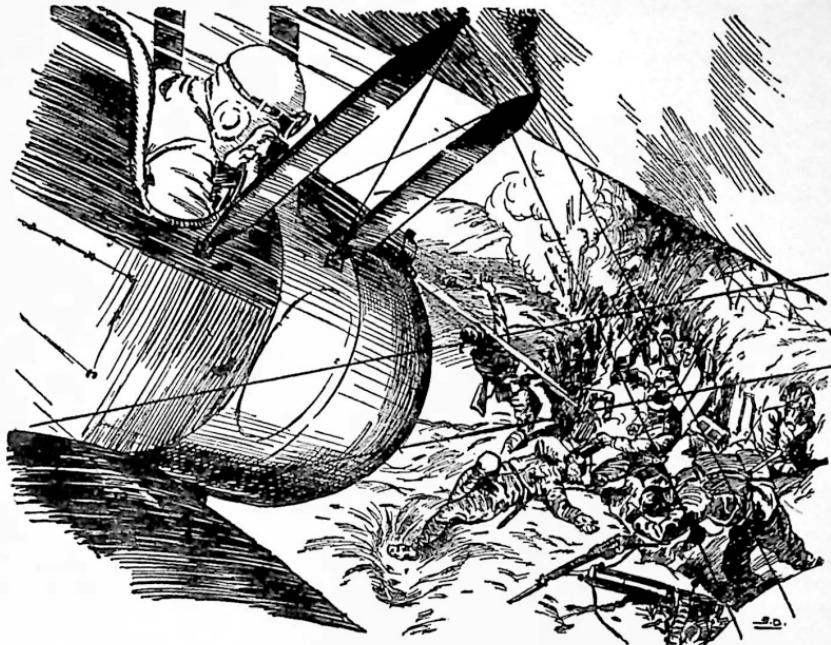
Then, leaving the vanquished enemy machines to seek safety unhindered, he dived away towards the trench-lines. He dived down below the danger of anti-aircraft gunfire and, followed by his squadron, roared up and down over the Turkish rear line, scattering reserves, firing ammunition wagons, and generally creating so much confusion that the coming attack was seriously hampered.

Indeed, by the time petrol had run so low that a return for refuelling was necessary, the Turkish forces had been very considerably disorganised. Moreover, they were fearful.

Their only available machines had been driven out of the sky, and they knew that this vicious force of British flyers would return to their work of confusion again and again.

In which they were perfectly right. During the next day and a half, Baldy and his men kept hard at work. One more machine was lost, but the disorganisation of the Turkish attack was so complete that it never really developed into the danger that it might have been.

Meanwhile, naturally enough, Baldy's thoughts were with Bud and Wagstaff. They had not yet returned, and he had seen or heard nothing of them since that moment when they dropped away from the formation.



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#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER THE SANDSTORM.

At the moment of dropping away, those two machines had lagged half-a-mile behind the roaring squadron and swung down to within five hundred feet of the earth, before their engines miraculously picked up again and hummed out upon the usual strong, healthy note.

Then Wagstaff swung round and set off southwards, whilst Bud picked up speed and gradually came level. The two pilots looked across at each other and grinned, but they exchanged no actual signal.

Both of them knew well enough that, by this movement, they were

liable to be court-martialled and shot. Indeed, if any wandering staff-officer had spotted what they were up to, he would certainly have put a report through—and then nothing that Colonel Baldy could do would save them from being stood up against a white wall opposite a firing-party.

But firing-party or no firing-party, they had both made up their minds to go and get John Henry back. The Three Musketeers of the Air they had been called on the Western Front—their watchword had been One for All, and All for One.

And now the two were going out to rescue the third without hesitation

and without counting the cost.

Wagstaff had seen that plan which Colonel Lawrence had drawn for Baldy, and he carried it clearly in his mind. Accordingly he set the right course and flew steadily for an hour in the hot sunlight, until at last a tiny blot upon the desert far below showed where the stranded party were entrenched about the water-hole.

As the two came closer, a crashed Flying Corps machine could be seen, standing up on its nose at the oasis side.

The tiny forms of men were clustered behind it for cover. Thin whiffs of smoke showed the rifle fire that was being carried on, whilst all around the spot the moving lines of Bedouin horsemen wavered back and forth among the sand-dunes.

Wagstaff and Bud both dived in the same moment, and their machine-guns rattled and danced viciously as they whined down upon those horsemen, scattering them and knocking a dozen from the backs of their plunging animals.

A thin, ragged cheer rose from the oasis as the two soared up again, and Bud waved cheerily. But Wagstaff was now looking grim.

The desert to the south was becoming misty, and the sky had toned down to a sickly yellow colour. Far away in the distance whirling ghosts seemed to be rising from that vast ocean of dry sand.

But Wagstaff knew that those whirling ghosts heralded the approach of a sandstorm coming up out of the south. That would prevent the camel-corps from finding their way to the little party, unless there was any means of guiding them to the spot.

The position was a grim one, and for a few minutes Wagstaff could not think of what to do. He and Bud dived again and yet again upon the Bedouins, but the wild men of the desert had

been attacked by aeroplanes before, and they knew how to act.

They broke up any kind of solid formation and scattered. They left their horses and ran for cover, shooting from the sandhills every time the two machines came thundering down.

And then, in one of these dives, Bud's face was suddenly deluged with oil, and only by something like a miracle did he avoid going straight down, head-on, into the sand.

As it was, he had to swing round and make a landing directly he had knuckled his eyes clear and straightened the machine up. He swore violently, for the trouble which afflicted his machine was only a mild one.

A Bedouin bullet had smashed one of the pipes from his oil tank, and he knew he could make a reasonable repair in about ten minutes. But he would have to land in order to do so—and landing on the uneven sand was a tricky business, as the fate of John Henry's machine showed.

Bud had better luck than his stranded friend, however. He made a wild "grasshopper" landing on the edge of the oasis, and his machine finished up without damage.

Then he coolly unclipped his belt and set about making the necessary repair without taking the slightest notice of the constant bullets which whined and zipped all about him.

John Henry Dent came staggering across, laughing and cheering. In his left eye was a somewhat sandy eyeglass, and a rough bandage was about his right wrist.

"What ho, what ho, what ho!" he chanted. "Dear old Rosebud! I guessed you and Wagger'd be along pretty soon. In fact, I've been cheering up these noble lads by telling them so. Dash it all, can I lend a hand?"

"You buzz off an' bury your head

in the sand, you telescopic-eyed, grinnin' sand-rabbit," advised Bud impolitely. "I've got an oil-leak, that's all. But you could make things a bit easier if you'd look for that darned Bedouin sniper who's takin' such an interest in me. Give him a bullet in the ear, there's a good chap."

"It's a pleasure!" grinned John Henry. "The goods shall be delivered at once, sir. But, pardon me, you didn't say which ear!"

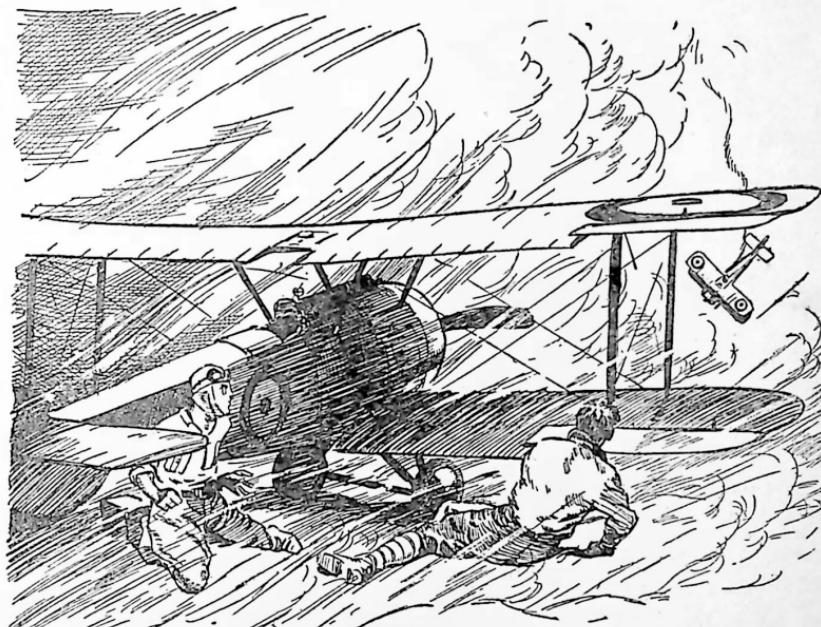
He ducked convulsively as a spanner whizzed from Bud's hand and missed him by inches. Then he scuttled off to the grimed and tattered group who were shooting from behind

the cover of his own machine. They paid the sniper all due attention—which eventually proved somewhat tragic for the sniper.

Meanwhile, Langton Wagstaff, surprisingly enough, brought his machine down, and landed it with brilliant skill close beside that of Bud.

With his engine still ticking over, he yelled out a message, and both the American and John Henry ran across.

"Quick!" bawled Wagstaff. "There's a sandstorm coming up, and I've got to get away and try to find the camel-corps, or otherwise they'll never reach you. I couldn't signal from the air, so I had to land to tell you. But don't take off in your



Crouched under the lee of the plane, Bud and John Henry watched Wagstaff's machine being tossed about like a leaf in the sandstorm. Then suddenly Bud let out a roar. "Jumpin' catsnakes, Johnny!" he gasped. "Wagger's done! Look, he's in a spin now."

machine unless you see the storm catch up with me and force me down. Stay here if I get away all right. You'll have a tough enough job fighting off the Bedouins when the blow's all over and they come out of cover."

Bud sized up the situation at once.

"Okay!" he shouted. "Get goin', Wagger."

He staggered on his feet as the first blast of the approaching storm whined across the desert, kicking up a whirling cloud of sand in a writhing, choking mist.

Wagstaff opened out his engine and set the little machine rocking and thundering over the levellest patch of sand he could see. He wrenched it into the air and turned swiftly, trying to get the wind behind him so that he could be carried by it until he could manage to rise above the blast.

Fighting wildly, he went for about a quarter of a mile, tossed about like a leaf in the fitful force of those tremendous, eddying gusts.

Bud and John Henry, crouched under the lee of the repaired Pup, watched him, holding their breaths. They lost sight of him for a few minutes, saw him again, and then Bud let out a roar.

"Jumpin' catsnakes, Johnny!" he gasped. "Wagger's done! Look, there he goes! The heat strains these machines all out of rig, an' Wagger's right wing-bay has failed under the strain. Look, he's in a spin now!"

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### A PERILOUS FLIGHT.

JOHN HENRY DENT, as soon as he saw disaster overtake Wagstaff, scrambled up into the cockpit of the machine beside him.

"I'll take her, Bud," he breathed.

"Dash it all, man, I don't want to be cocky. But if you grasp what I mean, I think I can manage to get through.

What I mean to say—d'you mind swinging the prop, dear old boy?"

Bud dashed round and swung the propeller without question. In spite of John Henry's present crash, in spite of his seemingly thick-headed ways, he was acknowledged to be far and away the finest pilot of the entire Royal Flying Corps.

People said, jokingly, that he had been born with wings on him. He had an absolute genius for control, and in this present circumstance—in such a matter of life and death—there could be no argument as to who ought to make the desperate attempt.

"Contact!" roared Bud, swinging mightily. "Good luck to you, Johnny—an' fly now as you've never flown before. Try an' spot where Wagger's fallen, if you've got a chance. Don't worry about us. Guide the camel-corps to him, an' pick him up before you come back here."

John Henry said nothing. It wouldn't have been much use, anyway, for his engine was now roaring all out, and the rising howl of the storm drowned any other sound.

Sand clattered and lashed against his machine, biting at his face and well-nigh blinding him, but he dared not put on his goggles. He ducked low in the cockpit, and sent the little craft swaying forward. Glass was useless in circumstances like these. In fact, it was useless to try to see anything much. He "felt" the controls, as an expert rider feels the reins of a sensitive, high-spirited horse.

Bud gave a sand-choked cheer as he saw that little machine swung up off the ground at the exact moment that it had gained sufficient flying speed.

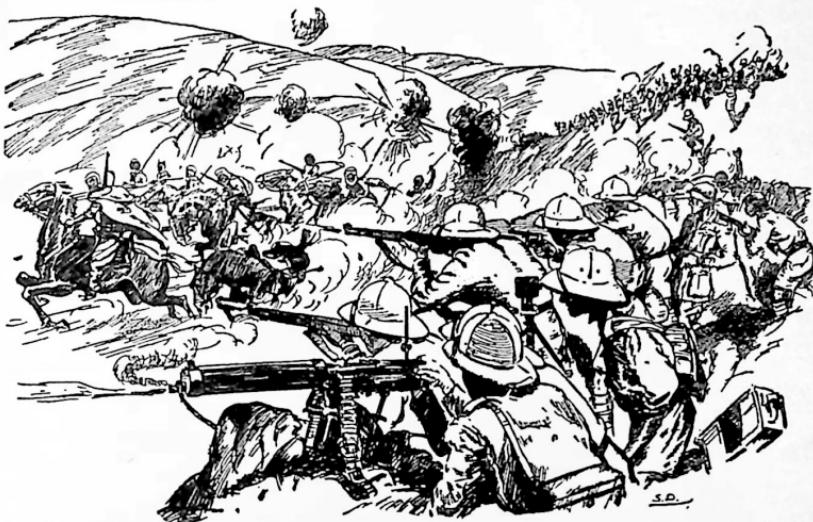
How John Henry had done it, he couldn't tell. It was a matter of instinct, of pure genius. But there was a lot of pure genius needed now.

John Henry flew completely blind for the next ten minutes. He couldn't see a single thing, and he seemed to be carried helplessly upon the crazy wings of that roaring, blasting storm. All the time his hands and feet were working upon the control-stick and rudder-bar with uncertain, jerky movements.

Why he made them, he could not himself have told. But the effect was that the machine kept a more or less

Then, at last, the worst fury of the storm seemed to abate, and he began to get a vague sight of his surroundings. What had actually happened was that he had got above the full fury of the blast, and he knew now that he would be safe, if he could only get more height and let the worst of the sand-storm thunder along below him.

Through the driving whirling sea of sand, he caught a momentary vision



Bud and the stranded men fought the Bedouins to the last. They had given up hope of help arriving when, suddenly, the relieving forces poured down out of the misty sandhills and raked the enemy with a fierce fire.

even keel and climbed at a fairly steady average.

Every strut and bracing wire creaked and protested violently. The gusts were so violent that, on one occasion, the rudder-bar was banged over and his feet knocked clear.

He had the control-stick wrenched out of his hand twice, and for some time the machine flew with one wing heavily down, and he feared that an aileron wire had parted.

of a wrecked machine far below him, and he marked his compass direction carefully. Then he climbed higher and higher, coughing and choking, but staring all about in the hopes of getting a glimpse of that rescuing column.

Actually, John Henry found the column—but he only found it when his petrol had run down to the last pint, and he knew he would have to make a landing, anyhow. To have

kept on so long was just another illustration of his cast-iron, inflexible courage.

Only the whining remains of that blasting storm were disturbing the desert when he finally saw the faint movement amongst the sand that showed where the camel-corps had taken cover.

John Henry gave a cracked cheer of relief and delight, and swung his machine down so that he could land beside them. The men who ran to meet him looked more dead than alive, covered as they were from head to foot with sand. Their eyes were mere slits, and their lips swollen and bruised. But had he only known it, young Mr. Dent was in a worse condition still. For the fierce draught of his propeller had flung the sand at his face with such force that he was scratched and bleeding in a hundred places.

The camel-column pushed straight on, however, not waiting for the storm to fully abate, and soon after dark had fallen they sighted Wagstaff's machine, and John Henry ran towards it with a yell.

Wagstaff, by good fortune, was not seriously hurt. He had a broken arm, and he was in considerable pain. But the disturbed sand of the storm had broken the worst of his fall.

He was hoisted straight away up on to a camel, and his injury given what first-aid was possible whilst they were still on the move.

And at dawn, the column came within the sound of rifle fire, and urged their bad-tempered beasts to full speed. The fight round the oasis was a sharp one, for the Bedouins had entrenched themselves against the storm, and had come out to finish off the helpless, besieged party directly it had finished.

Bud and the stranded men had decided to fight to the last, however,

even though, with the passage of the night, they had come to the conclusion that no help could be expected. When it did come, they could hardly believe it, but they fought on wildly.

The Bedouins gave up and galloped away on their horses about half an hour after the relieving force had poured down out of the misty sand-hills and raked them with a fierce fire.

So the little garrison was relieved, and the Three Musketeers, were once again reunited.

The results of that action have not passed into British official history, although the action of Baldy and the squadron has got its full chapter.

They finally got their orders to discontinue raids over the Turkish positions. But when Baldy climbed out of his machine on the aerodrome he received a note, which a sentry told him had been handed in by a shabby old Arab water-carrier from the town.

The note told Baldy that his three boys were safe—told him that they were being brought in, together with the stranded party they had so gallantly saved!

Baldy pranced in wild delight.

In his final report to headquarters, he tactfully made no mention of three machines lost far away in the desert in places where it was impossible to get them back. He merely notified headquarters that they had been amongst the battle casualties, from which the pilots had, by good fortune, survived.

Headquarters, in their brief reply, were kind enough to offer congratulations to the officers concerned.

Whilst down in the Arab town a water-carrier went on shuffling feet and cried his age-old call, to the musical jingling of his dusty copper pans!

THE END

# COKER'S LAMENT!



(The Fifth Form have been learning "Omar Khayyam" lately, and Coker has evidently adopted Omar's verse to vent his wrongs.)

ALAS ! The Smiles have faded from my Face,  
And on my Cheeks the Tears have left  
their trace,

For Lo ! the hamper of my Aunt has gone  
And Empty Atmosphere is in its Place.

Come, in the Fire all hopes of Pastries sling ;  
The thief has Gone, and hasn't left a thing.

A Bird named Bunter is the Culprit—yes,  
And well I know the Bird is on the Wing.

The hopes and dreams of Many Hours are  
dead—

Oh, how my Eyes have conjured up that  
Spread ;  
Jam tarts and Doughnuts, Ginger Wine and  
Cake—

They all with Bunter—in him, p'raps—have  
Fled.

Here, with a Loaf of Bread upon the Floor,  
A Book of Verse (old Virgil's) and a Score  
Of Empty Jars and Bottles on the shelf—  
This is our Tea—and what can man want  
More ?

Myself, when young, did Eagerly Frequent  
The studies of this Great Establishment,

But if I laid a finger on a tart  
I came through the same Door as in I went.  
Shall Bunter, then, make Free with our  
Preserves,

Pinch all our Pastries, shatter all our Nerves,  
Defy the Fifth with impudence, and then  
Escape the Record Kicking he deserves ?

No, never ! Yet too well I know the Snares  
Of meddling in the Lower Fourth affairs ;

At other times a Swarm of Fags have come  
And Collared me, and Rolled me down the stairs  
How long, how long, I've tried to Make them  
See

That every Fag owes deference to Me,  
That Greyfriars, prefects, seniors and all,  
To Horace Coker ought to bow the Knee.  
And this is the Result ! It comes to pass  
That Discipline is nothing but a Farce.

My hamper's gone, and Now the one word  
" Rats ! "

Is Scrawled in Ink upon my Looking-Glass.

The Moving Finger writes, and having Writ,  
Moves on. There's no Variety or Wit

In such a Cheeky Message ; but, My Hat !  
Don't I just wish I knew who Scribbled It.

But I will cease. What boots it to repeat

My wrongs, when I have Nothing left to Eat ?  
But let me get that cricket stump, and then  
You'll see some Fireworks Ah ! Revenge is  
Sweet.





# Pon's Little Mistake

By Mark Linley.

*Ponsonby & Co., the knuts of Highcliffe, hit on a bright idea for raidin' their rivals, Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars . . . . But the best-laid schemes "gang oft agley" . . . . and so does this wheeze of the Highcliffe knuts!*

Pon. chuckled.

"Up there in the tree, readin' a book. One of Wharton's pals, too—I forgot his name. This will help us no end, my pippins!"

"Dashed if I see how a Greyfriars cad up a tree can help us in raidin' Wharton's campin'-out stunt!" remarked Vav, warmly. "What's the idea, Pon?"

"Just this, ol' bean: to pretend we haven't noticed him an' discuss plans under his tree—cod plans!"

"Oh!"

"What we want to do is get Wharton an' his pals out of the way while we wreck their charm-in' little Boy Scout camp," went on Pon. "Well, suppose we stroll over to that tree an' talk as though we're goin' to raid a Greyfriars picnic-party on the river."

"Oh, gad!"

"Then it's a stone cert that the Greyfriars lout who's listenin' from above'll make a dash for dear ol' Wharton an' Co. the moment we've gone an' tell them to gó to the rescue!"

"Ha, ha! Oh, rather!"

Vav. and the rest grinned. They began to see the idea.

"They do these things at Greyfriars," smiled Pon. "Stickin' together

"**G**REYFRIARS cad!"

Ponsonby, of the knuts brigade at Highcliffe, made that exclamation.

Vavasour and Monson and Gadsby, who were walking through the Friardale Woods with their leader, looked surprised.

"Where?" asked Vav. "Can't see him!"

through thick an' thin—l'esprit de corps an' all that rot, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This chap'll fall for it like a lamb! Soon as we push off, he'll rush over to Wharton's tent. An' in a matter of seconds they'll all be chasin' down to the river, leavin' us plenty of time to make a thorough mess of what they've left behind 'em! Good wheeze, what?"

"Oh, gad! Rippin'!"

Vav. & Co. were enthusiastic. They didn't enthuse over many things; but the prospect of getting Wharton & Co. out of the way while they carried out a wrecking programme roused them completely out of their customary languor.

"We'll try it on," said Pon. "This way!"

He led the knuts across the glade, talking loudly as he neared the tree, in whose branches the unsuspecting Greyfriars Removite was reading his book.

"It'll be as easy as rollin' off a log, I tell you," he said, for that junior's benefit. "There are just three of 'em—Greyfriars Remove chaps, you know—an' they're picnickin' about half-a-mile beyond the bathin'-pool. If we break in on 'em unexpectedly, they won't stand an earthly!"

"Jolly good idea!" said Gadsby, taking his cue from Pon. "We'll pay off a few scores while we're about it—give 'em a duckin', perhaps. I suppose Wharton an' his mob aren't likely to chip in?"

"No danger from them," said Monson, in the same loud voice that his companions were using. "They're campin' out in the woods somewhere. They'll be nowhere near."

"Good biz!" grinned Pon. "Well, then, if you men are ready—"

"We're ready, ol' bean!"

"Good! Then march!"

They marched—until they were out of sight of the fellow in the tree, when

they promptly took cover in some bushes and waited to see what he would do.

They hadn't long to wait. Almost immediately the Greyfriars man climbed down from his vantage-place, pocketed his book and set off briskly through the woods in the direction of Wharton's tent.

"Swallowed it whole, you see!" chuckled Pon. "We'll give 'em five minutes to get away; then we'll step in an' do our stuff!"

"Oh, rather!"

The knuts waited just five minutes. Then, at a signal from Pon., they rose and tramped off in the same direction as the Greyfriars man had taken.

Wharton's tent was pitched in a sunny little clearing at the Greyfriars end of the woods. Pon. & Co. approached it with caution. But caution appeared to be unnecessary. There was no sign of the Famous Five.

"The birds have flown, methinks!" grinned Pon. "Leavin' their traps behind 'em! How awfully careless some people are!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fairly askin' for trouble!" chuckled Vav. "They can hardly blame members of the public who kick down their tent—like this!"

"Nor others who—whoop!"

Monson broke off, with a sudden yell. As if by magic, six Greyfriars juniors had appeared in the clearing—the Famous Five and the other Removite whom Pon. & Co. had previously seen in the tree.

"What the thunder—" gasped Vavasour.

"Oh, gad! They're still here, after all!"

"Run for it!" yelled Gadsby.

Before the knuts could escape, however, Harry Wharton & Co. had surrounded them, grinning.

Pon. & Co. were not grinning. They were glaring—Pon. at the



Ponsonby & Co. were tied together in a chain with stout cord, and, to the laughter of the Removites, sent uncomfortably back to Highcliffe.

Greyfriars men and Pon.'s followers at Pon.

"Fat lot of good your bright wheeze turned out to be!" said Vav. furiously. "The rotters are here in full force!"

"Blamin' me, then?" asked Pon., turning his glare to Vav.

Vav. snorted.

"It was your idea to talk about raidin' a river-party so that this Greyfriars rotter'd send 'em chasin' off, wasn't it?"

"What's that?" yelled Bob Cherry. "Oh, my hat! Then they must have stood under the tree talkin' cod-stuff to get us out of the way! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Harry Wharton & Co.—with the solitary exception of the fellow from the tree, who seemed, for some reason, to have missed the point of the joke.

"No wonder they strolled up here so boldly!" grinned Wharton. "They thought we'd be half-way down to

the river, leaving the coast clear for 'em. Will it surprise you, Pon., to know that this is the first we've heard of it?"

"What?"

"The chap who was up the tree simply came along to warn us that you were about," explained the grinning leader of the Friars. "That was why we made an ambush for you. He saw you all right, and he thought you intended some mischief. But he didn't hear what you were saying for his benefit!"

"D-d-didn't hear—" stuttered Pon.

"Not a word, old bean! Not a syllable! You see, he happens to be Tom Dutton; and as you don't appear to know it, we'd better tell you that he's as deaf as a doorpost. That's right, isn't it, Dutton?"

Tom Dutton looked surprised.

"I'm as tight as mutton? What the thump do you mean?"

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

Pon. & Co. looked at each other. Then they looked at Dutton. And if looks could have killed, the deaf junior of Greyfriars would have perished on the spot.

"Well, of all the luck—" muttered Pon.

"Of all the so-called leaders—" sneered Vav.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites roared—roared without restraint. And when they had finished roaring they tied Pon. & Co. together in a chain with stout cord, and sent them hopping uncomfortably and furiously back to Highcliffe.

And if one thing was more certain than anything else after that, it was that Pon. & Co. would never again lay "cod" plans for an eavesdropper to hear if there was the remotest chance of that eavesdropper turning out to be Tom Dutton!

THE END



# WALLY the WHALER

THE FIRST CHAPTER

DRUGGED!

WALLY BURKE stood on the hot beach at Condon, West Australia, watching a bluff-bowed whaler come to her moorings a couple of miles off shore.

An unfortunate circumstance and a lucky meeting with a tramp steamer were the reasons why Wally was at Condon. He had gone ashore in *Wally's a regular whale of a fellow* a dinghy at Broome, *—as his kidnappers soon find out* two hundred miles *when they get him aboard a whaler!* or more to the north-east, from his father's trading schooner, with letters and some shopping orders to execute.

At sunset he had tried to row back to the schooner, but he had found himself in the grip of a strong current which swept him past the ship. He had yelled for all he was worth, but no one had heard him. He was carried miles out to sea and, luckily

By PERCY A. CLARKE

for him, had been picked up by a Dutch tramp steamer that had no wireless apparatus. He had been set ashore at Condon, and now he was wondering how on earth he was to get back to Broome. Would his father's ship still be there, or would he have been given up for lost?

The whaler had steamed up from the south, and there was just a chance that she had simply put in for water and would proceed north again, probably touching at Broome. Many sperm whalers called there.

The whaler was a strange-looking ship, no bigger than a large-sized trawler. She was high in the bows and low at the stern. Her masts were strong and stumpy, and fitted with crow's-nests. Her smoke stack was thin and high, and the wheel-house

was built up high over the bridge, almost level with the top of the stack, so that the skipper could see over the towering bows.

Wally saw a longboat drop from the whaler's davits, saw men leap into her and the craft come towards him over the rollers. It landed on the beach a few yards from him. The bronzed seamen leaped out and hauled the boat clear of the waves. One of the men—a huge fellow with an enormous black beard and clear blue eyes—marched off towards the township.

The seamen were soon busy with water kegs, but Wally followed the bearded man, who was obviously an officer, and most likely the skipper. The fellow visited several merchants, and finally went into the one and only hostelry in Condon. Wally went in after him and sat down at the same table.

"Excuse me, sir," he said. "You're an officer aboard that whaler out there?"

The man stared at him, then made a gesture with his gnarled hand as if to brush Wally out of his way.

"Oi'm not wantin' any hands, younker," he said, in a musical Irish brogue. "Me ship's the Pelican, and me name's Finnegan—Cap'n Mike Finnegan. But Oi'm not wantin' any hands, so—"

"I don't want to ship as a deck-hand, sir," said Wally. "I was just wondering if you'd be touching at Broome. I want to get there quickly."

"And phwat would ye be wantin' at Broome, young shaver?"

Wally told him how he was placed, and Cap'n Finnegan listened with a twinkle in his eyes.

"My father would pay for my passage," concluded Wally.

"Bejabbers, he would, would he?" said Finnegan. "And who moight your father be, anyway?"

"If you know anything about this coast, sir," said Wally, "you've heard of my father—Captain James Burke of the schooner *Nautilus*."

"Great Brian Boru!" roared Finnegan, starting to his feet, his face as black as thunder. "Jim Burke's boy! Bad cess t' Jim Burke and everywan belongin' to him! Bad cess, Oi say, to—" He suddenly sobered down and began to grin, fingering his black beard and eyeing Wally with interest. "Jim Burke, hey!" he said. "Begorra, Oi don't know. Oi moight call at Broome. Sit down, ye young spaldeen. A cup of coffee, now. Oi knew yere father years ago."

"And you seem to hate him," said Wally dubiously.

"Forgit it," said Finnegan. "Oi'm an ould fool to worry about things as happened many years ago. Forgit it, young Burke. A cup o' coffee here," he called. "So you're Jim Burke's boy! And you run athwart the house o' Mike Finnegan. Faith, but 'tis a quare world, so 'tis! Ever been aboard a whaler? No? Thin, bejabbers, Oi'll show ye the ropes. There's my ship, the Pelican, the smartest whaler out o' Port Chalmers—"

"But are you touching at Broome, sir?" asked Wally.

"Well, Oi moight. But f'r ould toime's sake, young Burke—me wance bein' shipmates wid yere father—Oi'll take ye aboard the Pelican—show ye phwat a whaler's like. Dhrink yere coffee, now. Jist ye look at the Pelican, how she sits the rollers like a sea-gull. Take a look at her lines, young Burke. She's a beauty, she is!"

Following his pointing hand, Wally turned to gaze through the window, across the street and the yellow beach, at the whaler swinging at her anchor chain. He did not see

Finnegan drop something into his coffee. The captain was talking volubly and rapidly to divert his attention.

"A hard life, young shaver, is whaling. But Oi loike ut. Mebbe you'll loike ut, too."

"But I don't want to go whaling. I want to get to Broome," said Wally.

Finnegan burst out laughing, tilting his head back and opening his great mouth.

"Begorra, hark at the cock robin! Ye want to get to Broome—Jim Burke's boy—aboard Mike Finnegan's hooker. Well, dhrink yere coffee, and ye'll come wid me, so you will."

Wally wasn't sure what to make of it all, but he raised his coffee and drank. The stuff burnt his mouth and scorched his throat. He set the cup down, staring at the grinning Irishman opposite. Then the room swayed before his eyes. His head reeled and his temples throbbed. The floor seemed to rise and fall like the ocean rollers, and the grinning bearded face of Finnegan seemed distorted and twisted.

He made an effort to rise from his chair. He staggered this way and that, and the booming laugh of Finnegan rang in his ears.



Following Captain Finnegan's pointing hand, Wally turned his head and gazed at the Pelican. As he did so the captain dropped something into the boy's coffee.

"What—what have you done—done to me?" cried Wally. "You—"

Then he pitched forward and, Finnegan's mocking laughter still echoing in his ears, he lost consciousness.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### THE FIGHT ON THE PELICAN.

WHEN Wally came to his senses he discovered he was lying in a bunk in a stuffy fo'c'sle. The motion of the ship told him immediately that he was at sea, and the regular hum of the engine amidships, and the pounding of the propeller astern, told him that he was not aboard a sailing vessel.

He had to lay where he was a little while to gather his scattered wits; after which he sat up and stared about

him. He found burly men grinning at him—men of all nationalities, who were all oily and greasy. There was a heavy stench of whale oil over everything, mingled with the sickly smell of blubber. He was aboard the Pelican.

He was out of the bunk in a flash.

"Hullo, young Burke!" greeted one of the men. "Woke up?"

"Is this the Pelican?" snapped Wally, feeling bad-tempered.

"Sure—the Pelican, heading out for the Timor Sea after spermacti. Don't tell us you never knew!"

The men guffawed at that sally, but Wally ignored it.

"Cap'n Finnegan said he'd set me ashore at Broome," he said.

"Broome! I like that. The first port we touch will be Batavia, and that won't be for a fortnight, if the sperm are swarming."

"Then what does it mean? Why was—where is Cap'n Finnegan?"

"Up on the bridge, sonny," said one fellow. "But he won't thank you for disturbing him. Nasty man to upset, is the skipper, and if I were you—"

"I don't care!" cried Wally. "I haven't signed on as a seaman on this ship. He can't shanghai me and get away with it. Where is he?"

Wally rushed out of the fo'c'sle in a furious temper. The coffee had been doped and he had been carried aboard the whaler—why, he didn't know. He found himself on the fore-deck of the Pelican, and the superstructure of the steamer, surmounted by the towering bridge, completely overshadowed him.

Cap'n Mike Finnegan leaned out of a window of the wheel-house and yelled down at him.

"Hillo, young Burke! You get along to see cookie in the caboose. You're cook's boy aboard this packet. And, begorra, you jump to orders."

"I'll do nothing of the sort!" retorted Wally. "I haven't signed my name on the ship's books, and I don't take orders from you, Cap'n Finnegan!"

The skipper disappeared, then came clattering down the ladders until he reached the hurricane deck. He vaulted the weather rail and landed lightly on both feet on the foredeck, not a yard from where Wally stood, his big black beard bristling with rage. He reached out and gripped Wally's shoulder. His strength was amazing and Wally was absolutely powerless.

"Answer me back, would ye!" roared Finnegan. "By St. Patrick, Oi'm the man to knock sense into Jim Burke's boy. Oi'm skipper o' this hooker and my word's law. Ye hear? Do as ye're tould, young Burke, or ye'll smart for ut. Oi owe Jim Burke a thing or two. Oi can't git it back on him, the spaldeen, but Oi'll show his boy a thing or two. Yis, bejabbers—jump to ut. Report to cookie, you—"

He thrust Wally from him with such force that the boy slithered several yards along the deck. The skipper struck out savagely, but Wally dodged the blow, and stood by the break of the hurricane deck, a fighting glint in his eyes.

He knew he couldn't help himself. At sea, in that part of the world especially, many miles from civilisation, a skipper was a law unto himself, and Wally couldn't fight Finnegan and his ship's company single-handed.

"Very well, Cap'n Finnegan," he said angrily. "I'll obey orders, since I can't help myself. But you shanghaied me at Condon—I don't know why and I'm not asking—not now. But the day will come when you'll be sorry for it. That's all!"

Cap'n Finnegan thrust back his

head and laughed aloud, and the crew, gathered under the fo'c'sle to watch proceedings, joined in his merriment.

To peals of laughter Wally walked along the alleyway towards the caboose, or galley.

He soon found out what had been prepared for him. The greasy cook kept him hard at work every minute of the day, swabbing out the galley, peeling potatoes, running and fetching, waiting on the oily men in the fo'c'sle, who thoroughly enjoyed the situation, and washing up the greasy crockery in a bucket of sea-water.

Everybody jeered at him and mocked him, but he made no complaints. He was biding his time. He was a little perplexed about his being shanghaied, but he had heard enough to tell him that this was Finnegan's way of getting even with his father over something that must have happened years previously.

Wally was not easily aroused and could stand a lot of gibing ; but Finnegan's own son, a lad about Wally's age, and typically Irish, teased Wally unmercifully for two whole days until it became unbearable.

On the third day out of Condon, in the Timor Sea, with the tropical sun scorching down out of a copper sky, matters reached a head.

Wally was sitting under the alleyway, not feeling too pleased with himself, scraping away at potatoes, when Pat Finnegan came along, ripe and ready for a jape. His foot shot out and the bucket was sent flying, potatoes rolling everywhere.

Seamen who saw it guffawed loudly. Wally, however, had had about as much as he could stand. Pat Finnegan fled down on to the foredeck and Wally went after him, leaping down the ladder with one bound. Pat heard him land on the deck and spun round.

"Arrah, now, and phwat d'ye mean comin' after me that way ?" he demanded cautiously.

"I've had all I'm standing from you, Pat Finnegan !" snapped Wally.

"I'm going to give you a good hidin'!"

"Hooroosh !" cried Pat, squaring up. "Oi'm burstin' f'r a foight. Come on, young Burke, ye spaldeen, and whin Oi've finished wid ye, begorra, ye're own mother won't know ye. Come on !"

He struck out, but Wally parried the blow and came back with a half-arm jab that stung Pat's cheek. Cap'n Finnegan leant out of the wheel-house window, chuckling with huge amusement.

"Bate him up, Pat !" he roared. "Bate him to a pulp, or Oi'll be afther marking ye wid a rope's end !"

The crew turned out to watch, and they shouted encouragement and advice to the skipper's son. But Pat had no time to heed it, for Wally was giving him something to think about.

They sparred about all over the foredeck, with Cap'n Finnegan yelling to his son.

"Foight him, Pat ! Bate him up !"

Pat did his best, and Wally shipped several hard blows in his face ; but Wally returned them, with interest. He was only too eager to repay Pat Finnegan for the ragging, and he sailed into his adversary with a will. He drove Pat round and round the deck, so that the Irish lad had to fight on the defensive, until Wally began to tire.

Then it was Pat's turn, and Wally suffered. But there was no thought of giving in by either of them. Pat was a fine fighter, and if Wally had not been every bit as good he wouldn't have lasted long against the captain's son. As it was, they exchanged blow for blow.

Wally began to respect Pat's skill and pluck. Pat began to admire Wally for the self-same reasons. They stood toe to toe hitting away at each other until one retreated a pace. It was an equal fight, and the crew forgot that Pat was the skipper's son, and took sides, so that some yelled for Pat and some for Wally.

Wally dodged a swinging blow at the ear and came up with a beautiful upper-cut under Pat's guard. It landed on the Irish lad's jaw and sent him slithering along the deck on his back. But Pat was soon up and on his feet, a rueful grin on his bronzed face, and still game.

Wally waited for him to recover. It was a sporting action, and the skipper's son appreciated it. But Pat couldn't resist a joke, even then. A bucket of greasy water stood under the bulwark, and as quick as lightning he seized the rope handle and flung the contents at Wally.

But he wasn't quick enough. Wally saw it coming and dodged out of the way; but Ah Loo, a Chinese fireman, coming up the forehatch at that moment, caught the greasy water full in the face. He was drenched in the vile stuff from head to foot.

Pat gaped, dismayed by what he had done. The Chinaman stood there a moment, a look of fury on his face. The seamen guffawed, and Cap'n Finnegan's laugh boomed louder than any.

Then Ah Loo suddenly whipped into action. He drew his knife and plunged at Pat Finnegan, who fled from him. Pat's foot slipped and he fell headlong by the for'ard hatch. Another second and Ah Loo would have been on him, dangerous in his unreasoning rage. But Wally leapt at the fireman, and with one blow of his fist knocked him into the scuppers. The knife dropped from the China-

man's hand and Wally kicked it out of his reach.

"That's enough of that, Ah Loo!" he said tersely. "That wasn't meant for you; it was an accident."

Ah Loo scrambled to his feet, scowling at Pat Finnegan.

"All same insult," he growled.

By that time Cap'n Finnegan had arrived on the foredeck and confronted the Chinaman.

"Arrah, now!" he cried, thrusting a pound-note into Ah Loo's hand. "Wipe out the insult wi' that. Pick up yere knife and kape it in yere belt, or, begorra, Oi'll handle ye meself!"

Ah Loo pocketed the note, picked up his knife, and shuffled for'ard to the fo'c'sle, an inscrutable look on his yellow face.

"Bejabbers, ye'll have to watch out there, Pat, ye spalpeen. Thim Chinese can't forgit things loike that."

Wally had walked back to the alleyway, where the cook was yelling from the galley:

"What about these spuds?"

Wally began to pick them up, and Pat Finnegan joined him.

"Ochone, Wally," he said, with a friendly grin. "Ye've baten me face to a mash and Oi can't laugh at all. But for why did ye wallop Ah Loo?"

"Hang it!" replied Wally. "He looked dangerous with that knife!"

"Haven't Oi been after makin' yere loife unbearable? Why should ye save me from Ah Loo's knoife? 'Tis a sportsman ye are, Wally Burke, and Oi'm proud to have fought ye. And since Oi upset the praties, Oi'll help ye pick 'em up."

Which he did, and Wally and Pat Finnegan were pals from that moment, a fact which puzzled the skipper.

"Great Brian Boru, and phwat does ut mane?" he muttered. "The boy o' Mike Finnegan palling up wid

Jim Burke's boy. It manes throuble, as sure as St. Patrick swam the Liffey wid his head under his arm ! "

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

" THERE SHE SPOUTS ! "

UNNOTICED by anyone, clouds had crept up out of the sou'-west and gradually obscured the sun. Cap'n Finnegan suddenly dived into the chart-house to study the glass. The waves became crested with creamy foam, the wind freshened, and the colour of the sea changed from deep blue to a deep, dull green.

It was obvious to everybody that a storm was coming.

" Stand by to bat-ten down hatches ! " bellowed the mate from the bridge.

All the crew tumbled out, except the harpooners, who never work the ship at all unless in a crisis.

Then, sud-denly, from the crow's-nest there came the welcome cry:

" There she spouts ! "

A whale ! A sperm whale, rolling listlessly on the waves and spouting its fountain of spume high in the air.

After that everything was completely forgotten aboard the Pelican, and nothing else mattered except the harpooning of the sperm. Cap'n

Finnegan was on the platform on top of the wheel-house, the mate went up in the for'ard crow's-nest, while the harpooners and their mates took command of the fo'c'sle and got the harpoon gun ready. The lines were ready on the winches, spears and harpoons to hand in the racks.

Finnegan brought the Pelican round in a great sweep until she was

Pat Finnegan grasped a bucket of greasy water and flung the contents at Wally ; but Pat was not quick enough—neither was Ah Loo, to dodge, and he received the bilge-water full in the face !



steaming up into the wind. The whale had sounded and there was no sign of the great animal at all. Wally was up on the fo'c'sle beside

Pat Finnegan, ready to help with the running gear.

Dense volumes of smoke belched from the stack, the propeller churned up the sea, and the ship ploughed ahead until the mate in the crow's-nest bawled at the top of his voice :

" There she blows ! Hard aport ! "

Round came the Pelican, so sharply that the men had to grip the rails to remain upright.

"Stand by, harpooners!" yelled Finnegan.

The huge spermaceti rolled lazily in the swell right in the path of the oncoming whaler.

Nearer—nearer, a hundred yards—the whale. Wally waited tensely, fifty, thirty—the Pelican steamed to thrilled by it all. Pat was beside him, his eyes glittering.

"Begorra, but she's a whopper!" he muttered excitedly.

"Now!" bawled Finnegan.

The chief harpooner of the Pelican had the fo'c'sle gun sighted. Suddenly the charge blared, and the smoke was flung back, acrid and stinging, into the eyes of the linesmen. But the harpoon, the line snaking behind it viciously, sped true to its mark and buried itself deep in the blubber under the fore fin of the sperm.

Finnegan shouted orders to the helmsman and the wheel spun round. The Pelican moved to starboard slightly, while the whale rolled over, struck the water a thundering smack with its flukes, spouted a fountain of blood-flecked spume, then dived deep.

Wally was busy keeping the line clear as it ran out at a terrific rate. The winch rattled and wheezed, revolving so fast that it was merely a blur to the human vision. The sockets smoked from the friction and Wally had to cast bucket after bucket of water over the whole contraption to prevent the heat burning the line.

The whale was travelling fast, fathoms deep. It pulled the high bow of the steamship down until the fo'c'sle rail, instead of being nearly eighteen feet above the water, was now barely five feet from the foaming wave-crests, with water bubbling over the bulwarks of the foredeck and

racing down to the break of the hurricane deck and pouring out through the scuppers in cataracts.

"The biggest this season, bejabbers!" yelled Cap'n Finnegan. "Stick to her, bhoys!"

The sperm was dragging the steamship along, although the propeller was driving it astern. But at last she came up about ten yards abeam on the port side, and spouting blood and spume, shot off astern. She almost got the line round the Pelican's screw, but Finnegan brought the ship round smartly, with the engine driving ahead once more. The stern harpoon gun blared, and the iron head buried itself deep in the sperm's flanks.

Her flukes beat the water to a foam, then she dived again, but not so deep. She was losing strength fast. Finnegan paid out on his stern line and sheered off a bit, bringing the nose of his ship round to face the whale. As she broke surface for the second time, the fo'c'sle gun let her have a third harpoon well in the shoulder.

The sperm reared up until her flukes were high in the air. She came down with a report like a cannon, and the whalers cheered.

"The death flurry!" cried the chief harpooner. "She's finished!"

The whale made off again, diving and travelling in a last fierce endeavour to escape. The stern line was paid out, but the bow lines were hauled in, checking the stricken Leviathan. The Pelican was set astern, but the sperm towed her ahead for some distance, pulling her bows down perilously near the gurgling wave-crests.

The whale came up again to blow, and the winches rattled, hauling in the slack of the lines, so that the ship was brought nearer and nearer to the quarry. The spearmen stood

by with their long-handled spears, ready to leap down on to the back of the monster and drive their lances into her heart.

Wally was as keen as anybody on the struggle as he stood by his winch. The harpooner handed him a curved knife.

"You'll be wanting it," he said. "Fix those irons to your boots. Stand by with the grapples and pass that line under her fore fin when she comes alongside."

Wally quickly fastened the iron spikes to his feet, so that he would be able to leap on to the back of the dead spermaceti and walk about on her slippery bulk.

All the time—a fact which the whalers disregarded—the storm clouds were increasing from the sou'-west, lowering over the scene, and making the light dim. Away in the distance the thunder rumbled and roared.

The whale tried to dive again, but its strength was not equal to it. The winches rattled wildly to gather in the slack and haul that almost lifeless bulk to the side of the ship. Every man available was on deck, most of them up in the fo'c'sle head. Even Ah Loo was there, his face expressionless as he handled the ropes with deft hands.

A great wave tossed the Pelican



Knife in hand, Ah Loo leaped for the still form of Pat Finnegan, but he was met by Wally's fist, which sent him reeling backwards, to slide into the rough sea.

high, then shot her down in the trough beside the whale. A spearman on the foredeck leaned over the bulwarks and struck downwards with a great spear, driving the blade in under the great fin as the whale rolled listlessly. The steel went into her heart. The great fluke rose in a flurry and smote the water with a report like a cannon, sending the water in sheets of stinging spray high over the smoke stack of the Pelican. The huge body quivered convulsively, and then went limp. The spermaceti was dead!

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER WALLY'S WIN !

In a flash, the spearmen were swarming over the corpse. A bight of cable was passed round the tail

of the monster. The winches and windlasses creaked and rattled.

"Haul in y'r slack!" bellowed the mate.

"No!" yelled Cap'n Finnegan. "Cut loose, ye spalpeens! We'll pick her up again later. Cut loose—set her adrift—f'r yere lives, bhoys!"

The whalers suddenly realised that the sky was pitch black; that the storm was upon them. The clouds seemed to split asunder in a riot of flame and rolling thunder.

The whalers scrambled from the body of the whale to the deck of the ship. They cut the cables that held the Pelican to her catch, but the harpoon lines, which they always endeavoured to salvage, still remained fast.

The great waves reared up to the lowering clouds. The ship was tossed about like a cork. The whale struck the side of the vessel a shuddering blow, and the lines on the fo'c'sle went limp. Then the corpse was flung away by the waves. The lines were as quickly pulled taut, and the sudden jerk shot three dark figures helpless over the rail into the raging sea.

Wally was one of them. He lost his balance, hit the rail, and over he went. Deep down in the warm sea he sank before he shot up to the surface, his lungs almost bursting. It had all occurred so suddenly that hardly anyone realised what had happened. The harpoon lines had snapped, and the Pelican was steaming away from the drifting whale to save her plates being buckled.

Wally was washed up beside the whale. He saw a lance sticking out from the blubber and reached it, gripped it, and hauled himself up on the great shoulder, while the storm raged over his head. The rain came down in sheets and almost beat the breath out of him with its violence.

The lightning cracked and flashed like an arc lamp; in the light of it he saw Pat Finnegan's white face in the water beside the whale. He slithered down the slippery surface, digging his spiked boots well into the blubber, and managed to grip one of his hands. He hauled with all his might and reached the highest point of the whale's shoulder, dragging Pat after him. The skipper's son lay where Wally had hauled him, unconscious. His head must have struck the rail as the taut line had swept him overboard, for there was a jagged wound in his temple.

As Wally studied him a movement behind made him turn, and as the lightning lit up the scene, the blood ran cold in his veins, for Ah Loo was there, creeping along the body of the whale, his knife in his hand, his narrow eyes focused on the still form of Pat Finnegan.

Suddenly the Chinaman leapt, but Wally moved equally quickly. He stood up, dodged the sweeping blow of the knife, and his fist came round in a fierce blow that landed on Ah Loo's ear. The Chinaman went down, the knife dropping from his hand, and he slid into the water.

The knife would have followed him, but Wally grabbed it. Ah Loo cried out shrilly with fear. He was swimming and vainly trying to get a hold on the smooth, rounded body of the sperm. Lightning lit up the scene, and Wally saw a wedge-shaped fin careering through the water. Sharks!

Wally hastily scrambled his way down by the fore fin and clawed along to where Ah Loo was swimming.

Wally reached down and gave Ah Loo his knife.

"Jab it in!" he shouted. "Get a hold that way!"

Ah Loo understood. He stabbed the knife into the whale and so got a

hold to enable him to help Wally, who had gripped his shirt collar, haul him clear.

But the shark made a frantic rush at the last minute, and turned over to snap at the Chinaman's feet. Ah Loo screamed frantically. Pat Finnegan, however, had regained consciousness and seen the danger. He had snatched a spear from the blubber of the whale, and aided by his spiked boots, came down to help. He struck downward viciously, and the shark slid away in blood-stained water, the spear sticking from its side.

With one more heave, Wally hauled Ah Loo well up on the whale. The Chinaman clutched his knife in his hand. He sat there a moment, eyeing Pat while Wally waited for what was to come. Then with a quick movement, Ah Loo tossed his knife yards away into the foaming waves.

"Ah Loo would have killed. Your fiend savee you—tly savee Ah Loo. You killee shark, savee Ah Loo. Insult all same wiped out. Ah Loo forget."

"Bejabbers!" exclaimed Pat. "'Tis meself as is glad, Ah Loo, for why should Oi be afther insultin' any man? But ye're the hero, Wally, darlint, for didn't ye haul me out first?"

"Never mind that," said Wally. "Grab that lance and hold on, or you'll be washed off. We're in a nasty mess, and may never see land again."

"Bad cess t'ye for a Jonah!" cried Pat. "My father never loses his fish! Bejabbers, he'll find us come dawn, and a dead whale will float for weeks."

All through the night the three castaways clung grimly to the lances thrust deep in the blubber, while the storm raged all around and the waves ran mountains high, enveloping them in sheets of stinging spray.

But with the dawn came a respite.

The storm blew itself out—and away on the horizon was a smudge of smoke that ultimately resolved itself into a ship.

"The Pelican!" cried Pat.

He was right. It was the Pelican, and Captain Finnegan was as pleased to see them and the whale as they were to see him.

"By rights," said Pat, when he had finished explaining to his father what had happened, "'tis Wally's whale. He deserves it, for wasn't he afther savin' me loife, Ah Loo's as well?"

"I don't want the whale," said Wally. "I want to go to Broome to rejoin my father."

"Bejabbers, an' so ye shall, Wally Burke!" exclaimed Captain Finnegan. "'Twas meself as never intinded ye should get to Broome, but afther all this shenanigan ye deserve it."

"But," said Wally, "I'd like to know just why you shanghaied me at Condon."

"Sure, and Oi will," said the skipper, with a twinkle in his eyes. "'Twas many years ago, whin all of us seamen were tough guys. Yere father was as tough as any, and he shanghaied me off the waterfront at Penang. Not that he ill-treated me, mind. But Oi swore Oi'd git even wid the spalpeen wan day. Only Oi never got the chance until ye came walkin' up to me at Condon. 'Glory be,' Oi ses to meself, Oi ses. 'Since Oi can't make Jim Burke smart f'r shanghaiing Mike Finnegan, then, bejabbers, I'll make his son lose himself f'r a toime, and Jim Burke'll suffer that way,' Oi ses. But ye've come through it with credit, Wally Burke, and 'tis proud Oi am to have known ye. And as soon as Oi get the oil in barrels and under hatches Oi'll chase yere father's schooner, if it takes me months, and give him his son back."

And he was as good as his word!

THE END

# Who's Who at St. Jim's

By MONTY LOWTHER

*Personal Pars on the Leading Lights of the School*

DR. HOLMES. The "kindly old Head" of St. Jim's. He was so kindly on the occasion of my last visit to him that I haven't been able to sit down since!



Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's.

MR. VICTOR RAILTON. The muscular Housemaster of the School House. Is alleged to spend an hour a day beating carpets to keep himself fit for his work!

MR. HORACE RATCLIFF. The Housemaster of the New House. Has a slightly jaundiced outlook on life. Wore out a new set of false teeth last term in making biting remarks. Thinks vinegar an awfully sweet drink. Stays away from circuses for fear of being taken for a performing chimpanzee; but there's really no danger of that—he's not good-looking enough.

ERIC KILDARE. Captain of the school. So popular that when he goes for a walk round the quad he has to disguise himself to dodge the cheering crowds.

TOM MERRY. Arrived at school in velvet knickerbockers; but now he's lived that down, I trow sir! (Brilliant pun, in case you didn't notice it.—M. L.)



Tom Merry, as he first arrived at St. Jim's.

GERALD CUTTS. The gay dog of the Fifth. His lips curl, his smile is twisted, and he wriggles out of difficulties. In other words, he's not straight.

GERALD KNOX. The amiable sportsman of the Sixth. So amiable that dogs cringe instinctively when he turns up. Hobby—backing geeges. Ambitions—nil.

BAGLEY TRIMBLE. The celebrated "Baggy" of the Fourth. Handsome, brainy, athletic and rolling in wealth—so he says. But if you want to find him at St. Jim's, look for a chap with a face like a squashed pork pie, who's as athletic as a slug, and button-holes you for half-a-crown the moment he sees you.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY. A fellah of gweat tact an' judgment; flichtfully partic. about his clobbah. Decowates his wight eye with a pane of glass which he nevah dwops. To level things up a bit, he dwops all his final "g's."

JACK BLAKE. Leader of the Fourth. Has an idea he ought to be junior captain of St. Jim's. In other respects seems to be fairly sane.

GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY. Some fellows say it's his face they



Bagley Trimble, the fat Fourth-Former.

don't like ; others say it's his bumptiousness ; still others maintain it's his densesness. But it's unfair to blame these things on to him. The fact is, Grundy was born like it and just can't help it.

**RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW.** Gussy's cousin, but that's not his fault, poor chap. Cardew's supposed to be a queer mixture. He's good yet bad, plucky yet cowardly, handsome yet ugly, energetic yet lazy, and popular yet unpopular. A fellow of contradictions, so to speak.

**BERNARD GLYN.** The great inventor of the Shell. He's so good at inventing that on a recent occasion when Railton caught him breaking bounds he promptly invented an excuse.

**GEORGE CROOK.** Crook would be one of the best but for the fact that he happens to be one of the worst.

**HERBERT SKIMPOLE.** A reformer whose anxiety to put the world right usually means that he gets left.

**FATTY WYNN.** One of the New House horrors, but the leading junior goalkeeper in spite of it. Once Fatty stands between the goalposts, there's simply no room for the ball to get through !

**WALLY D'ARCY.** D'Arcy minor. Leader of the Third. Hobby—frying herrings on penholders. Pet aversion—soap.

**EPHRAIM TAGGLES.** The ancient keeper of the gate. Historians have sometimes listened to his reminiscences of the St. Jim's he knew in the old days. They say afterwards that Taggles is either 400 years old or a fibber !



Ephraim Taggles, the ancient keeper of the gate.

**G E O. R G E FIGGINS.** Leader of the New House juniors. You can recognise him by his spidery legs and enormous feet. Not a bad chap, considering the "casual ward" he has to live in.

**ERNEST LEVI-SON.** Once a black sheep and a gay dog, always acting the giddy goat. Afterwards stopped playing the ox, and now he's ashamed of the thought that he was ever such an ass ; in fact, he can't bear it !

**KOUMI RAO.** An Indian with a skin the colour of a ripe greengage. That's the only reason I can think of for his being called the "Jam" of Blundelpore.

**GEORGE HERRIES.** Of the Fourth. Fellows giggle when they see his feet for the first time. Herries gets his own back on the world by owning Towser, who claims to have got his fangs into people's trousers more times than any living bulldog.

**GEORGE FRANCIS KERR.** A canny New House Scot with a gift for impersonation. He can disguise himself as anything—except, of course, a gentleman ; his New House training always gives him away before he can carry that off.

**MONTAGUE LOWTHER.** The writer of this "Who's Who." A fine, outstanding specimen of the best type of British boyhood. Brilliant in class, a magnificent athlete, abounding in superhuman strength and courage, yet kind and good-natured with it. No praise can be too great for Monty Lowther. (Now put that in your respective pipes and smoke it, old beans !—M. L.)



George Figgins, leader of the New House.



# AROUND ST. JIM'S



UPON a noble tree-girt hill  
 Beside the smiling River Rhyll,  
 Which flows through many a copse and field  
 In beauteous Sussex weald ;  
 Fanned by the breezes blowing o'er  
 The wide expanse of Wayland Moor,  
 High in the midst of farming lands,  
 St. James' College stands.

Two buildings strike the traveller's view,  
 One very old, one rather new ;  
 And down the solemn School House walls  
 The ivy thickly falls.  
 The New House, just across the way,  
 Is not so ancient or so grey,  
 But what it lacks in point of years  
 It gives in new ideas.

The river is a splendid sight ;  
 It is the Saints' extreme delight  
 To glide along its crystal swells  
 In punts and racing-shells ;  
 Or else, submerged in limpid deeps,  
 Through which the lonely otter creeps,  
 To dive and twist with flashing limbs,  
 These athletes of St. Jim's.

Hard by the School, in Rylcombe Lane,  
 Glyn House stands in a large domain ;  
 This is the home of Bernard Glyn  
 Who fame one day may win  
 From some invention which "comes off" ;  
 And, though his Form-fellows may scoff,  
 There's good stuff in the noddle that  
 Is under Bernard's hat.

The Grammar School lies out of sight  
 Along a footpath to the right  
 To kybosh the Grammarians  
 The Saints make many plans ;  
 But Gay and Wootton, Monk and Hake  
 Are usually wide-awake,  
 And since they will not own defeat  
 They're always hard to beat.

From far away is seen the clock  
 And, just above, the weather-cock  
 Of old St. Jim's, of schools the queen,  
 Magnificent, serene.  
 Long may she flourish thus in peace,  
 Long may her honours still increase,  
 And mem'ry keep her ever dear  
 To those she helped to rear.

# SPOOFED!



*By Martin Clifford*

## THE FIRST CHAPTER GUSSY'S BARGAIN !

"WHAT'S that ? "

Blake, Herries and Digby asked the question together. They really did not need to ask.

For there was no doubt as to the nature of the article that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy placed on the study table. It was—or had been—a clock.

It was, however, a "has-been" of the most pronounced kind. One of the hands was gone; the other was immovably fixed. The glass was cracked, with a gap in it. Still, it was easily recognisable as the remains of a clock. There was no occasion for the question, or for the surprised stare that accompanied it.

"What the thump—" continued Blake.

"Weally, Blake—" "

"Well, what is it ? "

"It's a clock, deah boy !" said Arthur Augustus mildly. "I think

it is wathah in need of wunnin' wepairs ! But it is a clock."

"Somebody's sold you that clock!" said Blake, raising an accusing forefinger and pointing it at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Yaas, wathah ! "

"Gussy's sold, as well as the clock !" remarked Digby.

"Weally, Dig—" "

"That is what comes of letting Gussy off his chain !" observed Herries. "He's bound to do these things. Still, we can find the fellow who sold him that clock, and give him a hiding."

"Weally, Hewwies—" "

"Trimble, I suppose," said Blake. "Trimble's the only fellow at St. Jim's who'd sell a thing like that to anybody."

"It was not Twimble, Blake."

"Well, who was it, then ? " demanded Blake. "Let's have his name and we'll go and strew the

*When Trimble spoofs his Form-mates,  
With joy he's all a-bubble;  
But sad to say, he rues the day,  
For in its wake comes trouble!*

hungry churchyard with his bones."

"Weally, you know——"

"How much did you give for it?" asked Digby. "If you gave more than twopence, we'll bump you, as well as the chap who sold you a pup."

"I gave twelve shillin's, Dig."

Blake & Co. jumped up. They were quite prepared to hear that Gussy had given a shilling, or even half-a-crown, for that utterly useless piece of lumber. But well as they knew their noble chum, twelve shillings took them by surprise.

"Twelve bob!" roared Blake.

"Not at all, Blake!"

"You said——"

"I said twelve shillin's," said Arthur Augustus gently.

"What's the difference, ass?"

"There is a considewable diffewence, Blake, between givin' the wight name to a coin of the wealm, and usin' an absurd, slangay expwession. You see, the clock was wun up to twelve shillin's, and I bagged it. It is not weally a bad clock—in a way——"

"We've got a clock in the study, fathead!"

"That's all wight, deah boy. This clock does not keep time. We shall still need the old clock."

"What's the good of it, then?"

Arthur Augustus looked thoughtful. His chums looked exasperated. Twelve shillings was a considerable sum to Study No. 6 in the Fourth.

"Well, I don't know that it's any good specially," remarked Gussy. "But it may come in useful. If you will tell me the date of your birthday, f'winstance——"

"My birthday?"

"Yaas. Tell me the date and I will give you this clock for a birthday pwesent."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Herries and Dig.

"You utter ass!" ejaculated Blake.

"You give me that clock for a birth-

day present, and I'll shove it down your back!"

"I wegard that as ungwateful, Blake. It is not ewewy fellow who gives a fellow a twelve-shillin' clock for a birthday pwesent."

"Oh, kill him, somebody!" said Blake.

"Or we might give it to our Form-mastah on his birthday," said Arthur Augustus brightly. "Mr. Lathom might be pleased. Or perwaps we could get Glyn of the Shell to make it go. It's an Amewican clock; but Glyn is an awf'ly elevah chap."

"You gave twelve bob for that clock——"

"Shillin's, deah boy."

"As your keepers——"

"Bai Jove, I uttahly wefuse to wegard you fellows as my keepahs!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly.

"As your keepers," roared Blake, "we're bound to keep you from wasting your substance, and making ducks and drakes of the pecuniary resources of this study! We're going to give you a bump for each bob!"

"Hear, hear!" said Herries and Digby heartily.

"Weally, you fellows——"

"Collar him!"

"Welease me, you uttah asses!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "I am just goin' to explain. It was weally a case of noblesse oblige, you know!"

"Noblesse doesn't oblige you to waste twelve bob!" grinned Blake.

"Go it!"

Bump!

"Yawoop!"

"That's one bob," said Blake. "Eleven more to come. It's inconsiderate of you to give your friends a hefty job like this, Gussy, on a warm afternoon. But duty's duty!"

Bump!

"You uttah ass!" shrieked Arthur Augustus, wriggling in the grasp of his

devoted chums. "I tell you—  
Ooooooop!"

"Ten more," said Blake. "You will have to stand us some ginger-pop after this, Gussy. The labourer is worthy of his hire."

Bump!

"Oh cwumbs! I wepeat—  
Yawooooop!"

"Hallo, what are you killing Gussy for?" Tom Merry of the Shell looked in at the open doorway of Study No. 6. "Let him off, and I'll give you this handsome vase."

"What?"

Tom Merry was carrying a large, cracked vase in his arms. Blake & Co., in amusement, left Arthur Augustus on the study carpet and stared at the captain of the Shell and his extraordinary burden.

"Where did you pick up that rubbish?" asked Blake.

"At a giddy sale. I gave six bob for it!" sighed Tom Merry.

"Then you're as potty as Gussy! It's not worth anything."

"Of course it isn't," said Tom. "Is anything ever worth anything at a leaving-sale? Fellows are expected to play up, though."

Arthur Augustus struggled up.

"Tom Mewwy, pway lend me a hand to give these wuffianly wottahs a feahful thwashin' all wound!" he exclaimed.

Tom Merry chuckled.

"He bought that clock!" said Blake, pointing to the object on the table. "He gave twelve bob—"

"Shillin's!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Twelve bob for that thing. Naturally we pitched into him," said Blake. "I think Manners and Lowther ought to bump you for buying that silly vase. I would."

"You uttah ass!" explained Arthur Augustus. "It's up to a chap at a leavin'-sale."

"You didn't tell us it was a leaving-sale."

"Weally, you ought to have known, Blake. You know that Sturgis of the Sixth is leavin'."

"This study hasn't time to notice the Sixth," said Blake. "And I jolly well think that Sturgis will leave a blessed millionaire if he is getting rid of his props at this rate!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Anybody like this vase?" asked Tom Merry, holding it up.

"What's the good of it?" grunted Herries.

"It isn't any good. That's why I'm offering it to you."

"Fathead!"

Tom Merry laughed, and carried his purchase away down the passage. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy dusted his clothes, adjusted his eyeglass, and gave Blake & Co. a look of great sternness.

"If you fellows are goin' to apologise—" he began.

"That reminds me," said Blake.

"It weminds you that you have acted in a wuffianly and wude mannah?"

"Not at all. It reminds me that you've got nine more bumps to come. Collar him!"

Arthur Augustus hastily retired from Study No. 6.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### THE LEAVING-SALE.

STURGIS of the Sixth was leaving St. Jim's.

Sturgis of the Sixth was nobody in particular.

But he was leaving, and when a fellow left, there generally was a sale of his belongings, and on such occasions fellows rallied round—though not all so generously and recklessly as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Obviously, a fellow couldn't take with him, when he left school, a study

carpet much the worse for wear, a screen that showed plain traces of fencing foils and Indian clubs, a clock that wouldn't go, an oleograph splashed with ink, and other belongings of that kind. Probably his people would have stared at such a cargo reaching home.

So generally there was an auction in the fellow's study the day before he left, and fellows—especially fellows in his own Form—came round to bid. Good prices were given—that was understood. The things were of no use to the chap who was leaving—probably of little use to anybody else—but cash was always of use, and a fellow who was going was a fellow to be treated decently.

Perhaps dear friends missed him when he went. On the other hand, perhaps his friends were pleased to see the last of him. They might say, "Old Sturgis is gone," or they might say, "Thank goodness that ass Sturgis has cleared at last!" In either case, it was felt the proper thing to look in at the sale of his stuff and appropriate at least one article at twice its value.

Nearly all the Sixth had turned up at Sturgis' sale. Even Knox, the meanest fellow in the Sixth, had given a shilling for a pen-wiper worth a fraction of a penny. It was not the custom for a fellow to hold the sale personally. Another chap would act as salesman, and it was a point of honour to realise the highest prices possible. Mulvaney major of the Sixth had played auctioneer on this occasion. He had realised quite a handsome sum for property worth, perhaps, a pound at the most.

Mulvaney was a business man born. Besides appealing to sentiment in the Sixth for a fellow who was leaving, Mulvaney had promised his own fag a kicking if he didn't turn up at the sale and buy something, and he had gone round among the juniors men-

tioning the sale, and mentioning that it would be decent to help in giving old Sturgis a send-off. Fags of the Third were flattered at the idea of giving such a tremendous big gun as a Sixth-Former a send-off. Quite an army of the Third had turned up—unfortunately provided mostly with coppers.

Some of the Fourth and the Shell had gone, and in the midst of a senior crowd they would have been too nervous to bid but for the encouragement of Mulvaney major. Mulvaney major knocked down articles to them at prices fixed by his own fertile fancy, and the juniors felt too sheepish among the big Sixth-Formers to argue the point.

Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had become possessed of that valuable clock. Tom Merry had been landed with the vase quite unexpectedly. Mulvaney major had said to him, "Come to Sturgis' leaving-sale, like a good chap!" and like a good chap Tom had gone. It was rather flattering to be sought after like this by the Sixth. But when the vase was knocked down to Tom, he was surprised, as he had not, so far, opened his mouth.

"Going-going-gone at six shillings, to Merry of the Shell!" said Mulvaney major. "Here you are, Merry!"

"Here, I say—" began Tom.

"Take it away—clear the room, you know!" said Mulvaney major. "Put the money on the table!"

"But, I say—"

"Now, this handsome hearth-rug—" said the auctioneer, and Tom had no chance to say anything more. Prye of the Fifth was sitting at the table in the corner to take the money, and he signed to Tom impatiently.

"Buck up! Pay, and clear!" he snapped.



"Ten more bumps," said Blake . . . Bump ! "Oh, cwumbs I " gasped Gussy. "I wepeat—Yawooooop I " "Hallo, what are you killing Gussy for ? " Tom Merry looked in at the open doorway, with a cracked vase in his arm.

" But, I say— "

" For goodness' sake don't waste time ! "

" But I never— "

" You're interrupting the business, Merry. Get a move on ! "

Tom Merry found the vase shoved into his arms, and, almost in a state of bewilderment, he paid for it and promptly cleared. He did not linger. He was afraid that Mulvaney major might knock down the bedstead to him if he stayed longer.

" Now, this beautiful hearth-rug ! " said Mulvaney major. " Did I catch your eye, Cutts ? Going to Cutts for a pound ! "

" You may have caught my eye, " smiled Cutts of the Fifth, " but you won't catch my quids. " "

" Any advance on a pound ? "

asked the auctioneer, unheeding. " Did you say twenty-five shillings, Knox ? "

" No, I jolly well didn't ! "

" Going to St. Leger for twenty-five-and-six ! " said Mulvaney major. " Pay at the table, St. Leger ! "

" Oh gad ! " said St. Leger.

St. Leger of the Fifth had plenty of money, and he laughed and paid. Mulvaney major already had an ornamental jar in hand. Once it had been a jam-jar ; but Sturgis, when in the Fourth, had covered it by sticking foreign stamps all over it, and that jar had followed him up the school from the Fourth Form to the Sixth. He had kept flowers in it, he had kept matches in it, he had kept ink in it, and he had even kept cigarettes in it. It was a jar of many

experiences, and in its old age it was somewhat cracked and chipped. It might have been a specimen of rare and priceless porcelain by the way Mulvaney major held it up and exhibited it.

"This fancy jar—this bootiful jar—covered with rare and now unobtainable foreign stamps—going at—did you say five shillings, Jones?"

"Not likely!"

"I think I caught your eye, Grundy?"

"Rats!" said Grundy of the Shell.

"Kick that cheeky fag out, Knox! Thanks!" There was a wild roar from Grundy in the passage. "Now, young Wilkins, if you want this jar—"

"I don't!" said Wilkins.

"Think again, Wilkins. This lovely jar—"

"Boil it!" said Wilkins.

"Throw that fag into the passage, Cutts, will you? The cheek of these fags is a bit too thick. Thanks! Seven-and-six for this handsome jar! Thank you, Master Trimble! It's yours for seven-and-six!"

"Oh, I say!" ejaculated Baggy Trimble.

"Pay at the table!"

"But—"

"This way!" said Prye. "Seven-and-six. What? What the thump do you mean by buying valuable jars if you haven't any ready money?"

"But I didn't!" gasped Trimble.

"Pay what you can, then," said Prye. "Get it over!"

"Oh, dear," said Trimble, "I've only got a bob! I say, Mulvaney, I never said anything. I didn't catch your eye. I never wanted to buy that jar. I didn't really, Mulvaney!"

But Mulvaney was already selling a damaged screen, and he had no ears for the hapless Trimble.

But Trimble had ears, and Prye of the Fifth had hold of one of them.

"Buck up!" he said. "Shell out!"  
"Ow!"

Trimble shelled out his solitary shilling and escaped with the jar. He comforted himself with a faint hope of being able to sell it to some unwary fellow for threepence.

Conducted on business-like lines like this, the leaving-sale was quite a success. After it was over Mulvaney major sought out Sturgis of the Sixth.

"No end of a success," he told him. "What do you think of seven pounds ten shillings?"

"Oh, jolly good!" said Sturgis.

"And here's the money, excepting a quid that you're going to lend me till you see me again," said Mulvaney major.

And Sturgis pocketed six pounds ten.

After Sturgis of the Sixth was gone, various articles of problematical value were scattered in the other studies; and Baggy Trimble of the Fourth was making feverish attempts to sell a jar covered with rare and unobtainable stamps. The price of that jar came down from a shilling to twopence, then to a halfpenny; and still there were no takers. Finally, Baggy set it mournfully on the mantelpiece in Study No. 2—where sometimes he regarded it and thought of his shilling, and yearned to break it on the respective heads of Mulvaney major and Sturgis of the Sixth.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

MYSTERIOUS!

"Tom, old fellow—"

"Cut it out!" said Tom Merry.

"But I say, old chap—"

persisted Trimble.

Tom Merry picked up a ruler.

"Where will you have it?" he asked.

"Old fellow—"

"You call me old fellow again, and

you'll get it on the napper," said the captain of the Shell. "That's a tip!"

Baggy Trimble grinned feebly.

The fat junior had butted into Study No. 10, in the Shell, where the Terrible Three were at prep—some days after the leaving-sale in Sturgis' study, and the unmarked and unlamented departure of Sturgis of the Sixth. Tom Merry & Co. had forgotten the existence of Sturgis, as most fellows at St. Jim's had—and the leaving-sale did not linger in their memory. But it lingered in Baggy Trimble's—as transpired subsequently.

"It's about that vase," said Baggy.

"That which?"

"That vase you bought from Sturgis—"

"Well, what about it?" asked Tom, puzzled.

"Baggy wants to buy it," suggested Monty Lowther. "You offered to give it to me, Tom. I'll accept it now, and sell it to Trimble."

"But I don't want to buy it," said Baggy hastily.

"Oh! That alters the case. I shall not accept your gift, Tom."

"Fathead!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "If you've got anything to say, Trimble, cough it up and clear. Prep, you know."

"Clear, anyway," suggested Manners.

"You don't want that vase, Merry?" asked Trimble.

"Not at all. It's cracked, and no good."

"Well, can I have it?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Yes; if you like. Take it and go!"

"Good!"

Baggy Trimble jerked the vase out of the corner behind the bookcase, where it had been deposited, and departed.

"What on earth does he want the rubbish for?" said Manners.

"Blessed if I know—glad to get it out of the study, anyhow," said Tom, and he returned to his prep.

Baggy Trimble bore the vase away with great satisfaction. He landed it in his study, No. 2 in the Fourth, where Wildrake and Mellish were at prep. Both of them looked at him as he came in.

"More rubbish?" asked Wildrake.

"There isn't room in the study for all that stuff, Trimble," grumbled Percy Mellish.

Trimble did not trouble to answer. He put the vase in the bottom of the study cupboard very carefully, and retired. In the cupboard there were already a number of articles, about as valuable as Sturgis' vase, collected by Baggy Trimble. A football in a hopeless state of disrepair, a bat that had split, the skeleton of a tennis racket, an alarm-clock that was past praying for, and several other things formed quite a stack. Trimble's study-mates were puzzled. Trimble was an acquisitive youth, certainly; but why he was collecting rubbish like this was a mystery. Of late, Trimble seemed to have been smitten by a mania for acquiring all sorts and conditions of rubbish of no value whatever—and he was always ready to carry off any old thing that any fellow wanted to get rid of—indeed, Monty Lowther had already nicknamed him the Dust-man!

Heedless of the surprise of his study-mates, Baggy left them to their prep—Baggy had no time for prep himself at present. He rolled along to Study No. 6.

Blake pointed to the door with his pen as Trimble rolled in. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was more explicit.

"Pway don't wowwy, Twimble. Pweep, you know."

"It's about that clock," said Trimble.

"Eh! What clock?"

" That clock you bought at Sturgis' leaving-sale, old man. I heard you say it wasn't any good."

" Yaas, wathah ! "

" Well, if it isn't any good, you don't want it."

" Quite wight."

" Can I have it ? "

" Certainly. It will not keep time, Twimble. It is an Amewican clock ; and, besides, it has been damaged."

" That's all right ; I don't want it to keep time," said Baggy Trimble cheerfully.

" Bai Jove ! "

Baggy annexed the ancient clock, and rolled away contented. When he rolled into his own study with it there was a howl of protest from Percy Mellish.

" Look here, you ass, this study isn't a dustbin," exclaimed Mellish.

" What are you rummaging over the House and bringing all the cast-off crocks here for ? "

" I guess you're getting a little loose in the *cabeza*, Trimble," said Wildrake, staring in astonishment at the fat junior.

Trimble grinned complacently.

" That's all right," he said.

" It isn't all right," said Mellish tartly. " I've a jolly good mind to shove all that rubbish into the passage."

" Look here——"

" Oh, let him rip," said Wildrake. " It doesn't do any harm stacked in the cupboard. But what do you want it for, Trimble ? "

" That's telling ! " said Baggy Trimble mysteriously.

" You silly owl, tell us, then ! " snapped Mellish.

" D'Arcy gave twelve bob for that clock at the sale," said Baggy.

" D'Arcy's an ass—besides, Mulvaney major diddled him into it. Do you think anybody would give you

" twelve farthings for it ? " sniffed Mellish.

Trimble winked.

" Wait and see ! " he answered.

And he rolled away again, apparently in search of more useless plunder. The next morning, Trimble had some painful moments with Mr. Lathom in the Fourth Form-room. He had had no time for prep ; but, of course, he could not explain that to Mr. Lathom ; it never was any good talking sense to Form-masters, as Trimble had complained more than once. Trimble was given lines ; but, apparently, he forgave Mr. Lathom for the infliction ; for when the Fourth were dismissed, Baggy stopped at the Form-master's desk on the way out.

" If you please, sir——"

" I shall expect the lines after tea, Trimble."

" Yes, sir ; but that waste-paper basket——"

" Eh ? "

" It's jolly nearly worn out, sir," said Trimble, blinking at the astonished Form-master. " Isn't it time, sir, that we had a new waste-paper basket in the Form-room ? "

" Bless my soul ! " said Mr. Lathom.

" If it's done with, sir, I should like it in my study," ran on Trimble.

" I want one very much, sir."

" Upon my word ! "

" Can I have it, sir ? "

" No, Trimble, you may not have it. I gave you fifty lines, Trimble. They are doubled ! You may go."

" Oh, dear ! "

Baggy Trimble went, richer by fifty lines, but minus the desired object ; though what he wanted with a superannuated waste-paper basket really was a deep mystery.

During the next few days Trimble was an object of interest among the juniors in the School House of St. Jim's.



"That's the limit!" said Percy Mellish, when Trimble rolled into the study with a chair, of which two legs and part of the back were missing. "There's going to be a clearance here."

Collecting mania seemed to have seized him.

No matter how useless an article was, Trimble was eager to take possession of it; indeed, he routed over the box-rooms in search of abandoned lumber. His appearance in the passages was often hailed by the cry: "Here comes the Dustman!"

Mellish was loud in his protests against stacking the study with heaps of rubbish. In a few days the walls were almost covered with torn and discoloured pictures that nobody wanted; the mantelpiece was hidden by "ornaments" in various stages of chipping and disfigurement; the cupboard was full to overflowing with all sorts and conditions of articles.

"That's the limit!" said Percy

Mellish, when Trimble rolled into the study with a chair, of which two legs and part of the back were missing. "There's going to be a clearance here."

"Look here, Mellish——"

"I'm fed up!" roared Mellish wrathfully. "There won't be room to move soon, with your rubbish and your own fat carcase."

"I mayn't be here long, Mellish."

"What?"

"You'll be sorry when you don't see me in the study every day, Mellish," said Baggy in a tone more of sorrow than of anger.

Mellish stared at him.

"Why should I be sorry?" he asked.

"Look here——"

"If you went, I know it would be

a jolly lot more comfy in this study," said Mellish. "I jolly well wish you'd go and take your silly rubbish with you. But are you leaving?"

"I'm afraid so," said Baggy sadly.

"Hurrah!"

Mellish seemed quite bucked.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER PATHETIC!

**T**OM MERRY stopped, and he stared.

He was surprised.

Sauntering in the old quadrangle of St. Jim's after lessons Tom had come suddenly upon Baggy Trimble.

Baggy's aspect was peculiar.

He was standing with his fat chin lifted, looking up at the old ivied tower with a fixed and sorrowful gaze. He seemed unaware of Tom Merry's presence; though perhaps, from the corner of his eye, he had seen the captain of the Shell coming.

Baggy gave a deep sigh.

"The old grey tower—the dear old tower!" he murmured aloud. "Alas! The dear old school! To leave it—for ever—"

He sobbed a little.

"What the merry thump—" ejaculated Tom Merry.

He came up and bestowed a hearty slap on Trimble's shoulder.

"Ow!" exclaimed Trimble, brought back by that slap from poetic meditation to the common earth again. "Wow!"

"What's the row?" asked Tom. "What are you blinking up at the tower for? Can you see a bird's nest in the ivy?"

"I'm not thinking of birds' nests," said Trimble sadly.

"Not potty?" asked Tom.

"No!" roared Trimble.

"Not wandering in your mind?"

"No, you ass."

"Then what's the matter?"

Trimble gave him a sorrowful look.

"A fellow can't help feeling it a bit," he said, with a catch in his voice.

"Feeling what?"

"The parting of the ways," said Baggy.

"The which of the what?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"The old school—the dear old school!" said Baggy poetically. "How it twines round the heart, you know—"

"My hat! Does it?"

"Of course it does. You feel a lump in your throat when you're leaving your old school," said Baggy.

"Every grey old stone touches a chord of—of memory, and—and so on."

"You're not leaving, are you?" asked Tom Merry, quite perplexed. Even if Baggy was leaving, Tom would not have expected him to feel pathetic and poetical about it. The only part of St. Jim's that might have been supposed to have twined itself round Trimble's heart was the tuckshop. And he was blinking at the old tower, not at the tuckshop.

Trimble gave a deep sigh.

"It's hard!" he said. "Wouldn't you feel it if you had to leave St. Jim's, Merry?"

"I suppose so," said Tom. "I hope I shouldn't go round the quad looking like a dying duck, though. But I say, are you really going?"

Baggy nodded his head as if his heart were too full for words.

Tom Merry's heart, always ready to err on the side of tenderness, was quite touched. Certainly it would have been a blow to him to leave St. Jim's; and he could feel for another fellow in the same fix. He did not like Baggy Trimble. Tom Merry had a wide tolerance, but somehow he simply could not stand Baggy Trimble. But if Baggy was leaving that altered the case. It was up to a

fellow to make the best of any chap—even a slippery and unpleasant chap like Trimble—if he was going for good.

"Dash it all," said Tom, "I'm sorry, Trimble."

And he spoke quite sincerely and cordially. He simply couldn't feel sorry personally to see the last of Trimble; that was asking too much of human nature. But he was sorry for Trimble.

"You mean that?" asked Baggy.

"Of course I do," grunted Tom.

"We haven't been very good friends, I'm afraid," said Trimble.

"Well, Fourth and Shell don't pal," said Tom. "Never mind that."

"But I do mind," said Baggy. "We've had our differences. You've kicked me more than once."

"Well, if you sneak a fellow's grub, you know——"

"I know! I know! I was to blame," said Trimble. "I couldn't bear malice—not now I'm leaving the old school for ever. The grey old stones——"

"Yes, yes! But why should you leave, when you're only in the Fourth?" asked Tom. "If you don't want to go, why not stay?"

"I'm not my own master," said Trimble sadly. "It's not for me to dispute the pater's wishes."

"Oh, certainly not," said Tom. "If that's it—— Dash it all, I'm really sorry, old chap."

It was the first time on record that Tom had addressed Baggy Trimble as "old chap." But circumstances alter cases. Tom could not help feeling that this was "hard cheese" for Baggy. Certainly he was a rather unpleasant little beast. But he was leaving.

"I want to part friends with everybody," said Trimble.

"That's right."

"We've had our little troubles. A

## ST. JIM'S JINGLES

### TOM MERRY

(Captain of the Shell)



**TOM MERRY**, captain of the Shell,  
Is famed the wide world over;  
From Canada to Camberwell,  
From Delaware to Dover.  
They talk about him in Ceylon  
(where every prospect pleases),  
They yarn about him in Yukon,  
And love his japes and wheezes.

Some readers may remember how,  
A kid in knickerbockers,  
Tom Merry made his primal bow,  
And met with many mockers.  
But Tommy very quickly showed  
That he was not a "softy";  
But one who cherished, on life's road,  
Ambitions keen and lofty.

Jack Blake had been the leading light  
Prior to Tom's appearance;  
But Merry showed, in many a fight,  
Such pluck and perseverance,  
That Blake was banished from his throne,  
And Tom became the leader;  
The enterprise which he has shown  
Delights each ardent reader.

He "digs" in Study Number Ten  
With Lowther and with Manners;  
This trinity of mighty men  
Draws dozens to its banners.  
Three British schoolboys of the best,  
In friendship's bonds united,  
They work and play with zeal and zest,  
And see that wrongs are righted.

Tom Merry boasts a governess,  
The worthy Miss Priscilla,  
Who sends him hints on food and dress  
From her secluded villa.  
"Wear chest-protectors, Tommy dear,  
And feed on rice and sago;  
Then you'll be safe, and need not fear  
Pneumonia or lumbago!"

If "darling Tommy" took this tip,  
How all the chaps would snigger!  
But Tommy fears no icy nip;  
He's full of health and vigour.  
Explore these islands all around,  
From Leeds to Londonderry,  
No finer fellow will be found  
Than world-renowned **TOM MERRY!**

I'm going to forget all about them. There's my hand!" said Baggy, holding it out.

It was a large, fat hand, flabby, and distinctly in want of washing. Tom Merry felt a strong repugnance to that fat paw. He had all a healthy boy's horror of a pathetic scene, and all the nerves in his healthy body shrank from demonstrativeness. But Trimble was evidently prepared to work the pathos of the situation for all it was worth; and Tom hated to hurt anybody's feelings. So he took the fat, flabby paw, hastily and rather gingerly.

"In that hearty grip——" said Trimble.

"What?"

"In that hearty grip all animosity is buried."

"Oh, my hat!"

Tom Merry walked away. He had had as much pathos as he could stand for one occasion.

Trimble blinked after him. Tom, in turning the corner of the tower, happened to glance back, and saw Trimble standing, with deep and sorrowful sadness in his fat face. Tom walked on, feeling rather uneasy—wishing that somehow he had gone a little easier with Trimble—that the little fat beast had let a fellow go easier with him. Possibly Tom's compunction would have vanished, however, if he had seen Trimble a few minutes later. As soon as the Shell fellow was quite out of sight, Trimble's sad and sorrowful countenance relaxed into a grin. He winked at the pigeons in the quad.

"It's working!" he murmured.

Which really was a mysterious remark for Baggy Trimble to make.

The fat junior looked round him—perhaps in search of further audience—but he was alone, and he rolled away without bestowing any more pathetic looks on the dear old ivied

tower. As he came towards the School House he fell in with Grundy of the Shell. Grundy gave a whoop, and rushed down on him like a tank in full career.

"Got you!" roared Grundy.

"Yarооh!"

"Where's my cake?"

"Yow-ow!"

"I'll burst you! I'll——"

"Yow-ow! I say, Grundy, even you might be a bit decent when a fellow's leaving the school——"

"You're leaving!" Grundy released Trimble's collar. "Jolly good thing for St. Jim's, I must say! When are you going? Soon, I hope!"

"Saturday," said Trimble, with manly dignity.

"That's good!" said Grundy. "Well, if you're going, that's luck enough, and I'll let you off about the cake. But if I catch you rooting in my study again you'll get home on Saturday with a face that your people won't know! Mind that!"

"Let's part friends, old chap——"

"Bunkum!" said Grundy.

"There's my hand on it, Grundy——"

"Take it away and wash it!" said the unfeeling Grundy. "None of your film-play clap-trap for me, you little beast!"

And Grundy stalked away, evidently impervious to pathetic considerations.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER MONTY LOWTHER TAKES A HAND!

TRIMBLE was leaving!

The news spread through the Lower School of St. Jim's and excited great interest in both Houses.

The New House, in this matter, was the lucky House, Trimble being in the School House. Still, the New House saw enough of Trimble to be pleased that he was going.

Figgins & Co. of the New House looked as if they had won a House

match when they heard the news.

In the School House fellows said to one another in the studies and the passages, "Trimble's leaving!" in the same tone in which they might have said "Congratulations, old chap!"

Trimble became almost popular.

Nobody had even expected Trimble to do anything or to say anything that would confer pleasure on other fellows. But it had happened.

This was, as Monty Lowther said, real kindness. Lowther declared that Baggy had been misjudged. Somewhere, deep down under his layers of fat, there was a generous heart—a heart that found pleasure in making other fellows happy. For this reason, declared Lowther, Baggy had decided to go.

Wildrake was very kind to Trimble these days—even Mellish was civil. Both of them reflected how nice the study would be without Baggy Trimble in it, and the prospect solaced them for Baggy's present company; indeed, they felt grateful.

Baggy, perhaps, did not feel flattered when he observed the effect of the news upon his schoolfellows. Perhaps the unanimous and spontaneous jubilation came as a surprise to him. But there it was.

"We must do something for Trimble!" Monty Lowther remarked in Study No. 10. "He's doing a lot for us."

"Eh! What is he doing?" asked Tom Merry.

"Going!" explained Lowther.

Tom Merry laughed.

"I suppose he'll have a leaving-sale," said Manners. "We'll go and put up a few bob."

"Ch, certainly," said Tom at once. "I'm sorry for the chap. It's rotten to have to go."

"I dare say a good leaving-sale will console him," remarked Manners.

"Well, he seems very much cut up."

"Piling on the agony to get a good sale, perhaps. That would be like Trimble."

"Um!" said Tom thoughtfully.

"Well, it's so jolly good of him to go that I feel I can forgive him anything," said Lowther. "We'll help to make the sale a success."

"Yes, rather!" said Tom.

"He's asked me to be the auctioneer," continued Lowther. "Like his check, of course; but in the circumstances—"

"Oh, do it," said Tom. "After all, he's going, and—and he's got his good points."

"Blessed if I know where he keeps them, then. This is the first act of real kindness he's ever done."

"And this is unintentional," said Manners. "He wouldn't leave if he could help it."

"Still, he's leaving," said Monty. "Mustn't forget that! I think his leaving-sale will be a record. Everybody's so jolly pleased that he's going that they're sure to roll up and give him a send-off. It's up to this study to rally the fellows for a good sale—we'll get the New House chaps to come, too. Might get some of the seniors. They don't see so much of Trimble as we do—still, they must be glad he's going; it stands to reason. Cutts and his gang have lots of money—if they'd come!"

"You won't get any seniors," said Tom, shaking his head. "But it ought to be a good sale, if we rally the Shell and the Fourth and the fags. Where are you holding it?"

"In the hobby club-room. No room in a study for a sale of these giddy dimensions. I'm going to do the thing in style," said Lowther. "Trimble's going to have the best send-off I can manage, bless him! Why, I'm so pleased that I almost

feel inclined to buy something myself. Luckily the auctioneer doesn't have to buy anything; that's why Mulvaney major did the job for old Sturgis last week. Now, you fellows, shut up while I draw up the sale notice."

Monty Lowther was very busy with pen and paper for some time after that.

Monty was taking his task seriously.

He liked to make a success of anything that he took in hand, and he hoped—since he was going to be auctioneer—that this particular leaving-sale would break all records.

On Thursday afternoon, the sale notice was pinned on to the notice-board in Hall.

It was quite an interesting document, and crowds of fellows gathered to read it. It ran :

"NOTICE !

Saturday, at 3 o'clock, in the junior club-room,

A SALE WILL BE HELD

comprising part of the furniture of a study, and many objets-d'art, valuable curios, etc. All the innumerable friends of Bagley Trimble, Esq., are requested to ROLL UP for his leaving-sale, and give him a Handsome Send-Off. No reserve. All goods knocked down to the highest bidder.

Auctioneer : M. LOWTHER.

N.B.—Don't forget to bring your Cash. No cheques taken. Any Bidder requesting Tick will be ejected on his Neck."

Kildare of the Sixth came along and found a dozen juniors reading the new notice on the board. He looked at it.

"Hallo! Is this another of Lowther's potty jokes?" asked the captain of the school.

"No; it's genuine!" said Kan-

garoo. "Trimble's leaving, you know."

"Is he?" said Kildare. "I hadn't heard!"

And the great man walked on, leaving the notice on the board. Trimble came along and found the crowd reading it, and looked rather worried.

"Better stick that up in the junior common-room," he said, taking down Lowther's paper.

"Leave it where it is!" said Bernard Glyn. "The seniors will see it here, and they may come to the sale."

"The masters might see it—"

"Well, why shouldn't they?"

Trimble did not answer that question.

"I don't want any dashed seniors at my sale," he said. "They'd bag the stuff for any price they liked, and perhaps wouldn't pay."

"Something in that!" remarked Wilkins.

When Lowther saw his sale notice again, it was pinned on the wall of the junior common-room in the School House.

For some reason best known to himself, Baggy Trimble did not want the news of the leaving-sale to penetrate to the masters. He did not, however, confide that circumstance to the other fellows. They would have been surprised, and would have wanted to know why and wherefore. Leaving-sales were an institution at St. Jim's, and no objection would have been raised to Trimble's sale—if he was leaving. Trimble probably had good reasons for not wanting to go into particulars.

With all his care, however, Baggy had to take the risk—and the risk materialised. On Friday, when Mr. Lathom dismissed his Form after lessons, he signed to Trimble to stop as the rest of the Fourth left.

Baggy approached the Form-

master's desk with his fat knees trembling a little.

"I'm sorry I haven't done the lines, sir!" he began. Some of the Fourth were still within hearing, and Baggy wanted to give them time to get clear before Mr. Lathom started.

"The lines!" said Mr. Lathom. "Ah, yes! Quite so! Bring them to my study this evening without fail, Trimble!"

"Yes, sir!"

"It was not, however, on that subject I was about to speak, Trimble," said Mr. Lathom.

"Wasn't it, sir?" said Baggy, who was quite well aware that it wasn't. Mr. Lathom had forgotten the lines, or they would have been asked for earlier than this.

"No, Trimble. I hear that you are leaving the school."

"Indeed, sir?" murmured Baggy.

"I was very much surprised to hear it, Trimble, as naturally the Head would have informed me, and he has not done so. I spoke to Dr. Holmes on the subject, and I find that he knows nothing of it."

Baggy breathed hard. The Fourth were all out of hearing now, that was one comfort.

"You see, sir——" he stammered.

"If it is your father's intention to take you away, Trimble, it is very odd that he has not communicated with the Head in the first place," said Mr. Lathom, blinking at Trimble over his glasses. "I must ask you to explain what this means, Trimble."

"The—the fact is, sir——"



"We've had our little troubles. I'm going to forget all about them. There's my hand!" said Baggy, holding it out. It was a large, fat hand, distinctly in want of washing, but Tom Merry shook it, for he hated to hurt Baggy's feelings.

" Well ? "

" I—I'm not leaving, sir ! " gasped Baggy.

" I am aware of that. But it appears that you have stated that you are leaving, and that the whole of the Lower School seems to be under that impression. Is this some silly practical joke, or what is it ? "

" That's it, sir, " said Baggy. " One of Lowther's silly jokes. You—you know what an ass Lowther is, sir ! "

" Lowther should not make such jokes, and I certainly fail to see the point of this one ! " said Mr. Lathom.

" However, if there is nothing in the rumour, it is a matter of no consequence. You may go, Trimble ! "

And Trimble went.

Mr. Lathom dismissed the matter from his mind ; it was, as he said, of no consequence. It was, however, of very considerable consequence to the wily Baggy. And he congratulated himself that no one had overheard that little talk with his Form-master.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER THE AUCTION !

**R**OLL up ! "

" Sale now on !

" Woll up, you fellows ! "

There was a crowd in the junior club-room in the School House of St. Jim's, although three had not yet struck. And more and more fellows were coming in every minute.

Tom Merry & Co. had " whipped " up a good attendance. The Terrible Three were there in an official capacity —Monty Lowther as salesman, Manners to take the cash, and Tom Merry as general superintendent to keep order. Grundy of the Shell had consented to act as doorkeeper—Grundy, being a very hefty fellow, was calculated to be able to deal effectively with any reckless bidder who forgot to pay before he left.

Tom Merry's friends all came—and their name was legion. Kangaroo and Dane and Glyn of the Shell and Talbot and Skimpole and Gore, and other Shell fellows came—even Racke and Crooke turned up. Study No. 6 came in a body to represent the Fourth, and Cardew and Clive came in, and Julian, Hammond, Reilly, and Kerruish. Mulvaney minor came in with Tompkins, and Kit Wildrake came, and Lumley-Lumley and Durrance. The crowd thickened in the club-room.

Wally & Co. of the Third turned up. Arthur Augustus had impressed upon his minor that he was expected to come, and Wally had come. He had carried his complaisance so far as to borrow ten shillings off his major to bid with.

The arrival of D'Arcy minor and Reggie Manners and Frayne and Jameson and Curly Gibson and Hobbs and a dozen more fags added to the liveliness of the proceedings. Manners minor played tunes on a comb wrapped in paper to cheer up the gathering while they waited for the sale to start. Wally projected paper balls in various directions, with a very creditable aim.

Then came Figgins & Co. of the New House, with Redfern and Owen and nearly a dozen more New House fellows.

By this time there was rather a cram in the club-room. Three o'clock sounded out from the clock-tower.

Monty Lowther took up his official hammer and stood at the table. On either side of the table were stacked the goods belonging to Baggy Trimble, now to be disposed of.

They were many and various.

A leaving-sale generally brought to light a rather curious collection of goods of very problematic value.

Trimble's leaving-sale brought to light an unusually curious collection,

of which the value was more than problematic.

The few articles of value that Baggy possessed were not included. Apparently he was taking those articles home with him.

The stack was, in fact, chiefly composed of the goods that Trimble had bagged for nothing, or next to nothing, during the few days on which the collecting mania had seized him.

Prominent among them were the vase, once the property of Sturgis, and then of Tom Merry, and the clock for which Arthur Augustus had given twelve shillings.

That Baggy had been preparing for his leaving-sale in advance was now fairly clear to the most unsuspicious mind. Even Arthur Augustus D'Arcy could not help recognising that obvious fact. Nevertheless it was all taken good-humouredly. It was to be the last, at all events, of Baggy's knavish tricks.

Baggy was going. When a fellow was going much could be forgiven him. Fellows could afford to be indulgent to a fellow whom they were never going to see any more.

And Baggy had turned on the pathos stop, so to speak, with great skill and untiring energy. The dear old school, the old grey, familiar stones, the ivied tower, the initials carved on the old oaken desk and so forth, had been worked for all they were worth. Fellows were surprised and touched to see Baggy so cut up at leaving. It was surprising that a fellow who was so sorry to go should not have tried to be a credit to his school while he was there. Still, Baggy's sorrow was loud and deep and prominent, and fellows felt sympathetic. Indeed, some tender-hearted fellows felt some compunction at feeling so much satisfaction at Baggy's departure, and for this reason they

## ST. JIM'S JINGLES

RICHARD REDFERN  
(of the *New House*)



A SPLENDID lad, with sturdy limbs,  
Courageous, strong, and clever;  
Who won his entry to St. Jim's  
By honest, hard endeavour.  
His sire is not a millionaire,  
Like Aubrey Racket's proud pater,  
And Reddy's therefore had to bear  
The sneers of that "third-rater."

The hero of a hundred fights  
On Little Side's arena,  
His prowess pleases and delights—  
No sportsman could be keener.  
He plays the game in every sense,  
And plays it to a finish;  
His popularity's immense,  
And may it ne'er diminish!

Cads such as Mellish, Racket, and Gore,  
He views with keen abhorrence;  
But always has a handshake for  
Owen and Edgar Lawrence.  
These are his chums, the first and best,  
Who rally to his banner,  
And hold their own against the rest  
In a courageous manner.

Once Reddy ran away from school,  
And joined a Wayland paper;  
His nerve was voted "pretty cool"—  
It was a reckless caper!  
He set to work, and soon displayed  
A genius for reporting;  
And thrilling articles he made  
Concerning topics sporting.

But this adventure fizzled out,  
And he was reinstated;  
To be a writing-man, no doubt,  
He's fitted and he's fated.  
But he will have to wait awhile,  
And rein his keen ambition  
Ere he surrenders, with a smile,  
His present-day position.

"Good luck to Reddy of the Fourth!"  
Whose exploits keep us wondering;  
From east and west, from south and north,  
Shouts of "Hear, hear!" come thundering.  
For he's a champion, I declare,  
In whom all virtues mingle;  
(But, being modest, he'll despair  
When he perceives this jingle!)

resolved to do their best at the leaving-sale.

From one cause and another it was clear that Baggy's farewell auction was going to be a record.

Rap! Rap! Rap! Monty Lowther rapped on the table with the hammer.

"Gentlemen, the sale is now on!" announced Lowther. "Gentlemen, I have only a few words to say. You all know our respected schoolfellow, Bagley Trimble, of Trimble Hall."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The shadow of misfortune has darkened the ancient stained-glass windows of the Hall!" said Lowther. "It seems that cash is scarcer than one would suppose from hearing Trimble talk. It may even be, gentlemen, that the brokers are hanging on the backyard wall, as the poet expresses it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"In these circs, it is up to St. Jim's to rally round Trimble. He is leaving us——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Like the gentleman who left his country for his country's good——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Trimble is leaving! No more shall we see his graceful form rolling across the quad. No longer shall we behold him wedged in a doorway; no more shall we chase him along the passage in desperate pursuit of stolen tarts and cakes——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Trimble is leaving! On this sad occasion I am glad, gentlemen, to see you looking so sorrowful——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the sorrowful juniors.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"On this sad occasion we must do all we can. The sale of the late Trimble's property must be a great success. A sum of cash in hand will comfort him on his sad journey

from the greatest public school in the three kingdoms!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bravo!"

"With sufficient cash resources in hand Trimble will be able to feed at every station on the way home. Think what a consolation that will be to him! Now, gentlemen, the sale is on. The first lot, gentlemen, is this handsome clock—once the property of a Sixth-Former of this school, and later in the possession of a member of the nobility."

"Bai Jove!"

"What offers for this handsome timekeeper, gentlemen?"

"Twopence!" came from Wally, of the Third.

"This is not a place for fag jokes!" said the auctioneer severely. "I beg you, gentlemen, to look at this clock. A handsomer timekeeper was seldom or never found in a junior study."

"Does it go?" asked Gunn.

"Gentlemen are requested not to put irrelevant questions to the auctioneer. The clock was a present from a member of the nobility to Baggy Trimble. That alone makes it valuable."

"Oh, cwumbys!"

"This clock has been the property of a peer's son, the glass of fashion and the mould of form at St. Jim's. What offers for this highly connected clock?"

"Threepence!" said Redfern.

"Order!"

"Look here, you know——" came a fat voice in remonstrance.

"Hallo, Trimble's here! Get out, Trimble!"

It was against all rules for the fellow who was leaving to attend his own sale. Baggy was too keen on the proceeds to heed that rule. But two or three fellows helped Baggy out.

"I say," roared Baggy as he went, "I want——"

"Outside!"

" I want to keep an eye on the money ! "

" What ? " yelled Manners.

" Of course, I know you won't pinch any, old chap——"

" Ha, ha, ha ! " roared the juniors, greatly taken by the expression on the face of Manners of the Shell.

" You—you fat villain ! " gasped Manners. " I—I——"

" But a chap wants to keep an eye on his own money ! " gasped Trimble. " I'm coming in ! "

" Kick him out ! " roared Tom Merry.

" Yaroooooooooh ! "

Grundy's large-sized boot came into play and Trimble quickly disappeared, and the door was shut on him. And as soon as order was restored Monty Lowther's voice was heard again :

" What offers for this handsome clock—still bearing the finger-marks of a distinguished member of the nobility ? "

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER SALE NOW ON !

" FIVE shillings ! "

" Six ! "

" Seven-and-six ! "

" This handsome clock is going for seven shillings and sixpence. Going—going— Did I catch your eye, Talbot ? "

" Eight shillings, " said Talbot, smiling.

" Eight shillings I am offered for this excellent clock which will shed an aroma of aristocracy over any fellow's study, having been handled by a member of the peerage. Going for eight shillings—going—going—gone ! The clock is yours, Talbot ! Pay at the table."

" Right-ho ! "

Talbot of the Shell handed the money over to Manners at the table. Manners made his first entry upon a

neatly ruled sheet of paper, and dropped eight shillings into an empty marmalade-jar placed there for the purpose.

" Lot Two, " said the auctioneer. " And up that handsome vase, Kangy."

" Where is it ? " asked Kangaroo.

" There—under your silly nose, old chap ! "

" Oh, my hat ! Is that a handsome vase ? I took it for a cracked old pot ! " said Kangaroo.

" Gentlemen, this handsome vase, once in the Sixth, and after that the property of no less a person than the captain of the Shell, is offered without reserve. Talbot, don't be in a hurry to go. There are other bargains as well as that clock——"

" Thanks ! One's enough, " said Talbot, laughing.

And he departed with his bargain.

" Gentlemen, this magnificent vase — Did you say ten pounds, Grundy ? "

" No jolly fear ! "

" Gentlemen, what offers for this objet d'art ? "

" What's an objy dar ? " inquired Wally of the Third.

" An object of art, " the auctioneer condescended to explain. " This beautiful object of art——"

" More object than art about it, " said Reggie Manners.

" Ha, ha, ha ! "

" Order ! Gentlemen, I will not say that this is a rare specimen of Etruscan art——"

" My hat ! I should say not, " grinned Kangaroo.

" But you can see for yourself what its value is, " said the auctioneer persuasively. " How much did you offer, Durrance ? "

" Sixpence."

" Gentlemen, this is a serious matter. Pray do not jest, gentlemen. Did you say a guinea, Wilkins ? "

"No! I said sixpence-halfpenny."

"Dash it all! Sevenpence," said Grundy.

"Eightpence!" sang out Frayne of the Third.

"Ninepence, and chance it!" said Hobbs.

"Gentlemen, be serious! This splendid artistic vase of great age—the cracks are a sign of its great antiquity—this handsome vase, an ornament to any gentleman's study, is going at ninepence!"

"A bob!" said Clive of the Fourth.

"We are getting on! Did any gentleman say eighteenpence?"

No gentleman did, and the vase was knocked down to Sidney Clive for a shilling.

Clive grinned, and paid his shilling, and the vase was tossed to him by Kangaroo, who was acting as auctioneer's assistant.

"Catch!" said Kangaroo.

Sidney Clive was a good catch in the cricket field. But that vase was rather unhandy for catching. It slipped his fingers and landed at his feet in a hundred pieces or so!

Crash!

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Kangaroo. "Clumsy!"

A fat face was blinking in at the doorway.

"I say, Manners, don't you give him his bob back!" yelled Trimble.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Kick that fat rotter out!" roared Manners.

"Yaroooooh!"

The catastrophe did not seem to worry Clive very much, his bargain was not an object of value. There was no time for worrying, anyhow, as the auctioneer had Lot Three in hand now, and his voice was resounding through the club-room.

"Lot Three—a handsome art jar, covered with foreign stamps—all hand done!"

"Couldn't have been done with the feet, could it?" asked Grundy.

"Order! This artistic jar, once—"

"Once a jam-jar!" said Cardew.

"Once a Sixth-Former's favourite study ornament, covered with foreign stamps with wonderful artistic effect. What offer for this handsome jar?"

"One penny!"

"Three-ha'pence!" grinned Wally of the Third.

"Gentlemen, this artistic specimen of pottery is going for three-halfpence. Going, going, gone! D'Arcy minor, the jar is yours. Kindly pay my colleague at the table."

"My only Aunt Jane!" said Wally. He had not expected to bag that object of art; but he had bagged it, and he sorted out three-halfpence to hand over to Manners.

"Lot Four—a magnificent tennis-racquet."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors as they looked at the magnificent tennis racquet.

"A bit thin in parts, perhaps, but still a very handsome racquet," said the auctioneer. "It has unique characteristics. A fellow can show his skill playing tennis with this racquet—a lot of skill would be required. What offer for this unequalled and unique tennis racquet?"

"Sixpence."

"Ninepence."

"Going at ninepence! Did you say a shilling, Gunn? Thank you! Going for one shilling—fifteen-pence! Do you hear, gentlemen? This unique tennis racquet is going for fifteen-pence! Going, going, gone! Tompkins, the tennis racquet is yours."

Clarence York Tompkins of the Fourth jumped.

"I didn't speak," he ejaculated.

"You looked at me," said the auctioneer.

"I didn't mean—"

"What you didn't mean isn't



"Kick him out!" roared Tom Merry. "Yaroooooh!" yelled Trimble as Grundy's large-sized boot came into play. Baggy went out of the club-room, and the door was shut on him.

evidence, Clarence York Tompkins. You've got a rich uncle, anyhow. The racquet's yours!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Tompkins. "But—"

"Pay at the table. Lot Five—a splendid alarm clock—cost originally something under five pounds!"

"About four nineteen six under?" suggested Cardew.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Four nineteen six I am offered by Master Cardew—"

"You're jolly well not!" roared Cardew, in alarm, while the other fellows chortled.

"I distinctly heard you say four nineteen six, Cardew!"

"I was sayin'—"

"Make it nineteen-and-six for a start; that's letting you off lightly.

Gentlemen, I am offered nineteen shillings and sixpence."

"Not by me!" yelled Cardew.

"Any advance on nineteen shillings and sixpence? No advance? Going, going, gone!" The hammer rapped.

"Master Cardew, you've secured that splendid bargain for nineteen-and-six. Pay at the table."

"But I haven't—" shouted Cardew.

"Lot Six—"

"Pay here, Cardew!" called out Manners. "Buck up! You're stopping business!"

Cardew breathed hard for a moment. He was paying rather dear for his little effort at humour. As he hesitated, the door opened a few inches, and there was a shout from Trimble.

" Make him pay up ! Make him shell out ! He's bought it ! Make him shell out, you fellows ! "

" Outside ! " roared Grundy.

And there was a yell as Baggy disappeared again with the assistance of Grundy's boot.

" Lot Six—a tin saucepan." The auctioneer was going on. " Very useful in a fellow's study. Tin saucepan, jewelled in every hole—jewels missing, but holes still there. What offers for this handsome saucepan ? "

" Look here ! " Cardew was protesting.

" Pay up and look pleasant, old man ! " suggested Manners. " It's a leaving-sale you know. I'm waiting to enter the item ! "

And Cardew decided to pay up, though not with the best grace possible. He did not butt into the sale with any more humorous remarks, however.

The sale went on merrily, and considering the utter uselessness of most of the articles, the prices realised were startling. Monty Lowther rapped off article after article with great success.

All the goods that Trimble had cadged or routed out of lumber-rooms went like hot cakes. A fellow was supposed to weigh in generously at a leaving-sale, and the fellows played up. Figgins & Co. of the New House were landed with perforated pots and pans at half-a-crown each, which they dropped into a dustbin before they returned to their own House. All sorts and conditions of things were disposed of, and Monty Lowther was getting a little husky when he came to the last lot. The last item was a pair of slippers, which had once been Mr. Railton's, and had then been used for a year or so by Toby, the page, and finally consigned to the dustbin by Toby—rescued thence by Trimble for the purpose of

his leaving-sale. Monty Lowther held them up with an air as if they had been equal to Cinderella's slipper, at least.

" Gentlemen ! Lot Forty-five, and last ! This wonderful pair of slippers —this handsome and elegant pair of slippers——"

" They look as if they want a bit of mending," remarked Blake.

" They do—they does ! " grinned Figgins.

" Gentlemen, this is an auctioneer's sale-room, not a shoemaker's establishment. The goods are here to be sold, not to be healed."

" Oh, my hat ! "

" This magnificent pair of slippers, that once adorned the respected tootsies of our Housemaster—did you say half-a-crown, D'Arcy ? "

" Bai Jove ! I did not say anythin' at all ! "

" Half-a-crown I am offered. Did I catch your eye, Blake ? "

" Not at all ! "

" Half-a-crown for these beautiful slippers, which have had a long and useful career. Going for half-a-crown to Gussy——"

" Weally, Lowthah——"

" Going-going-gone ! " Rap !

" Pay at the table."

" But weally, I did not——"

" Gentlemen, the sale is now over." Monty Lowther descended from his rostrum. " Any gentleman who has not paid will now be dealt with. You haven't taken your slippers, D'Arcy."

" But weally——"

" He hasn't paid yet," said Manners.

" Blake, I'm surprised at a fellow in your study bilking," said Lowther.

" Bai Jove ! I am not bilkin', you wottah ! But I weally did not——"

" Ha, ha, ha ! "

Manners held out his hand for the half-crown, and Arthur Augustus, still vainly trying to explain that he

had not bid for the slippers, dropped a half-crown into it. Then the crowd of juniors dispersed. The auction was over, and it only remained for the proceeds to be counted and handed over to the fellow who was leaving.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER GOING—GOING—

“FOUR pounds eleven shillings and sixpence.”

“Oh, good !”

Baggy Trimble beamed.

It was a handsome sum for a junior in the Fourth Form. True, it was not so extensive as the big cheques which Trimble—according to his own account—was in the habit of receiving from Trimble Hall. But it seemed to afford Baggy Trimble very great satisfaction.

“There’s the money, and there’s the account,” said Manners, rather gruffly. “Better go over it.”

“That’s all right, old fellow. Look here, you can keep the sixpence, if you like,” said Trimble, with a burst of generosity.

“Fathead !”

And Manners departed.

“Well, you’ve had a jolly good leaving-sale, Trimble,” said Tom Merry. “I hope you’ll have a good journey home. What train are you catching ?”

“Train ?” said Trimble.

“You’re going by train, I suppose ?”

“Or is the Rolls-Royce coming from Trimble Hall ?” asked Monty Lowther, with gentle sarcasm.

“Oh ! Ah ! Yes, exactly !” said Trimble, with a gasp. “Quite so. I—I’m going in the morning as it happens.”

“On Sunday ?” exclaimed Tom in surprise.

“Yes ; that’s how it is. Better the day, better the deed, you know,” said Trimble. “I—I felt I had to have one more night at St. Jim’s, the—the

dear old school, you know—the old grey stones—the—the ivied tower. I felt I couldn’t tear myself away so suddenly.”

“Well, good-bye, in case we don’t see you in the morning,” said Tom.

And Baggy Trimble was left to himself, gloating over his plunder.

Trimble of the Fourth disappeared from view soon afterwards. The general impression was that he was gone.

That impression turned out a mistaken one at calling-over, when Trimble turned up and answered “Adsum” to his name as usual.

“Bai Jove ! Twimble’s still heah !” whispered Arthur Augustus to his chums in surprise.

When the fellows came out of Hall, Gussy tapped Trimble on the shoulder. Trimble gave a sort of convulsive start.

“Ow ! Don’t touch me !” he gasped.

“Bai Jove ! What’s the mattah ?”

“Don’t jolt me !” gasped Trimble.

“Ha, ha, ha !” roared Blake. “He’s been stuffing the profits. How many jam-tarts have you put away, Trimble ?”

“Only twenty-four,” murmured Trimble, whose fat face was almost ghastly in hue. “It wasn’t the tarts. Two dozen jam-tarts don’t hurt a chap. It wasn’t the toffee, either. And I feel sure it wasn’t the doughnuts.”

“Bai Jove !”

“It can’t have been the cold chicken,” continued Trimble. “How could a cold chicken upset a fellow ? It may have been the lobster.”

“My only hat !” gasped Blake. “If you’ve got a cold chicken, a lobster, and twenty-four jam-tarts inside, I don’t envy you the state of your works. Have you got enough money left for the funeral ?”

“Ow !”

“You’ll be pretty sick travelling

on that hefty meal!" grinned Herries.

"Wow!"

"You'll have to be carried to the train!" chuckled Digby.

"I—I'm not going to-night, you know."

"What?"

"I—I mean the Head's letting me stay over to-morrow as—as I'm ill."

"Phew!"

Trimble rolled away to his study, looking as if he were not enjoying life. Undoubtedly he had overdone it, and the lobster was on the most unfriendly terms with the chicken, and the jam-tarts did not seem to agree with either.

"Trimble's staying over to-morrow," Blake told Tom Merry that evening, with a chuckle. "He's been stuffing at the bunshop, and the Head's had to let him leave it till to-morrow."

"Eh? He told us just after the auction that he wasn't going till to-morrow," said Tom.

Blake stared.

"Did he? Then it's not because he's ill. It's queer."

"I was thinking so," said Tom.

"I—I suppose——"

"What?" asked Blake, looking at him.

"Oh, nothing!" said Tom.

On the following morning Trimble was quite himself again. He rolled into the quadrangle looking bright and cheery. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy bore down on him with a time-table.

"I've been lookin' out the twains for you, deah boy," he said.

"Eh?"

"Sunday twains are wathah a wowwy," said Arthur Augustus. "Are you goin' befoah or aftah dinnah?"

"Oh, after!" gasped Trimble.

"There is an expwess at thwee fwom Wayland. Would you like me to walk to the station with you?"

"Delighted!" said Baggy.

"Start soon aftah dinnah, then."

"Oh, yes! Certainly!"

After dinner, however, Baggy Trimble was conspicuous by his absence. The kind-hearted Gussy sought him, but he found him not. Gussy was considerably perplexed. Trimble missed the only good train of the afternoon; but it did not seem to weigh on his mind when he turned up for call-over.

"You'll have a wathah slow twain this evenin'," said Arthur Augustus, after the roll was called.

"The fact is, I don't approve of Sunday travelling," said Trimble.

"I'm leaving it till Monday."

When Baggy Trimble rolled into the Fourth-Form dormitory that night he was eyed on all sides in a very curious way. Certainly it was odd that Baggy was still there. On the strength of his departure on Saturday the leaving-sale had been held; and Baggy apparently had already consumed most of the proceeds in the shape of tuck at the bunshop. Now it was Sunday night, and he was not gone. Fellows could not help thinking it odd.

Baggy Trimble seemed to fall asleep immediately that night. At all events, he did not answer any of the remarks addressed to him.

On Monday morning he was looking quite thoughtful at breakfast. When the juniors came in for morning classes Baggy Trimble rolled along to the Fourth-Form room, as usual.

The Fourth-Formers eyed him still more expressively than in the dormitory.

"Packed your box?" asked Blake.

"Eh? No! Yes!"

"You're not coming in to lessons?" said Herries.

"Oh, yes! The dear old Form-room——"

"Stow that!" said Blake abruptly.

"Look here, Trimble, what does this

mean? Why aren't you gone?"

"He's been raisin' our giddy hopes, only to dash them to the ground again!" grinned Cardew.

"Bai Jove, Twimble—"

"You—you see—" stammered Baggy.

"Well?" snapped Blake. Blake could not help feeling suspicious by this time.

"I—I feel it hard to tear myself

know—dear old St. Jim's. You see —"

"Here comes Lathom!" murmured Clive.

And Baggy Trimble rolled into the Form-room, saved by the arrival of Mr. Lathom. But during morning lessons, the Fourth-Formers eyed Baggy Trimble almost wolfishly.

The truth was dawning upon all of them now. It was a spoof—a gigantic



"Collar him!" "Scalp him!" "Lynch him!" Hotly pursued by the enraged juniors, Baggy made a frantic break for the School House, and bolted fairly into the arms of the Terrible Three.

away, you know. The dear old Form-room, the—the dear old blackboard—" stammered Trimble.

"The what?"

"Twines itself round a fellow's heart, and all that, you know," said Trimble. "Every grey old ivied stone in it—"

"In the blackboard?" yelled Blake.

"Nunno! In the—the school, you

spoof! Trimble was not going!

And at that thought—obviously the true explanation—the Fourth-Formers fairly shook with wrath. The fellows fairly shook with wrath. The well-known wrath of Achilles, destructive as it undoubtedly was, was "not in it" with the wrath of the St. Jim's Fourth when they realised that Baggy Trimble, after all, was not going. Baggy Trimble had "diddled" the whole Lower School with a spoof

leaving-sale—the idea, evidently, had been put into his head by Sturgis' leaving-sale—and all the time he was not going. He had realised nearly five pounds for a heap of rubbish worth, perhaps, five shillings—and he was not going! He had fed himself to his fat chin on the profits of his wonderful scheme—and he was not going!

Not going!

Most of the fellows had said that it seemed too good to be true. Now they knew that it was what it seemed.

Never had morning lessons seemed so long to the Fourth—never had they seemed so short to Baggy Trimble. In the looks of the fellows around him Baggy learned what he had to expect. He would have been glad had Mr. Lathom kept the class in all day—even on mathematics or deponent verbs. But it was not to be. The long, long morning—or the short, short morning—according to the point of view—had to come to an end at last. And then—

## THE NINTH CHAPTER BUT NOT GONE!

**C**OLLAR him!

“Scalp him!”

“Lynch him!”

“I—I say! Leggo! Oh, my hat! It's all a misunderstanding! Oh, crumbs!”

Baggy Trimble ran for his life, with Blake & Co. in hot pursuit.

Baggy was across the quad like a streak of fat lightning. He was round the corner by the school shop; he dodged round the old tower; he broke back along the gymnasium wall. Round the fountain in the quad went Baggy, hot and hard; and then he made a frantic break for the School House, and bolted fairly into the arms of the Terrible Three, who had come out with the Shell.

Tom Merry caught him as he butted.

“Hold him!” roared Blake.

“Seize the scoundrel!” yelled Arthur Augustus.

“Leggo!” roared Baggy, struggling desperately. “Leggo! Oh, my hat! They're after me! I'm going—I swear I'm going! Besides, it was all a joke! Oh, crumbs!”

Blake & Co. had him the next moment. Trimble roared and yelled as they clutched.

“But what—” gasped Tom Merry.

“He's not going!” shrieked Blake. “It's all spoof! Raising the wind with a leaving-sale, and blowing it on tuck and staying on!”

“Great Scott!”

“Not going!” roared Monty Lowther. “Why, he made me his auctioneer! Didn't I raise four pounds eleven shillings and sixpence for his rubbish? Not going!”

“The villain!” gasped Manners.

“Lynch him!” roared Kangaroo.

“Yank him away behind the elms, so that we can kill him quietly,” said Cardew. “We don't want the prefects butting in.”

“Yaas, wathah!”

Fifty enraged fellows were round Baggy Trimble. He was rolled and shoved to a secluded spot behind the elms. Then the enraged juniors stood round him, in towering wrath and vengeance.

“Hold on! Let me explain!” yelled Trimble. “I—I wasn't spoofing you fellows. I—I didn't get the idea from Sturgis' leaving-sale! Nothing of the kind! I—I never went round collecting stuff to be sold! I—I never thought of taking you fellows in! The fact is, it's all a misunderstanding. Owing to a—a change of circumstances, I'm not going. That's all. Fellow isn't responsible for a change of circumstances, is he? Besides, I'm prepared to hand

the money back, if any fellow wants it!"

"Shell out, then!"

"I'm going to write to my pater at—  
at Trimble Hall—"

"What?"

"For a specially big cheque—"

"Great pip!"

"And then square up all round, as the leaving-sale was a—a mistake," said Trimble. "That's all right, I suppose?"

The juniors looked at Trimble. Judging by their looks, it was not "all right." It was far from all right.

"Gentlemen," said Monty Lowther, "we've been spoofed. We've had our leg pulled. We've rallied round Trimble's leaving-sale, and he's not leaving. He's bagged our spare cash. And, worse than that, he's staying on. We'd give him twice as much to go; but he's not going! Gentlemen, I suggest that we ought to make Trimble wish he'd gone."

Monty Lowther's suggestion was adopted unanimously and without discussion. The juniors flowed over Baggy Trimble like a tidal wave, and he disappeared from view in the midst of them.

What happened to him Baggy had no clear idea. But he knew that it was something dreadful. It was the wreck of Baggy Trimble that crawled away when the juniors tired.

And that was not all. It was agreed nem. con. that for a week to follow, every fellow in the School House should kick Baggy whenever he saw Baggy; and that sentence was carried out with gusto. During that week, Baggy's life was crammed with excitement. The leaving-sale had been spoof. Baggy had not left. But during that painful week, from the bottom of his fat heart, he wished that he had!

THE END

## ST. JIM'S JINGLES

D'ARCY Minor

(of the Third Form)



THIS cheery, inky-fingered fag,  
Great Gussy's merry minor,  
Has taken part in many a "rag"—  
He thinks there's nothing finer!  
He's always organising japes  
That drive his seniors frantic;  
And with the other Third Form apes  
He's up to many an antic.

Some fellows seem to drift through life  
In gloom and melancholy;  
They relish not its storms and strife—  
That's not the way with Wally!  
It takes a lot to put him out;  
He's happy as a sandboy  
(Except, perhaps, at Selby's shout,  
"D'Arcy! Hold out your hand, boy!")

He doesn't worship silk top-hats  
Like the resplendent Gussy;  
On matters such as socks and spats  
He's not a trifl' fussy.  
His Eton coat is often torn,  
"A thing of shreds and patches,"  
Through being dragged in bramble thorn,  
Or rent in wrestling matches!

His faithful friends are young Joe Frayne,  
Gibson, and Ernest Jameson;  
They join the fray with might and main  
When there are sports or games on.  
The reputation of the Form  
Is in their jealous keeping;  
And never, even in the dorm,  
Do they believe in sleeping!

The revels of these gay young Turks,  
The pranks they've taken part in,  
Are they not written in the works  
Of the illustrious Martin?  
Week after week, in breezy style,  
He tells of all their capers;  
And those who want to laugh and smile  
Read the Companion Papers!

Here's to this mischief-loving Puck,  
The minor of Augustus!  
To wish him nothing but good luck  
He certainly may trust us!  
Long may his merry antics be  
A source of jubilation  
To readers all, on land and sea,  
Of every rank and station!

# LONG AGO



THEY went to school by horse  
Long ago,  
And they galloped hard, of course,  
Long ago,  
For the perils were untold—  
Highwaymen and bandits bold,  
In the stirring days of old,  
As you know.  
Though no motors were invented  
They seemed perfectly contented  
Long ago.

Conditions were severe  
Long ago,  
And luxuries were dear  
Long ago;  
Comforts which by now abound  
Nowhere in the schools were found—  
Tea was eight-and-six a pound,  
As you know.  
And they studied Latin papers  
By the glim of burning tapers  
Long ago.

Remittances were lost  
Long ago,  
For they had no penny post  
Long ago;  
Letters in a folded page  
Were sent upon the country stage  
In that far-off distant age,  
As you know.  
No schoolboy yarns amusing  
They might spend their time perusing  
Long ago.

Work was very hard  
Long ago,  
And idleness was barred  
Long ago;  
Pastimes then were much the same ;  
They all knew how to play the game—  
Their sportsmanship has earned them fame,  
As you know.  
At cricket the young dis-Graces  
Played in top hats and braces  
Long ago.

But the hardships they endured  
Long ago,  
Made them brave and self-assured  
Long ago ;  
And if comforts were but crude,  
Nature all her sons endued  
With that extra fortitude,  
As you know.  
And we'll therefore sing the praise of  
Those great giants in the days of  
Long ago.





*Mile after mile of the tortuous road circuit sped under young Peter Stuart's whizzing wheels. Then came the last lap of the race, with Peter lying fifth . . . . and he'd GOT to win to save his firm from going broke!*

By

WISHART PHILP

### THE FIRST CHAPTER DISASTER!

THE sun, climbing above the eastward hills, behind which, for the past quarter of an hour, it had been tinting the dawn sky with gold and cyclamen, shone on a scene of unwonted activity.

It shone on the sleepy, grey-roofed town of Arneagh, in which the racing camps housing the motor-cycle teams for the next day's race were already astir; it shone on the twisting Irish roads that made up the course, glinting on the massive chromiumed exhausts of the two machines that were streaking over the tarmac at eighty miles an hour; and three miles ahead, where a low hill made a natural vantage point, it shone on

two men who were watching the machines approach from a hiding-place in the hedge.

It was a glorious morning; and as Peter Stuart swung his machine in the wake of his team-mate, he thrilled. Tomorrow he would be riding as a member of the famous Nomad team in the Free State Grand Prix, and fulfilling the ambition he had nourished for as long as he could remember. Even now, with a super-tuned racer beneath him, he found it hard to believe in his good fortune. It isn't many people who realise their ambitions at eighteen!

With eyes fixed on the humped form of Dan Wilson, Nomad's first string, who rode ahead, Peter hung on desperately. He guessed that the

famous veteran was testing him by trying to shake him off, and he determined to keep up.

Their speed rose rapidly, until they were touching the ninety mark on the straights and cutting the corners within bare inches. The hedges, streaking towards them, became green smudges as they flashed past, and the rising wind threatened to tear the boy from the saddle.

Nothing could hold the Nomad team at this speed, Peter realised; neither the Nortons, nor the Rudes, nor the dangerously fast French Viberts. Nomads were going to win! And Peter Stuart would be a member of the winning team!

With perfectly tuned engines roaring in unison, the two speedmen flashed down the long straight—and the men who were hidden in the hedge watched them come.

The taller of the two lowered the binoculars through which he had been following the machines, and turned to his partner.

"Coming over the rise," he said.  
"Get ready!"

He turned back to the road without waiting to see his companion raise his hand above his head.

Still the speeding motor-cycles came on—up the hill that ended the long straight, past the white cottage and up to the solitary tree that stood, like a lone sentinel, in the hedge—and as they reached the tree the tall man's hand clenched convulsively.

"Now!" he snapped out.

His comrade's raised arm flashed down, and in response a heavily laden hay-cart lumbered out of an obscure side-turning, wherein it had stood motionless for half an hour, on to the road.

Streaking into view bare feet behind Wilson, Peter took in the whole scene at a glance: the hay-cart entirely blocking the road, the driver

apparently dozing on his high perch, and the big chestnut horse which he was leaving to choose its road. There was no way past!

In the same moment he realised that Wilson was no longer in front of him, and that he was still rushing at the obstruction at nearly seventy miles an hour.

There was only one chance of stopping in time, and Peter took it. He threw his lithe body sideways half out of the saddle, and jerked the machine into a broadside skid. Tyres, protesting, howled on the road, stones flew like bullets from the threshing wheels, and the speediron went careering wildly down the road, with the boy leaning it over until his knee almost grazed the ground.

But even as he wrestled with the kicking bars, he knew it was useless. The cart was much too near. To crash was inevitable!

Peter braced himself for the impact.

The front wheel of the bike slid full into the back wheel of the cart, the grips were jerked from his hands, and the cart's tailboard swept him from his mount and hurled him on to the grass verge. He felt the ground disappear from beneath him, clutched wildly at empty air, then the lush grasses of the ditch closed over him.

Dazed and shaken, he lay at the bottom of the ditch and took hold of himself. He was amazed to find that he was not badly hurt. In the moment before he hit the cart he would have counted himself lucky to have escaped with a broken limb.

For a time Peter remained still, waiting for his head to ease its throbbing and for the dizziness that was making him feel rather sick to pass off. Presently, when he felt better, he clambered to his feet and struggled back to the road.

The scene had changed considerably,

he saw. The frightened horse had dragged the hay-cart some distance along the road, leaving a liberal trail of loose hay ; and, at his feet, lay all that remained of a motor-cycle—a battered, almost shapeless mass of metal from which a grotesquely twisted wheel reared drunkenly on broken forks.

With a start Peter realised that he was looking at his own mount. He knew then how miraculous his escape had been.

On the other side of the road was another, less-battered, motor-cycle, and sitting beside it, nursing his arm, was Dan Wilson.

As Peter stumbled across the road towards him, the old speedman looked up at the boy, and a quick smile of relief lit up his face.

"Thank heavens you're all right," he said. "Gosh ! When I sat up and saw your bike there, I thought —" His face clouded and he left the sentence unfinished.

"Yes, I'm intact," Peter told him. Then, with a quick smile : "I never felt better in my life. What about you ? "

Wilson grinned reassuringly.

"An arm," he said. "Nothing much. Probably only a strain, only I can't move it."

The sound of the hay-cart approaching cut them short, and they turned to meet it. They found themselves looking into the wizened, pinched face of the carter, gazing down at them malevolently from his lofty perch.

Dan glared back at him.

"Look here," he burst out suddenly, "don't you know that these roads are closed to ordinary traffic during practice hours ? Couldn't you avoid blocking the whole road ? Man alive, it's a wonder you didn't kill us both ! "

The carter said nothing for a moment ; then, without warning, a

torrent of words in the native Erse poured from his lips.

Dan shook his head to show that he didn't understand.

"Speak English," he demanded.

But the more he tried to make the peasant understand, the more obvious it became that it was useless ; and when the carter made to drive his wagon back into the side-turning from which it had come, they stood back and let it go. There was nothing to be got from continuing the talk.

Together, the two speedmen stood and watched the cart out of sight, then they turned back to examine their wrecked machines.

Suddenly the place was full of people—another rider out for early morning practice, a farm labourer, hoe on shoulder, on his way to work, and a doctor returning homeward from a night case in a dilapidated touring car—all eager to help the Nomad riders who had met with misfortune.

With the help of the friendly speedman and the labourer, they lifted the remains of their bikes into the back of the car. Then, excusing themselves from the doctor's pressing invitation to accompany the wrecked machines back to the Nomad camp, they set out across country to walk.

For a long time Peter walked in silence, trying to hide the bitter disappointment that he felt. Three weeks ago he had been an apprentice working in the machine shops of the Nomad works, and the chance of ever gaining a coveted place in the racing team had seemed infinitely remote.

Then, suddenly, Orton, head of the Nomad works, had called him into his office and, because he liked the look of the square-shouldered, fair-haired youngster who looked one straight in the face when he spoke, had offered him a place in the team.

"We're a man short, and I like the

look of you," was all the reason Tod Orton had given ; and Peter had wondered, not knowing that, months before, Orton had stood under a tree in the pouring rain and watched the boy practising cornering on a second-hand motor-cycle of doubtful origin, and on a road that was slippery enough to have slowed up even Dan Wilson.

Now he had to tell Orton that he had lost his chance of making good and smashed up his machine. It wasn't exactly going to be a tea-party.

" I'd give anything in the world to undo that spill," Wilson said suddenly, as if he had read the boy's thoughts. " It wouldn't have mattered so much in an ordinary race, but this one——"

He left the sentence unsaid, so that Peter looked at him quizzically.

" Why this one, especially ? " he said.

Wilson paused for a moment as if collecting his thoughts before replying ; then he looked away from the boy and said quietly :

" I suppose you know that Orton's nearly bankrupt ? "

Peter stopped short in his tracks.

" What do you mean ? " he said.

" I mean that if we don't win this race Nomad's will go bust and the works will have to close, and hundreds of workpeople will lose their jobs."

Peter said nothing. His own little world, which he had always thought so secure—the Nomad works with their red chimney and low-lying sheds, the Nomad team, Orton, Wilson, everything—was crumbling about his ears.

" Tod's staking practically everything he's got on this race," Wilson went on passionately. " He's just got to win. If he can, it will prove to the world that Nomad bikes are just as good as ever they were when we were winning races hands down all over England and the Continent ;

and people will start buying them again. If he fails, well, I suppose this'll be the last race a Nomad team is ever entered in."

He went on to tell Peter how Viberts, the huge mass-production French firm, were straining every nerve to drive Nomads from the market ; how, with almost unlimited capital behind them, they were selling their machines for less than it cost to build them in order to induce people to buy Viberts instead of Nomads ; and how they had stopped Nomads winning races by bribing Max Souter and Kid Connolly to stop riding Nomads and ride for Viberts.

They had tried to bribe Wilson, too, and their emissary still cherished painful memory of the black eye which had been Wilson's only answer.

Now, with Dan Wilson and Peter out, and only Michael Gill left to carry Nomad colours in the race, it looked as if Viberts were going to win their dour struggle with Tod Orton and smash the tiny British firm that had stood out against them for so long. And once Nomads were out of the way, they would have almost a monopoly of the market for the particular type of machine which the two firms produced.

It was a galling reflection, and as the two speedmen made their way through the cobbled streets of the waking town, their faces were stern.

The Nomad camp was situated in a converted barn on the edge of the town, and if it lacked much of the splendour that characterized the white-walled garage which held the Norton team, and the extensiveness of the Vibert headquarters, it made up for all that in enthusiasm.

Wilson and Peter strode round the corner into view of the camp. Then they stopped dead !

Around the door of the barn was a

large crowd of onlookers, and at the gate was an ambulance.

Wilson grabbed Peter's arm and broke into a run. With overwhelming apprehension, they raced across the road and forced their way through the crowd to the door.

After the brilliant, crystal-clear light of the morning sun, the darkness of the barn seemed unusually intense. The benches which lined the walls, and the shiny tools which lay upon

get accustomed to the deep gloom; then, as if he had been hypnotized and had suddenly regained his senses, Wilson swung round on a mechanic.

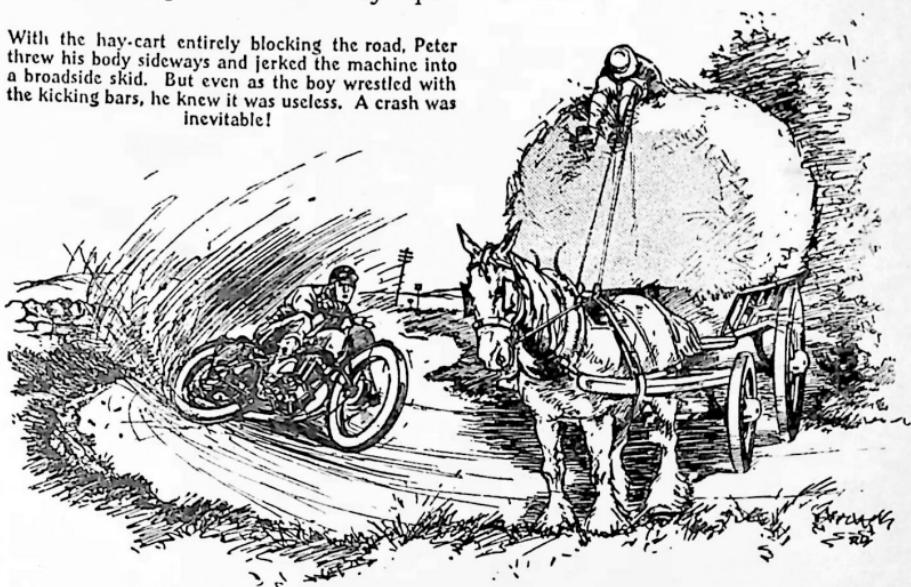
"What's the matter?" he gasped. "What's happened?"

"It's Gill," the man whispered. "He's crashed."

Wilson's face paled beneath its tan. His lips were set in a hard line.

"Crashed?" he breathed. "How? Where?"

With the hay-cart entirely blocking the road, Peter threw his body sideways and jerked the machine into a broadside skid. But even as the boy wrestled with the kicking bars, he knew it was useless. A crash was inevitable!



them, seemed to be playing hide and seek with the shadows, half seen and half obscured by the gloom. Only at the farther end of the place could the sun-blinded speedmen see; where brilliant rays of yellow sunlight streaming through the window in the roof shone on a little group of doctors and motor-cyclists who stood, silent and expectant, round something that lay on the floor.

For a few moments, Wilson and the boy stood inside the door, taking it all in, waiting for their eyes to

"About twenty minutes back," the mechanic told him. "He followed you out to practice—up by the disused railway line, there. Someone had closed the level-crossing gates—broken the padlock, apparently. Gill couldn't stop."

Dan's eyes rested on the silent group, but he didn't see them. In his imagination he was looking through them, seeing Michael Gill lying white and very still on the ground, a thin trickle of blood escaping from the corner of his mouth.

"Hurt?" he breathed. "Is he badly hurt?"

"Don't know yet. Pretty badly, I'm afraid. His machine's over there."

The mechanic indicated a pile of wreckage in the corner which gave mute testimony to the speed at which Gill had hit the gate.

Wilson bit his lip and beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead. Suddenly he squared his shoulders and turned once more to the mechanic.

"Where's Orton?" he asked.

The man jerked his head in the direction of the hotel in which the team were installed; and, looking to neither right nor left, Wilson strode once more through the crowd about the door and disappeared into the building.

Seeing that he could do nothing to help, Peter, too, forced his way back into the sunshine. He wanted to get back into the air. Somehow, near that silent, purposeful group at the other end of the barn he felt that he couldn't breathe.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER PETER'S CHANCE.

"DAN!"

Seated on an upturned box in the now deserted barn, Dan Wilson looked up at the sound of the voice. What he saw made him jump to his feet in astonishment.

Standing in the doorway, with his leathers open at the collar and his face hot and dusty, was Peter Stuart, and squirming in his strong grip was the man who had glared so malevolently at them from the hay-cart.

Over four hours had passed since the ambulance bearing Michael Gill—for whom the doctors prophesied at least a month in hospital—had driven away, and during that time Peter had not returned to the camp.

Now he had appeared suddenly out

of the blue, with his hand twisted into the collar of an almost complete stranger.

"Great Scott! What in heaven's name—" Wilson began.

Peter yanked his captive across the shed and dumped him, protesting sullenly, at the foot of the bench.

"I found him talking English," he said shortly.

Wilson stared in amazement at the cowering figure of the little Irishman and back at the boy, whose wind-blown hair and strained-looking eyes gave him a strangely wild appearance.

"But this morning he couldn't! You must be making a mistake!" he blurted out; then, as he realised the full significance of the boy's words: "Good heavens, you don't think the hay-cart blocking the road was anything but an accident. My dear chap, you can't mean—"

But Peter was no longer listening. He had looped a length of rope round his prisoner's wrists and was now absorbed in securing the man's ankles.

When he was satisfied that his knots were firm he swung himself on to the bench opposite Wilson.

"That's exactly what I do mean," he said, as if no time had elapsed since Wilson's last question. "I'm nearly sure that someone paid this merchant to block the road with his cart, and I'm going to make quite sure."

"What the dickens are you driving at?"

"I'm going to ask you to give me a hand in a minute, so I suppose I'd better tell you," Peter went on more quietly. "You see, during that crash this morning I hadn't much time to think; but afterwards I was kind of picturing that hay-cart in my mind, and suddenly it struck me that there was something wrong about it. I couldn't quite place what it was, but I was quite sure I was right. It was like having a word on the tip of your

tongue and not being able to remember it."

Wilson nodded, his whole attention fixed on the boy.

"Well, when we got back here and found that Gill had crashed at the same time, it seemed—how shall I put it?—rather too much of a coincidence. So I went for a walk to think it out. Then I remembered about the cart.

Peter leant forward, his eyes flashing.

"Dan, the reins were taut! The driver was reining back his horse! He wasn't trying to get out of the way!"

Wilson thumped his knee enthusiastically with his sound fist.

"By George, youngster!" he cried. "I believe you're on to something! What do we do now?"

"Find out who paid him, first; then tell Tod."

"All right; it's your show. Carry on."

Peter slipped off his seat and wheeled an old practice bike out from the corner of the shed, kicking it on to its stand so that its rear wheel hung almost over the helpless driver's head.

"Come and sit on the little rat's chest," he invited. "I'll show you." He kicked the engine into life, thumbing the throttle open until the back wheel whirled fiercely in the air; then, while the burly speedman straddled the unfortunate driver, Peter bent down and spoke to him.

"Listen!" he shouted above the roar of the engine. "I've asked before who bribed you to play that dirty rotten trick this morning. This is your last chance. Who was it?"

The man's face was pale with dread, but he said nothing.

Peter gripped the saddle of the machine. Gradually he edged it nearer and nearer until the spinning wheel was only a bare inch from the terrified driver's face.

"Who was it?" Peter demanded

again. "Or would you like to find out how it feels to have your face rubbed on a motor-cycle tyre?"

The threat was enough. Peter could see by the man's horrified expression that he was willing to do anything to escape. The boy cut out the engine and turned once more to the Irishman.

"Who was it?" he said very quietly.

The man opened his lips a quarter of an inch. The words came in a sibilant whisper.

"Mr. Souter."

Max Souter, Vibert's crack rider!

Wilson straightened up. A low whistle of surprise escaped from his clenched teeth.

Peter closed the door of Orton's room behind him and faced the manufacturer.

People in the Nomad works were wont to refer to Tod Orton as a character. It was easy to see why. In spite of his sixty-five years, he was still as straight as a plumb-line. His fine head, with its shaggy mop of grey hair, still sat proudly erect on his square shoulders; his unwavering, light blue eyes, set in a rugged, tanned face, still retained their brightness. Dressed in Harris tweed—as he always was—he seemed to Peter to be wholly British, like a John Bull who has lost his side whiskers and grown taller and less set in his limbs.

"Well, Stuart?"

"We've discovered that those crashes this morning were engineered. We think you ought to know," the boy said. He went on to tell Orton all that had happened since his disappearance; and by the time he had finished, the old man's eyes blazed fire and the hand which lay before him on the blotter was clenched until the knuckles showed white through the brown skin.

"Where is Wilson?" he said, at last.

"Outside in the passage. We locked the man in the shed."

"Ask him to bring the ruffian here, please."

Peter delivered the message and returned to Orton's room, taking the chair that the old man indicated. The silence that fell between them was tense and expectant, so that the grandfather clock striking midday made both man and boy jump. Peter felt oddly excited—the kind of feeling one gets in a theatre, waiting for the curtain to go up.

Suddenly the door was flung open, and Wilson was framed in the doorway.

"He's gone!" he snapped out. "Someone's unlocked the door and cut through the ropes. He's got clean away!"

Orton and Peter sprang to their feet as one man; then, slowly, the manufacturer sat down again.

"All right; come in and shut the door, Dan. It's no good crying over spilt milk."

"But we might catch him again," Peter gasped.

"Not a chance of it. The people who set him free had a car waiting, there's no doubt."

Tod Orton sucked his pipe meditatively; then he said to Peter:

"Your frog-marching the man through the town caused a good deal of excitement. Am I right?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you brought him past the Vibert camp on the way, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"H'm, that's fairly plain, then. They saw you, guessed you'd get something out of their man, and waited for a chance to get him away."

There was silence, then, until at last Orton looked up at Wilson.

"What part prevents you from

repairing your machine?" he asked.

"The frame's cracked and we can't get another from London in time. The one on the practice machine won't do because it's the old model."

Orton examined the bowl of his pipe for a moment without speaking; then, without looking up, he said:

"But we could get a new one here by air."

Wilson thought for a moment, then nodded slowly.

Suddenly, the manufacturer gripped the arms of his chair and rose to his full height.

"Listen," he said slowly. "Viberts have played me a few dirty tricks in my time, but I've never paid 'em back in their own coin. I've always fought fair all my life. You know that. Now they've smashed three of my machines and, what is far worse, incapacitated two of my riders by a trick that is as villainous as any that I've ever known. If I had any proof I'd go straight to the race stewards; but they've taken away all the evidence I had." The old man's anger was mounting up. "They've left me only one course—and I'm going to take it!"

He turned to Peter, thumping his desk to drive each word home.

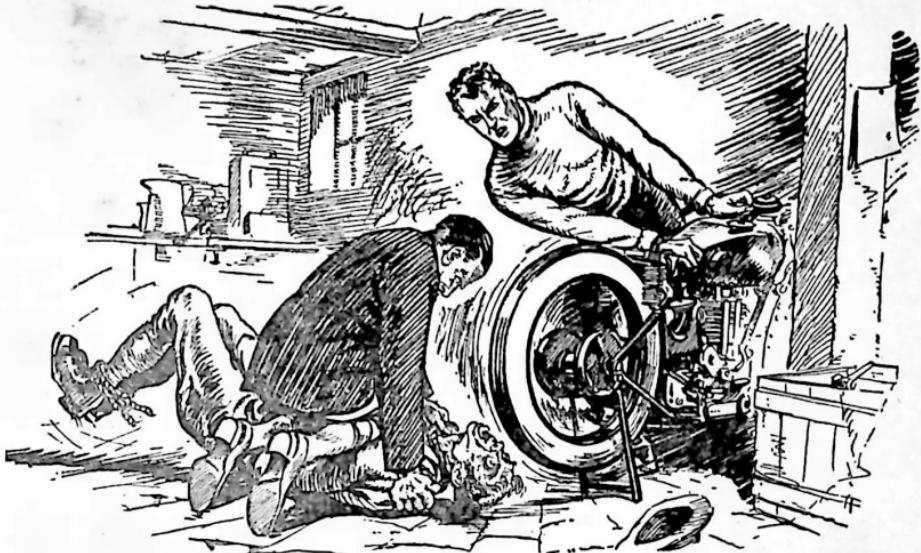
"I've got about two hundred pounds left in the world, Stuart. I'm using it to put you in the race. I'm going to smash Viberts, fighting fair if I can; and if I can't, I'd like to think I went down fighting."

He stretched out a powerful hand.

"Good luck!" he said.

The hands of the old manufacturer and the young speedman met across the table.

The shadows about the barn were growing long before the plane bearing the needed frame came dropping down on Arneagh out of the sky; and it was grey dawn before the



With Dan Wilson kneeling on the hay-cart driver's chest, Peter gradually edged the machine nearer and nearer, until the spinning wheel was only a bare inch from the man's face. "Now," demanded Peter, "who bribed you to block the road with your cart?"

dog-tired mechanics, who had worked all through the night under Wilson's guidance, stood back from the finished speed-iron. Then, while the men raised a tired cheer, the veteran speedman, with his arm still in a sling, rode the machine away into the dawn to test it.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER THE RACE!

**C**ROUCHING low over the bars, Peter streaked down towards the pits.

Eighteen times before—once every lap—he had seen the packed stands and the long row of replenishment depots slide up to meet him thus; and now, the next time, it would be the finish.

That meant that there was only one lap more to go—and, as yet, he had failed woefully to fulfil the confidence Orton had placed in him.

For hours, it seemed to him, he had

been roaring round the circuit; and at each straight section he had strained his eyes to catch a glimpse of either the crimson crash helmet of the Norton rider or the green ones of the three Vibert men. But he had not seen them.

Somewhere ahead of him streaked all four of his rivals—whom he had got to catch.

Settling himself lower in the saddle to cut down wind resistance, he twisted the throttle to the limit, asking his engine for that last ounce of power that he had been keeping in reserve.

And standing in the Nomad pit, his face expressionless, Tod Orton watched him come.

For close on two hundred miles the old man had stood thus, watching the blue-helmeted Nomad rider risking everything to catch the flying Viberts, and the crack riders of the Vibert team holding off the boy's

challenge. Now it was the last lap and still the three Viberts and the Norton maintained their lead.

The manufacturer turned to Dan Wilson who stood beside him.

"Give him the all-out signal," he said. "Show him he's close to them."

Wilson leaped to the back of the pit and seized a huge crimson disc mounted on a pole. Quickly he thrust it from the pit counter, waving it slowly to catch the boy's attention.

Peter saw it and his gauntleted hand left its grip for a moment, rising in a half salute to tell the men in the pit that he understood.

He had ridden fiercely before, but now he threw his machine round the corners in a way which made the crowds catch at their breath and step back involuntarily from the road.

He had forgotten danger; forgotten the pain that had been racking his chest ever since his crash in practice. He remembered only that he must go faster; that somewhere ahead were the men who were trying to wreck Nomads, and he had got to catch them.

Again and again his foot-rest struck sparks from the road as he leaned his speed-iron right over on its side to surge round a tricky bend; and again and again he brushed the roadside grass as he straightened out. A hundred times it looked as if he must crash and a hundred times he pulled his machine out of danger by a split inch and sent it rocketing onwards. It seemed almost that, whatever he did, no catastrophe had power to touch him.

He caught the Norton at the end of the long straightaway and, on his heels, zoomed up the hill to the white cottage beyond which they had crashed into the hay-cart. And as he swung round the bend in the Norton's wake he saw a Vibert rider at the side of the road.

Orange flames were streaking from the Vibert's engine, and its rider was bending over it, struggling desperately to put them out.

Eagerly Peter's gaze flashed to the machine's number, and, with a grim smile, he saw that it was No. 7. That was Kid Connelly's machine. Now it was out of the race there was only Max Souter and Vibert's third rider ahead.

Past the tree that stood like a sentinel in the hedge they streaked; and then Connelly and his burning machine were forgotten and Peter was riding all he knew to pass the Norton.

For a mile the two machines hung together, with Peter determined to pass and the Norton rider as determined to keep ahead; then suddenly the engine note of the leading machine started to die away and its rider was drawing in to the side of the road. Some small defect in his highly tuned engine had put him out of the race in the last lap.

As he streaked past, Peter risked a glance over his shoulder at the unlucky rider. He saw the man throw up his arm in the old Roman salute, sportingly wishing good luck to the rider who was more fortunate than himself.

Peter gripped his knees into the tank and strove for yet more speed. He was on the back leg of the course now, where vantage points were scarce and spectators consequently fewer; and there was little more than two miles left to go. He had got to go faster. It was now or never!

Corners slid to meet him, were negotiated and forgotten; straight stretches were covered at over the hundred mark; and the lone Nomad never faltered in its stride. It seemed to realise how great were the issues that depended on its speed.

Once more the boy flung his mount into a bend, and as he straightened

# THE LAST LAP!



Facing page 224

As the winning-post draws nearer, the pace of the roaring racers gets hotter and hotter! Skidding round the bends with wide-open throttle the leading riders make their final desperate bid for victory, with disaster as the penalty for the over-reckless!

*Specially drawn for the "Holiday Annual" by Roland Davies.*

out an exultant whoop escaped from his clenched teeth. For before him, one behind the other, were the two Viberts.

Glancing back from in front, Max Souter saw the boy at the same time, and humped himself down over his tank, urging his machine to the utmost. What he had imagined to be a runaway victory had suddenly turned into a speed duel as desperate as any he had ever experienced.

With scrabbling tyres screeching on the turns and engine shrieking defiance, Peter rode into the thundering exhausts of the two Viberts. And all the time the Nomad was catching up.

Yard by yard, foot by foot, the distance between the machines diminished until at last Peter drew out to pass the second Vibert. And as he did so, the man edged his machine over, cutting him out.

Again the boy tried to pass, and again the rival rider blocked his path.

Peter understood then. The man was holding him out purposely, taking advantage of the lonely part of the course to keep him back while Souter went on to win.

In a compact bunch the three snarling speed-irons stormed up to the hairpin bend, the last corner before the long, straight run to the finish. Into Peter's excited brain flashed the thought that unless he could get past here his last chance would have gone.

Deliberately he drew his machine wide, giving the impression that he meant to pass on the outside of the curve; and, with a grim smile, he watched the Vibert rider edge out to stop him.

For a moment the boy hung behind the Vibert machine; then, without warning, he flung his speed-iron over and, changing down, streaked for the inside of the curve.

The Vibert rider realised the boy's

intention too late. He jerked his front wheel inwards viciously and spun the throttle wide in a wild endeavour to cut the Nomad off. For a split second the two machines almost touched; then the Vibert was whipping outwards in an uncontrollable skid, with its rider striving in vain to hold it. In a series of frenzied swerves the snarling speed-iron skated across the road to hit the bank.

As he swung his machine after Souter, Peter saw the whole racer fling itself into the air and go crashing through the hedge.

But Souter was still twenty yards ahead, and before them were the stands again, and out in the road, small in the distance, the figure of an official holding his chequered flag aloft to acclaim the winner.

Peter's muscles stood out like whipcord under the skin, and his jaw, clamped hard, was thrust forward menacingly. He twisted his throttle hard against the stop and hung on. He could do no more. It rested between the two machines, now, to fight it out.

For seconds that seemed long as minutes the distance between the two machines remained the same, then slowly the British bike started drawing in.

The people who thronged the stands were on their feet, now, cheering wildly for the lone rider who had come, so it seemed to them, from nowhere to challenge the invincible Souter. His youth and the odds which he faced had made the crowd Peter's staunchest partisans from the start, and now their Irish enthusiasm was unrestrained.

In front of the stands, the time-keeper was gesticulating wildly to the marshal who held the flag.

"The lap record!" he managed to bellow above the uproar, and his expression suggested that it had already gone "sky-high."

The marshal nodded, and his gaze flashed back to the machines that streaked towards him, the roar of their engines already audible above the roar of the crowd.

Hastily Peter's eyes flashed from Vibert to the finish, measuring the distance, and then crazy joy was surging up inside him, for he knew that he would win !

" Got you ! " he croaked triumphantly at Souter's humped back.

" Got you ! "

The noise of the straining speed-irons roared in the boy's ears like a thousand machine-guns. It seemed to shake the very air. The ground rushing beneath their flying wheels vibrated as from the passing of an express train.

He was almost level now. His front wheel was up to Souter's foot, up to the Vibert's tank, up to its front wheel—ahead ! He was ahead !

Half a length in front of the Vibert he saw the flag slash down—then everything went black.

It was Tod Orton who picked the boy up from under his machine where he had fallen. He raised the youngster in his great arms and carried him to the special pit which had been fitted out as a first-aid station.

Quickly the doctor ran his practised hands over the boy's body, and when he looked up his face was grave.

" Good heavens," he ejaculated, " this boy's been riding with a couple of broken ribs ! "

The thing that pleased Peter most, later, was the postscript to a letter which he received from Tod Orton a few days before he left hospital and followed the Nomad team back to England. It consisted of a single line, and it ran :

" When are you coming back to practise for the Isle of Man T.T. ? "

THE END



## GREYFRIARS RHYMES BOB CHERRY

(the fighting man of the Remove and a member of the Famous Five)

A LONG-LIMBED, healthy lad is Bob,  
A splendid type of youngster;  
The nation's heart with pride should throb  
To have such boys amongst her.  
His eyes are all aglow with mirth,  
His ways are frank and sunny;  
And surely happiness is worth  
Far more than mints of money ?

Bob makes the lofty manners drop  
Of high-and-mighty Coker,  
And more than once has put a stop  
To Loder's games of " poker."  
He's not an interfering fool,  
A sneak both mean and brainless,  
But one who really loves his school,  
And keeps its honour stainless.

Bob Cherry is, without a doubt,  
A mass of wiry muscle;  
And bullies have been counted out  
In many a thrilling tussle.  
The Highcliff cads have felt his fist,  
And Vavasour and Monson  
Have begged our hero to desist—  
To them he seemed Len Johnson !

Though Bull can fight like one possessed,  
And Wharton has some science,  
They have to give the bully best—  
He sets them at defiance.  
The only fellow in the Form  
He cannot triumph over  
Is Cherry, who has made it warm  
For him—the great Bolsover !

Yet Cherry is, to tell the truth,  
When girls are present, modest;  
With them he thinks himself uncouth—  
His manners are the oddest.  
Although one day he'll maybe wed  
His Susan or his Sarah,  
His honest cheeks get very red  
With Marjorie and Clara.

Once Cherry was expelled for theft,  
His protests went unheeded;  
But when the school found they were " left,"  
Apologies were needed.  
To think that Bob could be a thief  
Was really very funny.  
One might suppose an Indian chief  
Had manners sweet as honey !

Good, honest Bob ! long may you be—  
The boy Frank Richards makes you—  
A hero brave on land or sea,  
Whatever fate o'ertakes you !  
To " H.A.-ites " who on life's course  
Are nobly persevering,  
Your sunny smile's a latent force,  
For ever bright and cheering !



Holidays come and go, but pleasant memories of them linger on—of joyful days spent hiking or cycling, camping or picnicking, boating or swimming.

# TUBBY'S TIP

*by*

**Arthur Edward Lovell**

**SAID** Tubby, beaming like the moon :  
“ I say, you chaps, how prime !  
My Uncle Joe this afternoon  
Is coming for a time !

I've got a wire to say that he  
Is coming for the trip  
On purpose to hand out to me  
A very useful tip ! ”

“ Congratters, Tubby ! ” Silver said.  
“ You're certainly in luck.  
Mind you don't paint the village red  
And die of too much tuck ! ”

Our podgy friend could hardly wait  
For Uncle to arrive ;  
He loitered at the college gate  
From three o'clock till five.

When Uncle in the station hack  
Rolled up, he grinned with glee,  
For he had got a bad attack  
Of “ hoping ” cough, you see.

At last, when Uncle took his leave,  
He gave his hand a grip,  
And said : “ Now, nephew, I believe  
I promised you a tip.

It's this : When next you write to me,  
Remember what I say—  
The word extremely ' has no ' g ',  
And Uncle ' has no ' k '.”

With that, and with a brief good-bye,  
He bade the driver start :  
But tear-drops filled poor Tubby's eye,  
And fury filled his heart.

When Jimmy said, “ Well, are you rich ? ”  
He groaned, as if in pain ;  
So we said, “ Have some doughnuts ! ”—which  
Soon cheered him up again !



# WHAT HAPPENED AT THE BOAT-HOUSE!



By  
OWEN CONQUEST

*"Fair play's a jewel." And never was this saying brought home with more discomfort and sorrow to a rascally schemer than in this topping tale of the Rookwood boat-race!*

## THE FIRST CHAPTER RIVALS OF THE RIVER.

"**P**ULL, you beggars!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Go it, *Classicals*!"  
"Bravo!"

The towing-path swarmed with Rookwooders, both *Classicals* and *Moderns*. The *Classicals* were shouting at the top of their voices, as Bulkeley's crew shot by in their racing skiff.

"*Classicals* will win on Saturday!" said Jimmy Silver. "Just look at them, you chaps! They'll beat the *Moderns* hands down."

"Good old Bulkeley!"

It was the last practice before the Rookwood boat-race; and the *Classical* senior crew were in great form. Jimmy Silver & Co., being merely juniors, were not personally concerned in the great event. But, as *Classicals*, they took a deep interest in it. Any member of the *Classical* Fourth would have given a term's

pocket-money to see Bulkeley's crew victorious when the race came off.

"We're going to win!" said Raby; the "we" referring to the *Classical* side of Rookwood generally.

"About a dozen lengths!" said Newcome. "Knowles won't be able to touch them."

"Not in his life-time!" said Arthur Edward Lovell emphatically.

"Fathead!"

Tommy Dodd of the *Modern* Fourth put in that remark. Tommy Dodd, being a *Modern*, took quite a different view.

"My dear chap," said Lovell tolerantly, "you *Moderns* don't know anything about rowing—"

"Ass!"

"Best thing you can do," continued Lovell, "is to warn Knowles to keep off cigarettes till after the race—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Otherwise, you'll see him crack up!" grinned Lovell.

"You cheeky ass!" growled

Tommy Dodd. "The Modern crew is going to walk away from Bulkeley's crowd on Saturday."

"Look at Knowles," murmured Mornington. "He doesn't look as if he thinks so."

The juniors glanced round. Cecil Knowles of the Modern Sixth was standing at a little distance, with his gaze fixed on the Classical boat. The Classical eight, pulling together in perfect time, were well worth watching, but Knowles' expression did not indicate that he found any pleasure in the sight.

His brow was dark, his thin lips tightly compressed, and his eyes had an angry gleam in them. Knowles was too busy with his own thoughts—not agreeable ones, evidently—to remember that he was not alone; and at that moment his looks betrayed his feelings very plainly.

The Classical juniors grinned. Knowles certainly did not look at that moment like a fellow who expected to win.

"Looks happy and confident—what?" chuckled Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Buck up, Knowles!" called out Lovell. "A race isn't lost till it's won, you know."

Knowles of the Sixth gave a start, and spun round towards the juniors. His hard face crimsoned as he caught the grinning looks on all sides.

"What? What did you say, Lovell?" he exclaimed.

"I said buck up," said Lovell cheerfully. "You're not beaten yet. You won't be licked till Saturday, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Certainly a junior of the Fourth Form should not have addressed a prefect of the Sixth in that cheeky manner. Arthur Edward Lovell, in the exuberance of his spirits, was really allowing himself a little too

much latitude. Knowles evidently thought so, for he made a furious stride towards Lovell, and caught him by the collar.

"Hallo! Leggo, will you!" roared Lovell.

Shake, shake, shake!

It was the turn of the Modern juniors to chuckle. Knowles of the Sixth shook Lovell a great deal like a terrier shaking a rat.

But if Knowles was understudying the terrier, there was nothing of the rat about Arthur Edward Lovell. He struggled gamely.

"Let go, you Modern rotter!" he shouted.

"Knowles—" began Jimmy Silver.

Smack!

The back of Knowles' free hand caught Jimmy Silver across the mouth, and Jimmy sat down on the towing-path quite suddenly.

"Ow!" he stuttered.

Lovell, with a savage wrench, tore himself free. He gave Knowles a shove that sent the Modern prefect staggering.

"Keep off, you rotter!" shouted Raby and Newcome together as the Modern senior rushed at Lovell again.

But Knowles did not heed.

It was not only the chipping of the Classical juniors that had irritated him. It was the form shown by the Classical crew in the trial run, as all the fellows present knew perfectly well. Knowles was almost savagely keen on winning the rowing event, and the sight of Bulkeley's crew had roused all the bitterness in his bitter nature. It was a solace to him to take it out of Bulkeley's enthusiastic supporters in the Fourth Form.

He grasped Lovell again and, instead of shaking him, began to box Arthur Edward's ears right and left.

Lovell struggled furiously, punching recklessly at the prefect.

Jimmy Silver jumped up.

"Collar the beastly cad!" he shouted.

"Down with him!" yelled Mornington.

There was a rush of the Classical juniors to Lovell's rescue. That the person of a prefect was sacred and not to be lightly touched by a junior was quite forgotten in the excitement of the moment. Cecil Knowles was collared on all sides and dragged away from Lovell, and in a moment he was sprawling on the towing-path.

That was too much for Tommy Dodd.

Tommy did not like Knowles personally, for the bully of the Sixth was not popular in his own House. But he was head of the Moderns and entitled to loyal support on that ground.

"Back up, Moderns!" yelled Tommy Dodd.

And Tommy rushed into the fray with a dozen Modern juniors. The Classicals met them more than half-way.

Bulkeley's eight, pulling down the river, vanished in the distance, quite unheeded now. There was a terrific scrap on the towing-path, Classicals and Moderns mixing up in a wild mêlée. Knowles of the Sixth, sprawling in the grass, was in the midst of



"Boys!" It was Mr. Dalton's voice. "Cave!" gasped Lovell. "Hook it!" As the master of the Fourth came hurrying along the tow-path, the Juniors scattered in every direction.

the combat which surged over him. It was, indeed, rather unfortunate for Knowles that Tommy Dodd & Co. had rallied to his rescue in that prompt manner. They meant well, but the last state of Knowles was worse than his first.

He gasped and spluttered as he was trampled over by wildly excited juniors. He scrambled up, but a rush knocked him over again, and Tommy Dodd was hurled sprawling across him and Cook and Doyle went across Tommy Dodd, and two or three Classicals were added to the heap.

Under the pile Knowles squirmed and wriggled and spluttered.

" Go it, *Classicals* ! "

" Buck up, *Moderns* ! "

" Give 'em beans ! "

" Back up ! "

" Ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-wow-wow ! " came in faint gurgling accents from the unhappy Knowles.

" Boys ! "

It was Mr. Dalton's voice. The master of the Fourth hurried on the scene.

" Cave ! "

" Look out ! "

" Hook it ! " gasped Lovell.

It was quite kaleidoscopic. As Mr. Dalton came hurrying along the tow-path, the juniors scattered in every other direction. By the time Mr. Dalton arrived the stricken field was tenanted only by Knowles of the Sixth, who lay gasping, too winded to rise.

The Fourth-Form master helped him to his feet, by what time the rival juniors of Rookwood had vanished in all directions over the horizon.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER LOVELL BUTTS IN.

JIMMY SILVER groaned.

Arthur Edward Lovell echoed his groan.

Raby mumbled. Newcome gasped.

It was a scene of woe in the end study in the Fourth-Form passage. The Fistical Four were suffering.

For quite a long time no sounds were heard in that celebrated study but groans and mumbles and gasps.

" Well, we've been through it ! " said Jimmy Silver at last. " I really think Dicky Dalton has overdone it, this time."

" He's a beast ! " groaned Lovell.

" Ow, ow ! " said Newcome.

" Ow ! My hands ! " moaned Raby.

Jimmy Silver grinned faintly.

" After all, it was worth it, " he remarked.

" Was it ? " groaned Lovell. " It doesn't seem to feel as if it was."

" Keep smiling, " said Jimmy.

" Wow ! "

" Knowles had the time of his life, " said Jimmy Silver. " After all, we were bound to be licked for ragging a prefect. But Knowles had a really good ragging."

" Wow, wow ! "

" Let's have tea, " said Jimmy.

And he gave his suffering palms a final rub, and started getting tea. His chums more slowly followed his example.

The Fistical Four had been through it. Knowles' complaint to their Form-master had been loud and long, and Mr. Dalton had administered what seemed to him an adequate punishment. To the Fistical Four it had seemed more than adequate.

Tea in the study revived them somewhat, and they began to recover their spirits. Lickings were not uncommon incidents in the career of the Fistical Four of Rookwood.

" I don't blame Dicky, " said Lovell at last. " Dicky couldn't do anything else when Knowles yarned to him. Dicky's strong on discipline, and I don't blame him. But that cad Knowles——"

" That rotter Knowles——" said Raby.

" That beast Knowles——" said Newcome.

" Oh, let him rip ! " said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. " After all, you did cheek him, Lovell."

Lovell snorted.

" Did he pitch into me for cheeking him, or because he could see that the Classical crew were in winning form ? " he demanded.

" That's so, " said Raby. " Knowles was as wild as a Hun about that. He could see that Bulkeley's crew will beat him on Saturday."

" And that's why Knowles tackled

me," said Lovell savagely. "He wanted to take it out of somebody on the Classical side. He would punch Bulkeley if he dared."

"I suppose that's so," assented Jimmy Silver. "We may as well keep clear of Knowles till after the race."

"I'm not going to keep clear of him," said Lovell. "I'm going to make him sit up."

"Look here, old chap——"

"He's pitched it to Dicky Dalton that we ragged him, and got us licked," said Lovell. "Think I'm going to have my ears boxed by a Modern cad, and a licking from Dicky into the bargain. I'm going to rag Knowles."

"But——"

"Oh, rats! I tell you I'm going to rag him," said Lovell, evidently in one of his most obstinate moods. "Let him keep his paws for Modern cads; they may like having their ears boxed!"

"Old chap——" said Raby.

"They're holding a committee meeting in the common-room in Manders' House after tea," said Lovell; "I had that from Towle. I'm going into Knowles' study while the dashed meeting is on, and when he gets back to his study he'll find a bit of a change there. I'm going to rag the place right and left."

"You'll be spotted," said Jimmy Silver uneasily.

"Rot!"

"You'll fall foul of Tommy Dodd and his gang if you go over there at all," urged Raby.

"You fellows can ask the Modern cads to a boxing-match in the gym. They'll accept, and that will keep them off the grass."

"Yes; but——"

"I'm going!"

Arthur Edward Lovell spoke in a tone of finality. His chums knew that

tone, and they ceased to argue. When Arthur Edward was in one of his mulish moods, as his chums termed them, he was not to be reasoned with, and they had to give him his head.

So all that the Co. could do was to take whatever measures were possible to make Lovell's raid as safe as they could.

After tea, the boxing challenge was issued to the Modern juniors, and accepted at once by Tommy Dodd & Co. Nearly all the Modern Fourth came over to the gym to see the three Tommies matched against Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Newcome.

Arthur Edward Lovell strolled across the quad with a very careless air, and chose his moment for dodging into Mr. Manders' House.

His strategy was successful—so far. In the Sixth-Form passage there was no one to be seen. Most of the Modern juniors were in the gym, and most of the seniors at the committee meeting in the common-room. Cecil Knowles' study door was half-open, showing the room vacant.

Lovell dodged in, and closed the door quickly.

How long Knowles would be detained at the meeting he did not know, but he hoped that it would be long enough to allow him to rag the study thoroughly and efficaciously, and to get clear afterwards.

Alas for the strategic Lovell!

He had barely had time to pour the ink into the clock when there were footsteps in the passage outside.

Lovell started, and put down the inky clock hurriedly. The footsteps were approaching Knowles' study, and he heard the voice of Cecil Knowles himself. He did not distinguish the words, but Knowles' rather strident tones were unmistakable.

Lovell stood for a moment in utter dismay.

Acting rather upon instinct than thought, the Classical junior made a dive for the bed in the alcove. The Sixth Form studies at Rookwood were bedrooms as well as studies, as the high and mighty Sixth did not sleep in dormitories like the smaller fry. Almost before he knew what he was doing, Arthur Edward Lovell had plunged out of sight under the bed.

A few seconds later the door opened.

Lovell could only hope that Knowles had come back to his study for some temporary purpose and would go again. That hope was soon knocked on the head.

"Come in, Frampton."

Frampton of the Sixth came in with Knowles, and the door closed again. Knowles came across the study to the fireplace.

Lovell suppressed a groan. He suppressed it very carefully, knowing only too well what to expect if the Modern senior found him hidden in the study. There was nothing for Lovell to do but to wait—and hope! But his spirits, lately so exuberant, sank down to zero.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER FOUL PLAY!

**K**NOWLES of the Sixth stood before the fire with his hands driven deep into his trousers-pockets, and a dark frown on his brow. Frampton sat on the edge of the study table, swinging his legs and regarding his chum curiously. There was silence in the study for several minutes—much to the hidden junior's surprise. He could see no reason why the two Modern Sixth-Formers should stare at one another without speaking, like a pair of boiled owls, in Lovell's opinion. It was Frampton who broke the silence at last.

"Well? You asked me to come here, Knowles. You said you had something to say."

"About the race on Saturday," said Knowles.

"Well?"

"I watched Bulkeley's lot at practice to-day," said Knowles. "They're in great form."

Frampton made a grimace.

"I know! Topping form! Bulkeley drives his men a bit harder than you do, Knowles. He's a good skipper."

"Perhaps he's got better men," said Knowles sourly. "His men don't smoke cigarettes when they're in training for a rowing match."

Frampton had taken out a cigarette. He paused, and threw it into the fire.

"You're right!" he said. "It's throwing away our chances. But, dash it all, Knowles, old man, you don't set us a very good example, you know."

"Never mind that," said Knowles.

"Look here, Framp, I'm keen on this race. The Classicals swank no end about getting the better of us in sportin' events—they claim to run better, and row better, and swim better, and play football better—"

"They do seem to bag things, somehow," said Frampton. "Still, I don't want to work under a dashed slave-driver, like Bulkeley's men. No need to break one's neck winnin' pots and things!"

"That's all very well; but we want to win this," said Knowles. "It's a big thing, and will set off a lot of lickings we've captured in other events. The school's thinking of nothing else."

"I know that. But—"

"If we bag it, it means no end of kudos; it will shut the Classicals up about their football wins, and it will be something for us to talk about if they get the better of us at the cricket and—"

"We all want to win," said Frampton, staring at Knowles. "You're

preaching to the converted, old bean. But if you're so jolly keen you might have tried a bit harder earlier on to pull the crew together."

"No good goin' into that!" snapped Knowles. "We could have done better; but with a set of slackers to drive——"

"Oh, draw it mild!" urged Frampton.

"Well, never mind that!" said Knowles more amiably. "The fact is we're up against it. I've timed the Classical crew, and at practice they've covered the distance with two minutes to spare over our best. And they weren't going all out to-day. The race is a goner, unless——"

"Don't see where the 'unless' comes in. You're not hoping that Bulkeley will fall downstairs and break his neck, I suppose!"

"No such luck!" said Knowles sourly. "I've been thinkin' it over, Framp. If the Classicals beat us this time we may as well shut up shop for good. They've won both the House matches and the swimming cup. Are we going to let them walk over us all the time?"

"Not if we can help it. But——"

"We can help it!" said Knowles in a low voice.

Frampton started. There was something in Knowles' tone that startled him.

"Dash it all, what are you thinkin' of, Cecil?" he asked uneasily.

Knowles set his lips.

"I'm goin' to pull it off, by hook or by crook!" he said in a low, concentrated voice. "As the matter stands, we're licked. It's partly our own fault—but it's too late to think of that. Bulkeley isn't goin' to crow over us at rowin' as at everything else so long as there's a shot in the locker. Are you game to help me dish them for the race?"



As footsteps approached the study, Lovell heard the voice of Cecil Knowles. Almost before he knew what he was doing, the Classical junior had plunged out of sight under the bed.

"But—but how? What——"

"I don't see why we should stand on ceremony with them," said Knowles. "We're up against Bulkeley and Neville and that lot all along the line. I've got a key to the boat-house."

"What's the good of that?" muttered Frampton.

"It wouldn't occur to Bulkeley that anybody might tamper with his craft," said Knowles, with a curl of

the lip. "He's too jolly unsuspicious for that. But such things have been done."

"Good heavens, Knowles! If it came out—"

"Oh, don't be an ass! Do you think I'd let it? They won't find anything wrong with the boat when they turn it out to-morrow. That will dawn on them half through the race."

"It's bound to come out later that the boat's damaged."

"Who's to hint that we know anything about it? Nobody knows I have a key to the boat-house; I'm not supposed to have one. Bulkeley has a key, as captain of the boats."

Frampton laughed slightly.

"Bulkeley couldn't be suspected of damagin' his own boat," he said.

"I don't care what they suspect—but they can't suspect us."

"I don't see how they could. But—but—"

"I've mapped it all out," said Knowles, almost in a whisper. "I've got a drill—"

"Knowles!"

"Nothin' will show—only when they're fairly goin' will it gradually begin to tell. Just about enough to give us a sportin' chance."

"I—I say, Knowles, it's an awfully rotten trick!" muttered Frampton, whose face had become quite pale.

"Does that mean that you funk it?" sneered Knowles.

"N-no! But I—I don't like the idea. I—I'll back you up if you're determined on it. I'd like to see those cads down, of course."

"I'm determined on it. I'd rather risk bein' sacked from Rookwood than let them pull it off!" said Knowles bitterly. "I want you to hold the light for me, that's all. We slip out at midnight and get down to the boat-house. The boat-keeper will be snoring in bed; not a soul will

be awake anywhere. Easy as fallin' off a form! It won't take us a quarter of an hour."

"It's risky—"

"Rot!"

"Well, I'm your man! But—" Frampton slipped from the table. "Don't let's say any more; I've heard enough. If anybody should hear us—"

"Who could hear us in this study, you nervous ass?"

"Enough said, anyhow. It's a go!" said Frampton. "Let's get out. We don't want fellows to think we're confabbing together; there'll be talk enough after the boat-race—"

"It's all right," said Knowles. He followed Frampton from the study.

The room was left vacant—save for the Fourth-Former under the bed in the alcove.

For some minutes after the two Modern seniors had gone, Lovell lay motionless in his hiding-place, his brain almost in a whirl. But he realised at last that now was his chance of escape, and he crawled out from under the bed.

It was deep dusk in the quadrangle. Lovell opened the window cautiously and dropped out. He did not care to take the risk of being seen to leave Knowles' study.

Two minutes later Arthur Edward Lovell dashed into the end study in the School House, pale and breathless. Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome were there, in excited discussion of the boxing-match with the Modern juniors, just ended. That discussion ceased suddenly as the chums of the Fourth caught sight of Lovell's face.

"What the thump!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

Lovell sank into a chair.

"The rotters!" he gasped.

"What—"

"The scoundrels!"

"Who—which—"

"I'll stop them, though," gasped Lovell. "I know all about it. I'll jolly well give Bulkeley the tip!"

"What the merry dickens—"

"Drilling holes in the Classical boat!"

"Wha-a-a-t!"

"Knowles—Frampton"—Lovell grew incoherent—"midnight—sneaks—rotters—midnight—Knowles—drilling holes—boat-house! Sneaks! Rotters! Cads! Foul play! Rotters—yaroooooh!" Lovell wound up as Jimmy Silver caught him by the shoulder and shook him forcibly.

"Now explain what you're babbling about!" exclaimed Jimmy.

"Leggo! I tell you I'll stop them and—"

"Explain, you ass!" howled Newcome.

And Lovell, recalling himself at last, explained. The Co. listened in horrified amazement.

"The awful rotters!" gasped Raby.

"I'll show 'em up," panted Lovell. "I'll make Rookwood ring with it! I'll make Knowles ashamed to show his face in the quad. I'll—"

"Keep your head, old fellow," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "You won't."

"I will! I—" Lovell spluttered. "I'm going to Bulkeley. I—"

"Easy does it. Listen to your Uncle James," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "You won't, old chap. Bulkeley wouldn't believe you, and Knowles would deny every word. What proof have you got?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Lovell. That was a new view to the rather headstrong Arthur Edward.

"Besides," said Jimmy, "we don't want a scandal in the school. Only those two cads are in this; the other Modern rowing men are all right. We don't want to disgrace a Rookwood House because of two sneaking rotters. The rest of Knowles' crew

would lynch him if they knew he was plotting to win the boat-race by foul play."

"That's so," said Raby.

"But," spluttered Lovell—"but, you ass, Jimmy, are we going to let them beat Bulkeley by dirty tricks?"

"Ass!" said Jimmy Silver politely.

"This study can deal with them. If Knowles and Frampton can sneak down to the boat-house in the middle of the night, so can four other chaps—us, for instance."

"Oh!" said Lovell.

"Knowles won't get at the Classical skiff, even if he has a key to the boat-house," said Jimmy Silver. "Leave it to your Uncle James."

"But—"

"Old man, your greatest fault is that you keep on butting like a billy-goat," said Jimmy Silver. "Not a word outside this study, I tell you."

"So long as we stop the rotters," said Lovell.

"That's the game."

And—in the deepest secrecy—the Fistical Four discussed the matter in the end study, and laid their plans. Over in Manders' House Knowles of the Sixth was feeling cheery and confident—so confident that his men, who had their own private doubts about the race, felt quite bucked and encouraged, little dreaming upon what grounds Knowles based his confidence of success.

But certainly Knowles would not have felt so confident had he known of the intentions of Uncle James of Rookwood and his faithful followers. Fortunately, Knowles did not know.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER TWICE BEATEN!

**MIDNIGHT!** There was a glimmer of starlight on the river as it rippled and murmured past the Rookwood raft. Dark and silent, locked for the night,

lay the boat-house. Not a glimmer of light shone from the boat-keeper's cottage near at hand. Two dark forms came stealing down from the direction of the school as midnight sounded from the clock-tower of Rookwood. Both of them were muffled up in overcoats, with caps pulled down low over their brows. They lurked in the shadow of the boat-house, one of them trembling slightly, the other cool, determined, with a cynical grin on his thin, hard face.

"Safe as houses!" whispered the latter. "Keep your pecker up."

"I'm all right!" muttered Frampton sullenly.

"You've got the electric torch?"

"In my pocket."

"Good."

Knowles fumbled for the key and drew it out. He inserted it in the lock of the boat-house door.

Frampton stood close to him, casting fearful glances into the deep shadows. Certainly the coast seemed clear enough; but the less determined of the two plotters was tormented by a guilty conscience. As was said of old, "the thief doth fear each bush an officer!" Frampton caught Knowles' sleeve suddenly;

"Hold on!" he breathed. "I—I heard—"

"Nothing."

"I—I think I heard—"

"You coward!" hissed Knowles, startled himself by his comrade's fears. "Pull yourself together! We—"

Knowles broke off suddenly. There was a sudden rush of footsteps, and four shadowy figures hurtled out of the gloom.

The attack was so sudden, so utterly unexpected, that the two rascals were taken completely by surprise. Frampton went whirling over from a violent shove, and

Knowles was grasped and dragged down.

Frampton sprang to his feet, and without even a glance to see who the attackers might be, he ran. The fear of exposure was too strong for him. Heedless of his comrade in the grasp of the mysterious assailants, Frampton fled at top speed and vanished into the night.

Knowles was not so lucky.

He was on the ground in an iron grasp, and a knee was planted in the small of his back, pinning him down helplessly.

He fairly squirmed with terror and apprehension. That his dastardly scheme was discovered was evident, and his brain almost swam at the thought of exposure to the scorn of the whole school—with expulsion from Rookwood to follow as a matter of course. Somehow Bulkeley had found out his plot—that was his thought. At that terrible moment Knowles almost fainted from sheer horror and dread.

But he quickly realised that he was in the hands of juniors. There was a faint chuckle above him, and the knee ground hard into his back. Then a can was up-ended over the back of his head, and there was a strong smell of paint.

Knowles gasped and spluttered.

Thick green paint flooded his head and his neck and his ears and his hair. His cap was jerked off, and the paint-can was jammed down over his head in the place of it, fairly bonneting him.

The key he had left in the lock was jerked out and flung into the river, splashing out into the middle of the stream.

Then, as suddenly as they had appeared, his assailants vanished. Knowles was left sprawling and clutching frantically at the paint-can on his head, from which paint



There was a sudden rush of footsteps, and four figures hurtled out of the gloom. The two rascals were taken completely by surprise.

was still exuding in horrid streams. He sat up, dazed, dizzy, smothered, blinking, the unhappiest plotter in the wide world.

Four shadowy forms vanished in the distance.

Not till they were close to the School House again did Jimmy Silver & Co. venture even to chortle. Then they chortled gleefully.

"Our win!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Knowles!" moaned Lovell. "How long will it take him to get that paint off his napper? I fancy he will be looking rather green to-morrow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fancy he will chuck it up, now!" chuckled Raby.

"He's got to!" grinned Jimmy. "I pitched his key into the river. He can't get into the boat-house now, unless he does it with an axe.

But I fancy Knowles is thinking just now chiefly of a wash!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fistical Four climbed over the leads to the box-room window—five minutes more and they were back in bed in the dormitory.

Meanwhile, Cecil Knowles was busy. He was scraping off paint. He scraped and scraped till he felt that he could venture to get back to Rookwood without leaving a green trail behind him. Under the daubs of paint his face was white and furious when he crawled into his study again.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were foremost in the crowd the following day, prepared to make the welkin ring for a Classical victory. When the rival boats took up their stations it was generally remarked that Knowles looked pale and worn. His adventures of the night had told upon him.

But there was bitter determination

in his looks. His foul play had been defeated, but a faint hope still lingered of winning by fair play.

"They're off!" roared Lovell at last.

"Put it on, *Classicals!*"

"Play up, *Moderna!*"

Jimmy Silver & Co. led the rush along the towing-path after the racing skiffs. From the Rookwood raft to Coombe Bridge there was one continuous roar. Tommy Dodd & Co. yelled encouragement to the Modern crew, but their yells were almost drowned by the enthusiastic roar of the *Classicals*.

The *Classical* boat led, but Knowles & Co., with a desperate spurt, passed them, and then the *Moderna* roared gleefully. But it was soon seen that Knowles & Co. had shot their bolt. The *Classical* skiff drew ahead again—half a length, a whole length, two lengths—and then the *Classical* crowd on the towing-path and the bridge went nearly insane. Caps were hurled in the air, with a reckless disregard to what became of them afterwards, fellows thumped one another on the back with mighty thumps, and there was a roar that might have made Stentor himself stop his ears.

"*Classics* win! Good old Bulkeley!"

Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!"

"Three lengths!" yelled Lovell.

"Hurrah!"

The *Moderna* crew held on gamely, but the game was up. The *Classical* skiff shot away, and led by four lengths at the finish. The river rang with cheers for the winning crew. But in the privacy of their own quarters Jimmy Silver & Co., while giving Bulkeley's eight due credit for their achievement, agreed nem. con. that the end study had done a very great deal towards winning the Rookwood boat-race.

THE END



## GREYFRIARS RHYMES

### HARRY WHARTON

(captain of the Remove and leader of the Famous Five)

THE praise of Wharton I extol,  
The ever-famous leader,  
Whose grit and courage thrill the soul  
Of every "H.A." reader;  
Who made his Form a fighting force,  
And worked some wondrous "wheezes";  
Upon whose frank and fearless course  
Adventure often seizes.

When Harry came to Greyfriars School  
He made a bad impression;  
Like Saul of old, he "played the fool,"  
And paid for each transgression.  
Although by Wharton's timely aid  
A boy was saved from drowning,  
He checked the friendly offers made,  
And could not keep from frowning.

But now the past is blotted out,  
His character is sounder—  
A ripping sportsman, splendid scout,  
And jolly good "all-rounder"!  
To say his patience never fails  
Would be absurd and silly;  
Such models only dwell in tales  
Of "perfect little Willie."

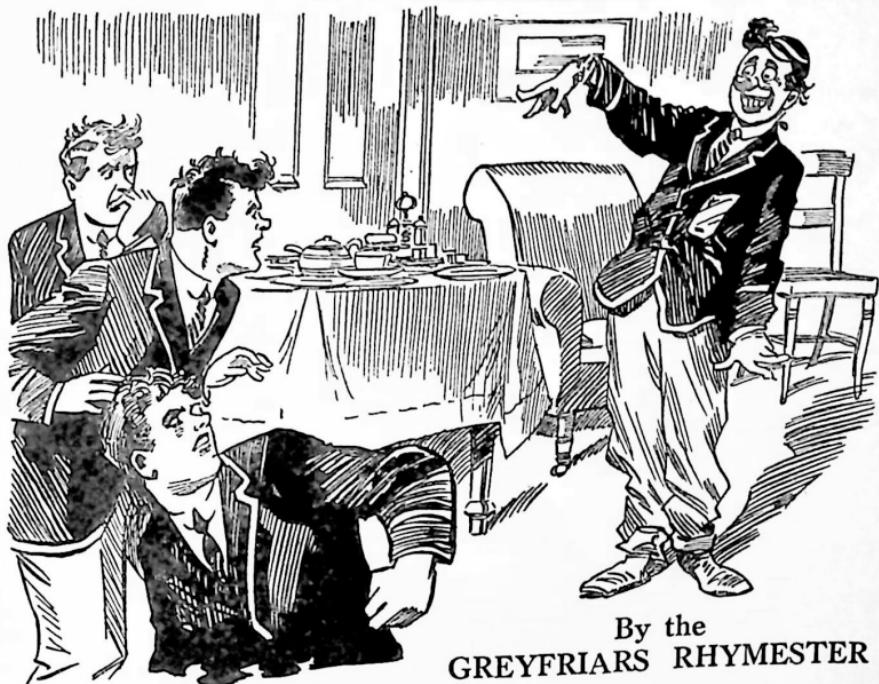
The person is amiss, I fear,  
Who tenderly supposes  
That Harry Wharton's school career  
Is like a bed of roses.  
Black sheep abide in every fold,  
And this is no exception;  
The Bounder figures, as of old,  
In many a base conception.

On one occasion Smith excelled  
In cunning (woe betide him!)  
Through him poor Harry was expelled,  
And several more beside him.  
Bob caused the bitter to be bit  
(He's cuter than Alonso);  
And Smith showed no desire to sit—  
The doctor laid it on so!

Since Smithy's vain attempt to score  
His manner has been quiet;  
No doubt when things are straight once more  
He will again run riot.  
But Harry Wharton's glorious fame,  
He never will diminish;  
For those who always play the game  
Are victors at the finish.

May Wharton's great and good renown  
Be present with us ever!  
The friend of fellows who are "down,"  
Courageous, strong, and clever.  
Who by his just and manly rule  
Will win the admiration  
Of British boys in shop and school  
For many a generation!

# The GREYFRIARS GUY



By the  
GREYFRIARS RHYMESTER

*A Play in Verse, with a few Musical Numbers, for Amateur Actors*

## ACT I.

(SCENE : No. 1 Study in the Remove. In the centre of the study a table is laid for tea, with a long cloth reaching right down to the ground. Under the table, behind the cloth, BILLY BUNTER is hidden from the view of the audience. Over to the right is a chair in which there is a guy wearing an old suit of clothes, a pair of old boots, a school cap, and a dusty old wig,

a hideous grinning mask for its face. THE FAMOUS FIVE are facing the footlights as the curtain rises.)

CHORUS :

THE FAMOUS FIVE.

(Tune : "The Marseillaise.")

Ye sons of Greyfriars, great in story,

Attend to this, our "modest" song ;

Ye fellows who aspire to glory,

## CHARACTERS.

Harry Wharton	The Famous Five.
Bob Cherry	
Frank Nugent	
Johnny Bull	
Hurree Singh	
Billy Bunter	The Fat Boy of Greyfriars.
Horace Coker	The Duffer of Greyfriars.
George Potter	Coker's Chums.
William Greene	
Mr. Paul Prout	The Fifth Form-master.

(Note.—This play may be performed by readers of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL without fee or licence on condition that the words "By permission of the Editor of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL" appear on each programme.)

Copy us—you won't go wrong !  
Copy us—you won't go wrong !  
We're the leaders of the college,  
And everyone admits that we  
Are just as clever as can be,  
And you cannot equal us for  
knowledge :

The Five ! The Famous Five !  
The Five ! The Famous Five !  
We're here ! Right here ! Give us a  
cheer !

A rousing three times three.

WHARTON :  
Well, now we've begun  
On an evening of fun,  
And a firework display by and by.

NUGENT :  
With a jolly good spread  
And a good time ahead  
When we burn Horace Coker the  
guy !

BULL :  
This handsome spread's extremely  
nice,  
And now we've managed to  
provide it—

CHERRY :  
Hear, hear, old beans ! Take my  
advice  
And let us forthwith get outside  
it.  
(They draw their chairs to the table,  
looking from time to time at the  
guy in the chair.)

NUGENT :  
This toast is really appetising.

BULL :  
I did it with the study poker.

CHERRY (*enthusiastically*) :  
I say, you men, there's no dis-  
guising  
That guy's extremely like old  
Coker.

(They all laugh.)

WHARTON :  
I don't think Coker would admit it.

HURREE SINGH :  
The admittfulness is not terrific.

BULL :  
If Coker sees it, he will hit it ;

We'll hide it—just to be pacific.

WHARTON :

There'd be a most terrific  
scrimmage—

CHERRY (*still enthusiastically*) :  
I'm sure that mask is Coker's  
image.

NUGENT :

Suppose you grab your share of  
food  
And leave the guy till later.

These sosses are extremely good,  
Likewise the baked "pertater."

WHARTON (*reflectively*) :

I wonder why the Bunter bird  
Has not yet come along ?  
Can poor old Bunter not have heard  
A feast is going strong ?

HURREE SINGH :

He will arrivefulness in time ;  
There's not the slightest doubt  
of it.

WHARTON :

Then eat the grub, for it's a crime  
To let him clear us out of it.  
(A voice calls from outside.)

THE VOICE :

You five fellows follow me  
To my room immediately,  
Whether you're willing to or not,  
For if you don't you'll catch it—  
hot !

CHERRY (*dismayed*) :

Oh dear, you men ! That let's us in !  
I recognised that voice.

NUGENT :

It's Gwynne !

WHARTON :

Perhaps it was a jolly nerve  
To throw a cracker at his feet.

BULL :

And now we'll get what we deserve :

CHERRY (*groaning*) :

Six of the best ! Oh, what a treat !

WHARTON (*picking up a book*) :

This book is Todd's ;  
I think I'll wear it.

CHERRY :

Oh, what's the odds ?



Harry Wharton & Co. drew their chairs up to the table for tea, looking from time to time at the guy of Horace Coker in the chair. Hidden from their view, under the table, was the fat figure of Billy Bunter.

Let's "Gwynne" and bear it!  
HURREE SINGH :

Let us not stopfully be late  
Or sixfulness may turn out eight.  
(*Exeunt THE FAMOUS FIVE.* As  
soon as they have left the room,  
BILLY BUNTER crawls out grin-  
ning from under the table.)

SOLO: BUNTER.

("The British Grenadiers.")  
Some talk of mathematics  
And some of "ologies";  
Of "stinks" and hydrostatics  
And such great stunts as these;  
But of all the world's great sciences  
There's none that can compare  
With the science which can imitate  
A voice that isn't there.

Some chaps learn catechism—  
They're welcome to the task!

Give me ventriloquism;  
That's all the art I ask.  
Then I can make the chaps disgorge  
Their foodstuffs rich and rare  
With the science which can imitate  
A voice that isn't there.  
(*BUNTER gathers an armful of food  
from the table.*)

BUNTER:  
Knowing the trouble they are in  
Through bunging jumping  
crackers,  
I threw my voice to sound like  
Gwynne  
And caught those thumping  
slackers.  
Now, while they're gone, a record  
feed  
My gift for me is earning—  
Of which I always stand in need—  
(*Noise from outside.*)

Hush ! Here's the beasts returning !

(BUNTER crawls under the table with his food. Enter COKER, POTTER, and GREENE.)

COKER :

The little sweeps aren't here ;  
They knew they'd better clear  
Before I called upon 'em with a poker.  
I thought that even they  
Would know it does not pay  
For fags to try to cheek great  
Horace Coker.

POTTER :

Ye heavens fall !

GREENE :

Ye stars and all !

BOTH TOGETHER :

When fags begin to cheek great  
Horace Coker !

COKER (*spotting the guy*) :

There it is—the guy, I mean !

GREENE (*critically*) :

It's not unlike yourself, old bean !

POTTER (*looking at it narrowly*) :

That's Coker's nose and Coker's  
grin—



Bunter crawled under the table with his food as Coker, Potter and Greene entered.

Coker : "The little sweeps aren't here. They knew they'd better clear . . . ."

COKER (*roaring*) :

Look here, I don't want any chin !  
Is that guy meant for me ? Great  
pip !

I'm glad young Snoop gave me the  
tip.

I'll confiscate this guy right now—

POTTER :

Those fags are bound to make a row.

COKER :

Shut up, George Potter ! Rats to  
you !

Think I care twopence what they do ?  
I'm Coker of the Fifth, remember !  
The Fifth, old chap—

POTTER :

Yes ; of November.

COKER (*picking up the guy*) :

Kim up, and kim along with me,  
You ugly, pug-nosed effigy !  
To-night you will be burnt, old  
sport, on  
The Fifth Form fire—as Harry  
Wharton.

SOLO AND CHORUS :

COKER, POTTER AND GREENE.  
(*"The Minstrel Boy."*)

COKER :

The mis'rable  
guy to the  
Fifth has  
gone ;

In my study  
you will  
find him,

With his mask  
and his  
gloves and  
his school-  
cap on,

And an old  
armchair  
behind him.

ALL THREE :

"The plan's gone  
wron g !",  
sang the se-  
nior pards,

" For the secret  
we have caught  
on ;

Instead of Coker,  
it's quite on  
the cards

This guy will  
be young  
Wharton."

(*Exeunt COKER, POTTER, and GREENE, bearing the guy. BUNTER comes out from under the table and grabs a little more refreshment.*)

Thank goodness  
Coker didn't  
see this feast !  
But fancy pinching  
Wharton's guy  
—the beast !

(*BUNTER dives out of sight again as footsteps are heard. Enter THE FAMOUS FIVE—all wrathful.*)

CHERRY :  
My only hat ! That was a frightful  
sell !

BULL :  
Gwynne flatly said he didn't call  
us—well !

NUGENT :  
It's awfully thick  
To play such a trick ;  
I always thought Gwynne was a pal.

HURREE SINGH :  
It was terrific hardful luck—

WHARTON (*sitting down*) :  
Great Scotland Yard ! Where's all  
the tuck ?

(*They glare wrathfully at the table.*)

NUGENT :  
It's not extremely tempting, is it ?

BULL :  
Bunter must have paid a visit.

WHARTON :  
We'll give him a thick ear for luck  
And black his spying eye—



Bunter (*frantically*) : " I say, you fellows, I ain't here." Wharton : " You've raided all our grub—that's clear." Bull and Cherry routed Bunter out from under the table and he stood quaking.

CHERRY (*impatiently*) :

Oh, never mind the beastly tuck,  
What's happened to our guy ?

WHARTON :

The guy gone, too ? What shall we  
do ?

It took us hours and hours to  
make.

CHERRY (*wailing*) :

And it was so like Coker, too—  
Oh, get it back, for mercy's sake !

BULL :

It must have been Bunter, the  
gorging fool !

He's taken the lot—

BUNTER (*from under the table*) :

—Oh, really, Bull !  
(*Sensation.*)

CHERRY (*furiously*) :

Did I hear a flabby, footling,  
Fatuous, frabjous, fathead speak ?

BULL :

We all heard Bunter's whisper  
tootling ;

He's somewhere here, the thieving  
freak !



Coker looked in here  
just now  
And took your guy  
away.

BULL (sarcastically) :  
And how !

BUNTER :  
It's a fact, upon  
my honour !

NUGENT :  
If that's so, the  
guy's a goner ;  
But Bunter's such  
a fibbing  
thief—

BUNTER :  
I say, you chaps,  
it's my belief  
That Coker's going  
to burn your  
guy  
Upon his own fire  
by and by.

Cherry (wrathfully) : "Where's our guy, you thieving rotter ?" Bunter :  
"Oh, really, Cherry ! I've not got her . . . ."

WHARTON :  
He's under the table, for a quid !

NUGENT :  
Then he won't find one ! Can't be  
did !

WHARTON :  
Roll out, thou deep and artful  
porpoise—roll !  
Ten thousand feet sweep over  
thee in vain;  
Kicking will not make thy man-  
ners whole—

BULL (grimly) :  
But we are going to try it on  
again.

BUNTER (frantically) :  
I say, you fellows, I ain't here !

WHARTON :  
You've raided all our grub—that's  
clear !

(BULL and CHERRY rout him out.  
He stands quaking.)

CHERRY (wrathfully) :  
Where's our guy, you thieving  
rotter ?

BUNTER :  
Oh, really, Cherry ! I've not got her.

CHERRY :  
Is that the stunt ? My only hat !  
We'll have a word to say to that ;  
We'll go to Coker's study now,  
And if it's there we'll make a row !  
Come on, you men—

WHARTON :  
Wait half-a-tick !  
We've work to do—don't be so  
quick.  
I rather fancy you forget  
That we've not dealt with Bunter  
yet.

ALL :  
That's so ! Don't overlook the fact  
That Bunter hasn't yet been  
whacked.

(THE FAMOUS FIVE seize the quaking  
BUNTER and group themselves  
about him grimly.)

FINALE :  
THE FAMOUS FIVE.  
("Widdecombe Fair.")  
You men, you men, come lend us your  
ears !

All along, down along, out along  
lea,

For Bunter is going to shed many tears,

As we thrash him and smash him,  
and kick him and lick him, and  
bump him and clump him,  
And rag the fat bounder and  
all.

He knew what he risked when he took  
all our tea

Under the table and down on the  
floor,

And he knew very well if we found  
him that we  
Should thrash him and smash him,  
etc.

Now friends and companions, who  
watch this display,  
All along benches and down in the  
pit,

If you'll be so kind as to turn round  
this way,  
We will thrash him and smash him,  
etc.

(THE FAMOUS FIVE proceed to rag  
BUNTER as the curtain slowly  
descends, to the rhythm of "Thrash  
him and smash him, etc."  
BUNTER's yells ring out until the  
curtain has fully dropped.)

## ACT 2.

(SCENE.—Coker's study in the Fifth  
Form passage. A table is laid with  
crockery and cruet, bread, butter and a  
tea-pot. See that there is salt and  
mustard in the cruet. In a chair close  
to the right-hand side of the table the  
famous guy is slumped, only it is really  
BOB CHERRY, who has put on the guy's



As Coker took up his cup of tea Bob Cherry, disguised as the guy, emptied the salt-cellar into it unobserved.

clothes, gloves, wig, mask, etc. He is sprawled in the chair just like a proper dummy. WHARTON, NUGENT, BULL and HURREE SINGH are shouting the famous Guy Fawkes chant as the curtain rises.)

Guy ! Guy ! Guy !  
Stick him up on high !  
Put him on a bonfire  
And there let him die.

CHERRY :

(Springing up and doing a kind of golliwog cake-walk on the floor)

Guy ! Guy ! Guy !  
Stick him up on high !  
If you put ME on a bonfire,  
I'll give you a black eye.

ALL TOGETHER :

Guy ! Guy ! Guy !  
Stick him up on high !  
And poor old Horace Coker  
Will shudder by-and-by !

Guy ! Guy ! Guy !  
We'll chair him shoulder-high,  
If Coker takes Bob Cherry  
For Guy ! Guy ! Guy !

WHARTON :

This is the brainiest idea  
That I have struck for many a year.

CHERRY (speaking through the mask) :

The idea seemed to come to me  
When I saw this effigy  
Left alone !  
For Coker has gone down to buy  
Tuck for tea, and left the guy  
On its own !  
To take old Coker down a peg  
I thought it best to pull his leg,  
Dodging strife ;  
To put these clothes on of the guy's,  
And then, before his very eyes,  
Come to life !

NUGENT :  
It's a topping scheme, old friend !  
Coker's hair will stand on end ;

When a straw and sawdust dummy  
Comes to life, it's—well, it's rummy !

BULL :

Like Hamlet, when he saw his  
father's spook,  
Coker will cry, with scared and  
pallid look,  
" Angels and ministers of grace  
defend us ! "

HURREE SINGH :

Old Coker's cryfulness will be tre-  
mendous.

But we had better go, my worthy  
chums,  
Before the mighty Sahib Coker  
comes.

WHARTON :

Yes, so we had ! You're quite  
right there !

But let us put Bob in his chair.

(CHERRY sprawls back into the chair.)  
Now hang your arms outside a bit,  
The fingers spread right out—that's  
it !

Your toes turned inwards—that's  
the stuff !

I think you look grotesque enough.  
Now, mind, old bean, stay there—  
That's right ! A record shock  
you'll prove !

CHERRY :

This posture makes me get the  
fidgets  
And gives me cramp in all my  
digits.

BULL :

Ta, ta, old bean ! And mind your  
eye !

Keep motionless and quite pacific !

NUGENT :

Bye-bye ! You look a frightful guy !

HURREE SINGH :

The guyfulness is most terrific.

(*Exeunt THE FAMOUS FIVE.*  
CHERRY, sitting motionless, sings in  
a doleful voice.)

SOLO : CHERRY.

( "Old Black Joe." )  
Gone are the days when I was  
young and gay,



Coker : "This is the stuff ! The good old brew !" He took a long drink, then spluttered and choked.  
 "Why, what the dickens ! Ooogh ! Yarooth !"

Gone are the times when a guy  
 could have his play.

My heart is soft—it's made of straw,  
 that's why !

And yet to-night they will be  
 burning—Poor Old Guy !

I'm going, I'm going ! The fire will  
 burn up high,  
 And not a single voice will murmur  
 " Poor Old Guy ! "

When I was young, I was a boastful  
 bloke ;

Often to friends, I said, " You'll  
 watch my smoke ! "

Now they've the chance, or will  
 have by and by,

For smoke will be the end of me, a—  
 Poor Old Guy !

I'm going, etc.

Last night I felt in cold and cheerless plight,  
 But they will make things warm for  
 me to-night ;  
 Hundreds of eyes will watch me as I  
 die—  
 Oh, telephone the Fire Brigade for—  
 Poor Old Guy !

I'm going, etc.

(Enter COKER, POTTER and GREENE,  
 the former carrying bags of cakes  
 and doughnuts.)

COKER : Strange ! I thought I heard a row ;  
 I must have been mistook.

POTTER :

There's no one in the study now—  
Perhaps it was a spook.

GREENE :

Or else that guy's a magic one  
And sometimes sings a song for fun.  
(All laugh.)

COKER :

I did not mean to leave this place  
With that guy open to attack ;  
I meant to lock it up, in case  
It wasn't here when we came  
back.

However, as it happens, it  
Is quite all right, so let us sit  
And have our tea. Pass me a  
plate !

(He empties the doughnuts on a plate.)  
Our walk has made us rather late.  
Pour out the tea—don't fill my  
cup !—  
And cut some bread. Come on,  
buck up !  
(COKER takes a cup of tea. While  
the three seniors are attending to  
the bread, CHERRY, unobserved,  
empties the salt-cellar in COKER's  
tea.)



Coker : " You cheeky, funny ass ! I'll show you—to mustard Coker's  
doughnut, blow you ! Take that—and that—and that—and that ! "  
Greene (fiendishly) : " Ow ! Dragimoff ! He's mad ! My hat ! "

POTTER :

I hope our fireworks are O.K.—  
Shall I put butter on this bread ?

COKER :

Oh, yes, I've stored them right  
away—  
Oh, no ; I will have jam instead.

GREENE :

This doughnut is extremely prime.

COKER :

Yes ; they're greengage jam this  
time.  
This is the stuff ! The good old  
brew !

(Takes a long drink, splutters and  
chokes.)

Why, what the dickens ! Ooogh !  
Yaroooooh !

There's something bitter in that  
tea !

Are you two playing games with  
me ?

POTTER :

No, you ass ! The tea's all right !

COKER (bawling) :

Taste it yourself, you silly kite !

(POTTER sips his own tea.)

POTTER :

Right as nine-  
pence ! Nothing  
wrong !

Except it is a little  
strong.

GREENE :

I put three spoon-  
fuls in the pot.

COKER (loudly) :

Yours may be right,  
but mine is NOT.

Pass me a dough-  
nut—yes ; be  
quick !

And pass the jam  
—I like mine  
thick.

(CHERRY slyly kicks  
COKER under the  
table.)

Yaroooooh ! Who

kicked my ankle  
—eh?

George Potter,  
keep your hoofs  
away!

POTTER :  
I didn't touch you,  
on my word!

GREENE :  
Nor I.

COKER :  
Rot ! Don't be  
absurd !  
Someone kicked me  
—that's a cert !  
And kicked me  
hard enough to  
hurt.

There's only you  
two here with  
me—

(sarcastically)  
Unless it was  
that effigy !

I've read of such things in a fable—  
POTTER :

Perhaps someone's beneath the  
table.

(*The three seniors bend their heads  
under the table. CHERRY plasters  
mustard on COKER's doughnut.*)

GREENE (crossly) :  
Oh, rot ! Of course there's no one  
there ;  
You must have dreamt the whole  
affair.

COKER (picking up the doughnut) :  
Look here, don't call my sayings  
rot ; (Takes a bite.)  
I tell you (*splutters*). Wow ! I'm  
burnt ! I'm hot !  
Oh, wow-wow-wow !

GREENE (amazed) :  
Why, what's up now ?

COKER (clenching his fists and hurling  
himself at GREENE) :  
You cheeky, funny ass ! I'll show  
you  
To mustard Coker's doughnut, blow  
you !



Cherry : . . . One word of caution you must bear: Beware ! Beware !  
Beware ! BEWARE !

Bunter (frantically) : "Yaroh ! Help ! Murder ! Goblins ! Ghosts !  
Help ! Rescue ! Spooks and things in hosts !"

Take that—and that—and that—  
and that !

GREENE (fiendishly) :  
Ow ! Dragimoff ! He's mad ! My  
hat !

POTTER (rushing to GREENE's aid) :  
Shut up ! You're making me quite  
flustered !

COKER :  
He did it ! Yes—I'll give him  
mustard !

POTTER :  
You talk as mad as any hatter ;  
Leave off, you ass ! Greene, what's  
the matter ?

GREENE (yelling) :  
I haven't got the faintest notion.  
(CHERRY rises slowly and jerkily to  
his feet.)

CHERRY (in a creaky voice) :  
Cease this ridiculous commotion !  
(Sensation.)

Cry quits to this untimely strife.

COKER (goggling) :  
Yaroh ! That dummy's come to  
life !

I thought just now its fingers  
twitched—

Help ! Rescue ! Help ! The guy's  
bewitched !

(COKER & Co. *rush out in terror.*)

CHERRY (*giggling*) :

Oh, dear ! I haven't had such fun  
Since first at Greyfriars I begun  
My progress as a genial joker—

(*Footsteps heard "off."*)

Here's someone coming—may be  
Coker.

(CHERRY *slumps back into his chair again in his "dummy" posture.*

BILLY BUNTER *blinks cautiously into the room, and then enters on tiptoe.)*

BUNTER :

He, he ! It seems the coast is clear,  
And Coker has some doughnuts here;  
I saw them wrapped by Mrs. Mimble.  
I can annex them if I'm nimble.

(*Blinks at CHERRY.*)

He, he ! That's that fathead  
Cherry's guy ;

He said he'd get it back, but I  
Knew if he met the Fifth, he'd funk  
'em ;

His talk was all a lot of bunkum.

(*Grabs up the doughnuts.*)

Only six—is that the lot ?

They're greengage, though, not  
apricot.

(*He blinks at the guy, and then his hair stands on end as CHERRY slowly and jerkily rises, pointing an accusing finger at him. The doughnuts drop on the floor.*)

CHERRY (*creakily*) :

My fat and flabby friend  
You'll come to a bad end,  
And what is more, you know,  
You haven't far to go !  
You are a thief, a worm, a pest !  
Without the slightest interest  
In anything beyond your grub,  
You bloated, over-nourished tub !  
One word of caution you must bear :  
Beware ! Beware ! BEWARE ! BE-  
WARE !

(*With each repetition of " Beware ! "*  
he jerks himself nearer to BUNTER  
until he is standing right over  
him.)

BUNTER (*frantically*) :

Yarooh ! Help ! Murder ! Goblins !  
Ghosts !

Help ! Rescue ! Spooks and things  
in hosts !

Yarooh ! Keep off ! Leggo ! Oh,  
dear, I'm booked !

Help ! Rescue ! Quick ! Before my  
goose is cooked !

(*BUNTER dashes terrified through the door. Just outside there is the sound of a heavy collision and two frantic yells. CHERRY quickly slumps back into his dummy position.*)

MR. PROUT'S VOICE (*off stage*) :

Bunter ! Boy ! How dare you ?  
Ow-wow ! I do declare you  
Unnerved me when you caught me ;  
How dare you thus assault me ?

BUNTER (*off stage*) :

Help, sir, help ! A guy is walking !  
Help, sir, help ! Yes, and it's  
talking !

COKER (*off stage*) :

The little sweep is right,  
The thing gave me a fright.

MR. PROUT (*off stage*) :

Follow me ! When I, Paul Prout,  
arrive,

Fear nothing !

(*Enter MR. PROUT, BUNTER, COKER,  
POTTER and GREENE. The master  
is carrying his rifle—an air-gun.*)

COKER (*pointing to the guy*) :

There, sir ! It's alive !

MR. PROUT (*doubtfully*) :

I shall now investigate  
This self-apparent lie,  
For knowing the inanimate  
Construction of a guy,  
A base deception it must prove,  
And I can only think  
That if you've seen the creature  
move,  
It must be due to—drink !

COKER :

I say, look here,  
sir—

MR. PROUT (*sternly, holding up his hand*) :

The facts are clear,  
sir :

If you've seen move-  
ment in this *doll*,  
It must be due to  
alcohol ;

A statement easy  
to be proved—  
(CHERRY turns his  
head.)

Why, bless my  
heart and soul,  
it moved !

COKER (*sarcastically*) :

If you saw that guy  
move, I think

That it is plainly  
due to drink.

MR. PROUT :

Be silent, boy ! How dare you  
scoff ?

BUNTER :

Yaroh ! It's moving ! Keep it off !

MR. PROUT :

Why certainly—that is a trifle  
While I have my beloved rifle.

(He takes aim at CHERRY, who  
bounces fearfully out of the chair  
and crawls under the table.)

CHERRY :

Nunno ! Don't shoot ! It's only  
me—

Bob Cherry, sir—a little spree—

MR. PROUT :

No wonder, Coker, that the guy can  
move,

Since it is just a boy from the  
Remove.

(To CHERRY.) You may come out !  
I shall report this jest

To Mr. Quelch, and he will do the  
rest.

(Enter HARRY WHARTON & Co.  
hurriedly.)



Mr. Prout took aim at Bob Cherry, who bounced fearfully out of the chair and crawled under the table.  
Cherry : "Nunno ! Don't shoot ! It's only me—Bob Cherry, sir—a little spree—"

WHARTON (*to CHERRY*) :  
Bad luck ! The game is up, I fear !

MR. PROUT :

It's always up when I am here.

CHERRY (*diplomatically*) :  
Yes, sir, we cannot take you in ;  
You spot us before we begin.

NUGENT :  
Of the Fifth we're always jealous,  
For their master is first-rate.  
Please, sir, won't you one day tell us  
What you did in '88 ?

WHARTON :  
As this is Guy Fawkes day, you  
know, sir,  
Couldn't you please let us go, sir ?

MR. PROUT (*coughing*) :  
Well, well, you've made a lot of  
noise,  
But, after all, boys will be boys !  
And just this once—excuse my  
cough !

I think perhaps I'll let you off.

THE FAMOUS FIVE :  
Hooray !

FINALE:

THE FAMOUS FIVE:  
("Auld Lang Syne.")

We've had some fun this afternoon;  
It's set us in a roar;  
And evening's coming very soon  
When we shall have some more.

ALL:

For Guy Fawkes Day, my lads, etc.

COKER & Co.:

You've pulled our legs and have not been

Respectful to His Nibs;  
We'll let you off, though, all serene,  
If you'll let off your squibs.

ALL:

For Guy Fawkes Day, my lads,  
For Guy Fawkes Day,  
We'll share a box of fireworks yet  
For the sake of Guy Fawkes Day.

ALL:

For Guy Fawkes Day, my lads, etc.

MR. PROUT:

You're very good at flattery,  
But I will answer you  
With no assault and battery  
Because your words are true.

ALL:

For Guy Fawkes Day, my lads, etc.

CURTAIN

## Au Revoir—Not Good-bye!

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And so, like all good things, this wonder-volume comes to an end; but readers who have found new chums in Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's, and Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood need not feel that they have said good-bye to these delightful schoolboy characters. Every Saturday, for instance, a grand new long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. appears in the MAGNET, price 2d.; every Wednesday Tom Merry & Co. are the "star" attractions in the GEM, price 2d.; whilst those readers with a preference for an EXTRA-LONG school yarn will find just what they want in the monthly issues of the SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY, in which Jimmy Silver & Co., Harry Wharton & Co., and Tom Merry & Co. figure prominently at regular intervals.—THE EDITOR.

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Oh, when the day was dawning  
I heard a rooster say  
Take ENO in the morning  
To keep you fit all day !  
To keep your bloodstream flowing free  
(ENO's for inner health, you see !)  
And ENO's as pure as pure can be—  
So take it every morning !

**EVERY MORNING**