

THE GREYFRIARS

# HOLIDAY

1924 ANNUAL 1924

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS



*The Limit!*





Frontispiece]

THE SEA ROVER



THE GREYFRIARS  
**HOLIDAY ANNUAL**

*A Bumper Book for Boys and Girls*

**1924**



*This Book Belongs to* \_\_\_\_\_



## **THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS**

To begin with, a word of thanks to those good friends—and they are numbered in hundreds—who have written me such cheery and appreciative letters since the publication of last year's volume of *THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL*. From all parts of the globe they came, proof that in every country, from China to Peru, the *HOLIDAY ANNUAL* is known and warmly welcomed.

It is natural to feel confidence in placing this new volume before my friends, who have welcomed each of the four previous issues with open arms. Among the varied contents will be found new stories, new facts, and new fun woven round the familiar favourites of Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood. Messrs. Frank Richards, Martin Clifford, and Owen Conquest—whose stories are more widely read by boys and girls than those of any other three authors in the world—have been given their head, so to speak! In addition, the hobby articles, and the stories of romance and adventure, are, without exception, written and illustrated by authors and artists of proved and long-standing popularity.

Cheeriness and the spirit of youth and schoolboy fun, are the keynotes of this *ANNUAL*. While its appeal to the young of both sexes is universal and irresistible, its attraction is no less powerful to all those in whom the spirit of youthfulness still dwells, mature though their years may be.

As a Holiday Book, it stands alone, and the world-wide popularity of the famous Companion Papers from which it springs, is the best guarantee of the high quality of the fare it offers.

THE EDITOR.

The Fleetway House,  
Farringdon St.,  
London, E.C. 4.



# A Ballad of Greyfriars School

OLD Gosling greets us at the gate ;  
His gaze is sour and surly.  
For Gosling has to work till late,  
And rise each morning early.  
“A porter’s life,” he sadly moans,  
“Is not a bed of roses !  
The winds of winter freeze my bones—  
Just see how blue my nose is !”

He conjures with his bunch of keys,  
And lets us pass the portals ;  
For William Gosling, if you please,  
Is one of the immortals.  
He has the power to shut us out  
Or let us in, at pleasure.  
We toss him half-a-crown ; no doubt  
That “tip” he’ll always treasure !

Then to the tuck-shop we repair ;  
’Tis kept by good Dame Mimble.  
Though silver streaks adorn her hair,  
She’s still alert and nimble.  
Beside the counter Bunter stands ;  
He’s famished, and wants feeding.  
He holds out supplicating hands,  
And starts his piteous pleading.

“Give me a dozen doughnuts, please,  
And six jam tarts to follow !  
I’m faint and feeble at the knees ;  
My cheeks are sunk and hollow.  
I cannot face starvation, ma’am !  
You know how much I dread it.  
See what a skeleton I am,  
And serve me now—on credit !”

But good Dame Mimble shakes her head  
As sternly as a warder.  
“I don’t believe a word you’ve said  
About your postal-order !

No, Master Bunter ; I insist  
Upon a prompt cash payment,  
For only a philanthropist  
Supplies free food and raiment !”





Then Billy Bunter pipes his eye,  
 And turns to us in sorrow.  
 "If you'll advance some money—why,  
 I'll pay it back to-morrow!"  
 We lend the rascal eighteenpence—  
 His acting is so clever—  
 Although we have the common sense  
 To know it's gone for ever!

And then the Famous Five stroll in ;  
 Indeed, a merry meeting !  
 Bob Cherry, with a spacious grin,  
 Extends a cheery greeting ;  
 Presenting us, without ado,  
 To Nugent and the Nabob,  
 To Johnny Bull and Wharton, too,  
 Then to himself—the gay Bob.

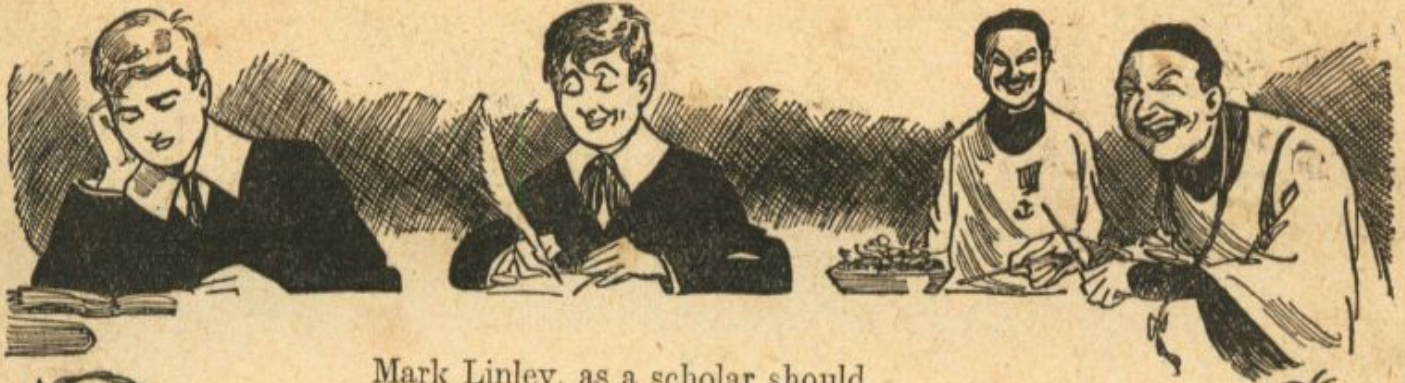
Fine fellows are the Famous Five  
 (You'll meet them in this ANNUAL),  
 Alert and active and alive  
 In mental tasks, and manual.  
 In school and sport they stand supreme,  
 Likewise in battle royal ;  
 These splendid schoolboys are the cream  
 Of all that's true and loyal.

They show us round the stately school,  
 Through close and crypt and cloisters ;  
 When passing through the vaults, so cool,  
 We keep as mum as oysters.  
 For there is something strange and weird  
 About these dim recesses ;  
 The Ghost of Greyfriars, it is feared,  
 This underworld possesses.

Gladly we greet the light of day,  
 When weary of exploring,  
 And to the studies make our way,  
 Where studious youths are poring

Over their Latin exercise,  
 Geography, or grammar ;  
 The famous annual Founder's Prize  
 Is sought by every "crammer."





Mark Linley, as a scholar should,  
 Sits pondering and frowning  
 Over the works of Thomas Hood,  
 And Byron, Burns, and Browning.  
 Then into Penfold's lair we look ;  
 He's busy writing ballads.  
 Two doors away, Wun Lung, the cook,  
 Is making Chinese salads.



In Study No. 7 we see  
 Alonzo Todd and Peter ;  
 The room is clean and orderly—  
 No study could be neater.  
 But when the careless Bunter comes,  
 We'll see a transformation ;  
 He'll strew the floor with countless crumbs  
 And cause great consternation.



We chat with Fisher Tarleton Fish,  
 The "guy" from New York City.  
 He's not so rich as he could wish—  
 It seems an awful pity.  
 He asks us to invest our cash  
 In one of his cute "wheezes."  
 We shun such speculations rash—  
 A fact which much displeases.



Bolsover major greets our gaze ;  
 He's beefy, big, and burly,  
 And very awkward in his ways—  
 So sullen and so surly !  
 "I'll fight the lot of you !" he cries,  
 In manner pugilistic.  
 "I shall be pleased to black your eyes  
 In combat fierce and fistic !"

We pass to a more pleasant zone,  
 And visit Rake and Russell,  
 Two fellows who have held their own  
 In many a thrilling tussle.

With Lord Mauleverer we chat  
 (Maully a gay young blood is) ;  
 There's much to see and wonder at  
 In the Removites' studies.





We call on Mr. Quelch, of course,  
That stern but manly master.  
When kindness fails, he rules by force ;  
His canings cause disaster !  
As Skinner says, " He's often smiled  
On those who practise virtue ;  
But when you make old Quelch wild,  
He never fails to hurt you ! "

To Mr. Prout and Mr. Twigg  
We make our salutations ;  
With Mr. Hacker, who's no prig,  
We 'stablish good relations.  
We call on Mr. Bunter, too,  
Who rules the kindergarten ;  
A sportsman, thorough and true blue,  
Whom nothing can dishearten.

And so we pass from place to place,  
And Greyfriars and its glories  
With eager eyes we fondly trace,  
Recalling all the stories  
Which we have read of this great school,  
So flourishing and famous.  
Who would despise it but a fool  
Or hopeless ignoramus ?

Now comes the parting of the ways.  
To Wharton and the others  
We bid farewell, and warmly praise  
This happy band of brothers.  
Long may they shine in school and sport,  
And every grand endeavour ;  
Their doughty deeds, of good report,  
Will be remembered ever !



Old Gosling greets us at the gate,  
Most eager and most willing.  
He's smiling, wondrous to relate  
(Tip him an extra shilling !),

" I 'ope you'll come again, young gents,  
This hedifice to visit.  
Good-bye ! Haccept my compliments ! "  
Not bad for Gosling, is it ?









# Something Special for Bunter!

A Humorous Story of the Famous Fat Boy of Greyfriars

By FRANK RICHARDS

"SOMETHING special!" said Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

Harry Wharton nodded.

The chums of the Remove Form at Greyfriars had finished their prep., and had gathered in Study No. 1. There was rather a moody frown on Harry Wharton's brow, and the rest of the Famous Five were looking sympathetic.

It was all Billy Bunter's fault. Billy didn't look at it that way, however. He had found Harry Wharton tied to a tree in the wood, the work of Ponsonby and Co., of Highcliffe, and, after making certain that Wharton's bonds were quite safe, Billy had made his demand.

Wharton had either to stop in the wood all night or persuade Billy Bunter to release him. It was quite by chance that Billy had come across him at all, and the same chance was not likely to be the lot of others.

The captain of the Remove had threatened, argued, and pleaded to be released. Billy was quite willing to cut the ropes which bound Wharton to the tree—on terms. The terms had had to be agreed to, and Harry Wharton had found himself back at Greyfriars with a promise to fulfil—a promise to stand Bunter a very special supper in Study No. 1.

Hence the frowns.

Bob Cherry's eyes twinkled suddenly.

"Now, exactly what did you promise the fat frog?" he asked.

"Supper in this study," answered Harry.

"A special supper?"

"Yes."

"Any details specified?"

"Oh, no!"

"I see! The ingredients left to you, but it's to be a special supper?" said Bob thoughtfully.

"That's it."

Bob looked at his watch.

"Lots of time yet," he remarked. "Now, give me my head, you chaps, and I'll arrange this. First of all, we'll have supper in my study."

"But if we're going to have supper here with Bunter——" said Nugent.

"Dear old man, let me have my way! Listen to the wisdom of your elders!" answered Bob. "In my study there's Welsh rarebit—Wun Lung's making it now—and a big cake. Leave it to me to arrange the supper with Bunter afterwards."

"Just as you like," said Harry.

"Good!"

Bob Cherry evidently had a stunt in his fertile brain, and his chums were willing to give him his head, as he expressed it.

The juniors proceeded to Study No. 13, where they enjoyed the Welsh rarebit made by little Wun Lung, the Chinese junior. After



that Bob was away for half an hour before he announced that the special supper was ready for Billy Bunter.

As they approached Study No. 1 they heard a grunt. Billy had arrived in good time for the promised feed.

The Owl of the Remove eyed them discontentedly.

"I'm waiting!" he snapped.

"Wait and be blessed!" said Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton! After asking a fellow to supper——"

"The askfulness was a boot on the other leg, my esteemed fat Bunter!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, Inky——"

"Cheerio, Bunty!" said Bob Cherry.

"Supper's coming along—a special supper! That was agreed, wasn't it, for services rendered? Not an ordinary supper——"

"Certainly not!" said Bunter promptly.

"But a very special one——"

"Exactly."

"Something a bit out of the common?"

"That's it."

"Good! Run along, fatty, and roll up in



Bob Cherry removed the cover with a flourish, and Bunter fairly blinked at the fish. "Wha-a-t's that?" he howled.

(See page 10.)

ten minutes, and it will be ready. We're all lending a hand."

"I don't mind helping with the cooking!"

"My dear man, you're the giddy guest!"

"You come along as soon as it's ready!"

"Not more than ten minutes?"

"Not a second more."

"Good!" said Bunter; and he rolled out of No. 1 Study with a grin of happy anticipation on his fat face.

Ten minutes had barely elapsed when William George Bunter reappeared. He found the table laid in No. 1 Study, and five juniors sitting round it with serious faces. Bunter rolled in.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Quite."

"I don't see the supper," said the Owl of the Remove, blinking round the room.

"Sit down, dear boy; I'm waiting on you!" said Bob amiably. "Like to begin with soup?"

"Yes, rather!"

Bunter sat down. Bob Cherry stepped to the cupboard, which was



Bunter eyed the soup, and eyed Bob Cherry. "Isn't that jolly thin soup?" he asked. (See page 10.)



apparently serving the purpose of a side-board. He brought a dish to the table and began to ladle soup into Bunter's plate with a tablespoon. Bunter eyed the soup and eyed Bob Cherry.

"Isn't that jolly thin soup?" he asked.

"Clear!" said Bob. "Not thin—clear!"

"Too jolly clear for me!" growled Bunter. He dipped a spoon in the soup and tasted it; then he gave a snort. "Call that soup?"

"What do you call it?" cried Johnny Bull.

"Warm water, with a dash of salt and pepper in it!" said Bunter hotly. "I don't call it soup. Pah!"

"Are you always as polite as that when you go out to supper?" asked Nugent.

"The politeness is terrific!"

"Well, try the fish, Bunter," said Bob Cherry amicably.

"That's better!" grunted Bunter. "Hand it out!"

"Here you are, old bean!"

Bob Cherry brought a plate, covered by another plate, to the table. He removed the cover with a flourish.

Bunter fairly blinked at the fish.

Certainly it was fish. It was about the third part of a sardine—not a very big sardine. Indeed, there seemed to be more aroma than sardine about it. There was not much of it, but it was rich for its size. Possibly it was a fragment that had been accidentally overlooked for some days. Whatever it was, it was the second course in that special supper.

"Wha-at's that?" howled Bunter.

"The fish course."

"You silly ass!"

"Don't you care for fish?" asked Bob innocently.

"Look here, you beast——"

"Well, try the joint," said Bob resignedly. Bunter brightened up a little.

"I say, you fellows, is there really a cut from a joint?" he asked eagerly. "I don't mind a joke. He, he, he! Let's see the joint."

"Certainly."

Nugent put a serviette over his arm and removed the fish course in the style of a waiter. Bob Cherry brought the joint on the table.

There was a yelp from Bunter.

"Is—is that the joint?"

"Yes."

"Beast!"

It was a joint. It was true that since having appeared at table it had been passed on to Gosling's dog, who had gnawed it beautifully clean, but it was a joint.

Bunter's face was a study. He blinked round at the chums of the Remove, and saw only five serious faces—indeed, solemn faces.

"Don't you

care for the joint?" asked Nugent.

"Beast!"

"Better take it away," said Bob. "Our guest seems a bit difficult to satisfy; he doesn't care for the soup, the fish, or the joint. I suppose he wouldn't care for the beans and bacon as an entrée now?"

"Beans and bacon! Yes, rather!" said Bunter eagerly. "Trot them out, and you'll jolly soon see!"

"Right-ho!"

The indefatigable Bob drew another plate from the cupboard and placed it before



Bunter rolled to the door and shook a fat fist at the Famous Five. "Call that supper, you rotters?" he howled. "Ha, ha! Yes—a special supper!" (See page 11.)



Bunter. It contained the beans and bacon. There were two hard and dry haricot beans—it could not be denied that they were beans—and there was the rind of a rasher of bacon—not edible. Bunter blinked at the beans and bacon with feelings too deep for words.

“He doesn’t care for the entrée,” said Bob Cherry seriously. “This supper—this special supper—doesn’t look like being a success. I must say that Bunter is rather exacting when he goes out to supper.”

“Look here, you rotters, what am I going to eat?” bawled Bunter.

“The fruit comes next, and the cheese,” said Bob.

“Yah! Gimme the fruit, then!”

“Care for nuts?”

“I suppose I shall have to feed on the nuts, if there’s nothing better!” snorted Bunter.

“Right-o!”

Bob Cherry laid the nuts before Bunter. The Owl of the Remove glared at them. They were nuts. There was no denying that they were nuts, but they were the kind of nuts that carpenters use for fastening on the ends of screws, and they were made of metal. Billy Bunter would eat most things in the way of nuts, but he drew the line at those nuts.

“You—you—you beast!” he gasped.

“He doesn’t care for the fruit course,” said Bob Cherry sadly. “It took me a lot of trouble getting these nuts—rooting through a tool-chest, and all that. There’s nothing more but the cheese, Bunter.”

“I’ll have the cheese, you beast!”

“Good!”

Bob Cherry placed the cheese on the table. It was cheese—quite good cheese—and it was the size of a large pin’s head. Billy Bunter did not touch it. It would not have gone far towards satisfying Bunter’s appetite. He rose from the supper-table quivering with wrath like a fat jelly.

“Beast!”

“My dear chap——”

“Yah!”

“A very special supper!” murmured Bob Cherry. “That was the agreement, and you can’t say it’s not very special. I’ve never seen a supper like it before, that I remember.”

“The specialfulness is terrific, my esteemed Bunter!”

“Beasts!” roared Bunter.

He rolled to the door and shook a fat fist at the Famous Five. Then the seriousness of the five visages relaxed, and there was a general chortle.

“Call that a supper, you rotters?” howled Bunter.

“Ha, ha! Yes, a special supper!”

“Beasts!”

Billy Bunter rolled away along the Remove passage, snorting with wrath, followed by a yell of laughter from No. 1 Study. That evening the Owl was wandering up and down the passage till bed-time like a lion seeking what he might devour, utterly unsatisfied by his special supper, though it had been very special, indeed!





# A FOOTBALL BALLAD



The famous Friars, in their jerseys blue—  
Play up, you fellows, play up!  
They are sportsmen tried, and sportsmen true—  
Play up, you fellows, play up!  
Wharton and Nugent, Bull and Brown,  
Freed from the rulers in cap and gown,  
On the field of play now seek renown—  
Play up, you fellows, play up!

Into the fray with eager zest—  
Play up, you fellows, play up!  
Your comrades know you will do your best—  
Play up, you fellows, play up!  
With here a tackle, and there a dash,  
Here a collision, and there a crash,  
Slipping in puddles with shout and splash—  
Play up, you fellows, play up!

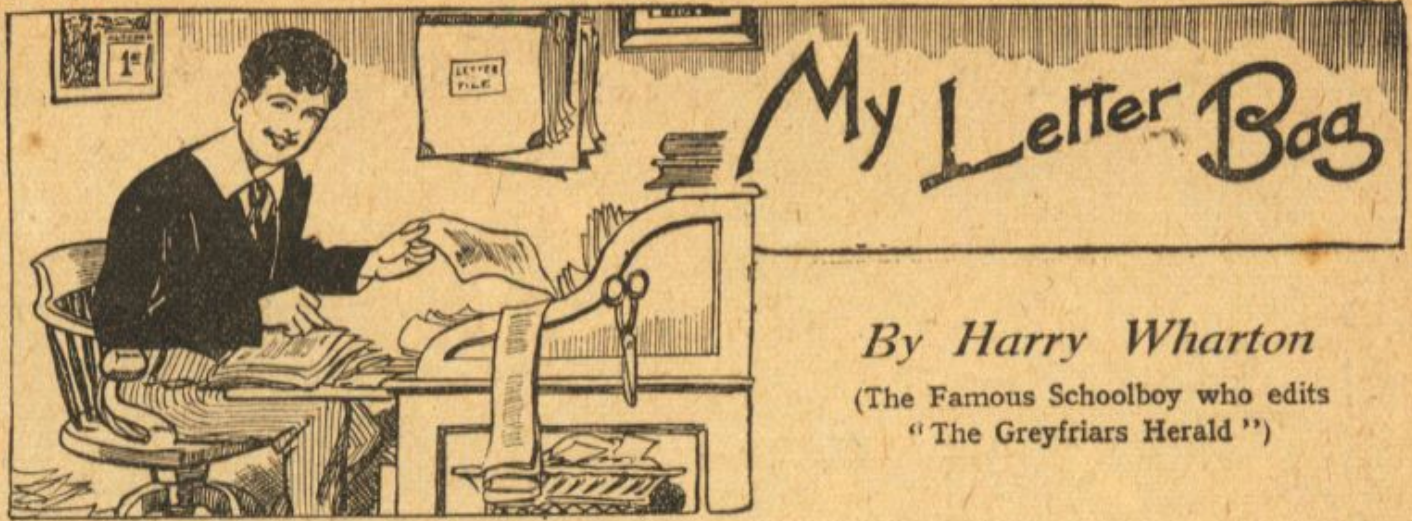
What if you're losing by two to nil!  
Play up, you fellows, play up!  
We trust to your science and speed and skill—  
Play up, you fellows, play up!  
You'll struggle and strive to the bitter end,  
And, whether your fortunes you mar or mend,  
Your energies you will fully extend—  
Play up, you fellows, play up!

A goal! A goal! And we clamour for others—  
Play up, you fellows, play up!  
Shoulder to shoulder, you Band of Brothers—  
Play up, you fellows, play up!  
Passing and pressing, with zeal red-hot,  
Then Wharton scores, with a lightning shot.  
A gallant revival, is it not?  
Play up, you fellows, play up!

List, oh, list to the deafening roar—  
Play up, you fellows, play up!  
"Come along, Greyfriars! Just one more!"  
Play up, you fellows, play up!  
Then Smithy scores, with a splendid drive,  
And the great ground hums like a human hive!  
So here's to the heroes who strive and thrive—  
Play up, you fellows, play up!







*By Harry Wharton*

(The Famous Schoolboy who edits  
"The Greyfriars Herald")

I CAN safely say that there is not another fellow at Greyfriars who receives so many letters as I do.

Even Lord Mauleverer, who has sisters and cousins and aunts scattered all over the globe, and whose postbag is voluminous, receives only a tithe of what I receive in the way of correspondence.

If I were to tell you the number of letters I have had during the past year you would be fairly staggered. Some of you would think I was indulging in a flight of fancy, as Billy Bunter so often does. But the fact remains that my yearly influx of letters runs into many thousands. Nor is this altogether surprising. For there are readers of "The Greyfriars Herald" all over the world—some of them residing in the farthest outposts of the Empire—and when they are in doubt or difficulty, or have any criticism to make, they write to me as one friend to another. They know they will always get a hearing, even though I may be too busy to give them an immediate reply.

There are lots of grown-ups, I believe, who dislike getting letters. They are haunted by thoughts of Bills. But to the average schoolboy, the postman is not merely a man who carries a bag—a paid servant of the government. There is something wonderful and magical about him, and when we watch his approach from our study windows we are on tip-toe with expectancy.

Having been swamped with correspondence ever since I started to edit "The Greyfriars Herald," I suppose I ought, by this time, to

take letters as a matter of course and not get excited about them. And yet every morning I find myself looking forward as eagerly as ever to the arrival of the postman.

I will now ask my readers to take a peep over my shoulder while I go through my morning mail.

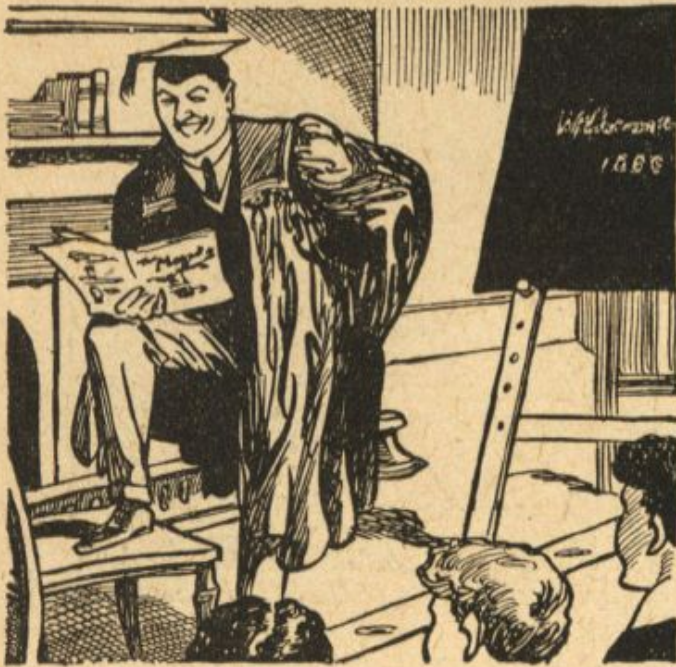
Eagerly I take up my paper-knife and slit open the envelope at the top of the pile. I take out the letter, and glance at it with a smile. It is from a reader signing himself "Sunny Jim," and his letter is typical of many hundreds that I receive.

"Dear Harry Wharton,—I have just finished reading this week's issue of 'The Greyfriars



I am always glad to meet the postman





A schoolmaster reads aloud to his class certain extracts.

Herald,' and I think it is simply ripping! Even the weird and wonderful article by Billy Bunter does not mar the number. It only makes it all the more amusing! Billy's article sent me into shrieks of laughter—I expect he intended it to be taken seriously.

"I hope you and the members of your staff will continue to turn out such splendid numbers. And may the 'Herald' and its cheery editor continue to flourish!"

This, as I have said, is a typical letter. The writer asks no questions and makes no criticisms. He simply lauds the "Herald" to the skies. When I have time, I will send "Sunny Jim" a few lines in acknowledgment of his kind tribute.

Now for the next letter. This is a horse of a different colour. Not all my correspondents are "Sunny Jims." Just listen to this:

"Dear Wharton,—The current issue of 'The Greyfriars Herald' is too tame for words. You want to buck your ideas up!

"We don't want any more tales of Greyfriars School. We are sick and tired of them! Why don't you give Buffalo Bill and Dick Turpin a look in? We want tales of thrilling adventure and hairbreadth escapes; and if you don't alter the style of your paper at once

I shall cease to be a reader. I've given you fair warning.—Yours, DISGUSTED."

"Disgusted" will have to remain disgusted; because I do not propose to make the sweeping alterations he suggests. "The Greyfriars Herald" deals almost exclusively with school life; else why call it "The Greyfriars Herald"? We might as well call it "The Wild West Weekly," and have done with it.

The majority of my readers prefer that our stories and articles should deal with Greyfriars, and it is the majority I have to study. "Disgusted" threatens to give up buying the paper, but that threat will occasion me no sleepless nights. I would not have any fellow read "The Greyfriars Herald" unless he genuinely liked it.

We now come to the third letter of the pile. This, also, proves to be a letter of criticism, but it is fair and just criticism, and that is what I like.

"My Dear Wharton,—I enjoy your little paper immensely; but it is not perfect, and I venture to suggest certain improvements.

"Your best humorous writer is Tom Brown; yet nothing has appeared from his pen for five long weeks. There are hundreds of your readers who hunger and thirst for Tom



"Billy Bunter's article sent us into shrieks of laughter."



Brown's laughable articles, and they are very disappointed to think that you have dropped him in favour of other contributors. Would you be good enough to bring him into the limelight again?

"The poems by Dick Penfold are excellent; but I do not see why Penfold should monopolise your poetry column. He is not the only fellow in the Greyfriars Remove who can write verse. It would be only fair to give some of the others a look in. Will you do this?"

"One other point. Although the 'Herald' is mainly a humorous paper, I think an occasional story written in a more serious vein would not come amiss. Mark Linley can write this type of story; and I suggest that you give him a chance to exercise his talents.

"Wishing you and your paper every success,

"Yours sincerely,

"A CANDID FRIEND."

Now, there is nothing to cavil at in that letter. The criticisms of the writer are helpful, not destructive; and he may be sure of gaining our editorial ear.

But we must hurry along with our correspondence, or we shall never be done.

Here, by way of variety, is a letter from a schoolmaster. I can picture some of you raising your eyebrows, and exclaiming: "Fancy a schoolmaster reading 'The Greyfriars Herald'!" Well, schoolmasters *do* read our little paper, as a diversion from their more serious studies. And I could name a doctor and a barrister who read the "Herald," too.

My schoolmaster friend writes to say that on certain days, when his pupils have been specially good, he reads aloud to his class certain extracts from "The Greyfriars Herald." I guess there are a good many boys who would like to belong to that class!

And so we go on through the colossal pile of correspondence. There are letters of every sort, "from grave to gay, from lively to severe," as the poet has it.

I keenly appreciate the hearty support and good wishes of all my chums, and they may rely upon me to keep the flag of "The Greyfriars Herald" flying as proudly as ever.

THE END.

## Great Days at Greyfriars

### First Day of Term

By Dick Penfold



The holidays have run their course,  
We're back to school's monotony;  
And now must turn our minds, perforce,  
To Latin, Greek, and Botany.  
Farewell to the vacation's joys,  
The sweet, delightful summer-time;  
New term commences; Greyfriars boys  
Will have a somewhat glummer time!

Bob Cherry's back; he sheds a tear,  
And Smithy's sad and sorrowing;  
While Billy Bunter's also here,  
Back to his deeds of borrowing.  
"Will some kind fellow," he inquires,  
"Lend me a bob right speedily?"  
Then to the tuckshop he retires,  
Devouring doughnuts greedily!

Hallo! There's Fisher Tarleton Fish.  
He shakes my hand most clammily;  
There's Skinner, too; and I could wish  
He'd stayed home with his family.  
There's Squiff and Brown, a merry pair,  
Both full of gay absurdities;  
Who is that giant over there?  
Why, Coker, on my word it is!

Welcome to all the Greyfriars throng!  
A noisy, vast community;  
Let's hope that we may get along  
In friendliness and unity.  
May all the days of this new term,  
Be happy days and jolly days;  
We'll play our parts with courage firm,  
Refreshed by recent holidays!







# Scott's Sister

## A PUBLIC SCHOOL STORY

BY  
P. C. Wodehouse



*What would you do if your chum's sister asked you not to try and get her brother "out" in your most important cricket match? That is what Charteris was up against!*

*Illustrations by Saville Lumley.*

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

#### A Cricket Enthusiast.

**O**H, woman, woman! As somebody once said. I forget who.

Woman, always noted for serpentine snakiness, is perhaps more snakily serpentine at the age when her hair is wavering on the point of going up and her skirts hesitating on the brink of going down than at any other moment in her career. It is then most of all that she will bear watching. Take, for example, Scott's sister. Which brings me to my story.

Charteris first made the acquaintance of Scott's sister when Scott asked him home to spend the last week of the Easter holidays with him. They were in different houses at Locksley, Scott being a member of the School House, while Charteris was in Merevale's; but as they were both in the first eleven they saw a good deal of one another. In addition, Charteris frequently put in an evening in the winter and Easter terms at those teas which Scott gave in his study, where the guests did all the work and the host the greater part of the feeding. So that it came as no surprise when he received the invitation.

He hesitated about accepting it. He was

a wary youth, and knew that scores of school friendships have died an untimely death owing to one of the pair spending part of the holidays at the other's home. Something nearly always happens to disturb the harmony. Most people are different in the home circle, and the alteration is generally for the worse. However, things being a little dull at home with illness in the house, and Scott's letter mentioning that there was a big lawn with a cricket net, where they could get into form for next term, he decided to risk it.

The shades of night were beginning to fall when the train brought Charteris to his destination.

Looking up and down the platform he could see no signs of his host. Former instances of his casualness, for which quality Scott was notorious, floated across his mind. It would be just like him to forget that his guest was to arrive that day.

The platform gradually emptied of the few passengers who had alighted. He walked out of the station, hoping to find a cab which would convey him to Scott's house.

"I say!" said a voice, as he paused outside and looked round about him.

Through the gathering dusk he could see the dim outline of a dog-cart.

"Hallo!" he said.



"Are you Charteris?"

"Somebody's been telling you," said he in an aggrieved voice.

His spirits had risen with a bound at the prospect of getting to his destination at last.

"Jump in, then. I thought you couldn't have come. I was just going to drive off."

"Don't talk of it," said Charteris.

"Billy couldn't come to meet you. He had to get the net down. You mustn't leave it up all night. The gardener's boy is a perfect idiot, and always gets it tangled up. So he sent me. Have this rug. Is the box all right? Then gee up, Peter. Good night, Mr. Brown."

"Good night, miss," said the station-master affably.

Charteris examined her out of the corner of his eyes. As far as he could see through the darkness she was pretty. Her hair was in the transition stage between mane and bun. It hung over her shoulders, but it was tied round with a ribbon. He had got thus far with his inspection when she broke the silence.

"I hope you'll like our wicket," she said.

"It's slow, as there's a good deal of moss on the lawn, but it plays pretty true. Billy smashed a bedroom window yesterday."

"He would!" said Charteris.

The School House man was the biggest hitter at Lockstey.

"What do you think of Billy as a bat?" asked the lad, turning to face him.

"He can hit," said Charteris.

"But his defence isn't any good at all, is it? And he's nervous before he gets started; and a man who goes in for a forcing game oughtn't to be that, ought he?"

"I didn't know he was nervous. He's not got that reputation at school. I should have thought that if there was one chap who went in without caring a bit about the bowling, it was Scott."

It surprised him in a vague sort of way that a girl should have such a firm and sensible grasp on the important problems of life. He had taken his sister to Lord's one summer to watch the Gentlemen v. Players match, and she had asked him if the light screens were to keep the wind off

the players. He had not felt really well since.

"Oh, no," said the girl. "He's as jumpy as a cat. He's often told me that it all depends on the first ball. If he can hit that he's all right. If he doesn't he's nervous till he gets out or slogs a four. You remember his seventy-one against M.C.C. last year. He managed to get Lee round past mid-on for three the first ball. After that he was as right as anything. Against Haileybury, too, when he made fifty-four. He didn't see his first ball at all. He simply slogged blindly, and got it by a fluke, and sent it clean into the pavilion."

"Did you see those games?" inquired Charteris, amazed.

"No. Oh, how I wish I had! But I made Billy promise faithfully when he goes back to school that he'll write me a full account of every match. And he does it, too, though those are about the only letters he does write. He hates writing letters. But he's awfully good about mine. I love cricket. Billy says I'm not half a bad bat. Here we are."

The dog-cart swung into a long drive, at the end of which a few lighted windows broke the blackness. A dog barked inside the house as they drove up, and rushed out as the door opened, and Scott's drawl made itself heard.

"That you, Charteris?"

"It looks like me, doesn't it?" said Charteris, jumping down.

"How many times has Molly spilt you on the way here?" inquired Scott.

"I drove jolly well," protested his sister with indignation. "Didn't I?"

"Ripping!" said Charteris.

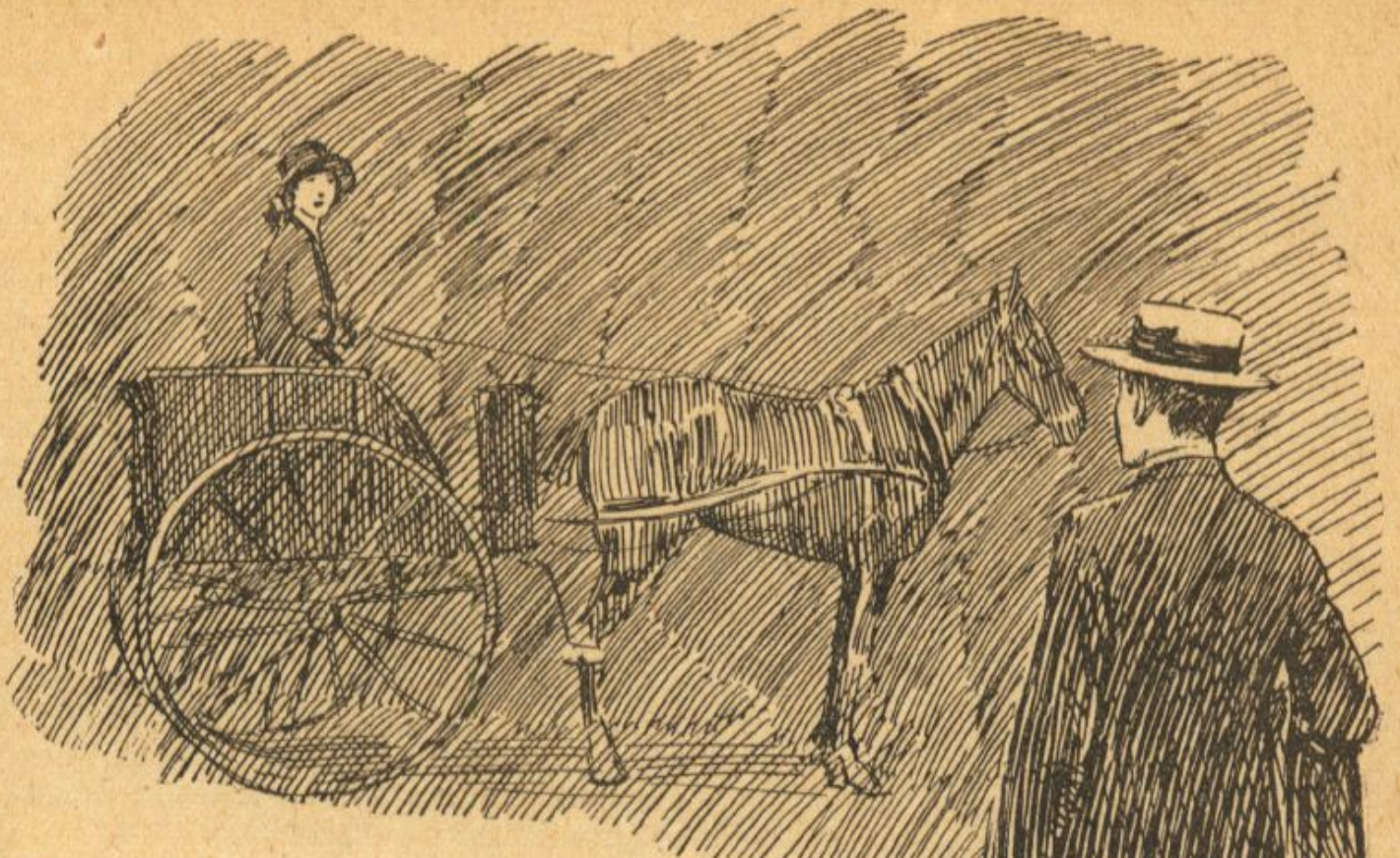
"It's very decent of you to hush it up," said Scott. "Come along in and brush some of the mud off!"

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### An Early Morning Practice.

Charteris woke abruptly on the following morning at twenty-three minutes and eight seconds past seven. What woke him was a cricket ball. It hummed through the open window, crashed against the opposite wall—an inch lower and an engraving of "The





As Scott paused outside the railway station, he saw through the gathering dusk the dim outline of a dogcart.

Fallowfield Hunt" would have needed extensive alterations and repairs—and, after circling round the room, came to a standstill under the chest of drawers. Charteris hopped out of bed and retrieved it.

"I say," said a penetrating voice from the regions of the drive.

Charteris put on a blazer and looked out. Scott's sister was standing below. She held a bat in her hand. In the offing lurked a shirt-sleeved youth whom he took to be the gardener's boy. He was grinning sheepishly. Across the lawn stood the net and wickets.

"Hallo, are you awake?" inquired Molly.

"More or less," said Charteris.

"Did you see a ball come in just now?"

"I thought I noticed something of the sort. Is this it?"

She dropped the bat, and caught the descending ball neatly. Charteris looked on with approval.

"I'm sorry if I disturbed you," said Miss Scott.

"Not at all," said Charteris.

"Jolly good way of calling people

in the morning. You ought to take out a patent. Did you hit it?"

"Yes."

"Rather a pull," said Charteris judicially.

"I know—I can't help pulling. It runs in the family. Billy will do it, too. Are you coming out?"

"Ten minutes," said Charteris. "Shall I do some bowling for you?"



The lady expressed surprise.

"Can you bowl?" she said.

"Rhodes isn't in it," replied Charteris.

"It's an education to watch my off-break."

"They never put you on in first matches."

"That," said Charteris, "is because they don't know a good thing when they see one."

"All right then. Don't be long."

"Well," said Molly half an hour later, as the gong sounded for breakfast and they walked round to the door, "I think your bowling's jolly good, and I don't know why they don't give you a chance for the first. Still, you couldn't get Billy out, I don't think."

"Billy!" said Charteris. "As a matter of fact, Billy is a gift to me. He can't stand up against my stuff. When he sees my slow,

hanging ball coming he generally chucks down his bat, hides his face in his hands, and bursts into tears."

"I'll tell him that!"

"I shouldn't," said Charteris. "Don't rub it into the poor chap. We all have these skeletons in our cupboards."

Molly regarded him seriously.

"Do you know," she said, "I believe you're very conceited?"

"I've been told so," replied Charteris complacently, "by some of the best judges."

The dining-room was empty when they arrived. The Scott family was limited to Molly, her brother, and Mrs. Scott, who was a semi-invalid and generally breakfasted in bed. Colonel Scott had been dead some years.

Molly made the tea in a business-like manner, and Charteris was half-way through his second cup when his host strolled in. Scott had been known to come down in time for the beginning of breakfast, but he did not spoil a good thing by doing it too often.

"Slacker," said Charteris. "We've been up and out for an hour!"

"What do you think of the wicket?"

"Very good. Miss Scott——"

"You can call me Molly, if you like," interrupted that lady, biting a section out of a healthy slab of bread-and-butter.

"Thanks," said Charteris. "Molly has got that stroke of yours to the on. She pretty nearly knocked a corner off the house with it once."

"Molly is always imitating her elders and betters," replied her brother. "At a picnic last summer——"

"Billy, stop! You're not to!"

"Now, I can't do the dashing host, and make the home bright and lively," said Scott complainingly, "if you go interrupting my best stories. Molly went to a picnic—grown-up affair—last summer. Wanted to be taken for about ten years older than she is."

"Be quiet, Billy!"

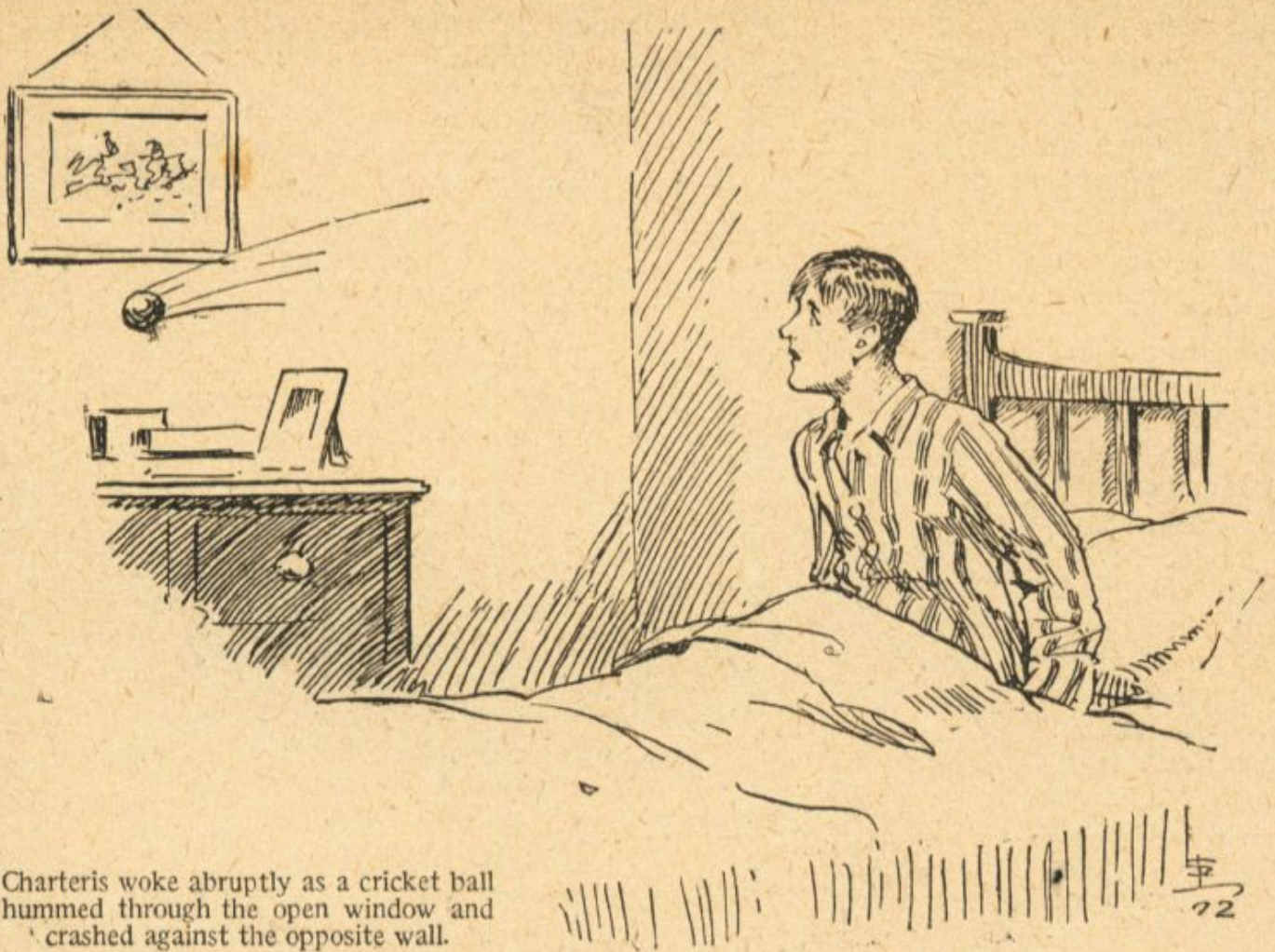
The story becomes jerky from this point, for the heroine was holding the narrator by the shoulders from behind and doing her best to shake him.

"So," continued Scott, "she turned up the collar of her jacket and shoved—shoved her



Molly Scott stood in the drive with a cricket bat in her hand.





Charteris woke abruptly as a cricket ball hummed through the open window and crashed against the opposite wall.

hair underneath it. See? Looked as if it was up instead of down her back. Palled up with another girl. Other girl began to talk about dances and things. 'Oh,' said Molly, 'I haven't been out a great deal lately.' After a bit it got so hot that Molly had to take off her jacket, and down came the hair. 'Why,' said the other girl, 'you're only a child after all!'

And Scott, who had been present at the massacre, howled with brotherly laughter at the recollection.

Molly looked across at Charteris with flaming cheeks. Charteris' face was grave and composed. This, he felt, was not the place to exhibit a sense of humour.

"I don't see the joke," said Charteris. "I think the other girl was a beast!"

Charteris found a note on his dressing-table when he went to his room that night.

It was a model of epistolary terseness.

"Thanks awfully for not laughing," it ran.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER

### The House Matches

CHARTERIS went back to Locksley at the end of the Easter holidays fit both in body and mind. In the first card match, against the local regiment, he compiled a faultless eighty-six. The wretched Scott, coming to the crease second wicket down, outwardly confident but inwardly palpitating, had his usual wild swing at his first ball, and was yorked.

A long letter from Molly arrived in the course of the next week. Apparently Scott sent her details of all the matches, not only of those in which he himself had figured to advantage. One sentence in the letter amused Charteris:

"I'm sorry I called you conceited about your bowling. I asked Billy after you had gone, and he said he was more afraid of you



till he got set than of anyone else in the school."

This was news to Charteris. Like many people who bat well, he had always treated his bowling as a huge joke. He bowled for the House first change, but then Merevale's were not strong in that department. Batting was their speciality. It had never occurred to him that anyone could really be afraid of his strange deliveries, and Scott, of all people, who invariably hit him off after three overs! It was good news, however, for the School House was Merevale's chief rival in the House matches, and Scott was the School House star performer. If there was a chance of his being too much for Scott, then Merevale's should win the cup.

The House matches at Locksley were played on the knocking-out system, and this year a great stroke of luck befell Merevale's. (The only other house with any pretensions to the cup) Dacre's drew the School House for their first match.

The School House won, Scott making 102 in an hour; and it was now evident that the cup lay between Merevale's and the School House. These two easily disposed of their opponents and qualified for the final.

There was much discussion in the school on the merits of the two teams. The general impression was that Merevale's would fail

for want of bowling. Scott, it was thought, ought to have a day out against the inferior bowling of Merevale's. If he got out early anything might happen, for Merevale's had the strongest batting side in the school.

Then it was that Charteris went to Venables, the captain of Merevale's, on the evening before the match.

"Look here, Venables," he said, "I'll start by saying I'm not ragging, or you might have your doubts. I want you to put me on to-morrow when Scott comes in. Whoever's bowling, take him off and give me an over. I shall only want one. If I can't get him in that I sha'n't get him at all."

"Have you developed a new ball?" inquired Venables.

It was Charteris' habit to announce every other day that he had developed a new ball.

"Don't rag," said Charteris earnestly. "I'm quite serious. I mean it. I happen to know that Scott's in a funk for his first over, and that my rotten stuff worries him till he gets set. You might give me

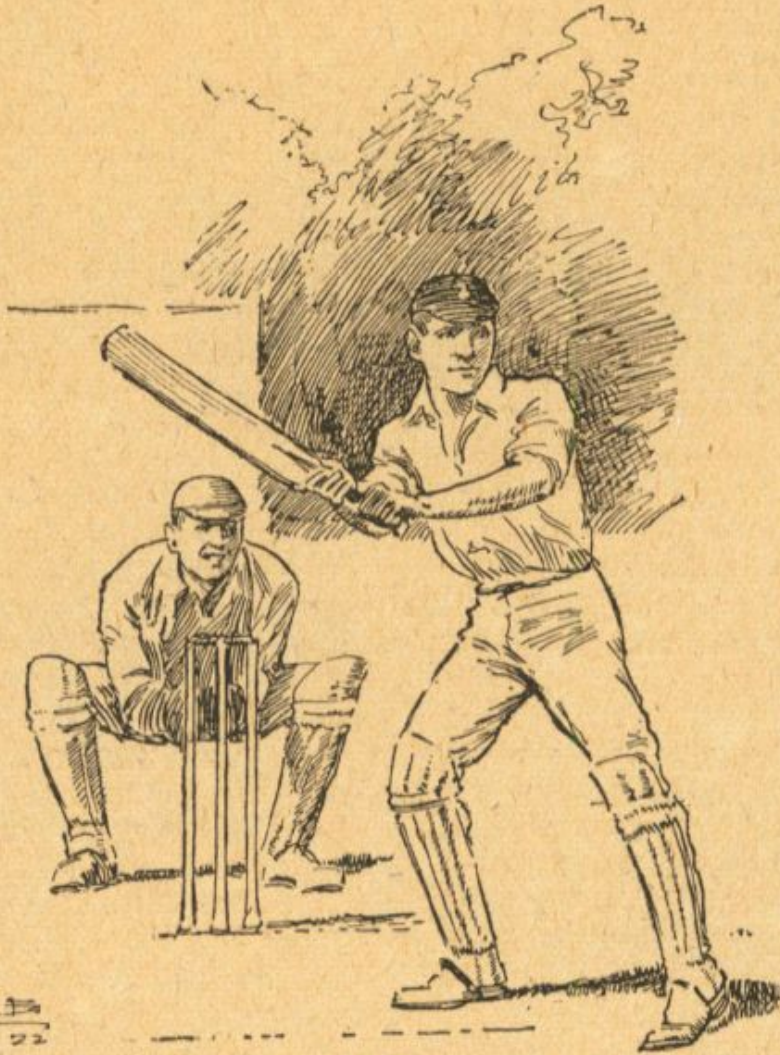
a shot; it can't do any harm."

"You really aren't pulling my leg?"

"I swear I'm not! Of course, it's a million to one that I sha'n't get him out, but it's quite true that he doesn't like my bowling."

"I don't wonder," said Venables. "It's uncanny stuff. All right."

"Thanks," said Charteris.



Scott made his usual wild swing at the first ball and was yorked!



## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### Playing the Game !

WE now come to that portion of the story which more particularly illustrates the truth of the profound remarks with which it began on the serpentine snakiness of woman. Coming down to breakfast on the day of the match, Charteris saw a letter by the side of his plate. It was from Molly.

Their correspondence had become, since her first letter, quite voluminous. Writing to Molly was like talking to a sympathetic listener. No detail of a match or of school gossip was too small to interest her, and when, as he had been doing frequently that term, he made a fifty or even a century, there was no need for him to slur modestly over the feat. He was expected to describe it vividly from beginning to end.

The bulk of the letter was not unusual. It was in the postscript that, like most feminine letter-writers, she had embodied her most important words. Charteris re-read them several times before the colossal awfulness of them dawned upon him.

This was the postscript :

"Now, I want you to do me a favour. I wish you would. Poor old Billy is quite cut-up about his luck this season. You know how badly he has done in matches. That century against Dacre's is the only really good thing he's done at all. Can't you give him an easy ball when the School House play

you? I don't mean to hit, but just so that he doesn't get out. He told me that he hated your bowling, and he is so serious in his first over. Do! It is such hard lines on him, making ducks, and I'm awfully fond of him. So you will, won't you?

"P.P.S.—If you do, you shall have that photograph you wanted. The proofs have just come back, and they are very good. I like the one best where I've got my hair sort of done up."

Charteris did not join the usual after-breakfast gathering of house-prefects in Venables' study that morning. He sat in his own den and pondered. At a quarter to nine he might have been overheard to murmur a remark.

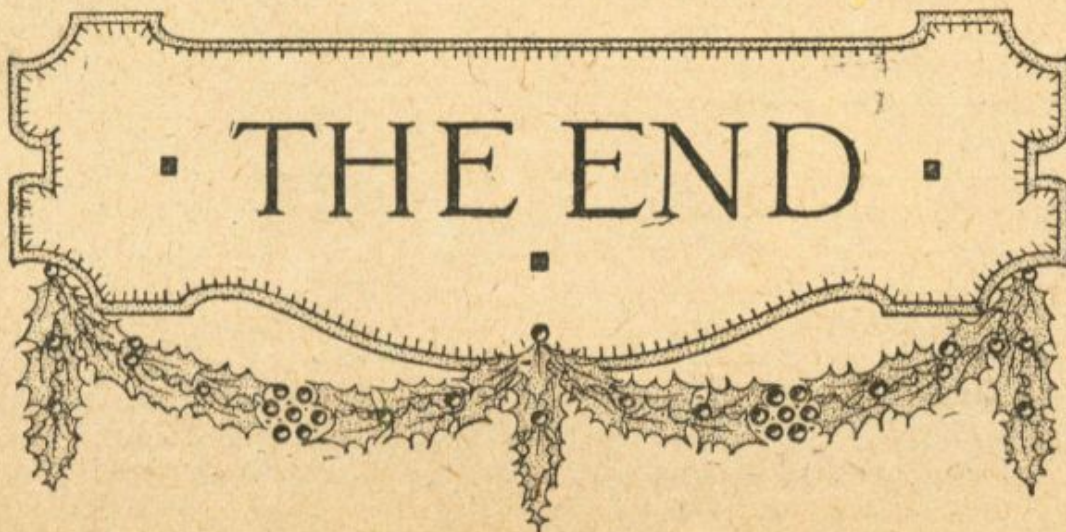
"And that," he murmured, "is the girl I thought really understood the finer points of cricket!"

It is a pity that the problem story has ceased to be fashionable. I should have preferred this narrative to have ended at the above point. As it is, I must add two quotations, one from the school magazine, the other from a letter from Miss Molly Scott to Charteris. Place aux dames! Here is the extract from the letter :

"I am sending the photograph. I hope you will like it."

And here is the quotation from the magazine :

"W. L. Scott, b. Charteris, 0; c. Welch. b. Charteris, 2."







## ODE TO AN EXPIRING SNAIL!

By ALONZO TODD,  
*(Duffer of the Greyfriars Remove.)*

SAW you lying in the passage,  
 Heard you weep and wail;  
 Tried to give first aid and massage,  
 Luckless little snail!

Artificial respiration  
 Was resorted to;  
 Soon I jumped with jubilation,  
 Thought you would pull through.

But your shell was badly broken,  
 Scattered on the floor;  
 Then the tragic words were spoken,  
 "You will crawl no more!"

Member of the tribe of oysters,  
 You will ne'er again  
 Crawl through crypt or close or cloisters;  
 You're untimely slain!

Someone's hobnailed boot descended  
 On your fragile shell;  
 Now your gay career is ended;  
 Stricken snail, farewell!

Gosling's foot, of size stupendous,  
 Sought to maim and kill;  
 May the mighty powers defend us!  
 Why, you're wriggling still!

But it is the final flutter,  
 Life's extinct—too true!  
 I can only stand and stutter  
 "Little snail, adieu!"

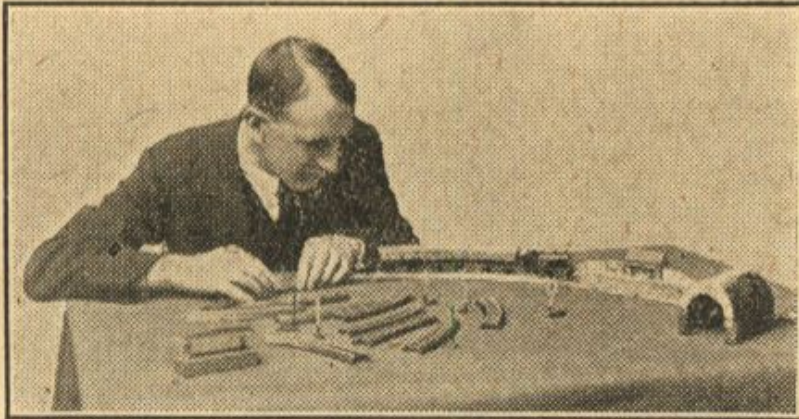
I will gather up the litter  
 Of your shattered shell;  
 Reader, if you know a fitter  
 Epitaph, please tell.



"Sidney Snail's remains are resting  
 'Neath this stone so cold;  
 Gosling killed him (cease your jesting!),  
 Sid was three weeks old."



# FOR THE YOUNG ENGINEER!



o o o

**An Interesting and  
Instructive Article  
on the Working of  
Model Locomotives.**

o o o

**T**HERE must be very few boys who have not, at some time in their lives, announced their firm determination "to be an engine-driver!" It is a profession that quite naturally grips the boyish imagination—to control the fiery monster that whisks the Limited Mail through the local station at seventy miles an hour, in a swirling shower of smoke and steam and sparks!

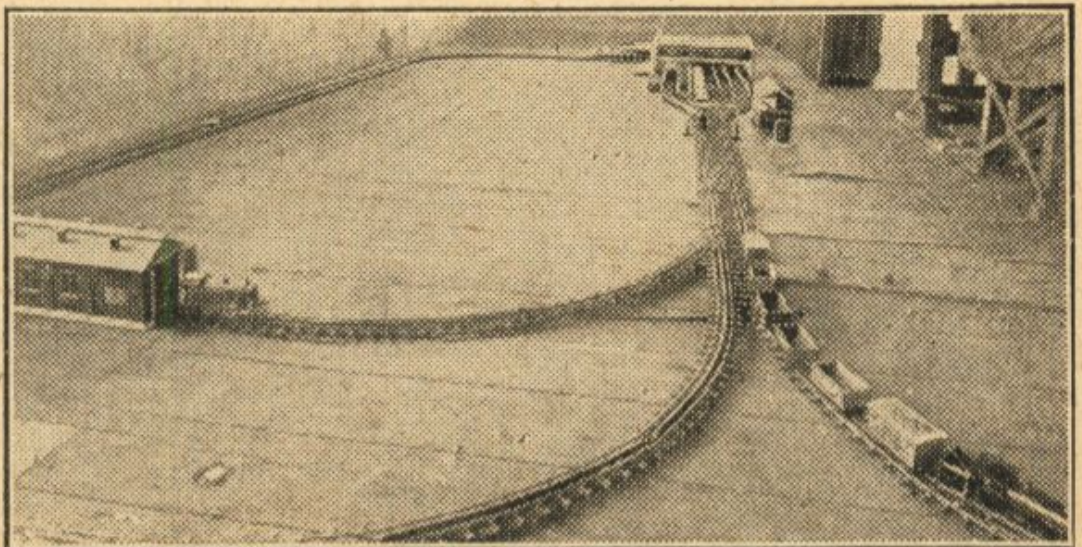
Equally natural is the boy's desire to possess a miniature "Limited Mail" of his own, in other words, to have a model railway to control and operate, which shall approximate as closely as possible to the real thing. And so it comes about that, among mechanical playthings, the model railway easily holds pride of place in the affections of the modern boy.

Thus among the many thousands of HOLIDAY ANNUAL readers there must be quite an army of model locomotive owners whose pastime, fascinating as it is, has also a definite educational value. Now, a model engine, like any other piece of mechanism, requires

proper handling if the best results are to be obtained from it, and it is with the object of assisting owners to get the best results, that the following notes have been compiled. They are culled for the most part from the life-long experience of Mr. J. W. Bassett-Lowke, the head of the famous Northampton firm of model engine makers, than whom HOLIDAY ANNUAL model locomotive owners could have no better guide, philosopher and friend.

## **Notes on Clockwork Locomotives.**

In the matter of clockwork locomotives the "directions for use" given with the engine are generally explicit enough.

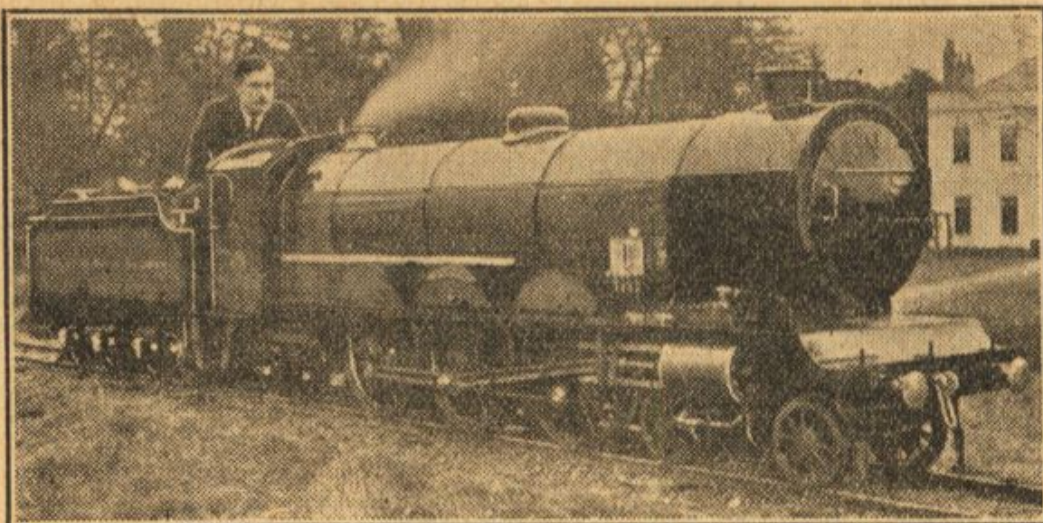


**A fine miniature railway system laid out on the floor. This particular system is electrically-operated.**



A MODEL ENGINE BIG ENOUGH TO RIDE ON!

The life of a clock-work locomotive is prolonged by keeping it clean, washing the mechanism out with petrol and re-oiling afterwards should it become clogged; never



This magnificent model "Pacific" type engine has a gauge of 15 inches, and is now in use on the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway in Cumberland.

leaving it wound up; and under no circumstances hastily manipulating the change-speed and reversing gear with the locomotive held in the hand while the wheels are spinning round in the air.

**Steam Locomotives.**

The important precautions to be observed by the small model steam engine driver may be summed up by saying that (1) The boiler should not be filled more than two-thirds full with water. (2) The flame of the lamp should be regulated to the needs of the boiler—if the wicks are too short insufficient steam will be generated; if too long, the excess pressure of steam will require to be relieved either by the whistle or by lifting the safety-valve; and (3) The cylinders, especially if they are of the piston-

valve or new balanced slide-valve type, should be well lubricated before starting. The safety-valve should be examined from time to time, to see that it is working

properly. Furthermore, when the house supply water is hard or chalky, do not use anything but clean rain-water; chalky water is the cause of innumerable failures due to the seizure of the piston-valves by the grit carried over with the steam from the hard feed water.

**Testing the Safety-Valve.**

Every model steam engine is fitted with a safety-valve, and a very important fitting it is; as, of course, unless it is working properly, there is a danger of the boiler exploding if the pressure of steam inside becomes excessive.

As long as the valve is working properly there is no danger whatever of this catastrophe happening, so that it is very necessary, as mentioned above, to test the valve at intervals.

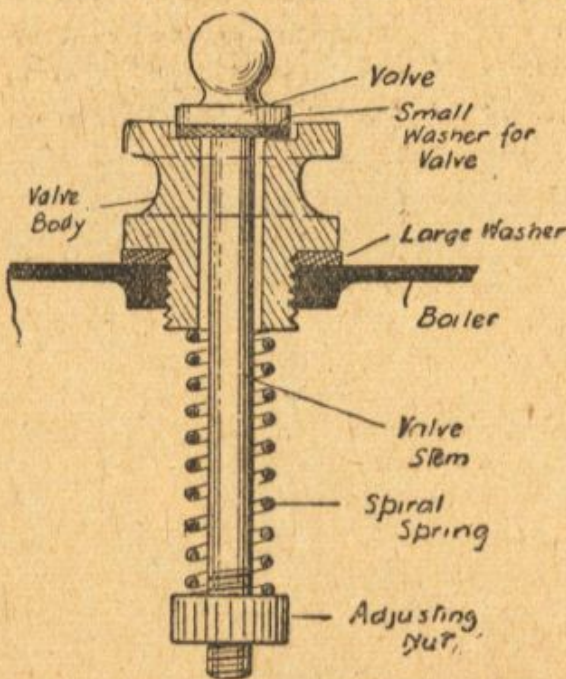


Fig. 1—Enlarged Section of Safety Valve.

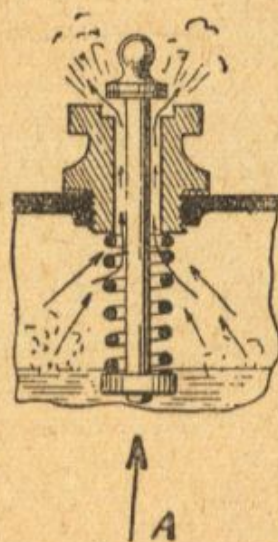


Fig. 2—Safety Valve in Action.



The safety-valve screws into the top of the boiler, the hole which receives it forming the filler-hole through which water is poured in.

The sketches on page 26 show an enlarged section of the valve, both at rest and in action.

The pressure of the steam, when it reaches a given point and overcomes the tension of the spring, lifts the valve and allows the surplus steam to escape. To ensure its action all parts should be free to move, and as in the case of an engine not used continuously, the parts may corrode or stick, the tension of the spring should be periodically tested. Hold the valve between the fingers and push the

bottom as shown against the pressure of the spring, in the direction shown by the arrow at A in Fig. 2. Washers of fibrous material are provided to ensure steam tightness; the lower and larger one makes the joint between valve and boiler

tight, and the upper one renders the spring valve tight when the valve is not in action.

Both washers may require to be reversed, and spares are usually provided. In fitting a new one (smaller sort) to the valve, care should be taken only to screw up the tension nut approximately as far as it was before the new washer was fitted. Note should be taken of the exact position of the adjustment nut before the valve spindle is taken out.

#### The Spirit Lamp.

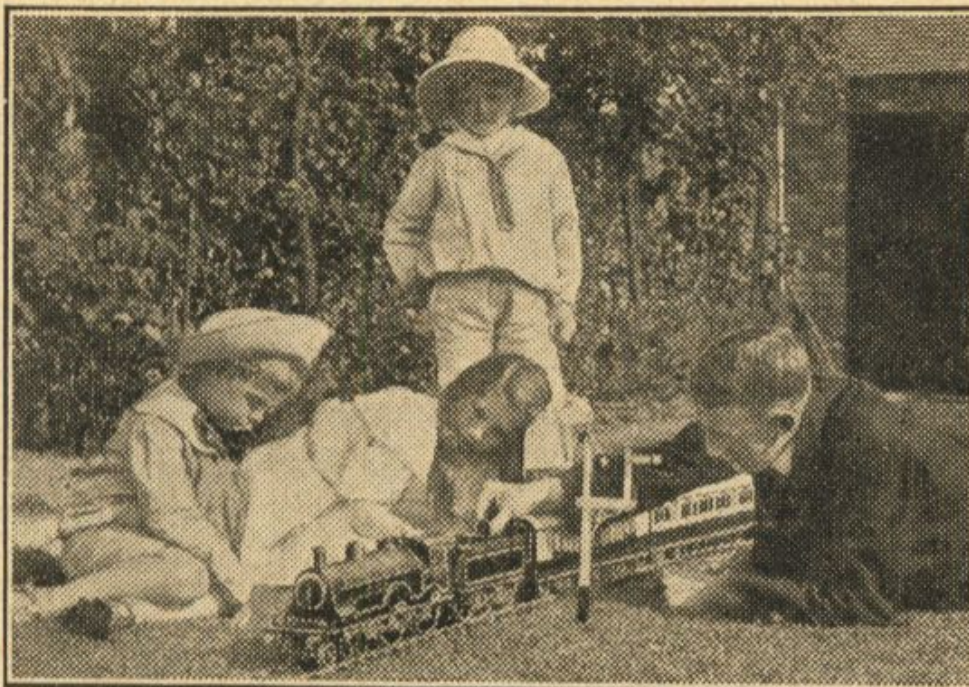
Except in the case of the more expensive models, most engines are externally fired by means of a spirit lamp. The spirit lamp is

usually proportioned so that it will remain alight for a shorter time than the charge of water in the boiler lasts; by this means there is no danger of burning the boiler. This gets over the chief difficulty and removes the great element of danger which may be feared by many would-be model engine owners.

#### How to Treat a New Engine.

On receiving a new model steam locomotive, the young enthusiast will be anxious to get it working at once. If the following points are carefully attended to, in the order given, there is no fear of the first run proving a disappoint-

ment. (1) Dust all parts free from any of the fibre used for packing, and shut all cocks and taps. Push the reversing-lever into forward gear. If this latter cannot be otherwise identified, run the engine along the track with starting



An Early Lesson in Engineering.

valve open, and then open the whistle.

If it blows when the engine is pushed backward, then the locomotive is in forward gear, and vice versa.

The reversing lever should be placed fully one way or the other previous to this test, and the starting valve should be open.

(2) All movable parts, such as bearings, piston-rods, and coupling-rod joints, eccentrics, and axle-bearings of engine and tender, should be carefully oiled. The oiling of valves and cylinders is also most important.

(3) The next thing is the filling of the boiler. Where the water is chalky or inclined to be



hard, boiled or distilled water is recommended, or filtered rain-water.

Remove the safety-valve (which also acts as the boiler-filler) and fill it two-thirds with water. Do not move the locomotive after the boiler has been filled, or the water may be drawn into the cylinders. Test the safety-valve before replacing it.

(4) Remove the spirit-lamp from the engine, unscrew the filling-plug and fill the lamp nearly

full. Insert the measure of spirit which is stated [in the instructions as the correct quantity and light up.

(5) The whistle should now be opened, and will give warning when steam has begun to generate. This may then be closed and the steam cock opened, the locomotive being then pushed gently along the rails to clear the condensation from the cylinders.

(6) The speed and steam pressure of the engines can be varied by the height of the wicks in the lamp. These should be regulated to suit the load and curves.

(7) When the spirit lamp has burned out, the boiler should be refilled, and the same routine followed before the engine is worked again. The lamp wicks will require to be renewed at intervals.

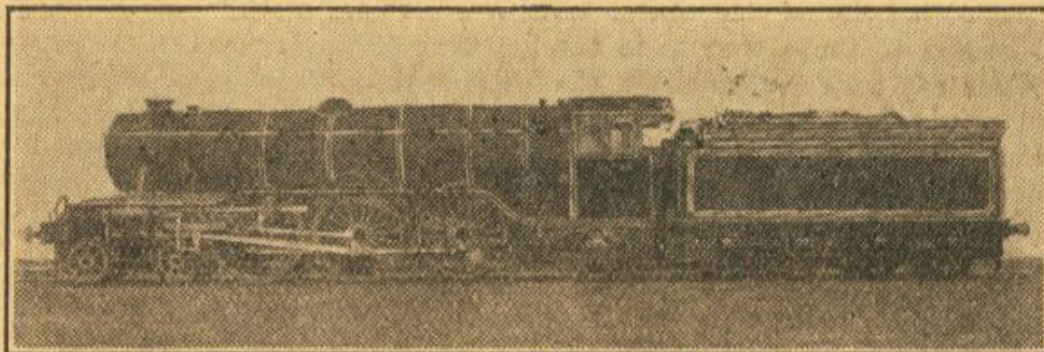
#### Some Important Precautions.

The boiler must not be filled more than two-thirds with water.

The flame of the lamp must not be too large or too much steam will be generated and the paint spoiled.

The safety-valve should be examined carefully from time to time to see that the washers have not stuck, as already recommended.

The locomotive must always be kept clean and free from dust.



A Famous "Pacific" type Express Locomotive, and—

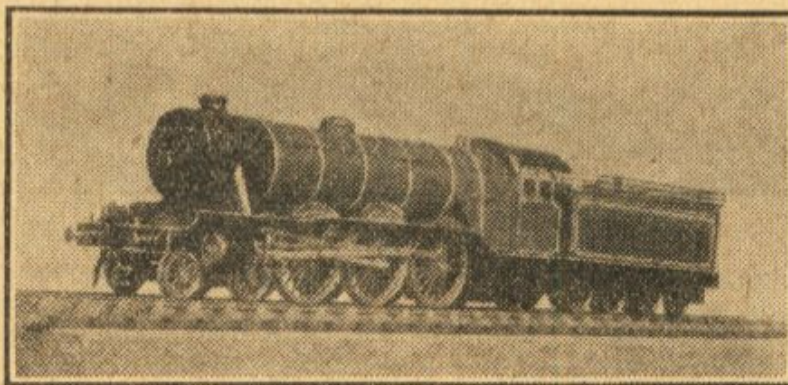
The whistle may always be used to relieve the boiler of any excess of steam, and also when the

locomotive is standing still at stations, etc.

Careful attention to the practical points enumerated above should ensure to the young owner complete success with his model locomotive from the very beginning.

#### Choice of Models.

A wide choice of model engines, both clock-work and steam, is now available. The more elaborate scale models are naturally expensive, but well-made working models can be purchased from half a guinea upwards. The miniature clockwork set shown in our heading-picture on page 25 costs even less

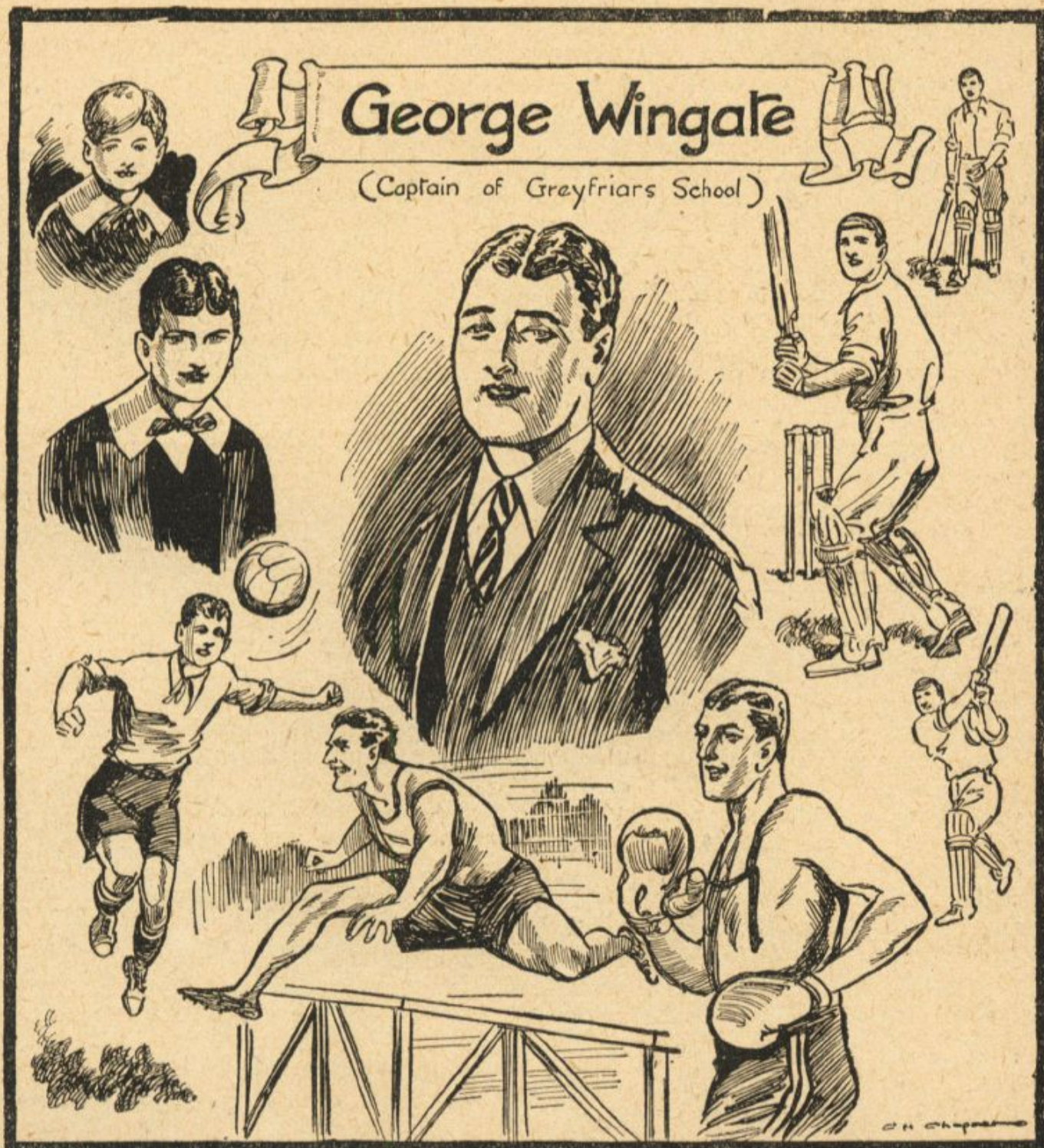
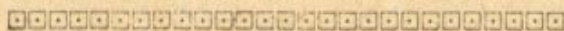


—a Bassett-Lowke model of the same engine, on a scale of  $\frac{1}{2}$ -in. to the foot. It is a perfect working reproduction of the original

than that, complete with engine, three coaches, and rails. This novel little set was designed by Mr. W. J. Bassett-Lowke as a Table Railway, in a gauge somewhat smaller than the No. 0  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch standard gauge, and it will solve the problem for many young enthusiasts who wish to start a model railway on the smallest possible outlay.



# The Idol of the School!



George Wingate, seen above in nine poses, is without exception the most popular fellow at Greyfriars. A great skipper, and a splendid all-round sportsman, he possesses the happy knack of being able to maintain discipline while preserving good feeling throughout the school.





# The TENDERFOOT'S TRIUMPH!

By Gordon Wallace.

A Splendid Story of the West, Showing How an English Lad Proved His Mettle

*Illustrated by Ernest Ibbetson*

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

### Fun for the Cowpunchers!

“LET 'er go, Jimmy! Hang on! What are your teeth for? Wow! Whoop-oe! Gosh! He's off again!”

The compound of the Lazy B Ranch was lively just at that moment. Seven of the toughest cowpunchers it would be possible to assemble in the whole length and breadth of Wyoming were having a little relaxation, were indulging in a little of the sport that will never pall on cowpunchers as long as there are cows left to punch.

Or, in other words, they were “roasting” their pet tenderfoot, these “boys” of the Lazy B. Not every ranch was lucky enough to have a tenderfoot to haze. But the Lazy B had one. And he was amusing them now by trying to stick on to a horse that certainly was well-known as a bad case. Or, rather, he had been trying to stick on. It was no use trying now; for Jimmy Deane had been shot right out of the saddle, and was just now sprawling on hands and knees, face dark with rage, teeth gritting together with mortification.

“Who told ye to dismount?” grinned old Dan Fritch, the foreman of the Lazy B.

“Oh, go to Putney!” snapped Jimmy

Deane, coming to his feet and examining his hands, which had been scratched considerably in his fall from the broncho that had so neatly bucked him off.

“Don't be riled, son,” jeered Slick Spicer, a cowpuncher of not much more than Jimmy's age. “Guess ye ought to be glad to keep seven punchers from dying of ongwyl Gee! What 'ud we do without our tenderfoot to amuse us? Likin' the country any better, Jimmy?”

Deane clenched his fists, and strode up to this tall, lanky young puncher.

“I hate your beastly country!” he said. Those who heard him laughed, for had not Jimmy Deane said he hated the Wild West on an average once a day since arriving here at the Lazy B? “And when I see bounders like you grinning, it makes me hate the people that are in it, too!”

He gazed challengingly at Slick Spicer as he spoke.

“Gosh! I believe the kid wants to fight Slick!” the foreman exclaimed. “Say, this won't do! Can't have no bad blood here on this yer ranch. Say, kid, quit that!”

“I've got to give somebody a hiding, just to ease my feelings,” said Jimmy fiercely. “You've had your bit of fun out of me, and



I'm going to get a bit out of some of you in exchange!"

But Slick Spicer evidently did not like the idea of standing up to this angry-eyed young Britisher. He took a backwards step, pulled out his gun, and fingered the chamber of it.

"With guns, if you like!" he said. "Guess I ain't no great hand with my fists. Worst of you blessed Britishers is——"

"All right, then," said Jimmy; and, ignoring the gun held by his tormentor, walked up to Slick and gave him a light, open-handed blow on the cheek. "Now will you fight? I'm sick of you, like I'm sick of this beastly country."

Slick's face was twisted with rage now. He advanced on the tenderfoot until the muzzle of his revolver was digging into Jimmy Deane's ribs. Deane looked him right in the eye and laughed at him.

"Oh, go ahead with it!" he said. "Just like they do on the pictures! You and your

beastly gun! Blaze away—you windbag! That's about the only thing out here that is thorough—the bluff of you cowpunching bounders, who couldn't——"

"Take him away!" shouted Slick Spicer, fairly dancing with rage now. "Take him away before I hurt him. Ye knows what a rale bad man I am when I'm roused!"

"Bah!" said Jimmy; and shot out a hand with the speed of light, seized Slick's wrist, and gave it an upwards jerk.

The revolver, its trigger pressed quite involuntarily by its owner, exploded noisily. Another twist Jimmy gave, and the gun dropped to the ground. The tenderfoot kicked it well away. Then he gave Slick a thrust that sent him staggering.

"You've had all your own way with me up to now," said Jimmy, and rolled up his shirt-sleeves. "Just because I was green at everything you could do. I've tried to ride your screws of horses. I've mucked out your stables and corrals for you. I've taken all your



Jimmy Deane, the tenderfoot, was amusing the boys of the Lazy B Ranch by trying to stick on a horse that was well known as a bad case. (See previous page.)



funny remarks. Now you're going to take something from me—something that I can do pretty well—or they used to say so!”

And he sprang forward. Lightly enough, he struck Slick Spicer on the face. Several times he struck the lanky cowpuncher, who, at first, covered himself up and shouted protests. Then, when Slick seemed to realise that this worm had turned in grim earnest, he cast a beseeching glance about him at his interested comrades, and tried to put up some sort of a fight.

It was a poor fight, though. A man who has been practically born with a six-shooter in his hand, who has spent all his life practising speed on the draw, and has never thought about defending himself by other means than his gun, is generally at a loss when unexpectedly deprived of his weapon and set face to face with a fellow who has a more natural means of offence, that he can use with skill.

The six who watched this affair muttered amongst themselves. Twice old Dan, the foreman, stepped towards the fighting pair, as though to stop them. And, after his second attempt, Jimmy deliberately struck this over-smart young puncher a blow in the face that sent him thudding to the ground, then, while Slick was blinking up skywards, turned and addressed the others.

“Fine sports, aren't you?” he asked. “Would you want to butt in if I'd agreed to fight this bounder with guns! I don't think you would! Well, you let me alone here. I'll go through the whole mob of you when I've finished this one!”

Slick Spicer, if a very unskilful fist-fighter, was not lacking in pluck, it seemed, for he brought himself to his feet and rushed at the tenderfoot, head low, fists flying. Remorselessly, Jimmy hit him again and sent him to earth a second time. Nor could Slick bring one of his fists within a foot of Jimmy's face or body.

At length, just as there came to the ears of the murmuring spectators the sound of horses' feet and the rattling of a buggy's wheels, Jimmy felled Slick a third time; and that was enough for the cowpuncher, who, a thoroughly beaten man, came rockily to his feet and

moved off over towards the bunkhouse and the water-pail.

“Now,” said Jimmy, breathing hard, but advancing, bright-eyed, on Pieface Walters, whose fingers also itched towards his gun. “I think I'll teach you next!”

“Hallo, there!” came the hail from a buggy that had just pulled up in the compound, “What's all the trouble?” And Frank Cooper, the wealthy young owner of the Lazy B Ranch, alighted and walked on the scene. “Scrapping, eh?”

“Yes,” said Jimmy fiercely. “I've just licked one of 'em, and I'm going through the whole lot, if they don't stop playing the fool with me.”

“Gosh!” murmured Cooper. “He's wakened up, I do declare.”

“Wakened up?” repeated Jimmy. “Yes, I suppose you're right, sir. I have. Been asleep too long. I hate this blinking country, and the last five months here didn't make me like it any better, but——”

“Arizona!” called Cooper; and a man who had ridden with him in the buggy came strolling over towards the party.

Jimmy Deane was still angry, still thought he had a lot of things to get off his chest. But he could not help staring in amazement, yet with considerable admiration, at the man Cooper had addressed as “Arizona.”

Here was a tall, athletic man of some thirty-five years of age, probably one of the best known men in that Wild Western State since the time when Buffalo Bill had been famous. He was as handsome as a god, with a finely chiselled face, a tiny, clipped moustache, and hair rather long and wavy. His dress was picturesque—almost stagey. His jacket was short, like an English schoolboy's Eton coat. He wore riding-breeches that would have made many a British hunting gentleman groan with envy, and polo-boots that were beautifully polished. His shirt was scarlet, of silk, and contrasted well with the black velvet of his coat. He wore a Stetson on his head, that had a gaudy scarf around it instead of the snake-skin band usually affected. And last but not least striking, he carried a monocle in his left eye.



"Well, Frank" asked Arizona Jim Carton, nodding to those cowpunchers present whom he knew, "wanting me?"

"Our tenderfoot's wakened up, Arizona," said Cooper, laying a hand on Jimmy Deane's shoulder. "Wasn't I saying that he needed to shake off the sulks he was living in?"

"Can't recollect," said Arizona Jim, and flashed a real heart-warming smile in Jimmy's direction.

And at once Jimmy's heart went out to this man, of whom he had heard a great deal during the months he had worked here as a tenderfoot on the Lazy B. Arizona Jim was an Indian agent—but he was more than that. Some said he had some connection with the American Secret Service as well. But he was perhaps best known of all as a helper of lame dogs over stiles. Nor did he always keep strictly within the law in his doings—if human justice could be served by his running counter to certain unscrupulous sheriffs and judges.

This man held out a hand to Jimmy, who shook it, and felt a little thrill as the Indian agent's slim, brown fingers closed over his own work-damaged hand.

"Best be honest, I suppose," Arizona said to the rancher, "and let this man know we were talking about him. I'm glad you have wakened up, lad. You've been having a thin time here, by all accounts. Well, now you are awake, stay so. You'll like this country much better than you did. And it's not a bad place."

He looked about him. Well to the west were to be seen the towering hills, some of them snow-capped, with the brilliant sunshine gleaming upon them. And nearer to them than the hills were the rolling plains, that were well dotted with cattle. And this ranch itself was picturesque enough, with its low-built house, its bunkhouse, cookhouse, barn, corrals, and windmills. Really, a healthy, adventure-loving youngster ought to have loved everything he could see here.

Dan Fritch, the foreman, muttered something to his underlings, and they all shuffled away towards the bunkhouse.

And just then Chop Suey, the Chinese cook, banged on the three feet of railroad iron that constituted the ranch's dinner-gong.

"Just a minute, Jimmy," said Frank Cooper, as Jimmy also turned to obey the dinner summons. "I want to know something about this row you seem to have been having. Come along inside."

Jimmy shrugged his shoulders; but he obeyed his boss, and entered the big ranch kitchen.

"What happened?"

asked Cooper, when they were inside.

But, with the steely blue eyes of Arizona fixed upon him, Jimmy felt some hesitation. His childish anger had departed now. Something about this Indian agent seemed to tranquillise him. There was nothing childish about Arizona Jim. He did not look as though he would throw himself easily into some puerile passion; though he looked a man who could be coldly angry when necessary; and then he would be a remarkably dangerous man.



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Jimmy shot out a hand, seized Slick's wrist, and gave it an upward jerk. The pistol exploded noisily. (See Chapter 1)



"Oh, it was nothing," he said. "I got a bit sicker of this country."

"Why are you sick of the West, lad?" asked Arizona Jim. "Most young Britishers I know out here love it. Aren't they treating you decently here?"

"Decently enough," said Jimmy. He glanced over towards his boss, who was eyeing him with a little grin. "As decently as my uncle wants them to," he added in a sudden burst of confidence.

Then, almost before he knew it, he was unburdening his soul to this wonderful, magnetic man. Nor did he care that Cooper was listening to all he said. For the first time in five months the tenderfoot had met a man whom he instinctively knew was a friend. In those five months he had not told a soul that which was eating his heart out—yet within ten minutes of meeting Arizona Jim Carton, he was letting everything out, knowing it was all falling into sympathetic ears. Why was he out here at all? Why was he sick of the country? He told Arizona Jim everything.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### Arizona's Bet!

**J**UST because I made a bit of an ass of myself at home. Got expelled from a public school," he said. "And an uncle—I haven't got another relation in the world—was so fed up that he sent me out here to Cooper, to be put through the mill a bit, to get the nonsense knocked out of me. Harsh old bird, my uncle Ben! And the worst of it was, he told Cooper here all about me, and Cooper must have passed it on to the men. They've chipped me without mercy ever since I came. And they've tried all their hazing stunts on me, thinking they'll make a man of me, I suppose. But they're only making a savage of me. Making me hate the country worse than ever. Wouldn't you hate it, if you were compelled to stay out here for six months, just to be chastened, as Uncle Ben put it? Thank goodness, though, I've only got another month of it, and then I'm going back home."

"Oh, and why?" asked Arizona Jim.

"Because I was sent here for six months, and if I managed to stick on this ranch so

long, without quitting of my own accord, my uncle was to send me cash and let me get back home."

"And what'll you do there?" asked Arizona Jim.

"Oh, anything; but no more stable-cleaning, no more water-carrying and wood-splitting for a Chink," said Jimmy, getting angry again. "And I'll bet I'm not a bit chastened."

Arizona Jim turned on Cooper, who was biting his lips and frowning a little now. Evidently Arizona and this wealthy young rancher were intimate. Anyway, Arizona spoke bluntly enough to him.

"You've made a mistake, Frank," he said coolly. "You haven't given the lad a chance. You've nearly spoilt him."

"How?" asked Frank Cooper, starting.

"Give the man a horse to ride; let him go out on the range at a man's job. Let him get into the swing of life out here in Wyoming," said Arizona Jim. "Don't keep him cooped up here choring about for Chop Suey! Fancy making a white lad fag for a Chinaman! Man, man, if you think that's how to chasten a high-spirited lad, you're all wrong. By gosh! Why, life like that would sicken me of any land!"

"I—I—but," stammered Frank Cooper, "old Mostyn, this fellow's uncle—who was a pal of my father's—wanted the nonsense knocked out of him. And I got the boys to help me."

"Bah, my dear fellow!" said Arizona Jim. "You're all wrong! I wouldn't give you much to educate a son of mine. Why, your boys should be giving him the chance to show what he's made of. Anyhow, I'm glad to see Jimmy turned to-day and showed them that, though he may be green at some things, he's no slacker with his fists. Maybe that'll make the boys respect him more."

"Don't care whether they respect me or what they think of me. I'll be out of here in another month," said the tenderfoot. "And I'll not look back on Wyoming with any affection."

Arizona Jim skewered the lad with his keen gaze. He laid a hand on Jimmy's shoulder.





As Jimmy watched, the five men seized a steer and, despite its bawlings, threw it to the ground. "Branding!" muttered Jimmy. (See Chapter 3)

"Supposing I give you a chance?" he asked. "A chance, I mean, to waken up a bit more? You don't know yet what is going on in these hills, my lad. You haven't got the love for adventure into your blood, just because you've been made a drudge by mistake. Suppose I make you so that you'll not want to go back to England at the end of your six months' penance here?"

Jimmy laughed jerkily at that. For five months he had been looking forward to but one thing—to get back away from this crude country that he hated so thoroughly; to get back to England, where, anyway, if they did despise a fellow, they were usually too polite to tell him so to his face. Here men pretty well carried their hearts on their sleeves, and nobody had made any secret of the contempt they felt for this sulky tenderfoot.

"The age of miracles is past," he said.

"We're living in that age right now," retorted the Indian agent. "I'll bet you—

what shall I bet you?—that, once you've had a touch of real adventure, you'll look at life out here from an entirely different angle. Now, what shall we bet? Put yourself into my hands and I'll make a Wyoming lover of you before the month's out."

"Can't understand why you're so interested in a tenderfoot," muttered Jimmy.

He glanced at his employer, who was rubbing his clean-shaven chin thoughtfully. Plainly, Cooper was interested in Arizona's words.

"I'm interested in you because you're a youngster from England," said the Indian agent. "All up and down this State I know Britishers who're about the best sportsmen I ever met. And I don't want to meet one who—well, who lies down to things. Bad for England, isn't it? Englishmen—Britons—have the reputation of being able to shake down anywhere, mostly in less than six months. So shall we have a bet?"



Jimmy was flushed in the face now. Perhaps, he thought, he had let what he imagined to be his grudge against fate overcome him. On the other hand, he would not dispute the fact that they hadn't given him a chance to like this Wild West since his arrival. The plans of his associates all seemed to have been with another view—that of sickening him of the country.

"But I'll bet you'll never make me want to stay out here," he said. "Anyway, even if you get used to the life, it's only hard work and no prospects."

"Can you ride decently?" asked Arizona Jim.

"Can't stay long on a buckler," said Jimmy. "But I can ride an ordinary, decently behaved horse well enough, though they've never let me mount anything but an outlaw since I came here."

And again Arizona Jim glanced with disapproval at Cooper.

"I've got what is reputed to be the best horse in the West," said he. "It was given me by another Britisher—a fellow I helped called Bob Raynor. The mare's called Cleopatra. I'll bet you that horse against anything you care to risk that I'll have you make a complete change of heart before another month's gone—or else I'll know you're not worth my interest."

"If you're right," said Jimmy, "I'll work for another six months for Cooper here, without any wages. Is that the deal? I'm to be a confirmed Westerner before another month's out. If I'm not, I'm to have a horse that I sha'n't need, because I can't take it home with me. That's a funny bet."

"I'm not going to lose Cleopatra," said Arizona Jim, with a laugh. He turned to Cooper. "And when, did you say, is your kiddie coming up to the Lazy B?"

"In about three weeks' time," said Cooper. "Poor Elsie! Since her mother died, last year, she's been lonesome enough, though I did think she'd be better with an aunt down at Cheyenne than up here, with no companions. Five years old she'll be in a fortnight, and her birthday's to be the day she arrives here. She's pining down there in Cheyenne. She'll be better, I think, after all, up here amongst us menfolks. But what——"

"Say," said Arizona Jim, interrupting, "will you lend this tenderfoot of yours to me for a while?"

"Well, I was thinking," said Cooper, "of detailing a horse to him and letting him ride the range a bit for a change. I see now I have been keeping him cooped up——"

"I want him to help me in a job I've got," said Arizona Jim; and smiled in the way no man could resist.

"Oh, all right," said Cooper gruffly. "He might as well have a good time the last few weeks he's out here."

"The next few weeks are going to be the first weeks of real Western life he's ever had," said Arizona Jim. "You don't know how to train a tenderfoot, Frank."

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

#### Underhand Work!

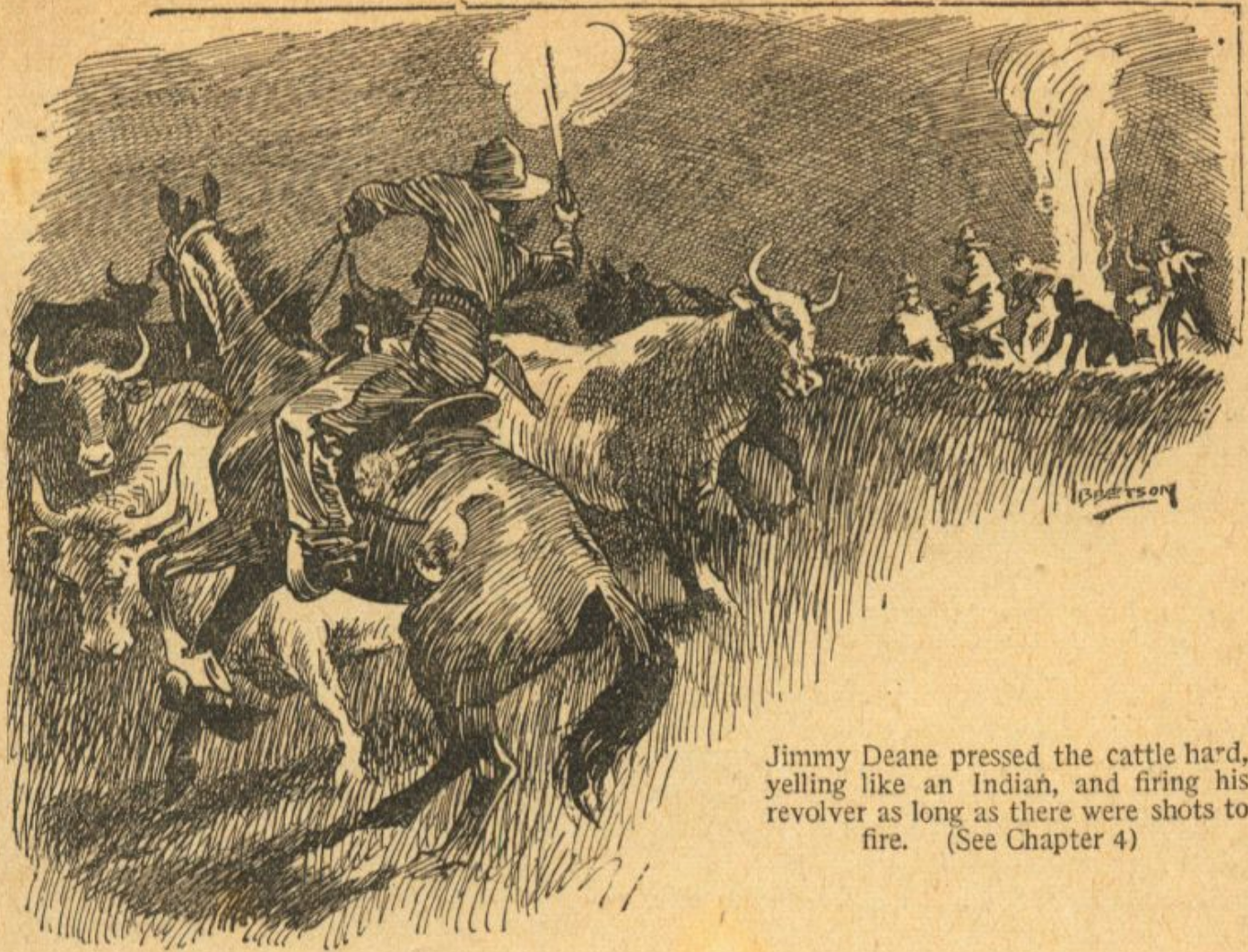
"STILL sick of this country?" asked Arizona Jim, rubbing his monocle against his flowing necktie.

"Yes," grinned Jimmy Deane. "Sick to death of it."

But he did not mean it. This was a different Jimmy Deane from the drudge that the boys of the Lazy B Ranch had loved so much to haze and bulldoze. Even though less than a fortnight had elapsed since Arizona Jim had taken the sullen tenderfoot in hand, there had come about a great change in the lad who had been sent out here to be chastened by an uncle with wrong ideas.

For the slouch had gone out of Jimmy's shoulders; the scowl had left his brow. There was a clear, far-seeing look in his eyes now, a tan on his cheeks that he had not been able to collect whilst working in the ranch compound or the cookhouse. And there was an air of confidence about the way in which he handled the mettlesome horse that he bestrode—one of Cooper's best saddlers. For certainly Arizona Jim's words had served to make Frank Cooper feel more than a little ashamed of himself, with the result that Frank now was a well-mounted fellow, and had proved he could be trusted with a good horse, even though he was no good at "forking" outlaws that nobody would ever want to ride as a regular thing. On these Western ranches





Jimmy Deane pressed the cattle hard, yelling like an Indian, and firing his revolver as long as there were shots to fire. (See Chapter 4)

they often keep an intractable horse for the purpose of mounting tenderfeet upon them and getting a little amusement. But a man who can break a buckjumper is not always the best man to put astride a well-broken, well-bred animal; and, vice versa, the best rider of a good horse is not always the broncho-buster.

"Fed up to the teeth with it," grinned Jimmy Deane. "My hat, if the other Britishers you speak about went about with you for a bit, I'm not surprised that they got to like this country. I've never had such a time in my life as I've had these last ten days."

He was right there. Adventure had been his every day during the time he had roamed the hills and plains in company with this lion-hearted Indian agent. Each day had seen some event that, to Jimmy Deane, spelt pure adventure, though to the ordinary fellow living the life there it might have been but

everyday happening. For life in the Wild West is not tame at any time.

Affairs with sulky Indians in their reservations; clashes with bumptious and unscrupulous sheriffs; meetings with shady characters whom it was not Arizona's job to arrest—they had all come Jimmy Deane's way. And his appetite for incident was now thoroughly whetted. In these days Jimmy had learned more about the real West than he had imagined he could learn in the previous five months.

Arizona Jim was a scout such as, perhaps, even Buffalo Bill could not have beaten. His eyes were the eyes of a hawk. Once or twice he had shown how quick he could be on the draw—though he was no gun-man. And, further, he had taught Jimmy something about gunmanship; and now Jimmy and a six-chambered Colt were never separated from each other.





Jimmy hurled his empty gun full at the rustler's head, sending him headlong from the saddle. (See Chapter 4)

"I'm not going to lose the old girl," said Arizona Jim, stroking the glossy neck of the beautiful bay mare he was riding. "That's why I bet her, because I know you'd soon get the love of Western life in your blood. Now, lad, do you want a job?"

He halted his horse at the beginning of a sharp declivity in the ground and pointed downwards. Below them was a ravine with steeply sloping sides. Down the slopes small fir-trees grew. But in amongst the trees, near the bottom, they could see several men and horses.

"Anything to do?" asked Jimmy, using his eyes.

"May be something," said Arizona. "Smell anything?"

"Smells like something burning," said Jimmy.

"Something is burning," said Arizona Jim. "None of my business, I know—but what are men branding cattle for this time of the year? There's no round-up on."

"That's so," said Jimmy; and he peered harder, until he was able to recognise one of the men working down below. "That's Pieface Walters of the Lazy B working down there," he said.

"Go down and see what they're doing," said Arizona Jim, chuckling, "but don't

get Pieface Walters annoyed. He's a hot-tempered man, isn't he?"

"He would have been the second man I'd have licked if you hadn't come along in time to save him," smiled Jimmy. "One of the cleverest of the Lazy B bunch. Want me to go down alone?"

"Yes, why not?" asked Arizona Jim. "You've got to learn to use your wits a bit, if you're going to stay out here."

Jimmy grinned. He hadn't yet decided that he was going to stick it out in Wyoming, though certainly he was looking at the life from another angle now, as Arizona Jim had prophesied. But the truth was he enjoyed doing things for the Indian agent.

He drove his horse down the steep slope, picking his way carefully amongst the trees. His animal made some slight noise in going through the underbush; but he was not seen by the five men who were working about a little wood fire. As he got nearer the stench of singed hair and flesh grew very pungent.

He halted his horse for a moment and watched these men as one of them went around a corner made by a hillock of land, and returned a few moments later with a rope in his hands, the other end of the rope being attached to an unwilling yearling steer.

As he watched, the five other men seized this steer and, despite its bawlings, threw it to the ground. Then Pieface Walters, who had been working with sundry irons in the little fire, took from the embers a white-hot branding iron and dabbed it on the flank of the struggling steer. There was a heart-rending roar from the animal. The stench was increased, but the steer was allowed to get to its feet and was led off again by the man who had fetched it to the fire.

Another steer was treated the same way as Jimmy, unobserved, looked on. He could not understand it. He wrinkled his brow, trying to think it out, for he knew this was not the branding season. When the third stocker was brought, protesting, up to the branding fire, he disclosed himself.



They all looked up with a start when he rode on the scene, and one or two put hands to guns. Probably they would have drawn their weapons, only Pieface Walters gave a laugh.

"'Sall right, boys, it's only our pet tender-foot," he said. "I guess he's gettin' used to the saddle, and has stumbled on to us by accident."

"But we're brandin'," said one of Pieface's companions, and he scowled at the tender-foot, who was still trying to make out what the game of these men was. That it was a dishonest one he was more than convinced now.

"You see," drawled the lad at length, "I'm learning how to be a cowboy. Why, that's a Lazy B steer, isn't it?"

He pointed to a very clear brand burnt on the haunch of the animal. "Surely it's clear enough, isn't it, without renewing it?"

The five looked at each other quickly. Then Pieface Walters spoke. He looked angry. And he thought he was still addressing the drudge of Lazy B Ranch.

"Beat it!" he said roughly. "When you know more about a cowpuncher's job ye'll understand more. Git!"

He waved a red-hot branding-iron threateningly into Jimmy's face. Jimmy drew his horse back a foot or two, to avoid getting his hair and eyebrows singed.

The end of the iron came very close—so close that he saw one thing distinctly. This branding iron, when it was stamped upon the hide of an animal, would certainly not make a "B" lying on its side—the Lazy B. It would, instead, make a circle of almost four inches in diameter. And Jimmy was not such a fool as many thought him. He knew that the "B" they stamped on Cooper's cattle was just about three inches long.

"Brand-blotting, are they?" he thought.

But he did not shout out to the others all he knew.

"Beat it!" said Pieface, and whipped his gun out.

Jimmy turned his horse obediently, and set it up the slope again. At the top he met Arizona Jim again.

"Did you know what they were doing down there, Arizona?" he asked, eyeing his Indian agent friend curiously.

"It's my job to know a lot of things," said Arizona Jim, with a little laugh. "Some sheriffs would give their ears to know what I find out. And what crooked work are they up to down there?"

Jimmy told the Indian agent what he had seen and what he had concluded. And Arizona Jim nodded his head.

"Easy enough to change the Lazy B into a Circle B," he said. "It's an old stunt. But I didn't know the Circle B people were on the crooked game. Well, don't that give you an idea?"

"Several," Jimmy said. "I suppose I ought to tell Cooper——"

"Cowpunchers in this country," said Arizona Jim, "don't go telling their boss things till they can prove what they say. Any fool can go blabbing to his boss. But the real Westerner gets evidence. Now, have you got any ideas?"

"Yes," said Jimmy. "A good one. There's a lot of Lazy B steers down there."



"I want a lift!" said Jimmy. "I'm riding to the place where you dump the mail bags. Arizona Jim's orders!" "Hop up!" said Hank. "At once!" (See Chapter 5)



getting their brands altered. Looks to me as though the clever people at Cooper's ranch aren't quite so clever as they seem to think they are—and they're letting rustlers rob their boss."

"Not forgetting that they are harbouring in their midst as a cowpuncher one Pieface Walters, who is one of the rustlers," grinned Arizona Jim.

"Pieface Walters used to say nasty things to me," said Jimmy. "I guess I'll have to think out what to do."

"Then you're interested enough in the ranch to want to save Cooper's cattle?" asked Arizona Jim.

"Of course!" said Jimmy.

"Then you're getting to like the life," said Arizona Jim, with a merry laugh.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### One to the Tenderfoot

**A**RIZONA JIM had grown very quiet, very much lacking in ideas, it seemed. When Jimmy asked him for his advice, he gave it sparingly.

"As a matter of fact," said Arizona, "this is your stunt, and I want you to work it out yourself. Call me second-fiddle here."

"Dashed funny thing, if you knew that all this brand-blotting was going on, you didn't stop it by telling somebody!" said Jimmy.

"I did tell somebody," smiled the Indian agent. "I told you."

"And you expect me to stop it?" asked Jimmy.

"Sure, why not?" smiled Arizona Jim. "If you work this case out to a satisfactory conclusion, you'll feel so good that you'll begin to think you've got a place in the West, after all. So get your headpiece to work, lad."

"I'm going, first of all," said Jimmy, half-hesitantly, "to find out where they're collecting all the cattle whose brands they're blotting. Then I'm going to drive 'em off and back to the Lazy B Ranch. The newly burned circle around the old 'B' will prove that they've been tampered with."

"And Cooper 'll begin to realise that he wasted you when he kept you grubbing around Chop Suey's cookhouse," said Arizona.

"Point is, where to look for the place where

they're rounding up," said Jimmy. "By Jove, I've got it!"

And he turned his horse and led the way. Arizona Jim, chuckling to himself, followed him.

It was early evening now, two or three hours after Jimmy had caught Pieface Walters in the act of blotting his employer's brands. In those two hours Jimmy had talked about the brand-blotting business, and had found Arizona Jim sparse with ideas on the matter. Plainly the Indian agent was leaving everything to Jimmy, and thus was expanding the lad.

Straight back to the ravine where they had seen the blotting going on Jimmy led his Indian agent friend. Down into the ravine he rode. Now there was no sign of the gang of rustlers. There were only the dead ashes of the branding fire to be seen—and tracks. It was the tracks Jimmy looked for, and, once he had found them, discovered that they would be quite easy to follow, for they were the hoofprints in the grass and sand of over twenty head of cattle. He called up to Arizona Jim, who rode down to him.

"These tracks 'll lead us to where we want to go," he said with conviction; and closely followed the trail which led him for some distance down the ravine, then up on to the higher level of the plain.

And for several miles they rode, until all grew dark, and the tracks became hard to follow. But Jimmy's eyes had grown wonderfully quick and keen under the tuition of this extraordinary Indian agent. He found he could follow them without overmuch difficulty.

And presently they came to another deep ravine, and at the bottom of this they saw the gleam of another fire, about which men were lolling, while to their ears came the lowing of many cattle.

Now, undoubtedly, Jimmy Deane was all a-thrill with excitement and the lust for adventure.

"What's the plan?" asked Arizona Jim coolly.

"Rush 'em!" said Jimmy. "I'll stampede the cattle off. If those brutes follow us, we'll fight. They're only five to two!"





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THE ATTACK ON THE BITTER CREEK STAGE I  
A Thrilling Episode of the Adventurous West



"Fire-eater!" chuckled Arizona Jim. "What about getting out a sheriff's posse?"

"Come on!" muttered Jimmy, and, dismounting, carefully led his horse down the slope. Arizona Jim, chuckling, but taking care that his revolver was handy and loose in its holster, imitated him.

The lowing of the cattle and the talk of the men about the camp-fire made it so that these two adventurers were not heard before they got down to the lower level of the ravine. And it was so dark now that men within the circle

"Might as well do something startling," he said at length, and pulled out his revolver. He mounted again.

Three shots he blazed into the air, and, at the same time, yelled like a blood-mad Indian. He edged his horse up against the restless and lowing cattle.

"Gosh—what's——" came from the fire.

"Just you stay right there! I've got the drop on you!" came in the clear accents of Arizona Jim. Followed a shot, a shout of bitter pain. And then the cattle began to move off



The lad stood and lashed up the six stage horses furiously. The coach rocked and swayed and creaked, and all the time the passenger kept up a hot fire on the rustlers. (See Chapter 5)

of the firelight could see nothing much outside it. Jimmy purposely gave the fire a fairly wide berth, and edged around until he came close to the outer edge of a fair-sized herd of young steers. It was too dark to see how many were there, but he guessed they were a large number.

Arizona Jim stopped when within a few feet of the fire, and mounted his well-trained mare. But he made no move. He was leaving this job entirely to the lad he was set on making a Westerner of.

Jimmy dismounted, and scratched his chin, while Pieface Walters and his associates talked loudly about the camp-fire.

in a close-herded mass, with the excited Jimmy Deane pressing them hard, yelling horribly, firing his revolver as long as there were shots to fire, and conscious that there was a bit of a gun-fight going on behind him between Arizona Jim and the five rustlers.

He could not get the herd moving very quickly at first, though he used his quirt lustily, making the thong hiss on the broad backs of the young stock. But gradually they broke into a gallop. Straight down the ravine they went, Jimmy knowing that they were heading towards the Lazy B Ranch.

But he was not to get the cattle away unmolested, though Arizona Jim was doing nobly



on his behalf to keep the rustlers' attention engaged. One man broke away from the camp fire, found a horse, mounted it, and galloped hotly after Jimmy and the stampede he was striving so hard to set up. The man was Pieface Walters.

The first thing the excited Jimmy knew was that Walters, a gun in his hand, was firing at him from close quarters. Jimmy's hat went into the air after one shot. But the cattle were running well, and the lad, heedless of anything now, drew rein on his horse, and awaited the coming of the ugly-faced cowpuncher-rustler who had been trying to rob the boss of the Lazy B.

Pieface Walters, shouting lurid threats, dashed up to the lad, took aim deliberately at Jimmy, and fired. Like a flash the boy hurled himself out of the saddle; and thus, perhaps, saved his life by a hair's breadth. Pieface Walters, thinking no doubt that his shot had brought the boy to the ground, jerked his horse to a standstill. A moment later he dropped out of the saddle. For, almost without his thinking, Jimmy's empty gun was hurled straight at the rustler's head. It caught Pie-face Walters squarely in the forehead. His horse galloped on without him.

Now the cattle were well ahead. Jimmy caught his well-trained horse, mounted again, and dashed after them.

At the end of a mile or so, the ravine ended naturally, and the little stampede carried on on level ground. And then Jimmy showed that he was something of a natural cowpuncher, for the way he kept those seventy-odd beasts together and moving ought to have fetched words of praise from anybody, had he been seen. But there was nobody near to see him. Where Arizona Jim was, he did not know. Nor did he stop to find out. His job was to get these stolen cattle out of the hands of the men who had stolen them and blotted their brands.

The Lazy B Ranch was seven miles from the spot where they had been herded. And Jimmy knew instinctively the direction in which to go. Nor, at the pace the stampede was travelling, did he take long about getting to his destination. Less than an hour after he had made his bold attempt he came within sight of the ranch buildings.

Straight into the compound he drove the cattle, yelling wildly. He milled them around the somewhat narrow limits of the compound, while several men emerged from the boys' bunkhouse. And Cooper himself came out of the house.

"What have ye got hyar?" asked Dan Fritch, the foreman.

"A bunch of cattle that were pinched," shouted Jimmy. "Clever guys you are, aren't you? While you're loafing about and sleeping here, you let your cattle get lifted, and their brands blotted. You need a tenderfoot, after all, to look after your job!"

A little vainglorious, perhaps, that remark. But then, Jimmy Deane was excited.

While the punchers and their boss examined the altered brands on these cattle, Arizona Jim, safe and sound, as cool and debonair as ever, rode into the compound. But he was alone.

"Gosh!" exclaimed Cooper, when he understood everything. "And I was for keeping the lad penned up in the cookhouse! Who're the rustlers?"

"'Red' Figgins' gang," said Arizona Jim. "They made a fight for it—but we managed to get away from 'em. We didn't arrest any, though."

"Well, I've got to say," said Cooper, "that this tenderfoot certainly is wakening up some. Do you mean to say he did it all himself?"

"All that mattered," said Arizona Jim, rubbing his monocle. "You have a smarter fellow here than any of you think—and you're going to lose him, if he don't decide to stay out West here after his six months are up."

Dan Fritch and his underlings eyed the tenderfoot in some chagrin. For Jimmy's scornful words had had a sting in them. He had made them feel very cheap and foolish. And if Jimmy did gloat about it, perhaps, as he was only a tenderfoot, he was not to be blamed overmuch.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### Jimmy's Triumph!

"YOU'RE due back home very soon now, aren't you?" quizzed Arizona Jim, eyeing the lad who rode by his side, about a week after the





Yelling like an excited Indian, Jimmy drove the stage straight into the compound at the Lazy B Ranch. (See Chapter 5)

stolen cattle episode. "Smatter of fact, I wouldn't wonder that this mail coach that's coming along had a letter from your uncle aboard, containing a draft to pay your passage home."

It was true that Jimmy's six months' penance were served, that he was due to go back home again. It was also true that he was almost daily expecting a preaching letter from Uncle Ben, with, however, a draft in it that he would be able to use as he wished—enough to take him back to England by first-class and saloon.

And it was also true that Jimmy of late had felt strange tuggings at his heart. For he now did not know what he would do when he got that draft. Of course, he was still sick of Wyoming and the rough life of a cowboy. And the prospect of going home again—even though he had nothing to do when he got there—had its attractions.

To be sure, there was fun to be had, after all, out here. And it certainly did him good

to see the change of mind his fellow-punchers at the Lazy B seemed to have had about him since he had been the cause of returning a large number of Cooper's steers to their owner. But— He looked at Arizona Jim, and decided that one of the finest experiences he had had out West had been getting to know this splendid chap.

"I'll tell you when I see the colour of my uncle's money whether I'm going to win your horse or work for Cooper for six months for nothing," he grinned. "But I can't understand why you want me to stop this coach and board it. Let me see, isn't Cooper expecting his kiddie to come up on it?"

"In charge of a half-breed nurse, yes," said Arizona Jim; and eyed his young companion covertly. "Do you know, that's why I want you to be a passenger on that coach for a stage."

"You're a mysterious chap," said Jimmy. "Never can quite make you out, you know. Never understood why you never tried to get





Arizona Jim rode up to the Lazy B Ranch covering two men, with handkerchiefs still tied over the lower halves of their faces. (See Chapter 5)

those rustlers, Figgins' gang, rounded up after the cattle-rustling affair. And Pieface Walters—it shouldn't have been hard to trace him—although he never did come back to the ranch."

"I work on my own lines," said Arizona Jim. "I'm not a sheriff. Besides, I didn't want those fellows to get rounded up—yet. Well, there's the road the coach is coming along, Jimmy. I'll take your horse, and you stop the coach. And remember—whatever you do, keep your eyes skinned when you come to the pine bluff at Three Forks."

"Why?" asked Jimmy.

"And have your gun loaded and loose in the holster," said Arizona Jim. "I'm giving you credit for having a great deal of common-sense. Well, you'll need it. Ah, there's the coach."

Over to the north they could see a cloud of dust rising in the sun-soaked air, and they knew it for the weekly stage-coach that, driven by Hank Dawson, travelled from Bitter Creek northwards to Wind River township. This route for the coach passed within two miles of the Lazy B Ranch, and it was arranged as a rule for mail-bags and what not to be

dumped at the nearest point to that place, which was the top of a steep hill.

But why Arizona Jim should have warned Jimmy Deane to keep his eyes skinned at Three Forks the boy could not understand. And he knew his Indian agent friend well enough to know that it would be useless to ask further questions. When Arizona Jim wanted to be mysterious, he could be very much so.

Arizona, leading Jimmy's horse, rode away from the coach road, leaving Jimmy standing beside the trail. When the coach with its six actionful horses came abreast, Jimmy stepped out into the trail and hailed the driver.

Hank Dawson hauled back on the reins, then grinned when he recognised the tenderfoot. For Hank was a friend of the boys of the Lazy B Ranch, and he had learned a great deal about Jimmy's manner and dislike for this wild Western country.

"Wal, son," said Hank. "Still sick o' this—"

"What's wrong here?" A passenger thrust his head out from inside the coach. He looked like some prosperous miner or something like that. "Held up!"

"Guess nix," laughed Hank Dawson. "Just a tenderfoot wants to pass the time o' day. Some tenderfoot this is, too. Right sick o' the country he is, and—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Jimmy. "I want a lift. I'm riding to the place where you dump the Lazy B mailbags. Arizona Jim's orders," he added; and if Hank had wanted to demur at first, mention of that famous man's name caused him not to do so.

"Hop up, then," he said.

Jimmy climbed up and took a seat alongside Hank.

"We got Frank Cooper's kid and her nurse aboard, inside," said Hank conversationally as he gathered up his reins skilfully and flourished his long whip. "Guess ye been sent to meet the stage an' escort them to the ranch—nix?"



"Maybe," said Jimmy; and wondered just why Arizona Jim had ordered him to do this thing.

"Kid's a bit frettish, kind of," said Hank, and flicked the off-side leader on the ear. "She's had a rough journey, from Cheyenne, and the nurse says she ain't too strong. Been pinin' for her ma an' pa. Giddap, thar!"

For several miles the spanking team of stage-coach horses drew the jolting and creaking coach along that unsurfaced trail. Hank was a skilled driver, and the way he handled those animals compelled Jimmy to feel great admiration for him. For it did not seem to matter whether Hank were driving on the level, down the slope of a deep ravine, or up it on the other side, he kept these six nags well up to their bits constantly; well into their collars. Such driving takes years of training. Yet Jimmy once found himself wondering whether he would ever be so neat with the "ribbons," until, with a laugh, he realised that it was just a toss-up whether he stayed on here a bit longer or went back to England and the uncle who had sent him out here to be disciplined.

"Got the mail aboard, I suppose?" he asked Hank.

"Sure; and the postmaster at Bitter Creek said as how there was a letter with an English stamp for you," said Hank, who was an incurable gossip. "Nothin' valuable aboard, for which I'm right glad, as I've heard Figgins' gang's knocking about this county now."

A hundred yards ahead of them now was the place where Arizona Jim had told him to keep his eyes skinned, his gun ready. He felt to assure himself that the gun was ready.

Looking ahead, he saw a horseman suddenly ride out on to the trail. This man stood his nag right in the coach's track.

"Somebody else stoppin' us—for a lift, maybe," said Hank, and drew rein as soon as he came level with this horseman. Then he growled something bitter to himself, for he, as well as Jimmy Deane, saw the man had a light-coloured handkerchief so tied that it covered the lower part of his face, showing just his eyes. And the man had a gun in his hand.

"Here—giddap!" shouted Hank, to the horses.

But just then five more men, all disguised in the same manner, came out from the trees of the bluff, and each of these five men was armed. Every gun they had was presented at Hank and Jimmy, on the box of the coach.

"Hands right up" came the shout; and at once Hank crammed the reins of the six horses between his knees and held up his hands.

"What's the idea, boys?" asked Hank. "I ain't got nothin' worth takin' aboard to-day."

"Guess ye got Cooper's kid—and she's goin' to be worth somethin' to us," said a man, who appeared to be the leader of this hold-up party. "So you just don't move—and you, too, younster!"

Two guns now were levelled steadily at Hank and at Jimmy, who both held their hands well up. The male passenger inside the stage coach thrust his head out of the window, and also held up his hands.



"Let us forget the unpleasant things, Jimmy," said the rancher simply. "We've treated you rotten, but——" Jimmy shook hands solemnly all round. (See Chapter 5)



Four men rode to the side of the stage. One of them dismounted, and reached out a hand to open the door.

There was a scream inside; the half-breed nurse uttered it. It was followed by a whimper of fright from the child.

"This won't do!" muttered Jimmy; and thought he knew why Arizona Jim had made him take this ride. Arizona Jim had known that this hold-up was going to take place; he had the ability to find out many things that sheriffs and others would have loved to know. And Arizona Jim had put him aboard the coach as a sort of escort to the child of his boss! Or, so it struck Jimmy, who had an imagination that had been greatly developed during the few weeks he had been so close a companion of the Indian agent.

And that thought made him at once determined to justify the confidence his hero had in him. This hold-up gang should not succeed in their attempt.

He asked for death, perhaps, but he gave no thought to the possibility of it when, suddenly, he dropped one hand with the speed of light, and made his revolver leap into his hand. And he fired a shot almost before the gun had left the holster. Arizona Jim had trained him well at drawing quickly. And a man who was covering him and Hank Dawson dropped limply from the saddle. The other man took rapid aim and fired; but Jimmy took no notice of the stab of pain that caught him in the right ear. He fired again. The hold-up man's horse reared, plunged, and came to earth.

The screaming inside the coach increased. The other rustlers began to shout. But Jimmy took no notice of them. He deliberately thrust the muzzle of his revolver against the ear of Hank Dawson.

"Drive—like fury!" he yelled. "Hurry, now!"

"Gosh!" exclaimed Hank.

But he obeyed, picked up the reins, lashed the horses into a gallop, and the coach, with a jerk, started into motion. And it began to roll down a hill almost at once, though the horses went with taut traces.

For a moment the hold-up men were bewildered with the speed of it. They let the coach get some yards ahead of them before

they began to pursue it. By then the stage was rocking and swaying sickeningly, and Hank was standing up and lashing away at the horses in a manner that—for Jimmy's revolver stayed pressed against his ear—told that the youngster was quite serious in his demands for speed, also that Hank was respecting those demands.

"But they'll ketch us up, and——" Hank yelled.

"No, they won't," roared Jimmy; and turned backwards suddenly.

He fired two shots at the rustlers who were galloping in the rear of the stage. A horse went down. Then the male passenger inside, leaning out through the window, also lent his gun to the bombardment. Another man and horse went down. The remainder of the hold-up men fell back a little.

Jimmy heard a groan come from Hank. He saw the man slip down in his seat; Hank almost let go the reins. But, dropping his gun to the dashboard at his feet, Jimmy snatched them up. He was lucky enough to grab them all. He took the whip as well from the fiercely clenched hand of Hank. Then he put a foot on Hank's body to keep the driver from slipping off to the ground.

Furiously, the lad stood up and lashed those six stage horses. What he lacked in skill at driving he made up in the luck that was his that day. For the horses kept their feet. The coach swayed and rocked and creaked; and the man inside it kept up a smart fire on those men who followed—but now at some sort of a respectful distance. The mad excitement of it all got into Jimmy's blood so that he whooped and yelled like a madman as he drove that fear-inspired team forwards along the trail.

They came to the spot which was the nearest bit of this road to the Lazy B. Jimmy recognised it. And, in his triumph, he decided once again to cause a sensation at the place where they had tried to make a drudge of him.

He swung the team off to the left. He left the main trail and began to use a thinner, narrower buggy track that he knew would take him to the Lazy B.

And, seeing what the stage coach was doing, the hold-up men, properly foiled, abandoned the attempt. For they knew there were



several stern men at the end of that buggy trail.

"I've done it!" Jimmy yelled, still whipping away as he saw the roofs of the Lazy B buildings. "Giddap, there!"

"Gosh, yer some driver, boy!" shrieked Hank Dawson, who lay huddled up there on the footboard, with Jimmy's foot holding him firmly into place. "Who said ye was a soft-handed gink?"

"Let 'em say it again—any of 'em!" shouted Jimmy.

A few minutes later, at the same old gallop, yelling like an excited Indian, Jimmy drove the stage-coach straight into the compound at the Lazy B. He had some difficulty in hauling the lathering team down to a standstill before they got mixed up with the mesh wire that bounded the enclosure. He had to mill the team round and round the yard before he could stop them, and by that time most of the punchers there and the boss himself was staring open-mouthed at the sight. But at length three cowpunchers ran to the heads of the gasping animals and held them quiet. Then it was that Jimmy threw his reins away and hopped to the ground. He assisted the wounded Hank down also. Then he opened the door, and took from the arms of a half-breed woman a little girl who was sobbing convulsively, who clung to the tenderfoot closely. Jimmy handed the child over to her father.

"What's it all mean?" asked Frank Cooper blankly.

Jimmy pointed to several bullet-marks on the coach. Then he indicated the male passenger inside and Hank Dawson.

"Ask them," he said shortly. "They'll be more believed that I would. I'm only a blessed tenderfoot, you see."

Half an hour later Arizona Jim rode on to the ranch premises. He was not alone. He had three men with him—all of whom rode with their hands well up—all with handkerchiefs still over the lower halves of their faces.

"The others weren't quite fit to come," explained the Indian agent. "You fellows on the coach did a bit of good shooting. But they're all that's left of Figgins' gang—and your Pieface Walters is amongst them. Pieface, if pressed, will talk considerably."

And Pieface, being pressed, did talk—explaining a great deal. At the end of the explanation, Frank Cooper understood just how much he owed to his young tenderfoot. Nor would Arizona Jim admit that anything was owing to him, though he certainly had done the "staff-work," as he did it on the brand-blotting episode.

Later, Jimmy Deane was reading a letter, the while he clutched in his hand a banker's draft for a hundred pounds, when there was a little deputation waited on him in the bunk-house. The deputation was headed by Frank Cooper himself.

"Tell us you're staying on in this country, old chap," said Cooper. "We've discovered we need men like you—fellows who can act quickly."

Jimmy clutched his draft. With that hundred pounds he knew he could get home in comfort, and then have something left over. Then he looked at his comrades of the ranch. Finally, he looked at Arizona Jim, who was at the back of the deputation.

"Huh!" he growled. But he winked at the Indian agent. "I'm sick of your country—but I've discovered that this ranch needs me here! I've been wakened up, and now I've discovered that a few of the Lazy B fellows are half asleep." He looked at the draft again, and sighed. "I'll need this, I suppose, to keep myself with, seeing I've lost my bet, and will have to work for Cooper for six months for nothing."

"You'll work for double pay, you mean," said Frank Cooper hastily. Then he held out his hand. "Let's forget the unpleasant things Jimmy," the rancher said simply. "We all make mistakes sometimes. We treated you rotten, but——"

"But he isn't going to be sick of the West any more," put in Arizona Jim quietly. "He's wakened up—and he's made a place for himself out here. He's going to be a good enough Westerner from now on—aren't you, Jimmy?"

"Do you know," grinned Jimmy Deane. "I believe I am."

He held out his hand to his comrades. They all solemnly shook it for him.

THE END.







# In Other People's Shoes!

By DICK PENFOLD

THE fag was making his master's toast,  
And he murmured, with a sigh,  
"I dare not shirk my daily work,  
Oh, a sorry slave am I!  
Instead of fagging for big Tom North,  
I wish I were in the Lower Fourth!"

A boy in the Lower Fourth just then  
Was writing a hundred lines;  
"It's a beastly fag and a dreary drag,"  
Quoth he, "and my spirit pines  
To join a higher Form—the Shell,  
Where dozens of happy schoolboys dwell."

A boy in the Shell was hard at work  
At his evening preparation;  
"I sit and swot till my brow is hot  
With worry and perspiration.  
In the ranks of the Sixth I'd love to be,  
A fellow of weight and dignity!"

A sad-faced prefect went the rounds  
To see that the lights were out;  
"Oh, this is a job to make one sob,"  
He grumbled, "without a doubt!  
My troubles they follow fast and faster:  
How I should love to be a master!"

A master was burning the midnight oil,  
Correcting his pupils' papers;  
"I'm sick of strife, yet I spend my life  
In checking schoolboy capers.  
"Some people have all the luck," said he.  
"The Head of the school I'd like to be."

The Head of the school lay wide awake  
Upon his cheerless bed;  
"My duties and cares, they bring grey hairs

Upon my fevered head.  
If I could change my lot, 'tis plain  
I'd become a fag in the First again!"







# A Great Man at Greyfriars

A Splendid Story of Harry Wharton and Co. of Greyfriars School,  
and of the visit of Martin Clifford, the World-famous Author.

BY FRANK RICHARDS

*Illustrations by C. H. Chapman*

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

### Bunter's Distinguished Friend!

"MARTIN CLIFFORD!"

"Yes."

Billy Bunter elevated his fat little nose, and blinked at Harry Wharton and Co. through his big spectacles.

The Owl of the Remove evidently regarded himself as a very important personage at that moment.

"Martin Clifford?" repeated Harry Wharton dubiously.

"I've heard that name somewhere," remarked Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter sniffed.

"Where were you dug up, Bob Cherry?" he inquired. "If you don't know who Martin Clifford is——"

"Not to know Martin Clifford is to be oneself unknown," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Well, who is it?" asked Bob. "There's no League footballer of that name that I know of——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There are great ones on the earth as well as League footballers!" remarked Frank Nugent sarcastically.

"Of course there are," said Johnny Bull. "There's the cinema stars."

"Is Martin Clifford a cinema star, then?" asked Bob innocently.

Another sniff from Billy Bunter.

"He's the celebrated author, you ass!" snapped Bunter.

"The 'Gem' author, fathead," said Nugent.

Bob Cherry nodded.

"Of course," he assented. "So he is—and more power to his elbow. So he's a pal of yours, Bunter, is he?"

"Exactly," said Bunter. "Quite an old friend. We were at school together—I mean we should have been at school together if we'd been the same age. And he's here——"

"Here at Greyfriars!" exclaimed Bob in surprise.

"Near Greyfriars, I mean," said Bunter.

"I met him to-day for the first time——"



"You met a lifelong pal for the first time to-day?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"I—I mean, I met him for—for the last time," stammered Bunter. "That's what I really meant to say. He's staying in Kent now, not very far from Greyfriars. I had quite a pleasant chat with him in the bun-shop in Courtfield. How'd you fellows like to be introduced to a real live author?"

Harry Wharton and Co. looked interested.

Certainly they would have been very pleased to make the acquaintance of the famous "Gem" author, and would joyfully have stood him a "spread" in No. 1 Study in the Remove.

But whether William George Bunter was in a position to effect the introduction was a point very much open to doubt.

"Talking to my old pal Martin," went on Bunter airily, "I thought of you fellows. You're trying to write a play for your blessed dramatic society to perform. Now, my pal Martin—I always call him Martin, and he calls me Billy—my pal Martin would write it for you, if I asked him. He wouldn't do it for anybody else; but he would do it for me."

"Bow-wow!" said Bob Cherry.

"Rats!" remarked Johnny Bull.

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh observed that the ratsfulness was terrific.

"He would!" said Bunter. "He's on holiday now, so he's got lots of time to spare. And he would do anything for me—anything I asked him——"

"Ask him to cash that postal-order you're expecting!" suggested Bob Cherry. "That would put his friendship to the proof, if anything would."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

Harry Wharton looked thoughtful.

"I'd like to see the chap, if he's really lying around loose in this neighbourhood," he remarked. "And—and if he'd give us a hand writing our play, it might improve it——"

"Very likely, I think," said Bob with a chuckle.

"Rather a cheek to ask him," observed Johnny Bull.

"Well, if we had him to tea in the study, and made friends with him, you know——"

"Just my idea!" said Billy Bunter. "Shall I ask him here?"

"Gammon!" growled Johnny Bull. "Bunter doesn't know him—it's only his spoof. The 'Gem' author must be a decent chap; and if he is, how could he know Bunter?"

"Why, you cheeky ass——!" howled Bunter indignantly.

"The knowfulness is not great!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Well, ask him, if you know him, and if he's around," said Harry Wharton, "we shall be glad to see him."

"Feed in the study?" asked Bunter, with a business-like air.

"Certainly."

"A really good spread?"

"Of course."

"Martin's very fond of meringues," said Bunter. "You'll have meringues?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"And jam tarts? Martin dotes on jam tarts."

"Yes, ass."

"And pineapple? Martin loves them——"

"One word for Martin and two for Billy!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"And, of course, I shall be present at the feed!" added Bunter cautiously. The Owl of the Remove did not believe in leaving anything to chance.

"I don't know anything about that!" said Bob. "If Martin Clifford comes to Greyfriars we'd like to give him a good impression of the place. It would be best for you to keep out of sight."

"Why, you—you—I won't ask him, then!" roared Bunter.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You shall come, if you can bring Martin Clifford," he said. "We'll believe you when we see him."

"I'll bring him to-day, then."

"Go it."

"All I want is my taxi fare to Hawkscliff," said Bunter. "That's where he's staying, with his grandfather. I'll bring him back in the taxi. I can do it on thirty bob."

"Good-bye!"



"I say, you fellows——"

"Ta-ta, old barrel!"

The Famous Five strolled away across the Greyfriars quadrangle.

Apparently they were not prepared to furnish William George Bunter with the sum of thirty shillings for his taxi fare to Hawkscliff and back.

Billy Bunter blinked after them in great indignation.

"I say, you fellows——!" he roared.

Harry Wharton and Co. walked on. Bunter rolled in pursuit.

"I say, Wharton——"

"Shut up, ass!" said Bob Cherry impatiently. "Nothing doing."

"I might do it on a quid——"

"You'll do it on nothing, if you do it at all," said Harry Wharton. "Go and gammon somebody else, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Can't you see we don't believe a word of it?" demanded Johnny Bull. "Dry up, or what you'll get won't be thirty bob, but a boot."

"But I—I say, if—if I get him here, the feed comes off?" asked Bunter.

"That's a go."

"Then I—I'll telephone for him," said the Owl of the Remove.

"Rats!"

"Yah!" snorted Bunter. "You can come and hear me phone, if you like."

"Still keeping it up?" grunted Johnny Bull. "Look here, we'll come, and if you don't telephone to Martin Clifford we'll jolly well bump you."

And the Famous Five went into the schoolhouse with Billy Bunter—whose fat face was now wearing a rather worried look.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### Not Quite Pally!

"SMITHY!"

"Hallo," said the Bounder, stopping as Harry Wharton and Co. hailed him in the doorway.

"Is Mr. Quelch out?"

Vernon-Smith shook his head.

"No, he's in his study."

"Then we can't use his telephone," said

Bob Cherry. "Anybody know where the Head is?"

Wibley of the Remove came along the passage, rubbing his hands, in time to hear the question.

"I do!" he grunted.

"Where is he, then?"

"In his study. Ow!"

"Sure?" asked Wharton.

"Quite! He's just licked me there."

"Oh, then the Head's telephone is off the list," said Bob Cherry. "I wonder whether there's anybody in the prefects' room?"

"Scout along and see," suggested Nugent.

Bob Cherry scouted along the corridor, and returned shaking his head.

"Wingate, Gwynne, and North chin-wagging there," he said. "Looks as if Bunter won't be able to speak to his old pal, Martin Clifford, after all."

"Martin Clifford!" exclaimed Wibley.

"Yes, Bunter's old pal——"

"Ha, ha, ha."

"Gammon!"

"You'd jolly well see, if there was a telephone available," said Billy Bunter.

"Let's try the masters' room!" said Harry Wharton. "Everybody can't be at home all at once just because we want to borrow a telephone."

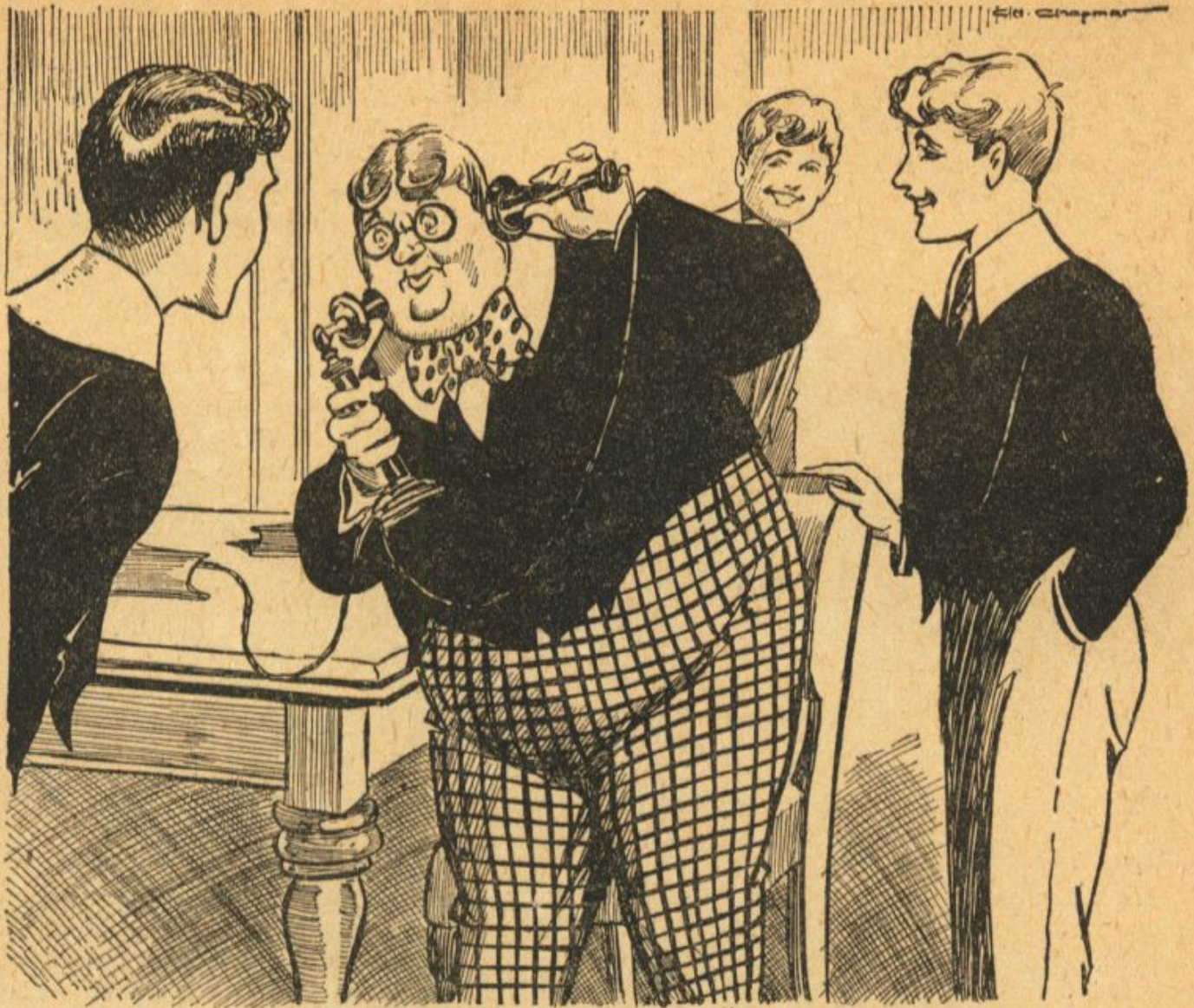
Fortunately, the masters' room was found unoccupied. Harry Wharton and Co. walked into it, followed by Wibley and Vernon-Smith and Billy Bunter. Two or three other juniors who had caught the name of Martin Clifford, followed them in, too. If any master had dropped in just then he would have supposed that a Lower Fourth meeting was being held in that apartment, which was, according to rule, forbidden to juniors.

"Here's the telephone, Bunter," said Wharton. "Buck up, before Quelch or Hacker blows in."

Bunter rolled over to the telephone, and took the receiver off the hooks. There was a second receiver to the instrument, and Bob Cherry picked it up and put it to his ear.

He was going to make sure that that little talk on the telephone was a genuine one. If it proved otherwise, William George Bunter was going to have a bumping.





"Go ahead, my fat pippin!" said Bob Cherry. "Ring up your old pal, Martin Clifford. If you're trying to spoof us, you know what to expect!" (See Chapter 2)

"Hawkscliff One!" said Bunter to the Exchange.

"Is that his number?" asked Squiff, who was one of the interested party gathering round.

"That's it."

"And you're going to ask Martin Clifford here?" inquired the Australian junior.

"Certainly."

"Go ahead, my fat pippin," said Bob Cherry. "If you're trying to spoof us, you know what to expect."

"Put that receiver down, Cherry," said Bunter, uneasily. "No need for you to listen to my conversation with my old pal Martin."

"We can hear a chap asked to tea, if we're standing the tea," answered Bob coolly. "Go ahead! Hallo, hallo, hallo, there's a toot on the 'phone."

A voice came through.

"Hallo?"

"Hawkscliff One?" asked Bunter.

"Yes."

"This is Greyfriars—Bunter speaking."

"Who the thump is Bunter?"

Bob Cherry grinned. If the gentleman at the other end was Martin Clifford, it really did not look as if he were an old pal of William George.

"Ahem! Is that Martin Clifford?"

"Yes."



"Oh!" murmured Bob.

"The 'Gem' author?" asked Bunter.

"Yes, yes."

"Good. Will you come over to tea?"

"Eh?"

"Come over to tea."

"Delighted, I'm sure——"

"Oh, good!"

"If I happened to know you," went on the voice. "Are you some ass trying to pull my leg?"

"Oh, really, you know—I say, Mr. Clifford, don't ring off. I'm Bunter——"

"You've said that before. Did you say Bunter or Grunter?"

"Bunter! I met you in Courtfield this afternoon——"

"Your memory is better than mine, Mr. Bunter."

"At the bun-shop, you know——"

"I had tea at the Bun-shop in Courtfield this afternoon," assented the rather pleasant voice on the wires. "I don't remember being introduced to any person of the name of Bunter."

"We—we weren't exactly introduced," said Bunter. "I—I was sitting at the next table."

Bob Cherry grinned. He was hearing every word, and was learning the exact extent of Bunter's ancient friendship with the famous "Gem" author.

"Oh! Were you the fat fellow——"

"Ahem!"

"Who bagged the cake from my table while I was talking to Owen Conquest——"

"I—I——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Shut up, Bob Cherry, you beast!" howled Bunter. "Put that receiver down! This conversation is private."

"Ha, ha!" roared Bob. "He bagged Martin Clifford's cake in the bun-shop! That's the extent of his acquaintance with him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up while I'm talking to Martin!" snapped Bunter. "I say, Mr. Clifford, are you still there?"

No reply.

"He's rung off," said Bunter angrily. "All through your interrupting me, Bob Cherry.

Now, very likely, he won't come over at all."

"Very likely, I should think," said Harry Wharton, laughing, "if you bagged his cake——"

"I—I didn't exactly. I—I was rather absent-minded, and took the cake from his table—it was quite close—a little thing like that doesn't matter between such old friends," said Bunter.

"Oh, cheese it," said Bob Cherry. "Mr. Clifford doesn't even know your name. I suppose you heard his mentioned by the chap he was talking to—he says he was speaking to Owen Conquest. I knew you were spoofing all along, you fat bounder. You've asked a man you don't know to tea—on the sole ground that you bagged his cake when he wasn't looking."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"The bumpfulness is the proper caper," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Bunter has been pulling our honourable legs——"

"I—I haven't. I——"

"Bump him!"

"Spoofer! Give him a dozen!"

"Collar him!"

Billy Bunter dropped the telephone receiver as if it had become red-hot, and dodged round the long table at which the masters sat when they were in session. There was a rush of the juniors after him.

Fortunately for Bunter the door opened at that moment, and Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell, came in. Mr. Hacker stared blankly at the sight of a crowd of the Lower Fourth chasing round the table in the masters' room.

"What does this mean?" thundered Mr. Hacker.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Oh! Ah!"

"We—we—we——"

"Leave this apartment at once!" exclaimed Mr. Hacker. "I shall report this to your form-master! Go!"

Harry Wharton and Co. went. They stood not upon the order of their going but went at once. And Billy Bunter, dodging rapidly round the first corner, escaped—for the present at least—the punishment of his sins.



## THE THIRD CHAPTER

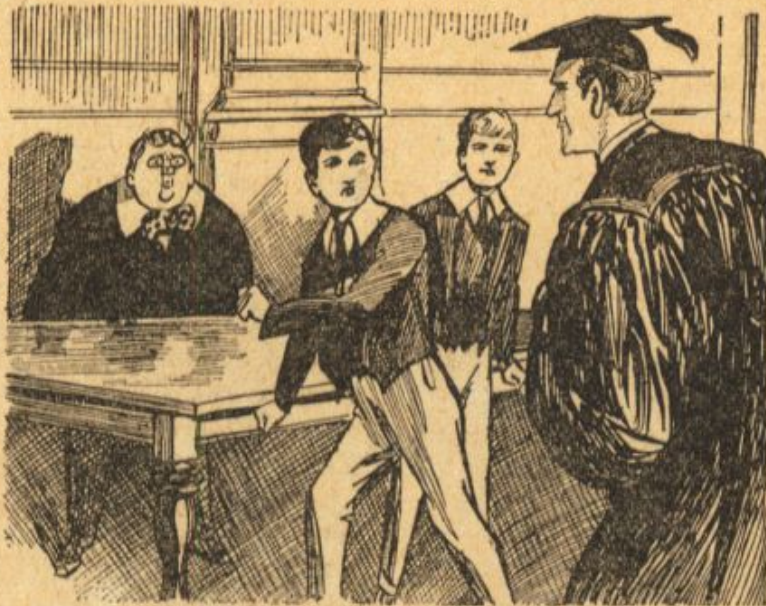
### Wibley Knows What To Do!

**W**ILLIAM WIBLEY, of the Remove, dropped into No. 1 Study after prep. that evening. There was a serious and thoughtful expression upon Wibley's face, which showed that his active brain was working. Wharton and Nugent did not need to be told the subject it was working upon; they could guess that.

Wibley, of the Remove, lived, moved, and had his being, so to speak, in amateur theatricals. He was the life and soul of the Remove Dramatic Society, as he had said himself; or, as Jack Drake had said, he was the head and foot of its offending!

But really Wibley was a wonderful amateur actor, and what he did not know about theatricals was hardly worth knowing. Most of his pocket-money went in 'props'; he was quite a benefactor to the Dramatic Society. Generally he wrote the plays the society performed, and he never omitted to give himself a decidedly "fat" part. In fact, his plays were generally written round one leading character, and that leading character was William Wibley.

He would take a Shakespeare play and re-write it, putting in all sorts of good things that Shakespeare never thought of. In dealing with the great bard he would allow himself more liberties than even a London actor-manager ever ventured upon. He produced great comic effects that had never occurred to the inferior intellect of Shakespeare; as, for instance, in the Wibley edition of Richard the Third, where Richard exclaims, "My kingdom for a horse!" Wibley had a clothes-horse



Mr. Hacker stared blankly at the sight of the juniors chasing round the table in the masters' room.

"What does this mean?" (See Chapter 2)

wheeled in. He had, as he often told the Remove fellows, a comic genius; tragedy was not in his line. But there was no mistake about the genius, comic or not; Wibley was quite sure about that.

"You fellows finished prep.?" he asked as he drifted into No. 1 Study with his hands in his pockets and a wrinkle in his brow.

"Yes. What's on now?"

"I've been thinking about that chap Clifford——"

"Bunter's old pal?" said Nugent, laughing.

"Bother Bunter! It seems to be the fact that this man Clifford is at Hawkscliff—not many miles from here," said Wibley. "We can get at him. We don't know him yet, but we can know him——"

"How?"

"By going to see him and introducing ourselves."

"Oh!"

"That's my idea. I've read a lot of his stuff," said Wibley. "There's no doubt that chap is clever. The way he strings a story together shows the dramatic gift. Some men write a story as if it were a furniture catalogue, or an almanac. This man Clifford has an eye to a sit-

uation—he makes his characters explain themselves—before you've got a dozen lines into the story you know the fellows as if you'd met them. He ought to be writing plays really, but I suppose a man has to live! Well, Martin Clifford is just the man we want to give us a leg up with our new play."

Harry Wharton looked doubtful.

"But a stranger," he said.

"He won't be a stranger when we know him," said Wibley calmly. "He's bound to take an interest in our play, as a fellow-artist."

"Oh, my hat!"



"I know he can act."

"How do you know that?"

"By the way he writes. My idea is to get him here and get him to knock our play into shape, and take part in it."

"The leading part, of course."

"Well, no; that's booked. The second part," said Wibley. "We're going to do something rather ambitious this time. You fellows ever heard of Ibsen?"

"Gibson?" asked Nugent. "Chap who draws——"

"Ibsen, ass! Ibsen was a Norwegian, and wrote plays—the greatest unconscious humorist ever born. His tragedies need only a touch here and there to turn them into ripping comedies. He wrote a play called 'The Dolls House,' which made no end of a sensation in our grandfathers' time. I've been sketching out a comic version, called 'Why Nora Left Home!'"

"Oh!"

"If we could get Martin Clifford into it, it would go with a tremendous bang," said Wibley. "We could put his name on the bills, you know, and charge for admission; proceeds to go to the Dramatic Society for new props and costumes. We're in want of a lot of new things for an historical play I've got at the back of my head. The question is, how to bag this man Clifford. We'll butter him a little."

"Oh, will we?" said Nugent.

"Yes, all artistic people have to be buttered—they like it, and it keeps 'em in good humour. You can do anything with an artist if you pull his leg sufficiently. When he comes along, for instance, he's going to spot fellow after fellow reading the 'Gem'—quite by accident, of course. I'm going to buy a dozen Gems on purpose, see?"

"But——"

"We'll borrow Quelchy's typer for him to work on, stick him in the Rag with a good fire, and set him writing the play. I shall go over it afterwards making little improvements."

"My hat!"

"Now, about bagging the man. If he's staying at Hawkscliff, he can run over here easily enough in a car—I suppose he's got a car."

"But if he hasn't——"

"He's on the 'phone—he can 'phone for a taxi, then."

"Wouldn't that run him into a lot of money?"

"Very likely," said Wibley. "Still, we'll assume that he has a car, and he'll try to live up to it, see? That's his business."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

"My idea is to drop in on him at Hawkscliff and bring him over," said Wibley. "We'll go in a car—Vernon-Smith has agreed to stand it; he's got lots of dibs. We raid Hawkscliff, rush in on Martin Clifford, and bag him without allowing him to say no."

"But—suppose he's busy——"

"He isn't! He's on a holiday."

"But he may have something on."

"He can put it off. Now, who's coming?" asked Wibley. "To-morrow afternoon's a half-holiday, and Smithy's getting a car from Courtfield garage. You ought to come, as captain of the Remove, Wharton. Nugent can come, too. That will make four of us. Four's enough. And the sooner, the quicker, you know. If Temple of the Fourth got this idea he would jump at the chance of bagging a man like Clifford to act in his silly Fourth-form play. So would Coker of the Fifth. This is a chance for the Remove to score."

"Something in that!" agreed Wharton, "but——"

"It's a go then! Two o'clock to-morrow afternoon," said Wibley. "Lay in something for a stunning tea—we can afford to stand him a good spread, considering what he's going to do for us."

"But perhaps he isn't."

"We'll make him. It's settled, then."

And Wibley left the study, evidently considering the matter settled. Harry Wharton looked at Nugent, and Nugent looked at him. Both laughed.

"Mr. Clifford will think it an awful nerve——" began Nugent.

"And he will be about right," said Harry. "Still, it would be no end of a catch to get him into our play."

"No doubt about that. If he's jolly good-natured, he may come. After all, he may pick up some tips for his books here."



"Hem! He may."

"Let's try it on, anyhow," said Nugent. "It will make Temple green with envy, and Coker black with rage, if we bag a big gun like Martin Clifford."

"Well, it's worth some trouble to make Temple green and Coker black!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "It's a go! If we get sat upon, we shall survive it somehow."

And so it was settled.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### Bagging a Great Man

"I SAY, you fellows——"  
"Scoot!"

At two o'clock on the following afternoon a big car halted on the drive. It was the automobile ordered by Herbert Vernon-Smith for the run over to Hawkscliff. Harry Wharton, Nugent, Wibley, and the Bounder were going in it; and Billy Bunter rolled up as a matter of course. But there was no admission for the Owl of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows, you can't leave me behind," exclaimed Bunter warmly. "You can't call on my old friend without me to introduce you."

"Rats!"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"Look here!" roared Bunter. "I'm coming!"

He put a foot into the car. Johnny Bull, who was standing by to see his chums off, took Bunter by the back of the collar.

"Kim off!" he said.

"Yaroooh!"

"Go it, chauffeur!" said Vernon-Smith.

The car moved down the drive, leaving

Billy Bunter wriggling in the sturdy grasp of Johnny Bull. It was a fine afternoon, and the chums of the Remove enjoyed the run along the cliff road by the sea.

"Anybody know exactly where this man Clifford lives?" asked the Bounder, when the car had covered half the distance to Hawkscliff.

"His telephone number is Hawkscliff One," said Nugent.

"We can't call on his telephone number."

"Nunno! But Hawkscliff is a small place," said Nugent. "We can ask at the post-office. There must be a post-office if there's a telephone, I should think. We ought to have brought old Redwing—he was born at Hawkscliff. I believe there isn't a road for a car into the village."

"There's the upper village, where there's a road," said Wharton. "The post-office is there, I think. Let's try that."

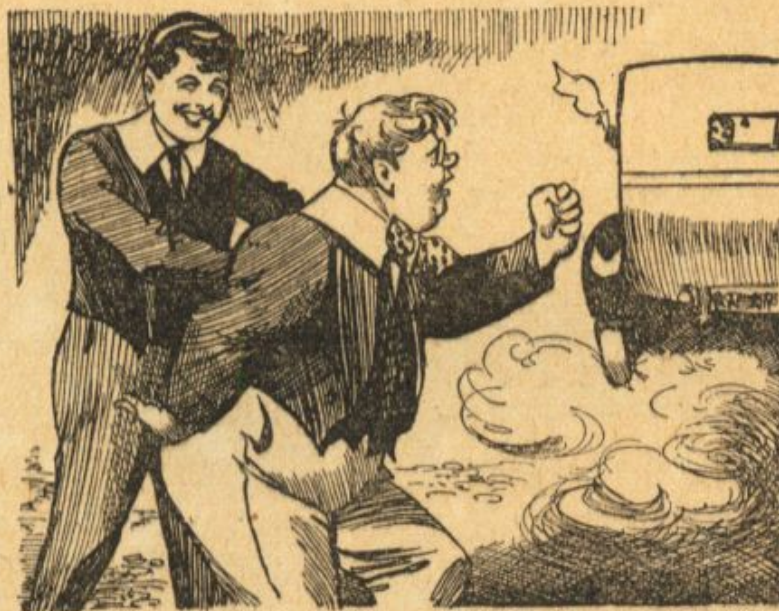
The car ran on, and stopped at last at a little building, which was a post-office, a village store, and several other things. There were two buildings near it, one a vicarage, and the other

the village school. Further along the road was a group of cottages. Farmhouses dotted the green distance, and beyond them the cliffs and the blue sea. The Bounder jumped down, and disappeared into the post-office. He came out in a few minutes with a satisfied smile.

"Got it?" asked Wibley eagerly.

The Bounder nodded.

"Yes. The name's well known here—chap named Clifford comes in often and sends down letters to be registered," said the Bounder. "That must be his copy for the Press, I suppose."



"Look here, I'm coming!" roared Bunter. But the car moved down the drive, leaving Billy Bunter wriggling in the sturdy grasp of Johnny Bull. (See Chapter 4.)



"Looks like our man!" said Nugent.

"But where does he live?" asked Wibley.

"About a mile from here, with an old gent named Cameron—his maternal grandfather," said the Bounder. "I've got all the news, you see. He's staying there on a holiday, I gather, and doing flying stunts at the aerodrome on the hill over yonder."

"What an ass—when he might be doing theatricals!" said Wibley. "We'll give him a chance to employ his time better, anyhow."

The Bounder gave the chauffeur his instructions and entered the car. The automobile moved on, climbing a hilly road towards the sea. In the distance the red tiles and chimneys of a house backed against a cliff glimmered in the sun.

"That's the show!" said the Bounder. "At least, I think so. It seems to be the only house in this quarter."

"Better ask somebody."

"There's a chap yonder—ask him."

A young man in tweeds, followed by a couple of dogs, was strolling along the road ahead in a leisurely way. The car stopped a few yards ahead of him, and the Bounder leaned from the window as the young man came by.

"Excuse me, sir——" began the Bounder politely.

The young man stopped.

He turned a pleasant face towards the juniors in the car.

"We're looking for Cameron Lodge!" said the Bounder. "Perhaps you can tell us if that house yonder is it?"

"Quite right—it is," answered the young man. "You'll find a gate on the other side of that fir plantation."

"Thank you." The Bounder eyed the young man rather keenly. "You know the Lodge, sir?"

"Quite well."

"Perhaps you could tell us whether Mr. Clifford is at home, then?"

The young man smiled.

"I can tell you that he is not at home at present," he answered.

"Oh, rotten!"

"This dashed journey for nothing, then, said Wibley. "What a rotten sell."

"Never say die," said the Bounder. "He mayn't be far away. If he's at the aerodrome we can run over for him. Excuse my bothering you like this, sir, but we want to see Mr. Clifford very specially. Perhaps you know whether he's gone over to the aerodrome?"

"He left it an hour ago," was the reply.

"Floored again!" said Wibley.

"Perhaps you could tell us where he is now!" suggested the Bounder.

The young man smiled again.

"Certainly, if you wish."

"Please do," said Harry Wharton. "We've come nearly ten miles to see him."

The young man eyed him curiously.

"Is he far away?" asked Nugent.

"No; quite near."

"Then where——"

"Here, talking to you," said the young man, laughing. "I happen to be Martin Clifford! What can I do for you?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

"You—you—you're Martin Clifford!" exclaimed Wibley.

"Guilty, my lord!" answered the young man humorously. "If you have come to see me, here I am. Very pleased to meet you, I am sure, though I believe this is the first time I have had the pleasure."

Wharton and Nugent coloured a little, and the Bounder was rather taken aback. But William Wibley was at no loss.

"Jolly glad to make your acquaintance, sir!" he exclaimed. "The fact is—the fact is, we're all enthusiastic readers of the 'Gem'——"

"I had already guessed as much!" said Mr. Clifford.

"Oh, you'd guessed——"

"Certainly. A glance was sufficient to reveal that you were unusually intelligent members of the rising generation," explained Mr. Clifford, with great gravity. "That you were, therefore, enthusiastic readers of the 'Gem' was a foregone conclusion."

"Ah! Oh! Yes!" stammered Wibley.

He wondered whether Mr. Clifford had realised that his leg was being gently pulled. He need not have wondered!

"We—we thought——" stammered Nugent.



"That's it," murmured the Bounder. "We—we thought——"

"We—we thought you'd care, perhaps, to drop in and have a look at Greyfriars," said Wharton. "We should be honoured——"

"And pleased——" said Wibley.

"And delighted——" murmured Smithy.

"As soon as we heard you were in the neighbourhood, Mr. Clifford," said Wibley, "we thought of it. All the fellows would be no end pleased if you'd give us a look-in. And—and if you'd look over our play——"

"If you're not engaged at the present moment," said the Bounder, encouraged by Mr. Clifford's kind smile, "jump in! We'll run you back to Greyfriars in good time for tea—that's what we we're going to ask you, sir."

"You are very good——" began Martin Clifford.

"Say you'll come, sir."

Martin Clifford laughed.

"Really, I don't know how I can say no!" he remarked.

"You're not busy just now?" asked Wibley anxiously.

"Not at all. The typewriter does not claim me again till next week."

"Oh, good! Jump in!"

"Do jump in, Mr. Clifford!"

"On your heads be it!" said Martin Clifford gravely.

And he took his seat in the car; and the chauffeur, at a word from Vernon-Smith, backed and turned and sped away for Greyfriars.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### A Flattering Reception!

HARRY WHARTON AND Co. were smiling with satisfaction when the car drew up at the gates of Greyfriars School.

On the way back they had had quite a pleasant chat with Mr. Martin Clifford, and they had found him a most agreeable young man.

They found him a well-informed young man, too. Wharton had drawn him on the subject of football, and found that he was "all there." Wibley tackled him on theatricals, and found

his knowledge great. Wib had drawn from him the admission that he had acted and that he had also sung, and that he had written plays. Wib was delighted. His estimate of Mr. Martin Clifford evidently was not a mistaken one. That young man was



"Perhaps you can tell us if Mr. Clifford is at home?" asked Vernon-Smith. The young man smiled pleasantly. "He is not," he said. "I happen to be Martin Clifford!" (See Chapter 4)

going to be very useful to the Remove Dramatic Society, and was going to help that society put the "kybosh" on their rivals in the Fourth and Fifth.

They alighted at the gates, Smithy telling the chauffeur to "hang on" to take Mr. Clifford home presently, money being no object with the well-supplied Bounder. The four juniors walked in with Mr. Clifford with great pride. They had captured a prize, and they knew it, and they were anxious for all Greyfriars to see their prize.

Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came up at once, and were presented to Mr. Clifford, and Squiff and



Ogilvy and Russell followed suit, and Drake and Rodney and several other fellows. Mr. Clifford was cheery and affable with all, and was evidently quite at home in youthful society. Quite a little army of gratified youths gathered round Mr. Clifford to escort him across the quadrangle. It was then that the eye of Coker of the Fifth fell upon them. Coker was punting a footer about to keep himself warm, and it entered Coker's powerful brain that it would be no end of a joke to punt the footer at the handsome young man who was coming along with a crowd of Removites.

Coker of the Fifth did not know who the young man was, neither did he care. Coker's ideas on the subject of humour were a little rough-and-ready. He executed a drop-kick, and the footer flew fairly at the young man in grey tweeds.

Up to that moment Mr. Clifford had been chatting amicably with his escort, and had seemed unaware of the existence of Coker of the Fifth. But the sequel proved that he was a very wideawake young man.

The muddy footer would certainly have bumped on his waistcoat, but at the psychological moment Mr. Clifford's neat tan boot came up and stopped the ball, which dropped at his feet. The next second he had kicked it.

The ball came back to Coker suddenly and unexpectedly, and with an aim that was unerring. Crash!

It was Coker's nose that caught the ball.

Coker sat down quite suddenly.

"Groooooch!" he spluttered.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Well saved!"

"Yoooooggghh!" spluttered Coker. "What the thump—oooooch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Coker!" chuckled Squiff.

"Always putting his foot in it! What do you mean by punting a ball at Mr. Clifford, you howling ass?"

"Groooooogh!"

"Roll him over!"

"My dear boys!" ejaculated Mr. Clifford as the Removites rushed at Coker of the Fifth.

But for the moment the dear boys did not heed the celebrated "Gem" author. They swarmed on Coker.

They were justly indignant at Horace Coker's unmannerly reception of their distinguished guest. They felt that Coker wanted a lesson. So they gave him one.

Horace Coker roared and raved as he was rolled over in the grasp of a dozen pair of hands, bumped on the ground, and finally deposited in a puddle in a state of wild mental confusion.

Coker was still sorting himself out of the puddle when the juniors walked on with Mr. Clifford, who was smiling genially.

During the delay Wibley had cut off from the escort and whispered hurried words to several fellows. Wibley had prepared a flattering little reception for the "Gem" author, and he did not want it to miss fire. As the party approached the schoolhouse they almost walked into Stott of the Remove, who was deeply interested in a paper.

"Sorry!" said Stott. "Didn't see you fellows—I was so interested in this 'Gem'!"

A few paces further on Bulstrode, leaning against an elm, with a paper in his hands, burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! You fellows seen this week's 'Gem'? It's spiffing."

Mr. Clifford smiled.

On the balustrade of the schoolhouse steps there were five Removites seated in a row—Tom Brown, Hazeldene, Lord Mauleverer, Vivian, and Redwing. Each had a "Gem" in his hands, and was deep in it.

They looked up at the approaching party.

"Reading the 'Gem,' you fellows?" asked Wibley, closing one eye.

"Yes, rather," said Tom Brown.

"Wouldn't miss it for worlds!" said Redwing solemnly.

"Isn't it a corker this week—what?"

"Beats even last week, I think."

"Every story a gem, in fact!"

Mr. Clifford smiled again and progressed into the schoolhouse with his young friends. In the doorway stood Bolsover major, and he shouted to the new arrivals:

"You fellows borrowed my 'Gem'?"

"Eh! No."

"Well, somebody's had it," said Bolsover major. "Not that I blame him, it's so jolly good."



Harry Wharton glanced quickly at Mr. Clifford, and felt inclined to kick William Wibley. He felt that this was laying it on too thick. But Martin Clifford's face was smiling and serene. In the hall, inside, Billy Bunter hove in sight. He was also one of Wibley's buttering recruits.

"I say, you fellows, I've lost my 'Gem,'" he said. "Anybody seen my 'Gem'? I wouldn't lose it for untold gold."

"Ah! My fat young friend of the bunshop!" said Mr. Clifford.

"The young gentleman who bagged my cake."

Billy Bunter grinned feebly.

"That was a—a—a mistake, sir!" he gasped. "I say, you fellows, I simply must have my 'Gem.' I haven't finished reading the story, and it was no end of a ripper."

"Which The ball came back to Coker suddenly and unexpectedly, and with an aim that was unerring. Crash! "Oooch!" spluttered Coker. (See Chapter 5) —yarooooo— one was it?" asked Mr. Clifford innocently.

"This week's, sir."

"And you liked the story?"

"No end, sir."

"What was it called?"

"Eh?"

"I should like to know which of my little efforts has pleased you so much," said Mr. Clifford gravely. "What was the story called?"

"I—I—I——" stammered Bunter.

As a matter of fact, William George Bunter had not seen the "Gem" that week at all, so he was in rather a difficulty.

Harry Wharton felt more inclined than ever to kick Wibley.

He had felt all along that the diplomatic Wib was over-doing it.

"The—the fact is——" stuttered Bunter.

Fortunately, Bob Cherry stamped on Bunter's foot at that moment, and the Owl of the Remove gave a yell of anguish, and explanations were cut short.

"Yarooooooh! Wharrer you treading on my feet for, you silly ass?" roared Bunter.

"I wasn't going to tell Mr. Clifford anything."

"Shurrup!" hissed Wibley.

"Yow-ow! My foot's squashed!" howled Bunter.

"You ass, Bob Cherry—you're more likely to give the game away than me, you dummy. Keep your elbow out of my ribs, Wibley, you beast, or I'll jolly well tell Mr. Clifford about your buying twenty

"Gems," and oh!" Harry Wharton and Co hurried Mr. Clifford onward. They felt that he had heard enough—if not too much.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER

### Nice for Martin Clifford

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, came out of his study, and glanced at the Removites and their distinguished visitor. He had seen the young man's progress across the quad in the midst of the Removites, and he naturally wanted to know who the visitor was. Harry Wharton made haste to present him.





"Mr. Clifford, sir!" he said. "Mr. Clifford, this is our form-master, Mr. Quelch."

The two gentlemen bowed gravely.

"A relative of yours, Wharton?" asked the Remove master.

"Nunno, sir! It's the celebrated author, sir."

"The 'Gem' author, sir," said Wibley.

"The great Martin Clifford, sir," said Vernon-Smith.

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch. He came towards Martin Clifford, and held out his hand very cordially. "I am very pleased to meet you, Mr. Clifford. I am, of course, well acquainted with your name."

Martin Clifford shook hands with the form-master.

"Welcome to Greyfriars, sir," continued Mr. Quelch. "It is always a pleasure to meet a distinguished literary gentleman."

"You are too kind, sir," murmured Martin Clifford.

"The boys, I suppose, are claiming you at present?" said Mr. Quelch, with a smile. "But if you find the time, I should be glad if you would drop into my study for a smoke and a chat."

"Delighted, my dear sir."

"I should like you to glance at my 'History of Greyfriars,' if you are interested in such things," said Mr. Quelch. "At present I have reached only the two hundred and thirty-seventh chapter, but I hope to complete the work in a few years' time. If you cared to read the manuscript, I should be delighted to place it at your disposal."

"I should be—be—very happy—very obliged," said Martin Clifford without turning a hair. "You are indeed kind."

"Not at all," said Mr. Quelch, much gratified. "I will look out the manuscript now; I am at leisure all this afternoon, and shall be delighted if you will come in any time."

And Mr. Quelch retreated into his study to sort out the tremendous manuscript which had been growing on his typewriter for years, and was still running.

Martin Clifford was escorted up to the Remove passage by a growing army of juniors. No. 1 Study was ready for his reception—and

its appearance must have given Mr. Clifford the impression that Greyfriars juniors were remarkably neat and tidy youths. For the study was newly swept and garnished. Half a dozen fellows had laboured on it to make it worthy of the occasion. Lord Mauleverer's new Turkey carpet had been borrowed, and all the best "crocks" in the Remove passage had been gathered. In the grate glowed bright brass fireirons, borrowed from the master's room—rather a risky proceeding, but justifiable in the circumstances. Flowers were tastefully arranged all round the study in jam jars.

A gorgeous armchair—wheeled in specially from the Bounder's luxurious study—was all ready for Martin Clifford.

"By Jove," remarked Mr. Clifford, as he sank into the comfortable chair before the blaze of the fire, "this is awfully jolly, you fellows!"

"Make yourself at home, won't you, Mr. Clifford?" said Wharton.

"I'm doing so, dear boy."

"I dare say you'd like to smoke——"

"Not here! I must not set a bad example to youth," said Mr. Clifford, shaking his head with a smile.

"We've got a cigar specially for you," said Bob Cherry eagerly.

"Oh! That is—is kind."

It was indeed kind, and Mr. Clifford felt that it was. But he seemed to be suffering from a pang of uneasiness; perhaps he feared Bob Cherry's cigar even more than Mr. Quelch's manuscript.

Bob unwrapped the cigar.

He had bought it specially in Courtfield, and had given eightpence for it, so he was quite satisfied as to its quality.

Certainly it was a big one. What it was made of Bob did not know; he supposed tobacco. With rather an air of doing things well, Bob presented it to the distinguished guest.

Mr. Clifford accepted it gracefully.

"Perhaps you'd rather smoke after tea though," remarked Bob.

Mr. Clifford jumped at the suggestion with great alacrity.

"Exactly!" he said. "After tea—much better. Put the cigar in a very safe place."



"On the mantelpiece," said Bob.

Tea was the next item in the programme.

But while some of the eager hosts were preparing tea in the study, Mr. Clifford was not left to his own devices. One or two or three of the juniors kept the guest in conversation, so that he should not be bored. The talk was interrupted by a step in the doorway, and Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell, glanced in.

"Pray excuse me," he said, with a bow to Martin Clifford, who rose politely and bowed in return, "I hear that Mr. Clifford—the celebrated Martin Clifford—is here——"

"At your service, sir!" said Mr. Clifford.

"Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell—Mr. Clifford," said Wharton.

"I am sure you will excuse this intrusion," said Mr. Hacker, with his best smile. "The penalty of fame, you know, Mr. Clifford."

"You flatter me, sir."

"Not at all." Wharton politely placed a chair for Mr. Hacker, as the Shell master seemed inclined to stay, though the juniors wished him anywhere else just then. They could not argue with a master; but they felt it was rather hard lines to have their visitor bagged in this way. "I have often heard your name, Mr. Clifford," continued the master of the Shell. "It is a very great pleasure to make your acquaintance. Run away for a few minutes, my boys, while I speak to Mr. Clifford."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Mr. Hacker was a form-master; but this was rather cool. In the midst of preparations for tea, the juniors were turned out of their own study, leaving their distinguished visitor to the tender mercies of Mr. Hacker. But there was no help for it. They went.

Then Mr. Hacker became confidential.

He talked on the subject of Martin Clifford's works, but evidently with some other thought at the back of his mind. He was, so to speak, sparring for an opening.

Martin Clifford knew the signs. He had been there before, as it were. Often and often had polite persons drawn him on the subject of his works, with the deadly intention of turning as quickly as possible to the topic of their own. Mr. Hacker was not long in turning.

"I have often thought," he remarked, after about three minutes devoted to rather vague

remarks on the subject of Martin Clifford's lucubrations, "that the life of an author must be a very attractive one."

"In many respects," assented Mr. Clifford.

"I have thought also, many times, that I should write myself, if I could only find the time," said Mr. Hacker.

"Is it only the time that is wanting?" asked Mr. Clifford sympathetically. If there

was a faint inflection of sarcasm in his voice Mr. Hacker did not observe it.

"Exactly," said Mr. Hacker. "I have turned my thoughts to this subject many times. In fact, I have dashed off a few things."

"Ah!"

"Of a—er—more serious nature, perhaps, than your own writings, Mr. Clifford."

"No doubt much more serious," murmured Mr. Clifford.

"I might say that I aim higher," said Mr. Hacker agreeably.

"Perfectly so."

"Somehow, I have achieved no success yet, so far as mere publication goes," said Mr. Hacker.



Mr. Quelch held out his hand very cordially. "I am very pleased to meet you, Mr. Clifford. It is always a pleasure to meet a distinguished literary gentleman!" (See Chapter 6)



"Mere publication is not everything," remarked Mr. Clifford blandly.

"Quite so, quite so. Publishers are often stupid——"

"Undoubtedly."

"They fail to see the quality of work that is far above the average——"

"There have been many such cases," said Mr. Clifford, with a shake of the head.

"But your work, I believe, has been always appreciated."

"I have been fortunate."

"You write a great deal for a paper called the—the 'Jewel'——"

"The 'Gem,'" said Martin Clifford mildly.

"Ah, yes, yes, the 'Gem,'" assented Mr. Hacker, with a nod. "I have seen the paper—a very nice little paper, Mr. Clifford. But a more serious strain would—ahem—improve it, do you not think? Now that I have met you, I feel that I should place the idea before you. A couple or three pages every week devoted to the subject of fossils——"

"F-f-fossils!"

"Exactly. It would form a very excellent contrast to the lighter character of your story."

"Undoubtedly it would."

"If you cared to place the suggestion before your editor, Mr. Clifford, I should be prepared to furnish a series of papers dealing with the interesting and instructive subject——"

"You are too good, sir," said Mr. Clifford gratefully. "I shall certainly mention it to my editor at our first meeting."

Mr. Hacker beamed.

"I have a few papers in hand now," he said. "I will submit them to your judgment——"

"I—I fear that my judgment is worth little on such——"

"You under-value yourself, my dear sir," interrupted Mr. Hacker genially. "I will send you the papers, and you may take them away with you. Of course, you will take the greatest care of them—but I need not mention that. Perhaps you will find my handwriting a little difficult to read. Some people have called it indecipherable. But——"

"A mere nothing, I assure you," said Mr. Clifford.

Mr. Hacker rose. There was a determined murmur of voices outside the study. To Harry Wharton and Co's relief, the master of the Shell took his leave. Martin Clifford was left in rather a thoughtful mood. With two hundred and thirty-seven typewritten chapters of Mr. Quelch's, and a series of papers in an indecipherable hand on the fascinating subject of fossils, he was likely to find himself rather busy for some days—if he read them. Possibly he would not read them.

But the celebrated author was smiling cheerfully over tea in No. 1 Study, and the chums of the Remove had the gratification of seeing that he certainly was enjoying his visit to Greyfriars. It was not, in fact, so very many years since Martin Clifford had been a schoolboy himself, and certainly he had not forgotten his schooldays.

"This is quite like old times!" he remarked as Bob Cherry filled his third cup of tea. "Now for the cigar."

Bob Cherry stepped to the mantelpiece for the precious weed. It had vanished!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, where's that cigar?" exclaimed Bob in dismay.

"My hat! Some ass must have knocked it down," said Nugent.

"Look in the fender."

"'Tain't there!"

"It's too bad!" said Bob. "It really is——"

"Not at all," said Mr. Clifford, with a smile. "If you young fellows don't object to a pipe——"

"Please put it on, sir."

"But it was such a jolly good cigar!" said Bob Cherry regretfully.

The mystery of the missing cigar remained a mystery. Only the Bounder suspected that Mr. Clifford had popped it into the fire while the juniors were out of the study. And even he was not sure.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

### Martin Clifford Obliges!

AFTER tea William Wibley came to business. He liked Mr. Clifford—he was, in fact, charmed with him, as all the juniors were. But he did not forget that he had, primarily, sought Martin Clifford's company



with an eye to business. So business came on the tapis at last.

The Removites found Martin Clifford very kind and accommodating. He took a keen interest in the Remove play, which was to break all dramatic records at Greyfriars. He gave his consent to taking a part in the play, agreed to turn up for rehearsals and to help in coaching the amateur actors. As for the calls upon his time, he waved that consideration aside—he was on a holiday, and he enjoyed a holiday most when it was spent with young society. So kind and obliging was he that

Wibley fetched in the rather sketchy manuscript he had started, and the study table was cleared, pens and ink provided, and Mr. Clifford set to work at once. The juniors gathered round the table with much delight. It was the first time they had seen a famous author actually at work.

Wibley was delighted at first, but his delight gradually wore off. The play grew rapidly under Martin Clifford's pen, and the juniors hailed every line with satisfaction. But Wibley began to wonder whose play it was going to be, and somehow there didn't seem room for all the good things Wibley had planned. Perhaps those good things weren't quite so good as Wibley supposed. But Wib, of course, could not be expected to see that. He was rather in the position of the ancient king who called in a too-powerful ally, who swallowed up his kingdom.

The play grew and grew, and characters were assigned, with a full chorus of approval for all of Mr. Clifford's suggestions, and Wibley found himself reduced to murmuring feeble objections.

Then Mr. Clifford suddenly remembered his appointment with Mr. Quelch.

Harry Wharton and Co. marched him down to the Remove master's study, and remained to escort him to the waiting car when he was finished with Mr. Quelch.

They had some time to wait; and when Martin Clifford emerged from Mr. Quelch's

study he had a bulky bundle of manuscript under one arm. At the doorway Mr. Hacker joined him with another bundle.

Both bundles accompanied Mr. Clifford to the car.

From the car Martin Clifford waved adieu to the Greyfriars crowd, and sped away into the dusk.

Harry Wharton and Co. returned to No. 1 Study.

They were highly delighted; but William Wibley was wearing a very thoughtful and somewhat worried look.

"Isn't he a tip-top chap?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "He's taken no end of trouble with our play."

"The tip-topfulness is terrific," said Hurree Singh.

"And all the stuff he's written for us is worth money, too," remarked Johnny Bull, "if he'd written it in the form of a story."

"Jolly good fellow!" said Frank Nugent.

"No end of a topping idea of yours, Wib!"



"A little more serious strain would—ahem—improve 'The Gem,'" said Mr. Hacker. "A couple or three pages every week devoted to fossils——"

"F-f-fossils!" gasped Martin Clifford. (See Chapter 6)



said Harry Wharton heartily. "You were really a genius to think of getting him here."

"Hum!" said Wib.

"Look how he's improved the play," said Vernon-Smith. "It wasn't much of a thing when you brought it along, Wib."

"Oh, wasn't it?" said Wibley rather warmly.

"No—awfully scratchy."

"Piffle in fact," said Johnny Bull. "Jolly weak, anyhow."

"Look here——"

"That chap's given it the professional touch," said Wharton. "Some of the stuff he's put in is a real shriek, and it will make the audience howl. It's as funny, in places, as anything in the 'Gem.'"

"I meant this play to be a bit above the 'Gem'!" said Wibley tartly.

"Eh!"

"What?"

"Fathead!"

The juniors stared at Wibley.

"There's a lot of my good things cut out," said Wibley.

"They weren't good, old chap."

"Not at all, old fellow."

"Mere rot, in fact."

Wibley gave a sort of wriggle. The Greyfriars Removites were very frank in speech among themselves. Frankness, Wibley felt, might be carried to excess on some topics.

"Then there's the parts," said Wibley. "You fellows insisted on Martin Clifford taking the leading part——"

"We jumped at the chance, of course," said Harry.

"Yes, rather."

"I'd booked that for myself," said Wibley.

"What rot!"

"I suppose I can act!" exclaimed Wibley, showing some signs of excitement.

"Of course you can act, old scout," said Bob Cherry soothingly. "But you're not a patch on Martin Clifford, of course."

"Of course not."

"No fear!"

"The no fearfulness is terrific."

Wibley looked morose.

"The fact is," he said, "this chap can write stories, but I don't think much of his play writing."

"Ass!"

"Fathead!"

"The whole dashed thing seems to be Martin Clifford from end to end," said Wibley.

"Well, what could be better?" demanded Bob Cherry.

Wibley snorted.

"Lots of things could be better. I intended it to be William Wibley from end to end."

"My dear chap," said Harry Wharton, "we can't afford to miss a chance like this. It's a real play now——"

"Can't I write a real play?"

"Ahem—not like this one."

"Look here, Wharton——"

"Mr. Clifford's promised to run over for an hour to-morrow for the first rehearsal," said Nugent. "Jolly good of him. I fancy he will knock us into shape in next to no time."

"I'm coach," remarked Wibley.

"Don't be an ass, old chap."

"Talk sense, old fellow."

"Oh, rats!" said Wibley.

And he left the study not at all satisfied. He felt more than ever like the monarch whose kingdom was swallowed up by his powerful ally.

But Harry Wharton and Co. did not heed.

They had an eye to business as well as William Wibley. Wibley was head of the Dramatic Society on his merits; but if a better man was found, Wib had to stand down as a matter of course. It was the same as in footer, as Bob Cherry remarked. A team had to be played to win, not to gratify this or that person. The Remove play was going to be a tremendous success, with the assistance of Mr. Martin Clifford, and Wibley ought to be pleased. If he wasn't pleased, that was his look-out.

The juniors did not make full allowance for the artistic temperament which Wibley possessed in a state of advanced development.

Wib had called in Martin Clifford as a "brilliant second," but it had not worked out like that. Like Lucifer, Son of the Morning, Wibley had fallen from his high estate, and he was worried.

The next day, after lessons, a car from Hawkscliff buzzed up to the gates of Greyfriars.





The table was cleared, pens and ink provided, and Mr. Clifford set to work at once on the play. The juniors gathered round the table with much delight. (See Chapter 7)

Martin Clifford descended from it.

He received a warm welcome from a crowd of Removites, and was escorted into the Rag, where the first rehearsal was to take place.

Martin Clifford soon showed that he knew his business. Even Wibley had to admire the skill with which he pulled the crowd together, and hammered into their minds a realisation of their parts. Mr. Clifford's face wore a cheery smile the whole time, and he did not observe the thoughtfulness in Wibley's expressive features. To his eyes, William Wibley was one of the crowd of schoolboys, and he was quite unaware of the greatness of Wibley in his own particular line.

Harry Wharton and Co. were delighted with their coach.

Lines delivered by Mr. Clifford seemed to acquire a new value and meaning, and he had no end of patience, and would go over the same thing a dozen times, if necessary. Even Bob Cherry began to deliver his lines with effect, under Mr. Clifford's skilful guidance. The crowd in the Rag were still busy when there was a tap at the door, and a youth presented himself with a letter. It was Trotter, the house page.

"Mr. Clifford 'ere?" asked Trotter.

"Here he is."

"This 'ere letter, sir, jest brought over from Cameron Lodge," said Trotter.

Martin Clifford took the letter.

"Excuse me, you fellows," he said.

"Certainly, sir."



Mr. Clifford opened the letter, and glanced through it, then a little wrinkle appeared on his rather boyish brow.

"Blow!" he was heard to mutter.

The Remove Dramatic Society waited.

"Can I use a telephone here?" asked Mr. Clifford, glancing round.

"Mr. Quelch would be glad," said Harry.

"I—I hope it's no bad news, sir."

"But it is rotten."

"Oh!"

"Nothing less than a demand for copy by Monday," said Martin Clifford.

"Oh!"

"I shall have to telephone that I am dead or dying," said Martin Clifford thoughtfully.

"I'll come back when I've telephoned."

And the celebrated author left the Rag.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

### Rescuing Martin Clifford!

I SAY, you fellows——"

Billy Bunter put a grinning face into the Rag.

The juniors were going on with the rehearsal of "Why Nora Left Home," but in a rather desultory way in the absence of Mr. Clifford. They missed that gentleman very much.

True, Wibley was there to take his place, and William Wibley was quite prepared to take it. Wibley had a secret conviction that he could "do the trick" much better than Mr. Clifford. But the other fellows did not agree with Wibley.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Tubby!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Seen anything of Martin Clifford? He can't be 'phoning all this time."

Bunter gave a fat chuckle.

"Quelch's got him," he replied.

"Quelchy!"

"I just passed the study," grinned Bunter. "Martin's been using the telephone, and now Quelchy's got him into a chat."

"Oh, dear!"

"They're on the subject of Quelchy's historical works," said Bunter, "I looked in. Quelchy is going nineteen to the dozen, and Martin is smiling politely with one side of his face—the side Quelchy can see. But you should see the expression on the other side."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't suppose Clifford will get away again before bedtime," said Bunter agreeably. "You fellows had better chuck it."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Let's get on," said Wibley. "I want you to make a bit of a change in your part Wharton. I'll explain——"

"Rats!"

"I'm not satisfied with the speech in the first act——"

"Martin Clifford's satisfied."

"Martin Clifford's an ass," said Wibley. "I tell you I don't think nearly so much of Martin Clifford as I did. Some of his ideas are simply asinine. Quite opposed to mine."

"Bow-wow!"

"Look at the way he does the part of Helmar," said Wibley. "Not at all as I was planning the part."

"Naturally," said Bob Cherry. "Improved out of all recognition, ain't it, Wib?"

"Fathead!"

Wibley looked quite cross.

But the Dramatic Society were not worrying about Wib; they wanted their theatrical manager, who had been bagged by Mr. Quelch. It really was hard lines on the youthful actors to have their leading gentleman bagged in this way.

"Cut along and see if they're still chinning, Bob," said Harry Wharton at last. "We can't keep on waiting. We shall have to rescue Martin Clifford somehow."

"Righto!" said Bob Cherry.

He left the Rag, and scouted along to Mr. Quelch's study.

The door was open—giving a view of the interior from the passage. Mr. Martin Clifford and Mr. Henry Quelch were engaged in a deep but one-sided conversation. Mr. Quelch was doing the talking and Mr. Clifford was doing the listening.

The Remove Master was on the subject of his historical work, of which Martin Clifford had taken away the manuscript the previous day. Doubtless the famous author was well aware that his young friends were impatiently awaiting him in the Rag; but politeness held him chained to the armchair in Mr. Quelch's study.

When Mr. Quelch was on the subject of his



"History of Greyfriars," he was lost to all considerations of time and space, and he had no doubt whatever that Mr. Clifford was equally interested.

He did not see Bob Cherry glance in at the doorway, though Martin Clifford did.

Bob returned to the Rag.

"Going strong," he announced. "Mr. Clifford's bagged—fairly muzzled. How are we going to get him out?"

"No need——" began Wibley.

"Shut up, Wibley!" roared a dozen voices.

"I tell you——" snorted Wibley.

"Dry up!"

"Somebody sit on him!"

"Don't jaw, Wib, for goodness' sake!"

"The jawfulness is terrific, my esteemed Wibley."

Wibley contented himself with snorting again. Harry Wharton and Co. held a consultation.

"That chap Clifford is a bit of an ass," remarked Johnny Bull. "Why can't he shut Quelchy up and clear? I would."

"The politeness, my esteemed Johnny——"

"Oh, bother his politeness!" grunted Johnny Bull. "What about our play?"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Wharton, I was going to make a suggestion to help you out," said Bunter, blinking seriously at the captain of the Remove. "If you like I'll take my friend Martin's place at the rehearsal!"

"Dry up!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"I've got an idea," said Squiff. "Quelchy has got to be called off. If there's nobody in the prefects' room, I'll ring him up on his telephone, and get him away."

"But how——"

"Come on and see," answered Squiff.

The juniors left the Rag, and fortunately found the prefects' room unoccupied. Squiff was soon busy on the telephone there.

Five minutes later the interesting conversation in Mr. Quelch's study was interrupted by the buzz of the telephone bell.

Mr. Quelch suddenly stopped short in his remarks.

"Excuse me a moment, Mr. Clifford," he said as he rose.

He took up the receiver.

"Yes?"

"Is that Mr. Quelch at Greyfriars?"

"Yes. Mr. Quelch speaking."

"Could you possibly come down to the vicarage at once?"

"Bless my soul! I could, certainly. But what——"

"I am sorry to disturb you, Mr. Quelch, but the matter is extremely important. I should take it as a very great favour if you could make

it convenient to come immediately."

"Certainly. But——"

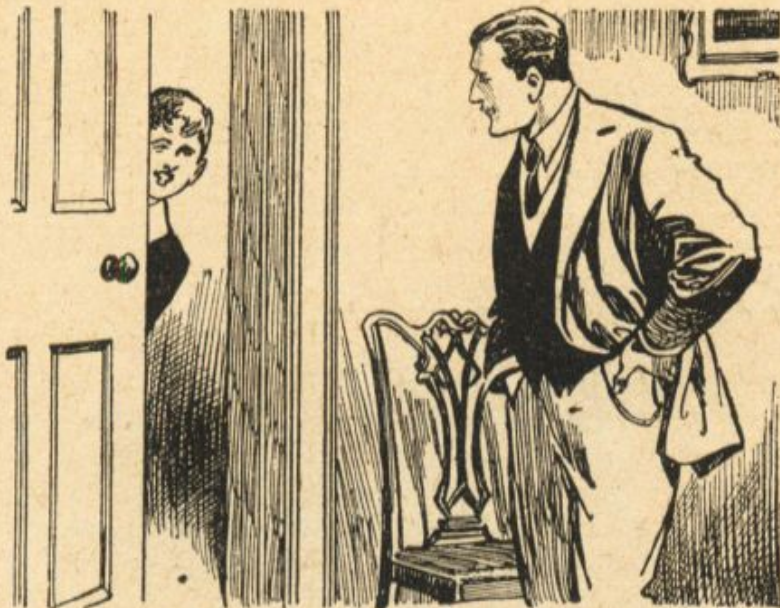
"Thank you so much."

The interlocutor at the other end of the wire rang off. Mr. Quelch put up the receiver with a puzzled expression.

"Very odd," he said, "very odd indeed! It was not Mr. Lambe speaking, though the voice certainly seemed very familiar to me. Will you excuse me, Mr. Clifford?"

"My dear sir, I shall be pleased—I mean——"

"A sudden call," said Mr. Quelch. "I do not know whether you are acquainted with Mr. Lambe, our vicar. I play chess with him one evening a week, but this is not the evening. Something must have happened, I hope



Martin Clifford saw Bob Cherry glance in at the doorway of Mr. Quelch's study—and suddenly disappear! (See Chapter 8)



nothing serious. If you will excuse me I will hurry."

And Mr. Quelch, quite concerned about what might have happened at the vicarage, almost skipped out of the study.

Martin Clifford drew a deep, deep breath.

He did not know the vicar of Friardale, but his feelings towards that gentleman at that moment were of the most cordial kind. He was feeling, in fact, very grateful.

Mr. Quelch had disappeared, and Martin Clifford was about to leave the study, when Bob Cherry's ruddy and smiling face looked in.

"We're waiting, sir," said Bob. "Come on."

"Righto!" said Mr. Clifford.

And he followed Bob Cherry down the corridor. But before they reached the Rag, the portly form of Mr. Hacker loomed up. The master of the Shell greeted Mr. Clifford very heartily, and shook hands with him most cordially. Bob Cherry suppressed a groan. Martin Clifford has been rescued from Mr. Quelch only to fall into the hands of Mr. Hacker—after escaping the perils of Scylla, he came to grief on Charybdis, as it were.

"A great pleasure to see you again, Mr. Clifford," said the master of the Shell. "Step into my study for a few minutes. I should like a chat with you—you are not going just yet?"

"Nunno! But——"

"You have looked over my manuscript?" asked Mr. Hacker, slipping his arm through Martin Clifford's and leading him away, without waiting for the unhappy author to finish.

"I—I——" murmured Martin Clifford.

"Very good! You did not find my handwriting too formidable?" asked Mr. Hacker, with a smile.

"I did not find it formidable at all, sir," said Martin Clifford, with perfect truth. He could scarcely have found the handwriting formidable, without looking at the manuscript.

"And what do you think of my papers?"

"I—I——"

"Come into my study, my dear sir. I can offer you a good cigar," said Mr. Hacker genially.

"The fact is——"

"This way, Mr. Clifford."

"The fact is, the juniors are expecting me——"

"Ah, I understand that you are interesting yourself in their little amusements," said Mr. Hacker indulgently. "Very kind of you, Mr. Clifford—very kind indeed. This is my study—pray step in."

"But the juniors——"

"Take that armchair; you will find it a comfortable one, Mr. Clifford. Try these cigars. Now, I want to know your candid opinion—your absolutely candid opinion—on the subject of your editor devoting three pages a week in the 'Gem' to my papers on the subject of fossilised remains——"

"But I—I——"

"I want you to speak with perfect frankness."

Martin Clifford resigned himself to his fate.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER

### From the Frying-Pan into the Fire

"**W**HERE is he?"

Half a dozen voices asked that question as Bob Cherry came into the Rag, with a frowning brow. Bob Cherry sparred into the air.

"Hacker's got him!" he said.

"Hacker!" yelled Wharton.

"Bagged him in the passage, and fairly kidnapped him!" howled Bob. "The poor chap tried to escape, but you know Hacker! Get on the telephone again, Squiff—we're not going to have our guest bored to death in this way. And the rehearsal——"

"You can leave that to me!" suggested Wibley. "I——"

"Shut up, Wibley!"

"For goodness' sake, give us a rest, Wib," said Harry Wharton. "We shall never get going at this rate. Go and 'phone to Hacker, Squiff—it's the only way."

"Right you are!" said Squiff, with a chuckle. And he cut off.

The telephone bell rang in Mr. Hacker's study—rescuing Martin Clifford from a long disquisition on the entrancing subject of fossilised remains. Mr. Hacker impatiently took up the receiver—keeping one eye on his



guest, as if fearing that Martin Clifford might escape while he was occupied.

"What is it? What is wanted?" snapped Mr. Hacker into the transmitter.

"Is that Mr. Hacker?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Will you come down to the vicarage immediately——"

"The vicarage? Is that Mr. Lambe speaking?"

"It is very important—a most serious matter. For goodness' sake, Mr. Hacker, do not delay a moment. I rely upon you."

"But—but what has happened?"

No answer.

Mr. Hacker hung up the receiver with an irritable gesture.

"Really, some people are most unreasonable, Mr. Clifford!" he exclaimed. "I am called away suddenly to the vicarage——"

"The vicarage!" repeated Martin Clifford, with a slight start.

"Yes, Mr. Lambe is an old friend, and I cannot very well decline, as he is so urgent. You will excuse my sudden departure, I am sure."

"Certainly." Martin Clifford did not add with how much pleasure he excused Mr. Hacker.

He quitted the study with the master of the Shell, and Mr. Hacker hurried away for his hat and coat.

"Mr. Clifford, I believe?"

A stout, red-faced gentleman dawned upon Martin Clifford from the doorway of the next study.

"Pray allow me to introduce myself," said the stout gentleman cordially—"Paul Pontifex Prout, the master of the Fifth Form here. I am delighted to make your acquaintance, Mr. Clifford. I have often wished to meet you. Will you honour me by stepping into my study?"

"I——"

"Pray come in—I shall enjoy a chat with you," said Mr. Prout, "Since I heard that you were here, too, an idea had come into my mind, which I am really anxious to communicate to you."

Bob Cherry, coming along the corridor, was

just in time to see Martin Clifford led into the Fourth Form master's study.

Bob retreated again with feelings too deep to be expressed in words.

Mr. Prout beamed on his visitor.

"A chat with a gentleman of your literary abilities is always a pleasure," he remarked, "pray sit down. Now, the idea that came into my mind is this, Mr. Clifford——"

"I——"

"I was not always a schoolmaster," said Mr. Prout. He waved his hand to the walls, which were plentifully decorated with souvenirs of Mr. Prout's earlier and more strenuous days, the days when he had been a mighty hunter. "I have trodden the wild places of the earth, Mr. Clifford—many a ferocious grizzly has fallen before my deadly rifle. You see the rifle hanging there——"

"I——"

"With that rifle, sir," said Mr. Prout, impressively, "I shot the largest grizzly ever seen in the Rocky Mountains."

"Really——"

"Figure to yourself, sir," said Mr. Prout, warming to his subject. "Imagine the scene—my Indian guides were far off—I was alone, sir, on the mighty mountains, when that gigantic grizzly emerged suddenly from the thicket, within six paces of me."

"A dangerous situation," said Mr. Clifford, shaking his head. "A most disconcerting thing to be tackled by any beast at an inopportune moment."

"Exactly, sir. But did I lose my nerve?" asked Mr. Prout. He went on without waiting for Martin Clifford to reply, "No, sir! Not Paul Prout! My rifle sprang to my shoulder—flash! bang!! The grizzly gave one fearful roar, sir, and lay dead at my feet!"

"A lucky shot!" said Mr. Clifford, "but——"

"But for that, sir," said Mr. Prout, "I should not be here talking to you at the present moment."

Martin Clifford wondered whether the shot had been so lucky after all.

"Now, sir," continued Mr. Prout. "I believe I may be of use to you. My life has been one of adventure—until the last twenty years. I have often thought of putting my experiences into a book. But I have little time for



literary work. What would you say, sir?" said Mr. Prout, with a beaming smile, "if I offered to place the history of my adventurous life at your disposal, to be used in your writings?"

Mr. Prout paused, doubtless expecting a burst of fervent gratitude.

Martin Clifford suppressed a groan.

As in a dreadful vision, he saw himself chained to Mr. Prout's study, listening to long, long stories of that redoubtable nimrod's adventurous youth, and grappling with the problem of suppressing his yawns unseen!

Fortunately, at that moment the telephone bell rang.

Mr. Prout gracefully excused himself and took up the receiver. Martin Clifford glanced at him, curiously. He was beginning to think these successive telephone calls rather odd; and he was hardly surprised when Mr. Prout turned from the instrument with a puzzled expression, and said—

"Most extraordinary! I am requested to proceed to the vicarage without a moment's delay—something must have happened, but Mr. Lambe has given me no particulars. We must postpone our little chat, Mr. Clifford—another time I shall be happy—"

"Pray lose no time," said Mr. Clifford courteously.

Mr. Prout lost no time. Martin Clifford was able to return to the Rag at last, where he was received with open arms.

He noticed there were smiling faces among the juniors. Billy Bunter emitted a fat chuckle.

"He, he, he! I wonder what they'll all do when they get to the vicarage—yaroooh! wharrer you stamping on my foot for, Cherry, you beast?"

"We're quite ready to go on, Mr. Clifford," said Harry Wharton hastily.

And they went on.

If Mr. Clifford had any suspicion with regard to those mysterious telephone calls, he kept it to himself. And the first rehearsal of "Why Nora left Home" proceeded, amid general satisfaction—unshared only by William Wibley, who somehow did not seem to be enjoying himself. And when Mr. Martin Clifford took his leave, he left an enthusiastic Dramatic

Society behind him—and William Wibley was the only one unenthusiastic!

## THE TENTH CHAPTER

### A Surprise for Mr. Lambe!

"MR. QUELCH!"

Mr. Lambe was in his study at the vicarage, at work on his sermon for the following Sunday, when the Remove master of Greyfriars was shown in.

He rose politely to greet his visitor, though his plump and placid countenance expressed surprise.

"Come in, my dear Quelch!" said the vicar, "to what do I owe—"

"What has happened?"

"Eh?"

"If I can be of any help, I shall, of course, be delighted," said Mr. Quelch. "I hope it is no misfortune—"

"Misfortune—"

"Not a case of serious illness—"

"Illness?" said the vicar dazedly.

"I came at once," said Mr. Quelch, "I was engaged in a most interesting conversation with Mr. Martin Clifford when I received your call—I fear he may think my departure rather abrupt. But, of course, when I heard that it was important, I came immediately."

Mr. Lambe blinked at him.

"I do not understand you in the least," he remarked. "I quite fail to follow you, Mr. Quelch."

Then it was Mr. Quelch's turn to blink.

"Really, Mr. Lambe, I presume that something of an unusual and untoward nature has happened here—"

"Not in the least."

"Then may I ask why I was so suddenly summoned by telephone?" asked Mr. Quelch, tartly.

"By—by telephone! You are not under the impression that I telephoned to you, surely?"

"Someone from the vicarage, at least. Did you give—"

"You have certainly not been telephoned from here, Mr. Quelch. The fact is that my telephone is out of order—a natural outcome of Government control of the service. So you see that it is impossible."





"You see that rifle hanging there?" said Mr. Prout proudly. "With that rifle, sir, I shot the largest grizzly ever seen in the Rocky Mountains!" (Chapter 9)

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

He stared blankly at the vicar.

"Is—is—is it possible that a trick has been played upon me—a foolish practical joke!" he exclaimed, at last.

"I fear so—indeed, it must certainly be so, if you supposed——"

There was a tap on the door, and it opened.

"Mr. Hacker!"

The Shell master of Greyfriars came hurriedly in.

"My dear Lambe——"

"My dear Hacker——"

"Nothing serious, I hope? Of course, I came at once—I had to leave Mr. Clifford, with whom I was engaged at the moment, very hurriedly—pray tell me what has occurred. Any aid or advice I can render——"

"Nothing has occurred, Mr. Hacker," said the vicar. "Only I have just learned from Mr. Quelch that he has been summoned here by a false telephone call——"

"Is it possible? Did you not telephone to me——"

"Certainly I did not."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Hacker.

The three gentlemen looked at one another. Mr. Quelch's jaw closed a good deal like a vice.

"Apparently, we have both been victims of the same practical joker," he said. "It must have been some person belonging to Greyfriars—some mischievous junior, I presume——"

Mr. Hacker breathed hard through his nose.

"I—I—I will find that junior!" he gasped.

"I—I—I will make an example of him! Really—really——"



"It was very kind of you to come so immediately, in the belief that I needed your presence, gentlemen," said Mr. Lambe graciously, "but——"

He glanced at his unfinished sermon.

He was quite grateful to the two gentlemen for having turned up so promptly; but, possibly, he would have been still more grateful for their immediate departure. For the sermon had to be finished in time for a meeting of the Dorcas Society—which could not be put off, because the committee of the Blanket Fund had to be seen afterwards. Mr. Lambe was a very busy gentleman. But he was not to be relieved of his visitors so soon as he hoped. A ring was heard at the door-bell.

Tap! The study door opened, and the trim maid announced:

"Mr. Prout!"

The Fifth-form master bustled in.

He was crimson with hurrying, having trodden almost upon Mr. Hacker's tracks on his way to the vicarage.

He glanced at the vicar and at his two colleagues.

"My dear Lambe——"

"Mr. Prout—really——"

"So you are here, Mr. Quelch—and you, Mr. Hacker," exclaimed Mr. Prout. "Good! We will put our heads together over this affair—rely upon us, my dear Lambe. I do not know yet what the difficulty is, but I understand that it is a very important matter. You have three friends here who will not hesitate to——"

"But—but——"

"Will not hesitate, sir, to render any—any advice in their power," said Mr. Prout. "Pray state the circumstances."

"There are no——"

"Be frank, sir, you are among friends," said Mr. Prout. "I hurried off at once, very much to the disappointment of a gentleman I was engaged with at the moment. I am delighted to find Quelch and Hacker here. In times of trouble, all a man's true friends should rally round him. Any counsel I can give you——"

"But—my dear sir——"

"A friend's advice, sir—a friend's advice!" said Mr. Prout. "We three shall straighten

out the difficulty, I am sure of that. If it is a question of the anti-Ritualists——"

"Nothing of the kind. I——"

"The fact is, Prout——" began Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Prout waved a plump hand.

"Let Mr. Lambe explain," he said. "Whatever the trouble is, we shall exert our very best endeavours upon it. Now, in a word, Lambe, what is the matter?"

"Nothing is the matter!" said Mr. Lambe, with a touch of tartness. "If you would allow me to speak, Mr. Prout——"

"Really, sir, then why——"

"You have been called here by some practical joker——"

"What!" thundered Mr. Prout.

"I did not telephone——"

"The telephone call came from here, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "Of that I am convinced."

"My telephone is not in working order."

"Eh!"

"And has not been used for days——"

"Oh!"

"So you see, sir, that the telephone call cannot have come from this house," said Mr. Lambe with acerbity. "No doubt some boy in your school has been playing a trick."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Prout.

Mr. Quelch coughed.

"Let us go!" he said. "We shall—er—pursue our inquiries better at Greyfriars."

"A trick!" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "A—a—a trick! I—the victim of a trick! Why, I—I will—will—will——" Words failed Paul Pontifex Prout. "Let us go," he gasped. "Let us discover——"

The three masters went, much to Mr. Lambe's relief. They walked back to Greyfriars more slowly than they had walked to the vicarage—and in a much worse humour.

Gosling, the porter, noted their expressions as they came in, and Gosling smiled. He read in their faces that there was severe trouble in store for somebody. And Gosling charitably hoped that it was for "them young limbs" of the Remove.

Three angry gentlemen were soon making wrathful inquiries in the School House. Harry Wharton and Co. were at tea in No. 1 Study



—a rather late tea—when Billy Bunter rolled in, grinning.

"You fellows are in for it!" announced Bunter.

"Chuck the loaf at him," said Bob Cherry.

"Of course, I'm not going to give you away," said Bunter. "It would serve you right, after the way you've turned down my services in the play. But I won't! Besides, there's no need. He, he, he! Quelchy's on the track!"

"How?" demanded Wharton.

Bunter chuckled.

"I've just heard him on his 'phone," he explained. "He's asking them at the exchange to tell him the number that called up this afternoon—the three calls that came to Greyfriars."

"Oh, my hat!"

"They—they don't tell 'em those things at the exchange," said Bob Cherry, in dismay.

"I'll bet you they'll tell Quelchy," said Bunter. "As it was a Greyfriars number that rung up, they've no reason not to. They'll give him the number of the telephone, and he'll know——"

"Great Scott!"

"The great-scottfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Quelchy will discover that he was called up on a Greyfriars telephone——"

"Phew!"

"Lucky Martin Clifford's gone—we don't want him to see us called over the coals," said Nugent dismally. "I—I fancy he suspected there was something fishy about those telephone calls."

"We—we had to rescue him," said Bob.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "Better tell Quelchy that! Tell him you had to rescue Martin from his terrific jawfulness! He, he, he!"

"It was their own fault, you know," said Harry Wharton, looking round. "They shouldn't have bagged our celebrated author."

"Certainly they shouldn't!" said Johnny Bull. "But——"

"Like their confounded check," said Nugent. "But——"

"The butfulness is terrific, my esteemed chums."

Wibley looked into the study. There was a peculiar grin on William Wibley's face.

"You fellows have done it now!" he said.

"Well, what is it now?" asked Bob Cherry, in a tone of patient resignation.

"They've found out that those telephone calls came from Greyfriars, and Quelchy's ordered all the Remove to be questioned."

"Oh!"

"Why couldn't you leave Martin Clifford where he was?" said Wibley. "You can't deny that I advised you to. Didn't I keep on telling you that I could conduct the rehearsal ever so much better——"

"Oh, go and eat coke."

"Well, you've done it now," said Wibley. "I'm sorry for you, but I must say I think it serves you right. When you call in an ass like Martin Clifford——"

"Oh, bump him!" said Bob Cherry.

"Here, I say—leggo, you silly asses—oh!"

The chums of the Remove were worried, and they had a strong inclination to "take it out" of somebody. So they took it out of Wibley. He was irritating; and he came in handy. William Wibley smote the study floor, and yelled.

"Come on, you chaps," called out Vernon-Smith from the passage. "Never mind that idiot now—we're wanted downstairs. Keep it dark if you can."

"If!" growled Bob Cherry.

"I wonder how the thump Quelchy guesses it was us!" said Squiff. "Might have been anybody at Greyfriars who rang up——"

"He knows us, I suppose!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Come on, my infants, like giddy lambs to the slaughter."

And Harry Wharton and Co. proceeded dismally to the Remove form-room, and filed in under the gimlet-eye of their form master.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

### Bunter Breaks the News!

"HI!"  
Martin Clifford glanced at the fat junior standing in the road, and slowed down the little two-seater he was driving on the way to Greyfriars.

Billy Bunter waved a fat hand at him.

"Give me a lift?" he called out.



"Oh, certainly!"

Mr. Clifford stopped the little car, and William George Bunter rolled into the vacant seat. The Owl of the Remove had met Mr. Clifford a mile from Greyfriars, and he settled down comfortably for a run back to the school. The young man set the car in motion again.

"Not so fast, please!" said Bunter.

"Eh?"

"I don't like going so fast," said Bunter, agreeably. "I like to take my motor-drives easy."

"Oh!" said Mr. Clifford.

He slowed down. He was in no hurry, if it came to that; but he cast a rather curious glance at his fat companion. Billy Bunter gave him a genial grin.

"Besides, I can't talk when you're racing along," he explained.

"Is there any very strict necessity for conversation in this instance?" inquired Mr. Clifford mildly.

"This is a jolly little car," said Bunter, without heeding the question. "How much did you give for it?"

"The price, naturally," replied Mr. Clifford.

"But how much was that?" asked Bunter inquisitively.

"It was the amount asked by the maker."

"But what amount did he ask?"

"The sum he named."

"What sum did he name, then?"

"The price of the car," answered Mr. Clifford blandly.

Bunter grunted. By this time he had realised that Mr. Clifford was gently pulling his leg, and did not mean to satisfy his inquisitiveness.

"I—I suppose you don't have any accidents?" he said, as the little car dodged round a motor-lorry from Wapshot Camp.

"Seldom," said Mr. Clifford. "The last time I killed my passenger——"

"Eh?"

"What is the matter, Master Bunter?"

"I—I think you'd better go more slowly," said Bunter. "Much more slowly. There's no hurry, you know. There won't be any rehearsal to-day."

Martin Clifford looked at him.

"No rehearsal?" he asked. "I understood

that the second rehearsal took place to-day; that is what I am going to Greyfriars for."

"He, he, he! It's all off!" chuckled Bunter. "You see, it came out yesterday about the telephone calls from the prefects' room."

"What?"

"The whole lot of them were called up before Quelchy," explained Bunter. "It came out that Squiff had telephoned, and made those three old donkeys march down to the vicarage. Old Lambe must have been surprised to see them. He, he, he!"

Martin Clifford frowned a little. Probably he had had his suspicions.

"Quelchy was no end ratty!" rattled on Bunter. "Every chap concerned in it has five hundred lines——"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Clifford.

"And the Remove Dramatic Society is forbidden to give any performances this term."

"Oh!"

"Quelchy thinks that's making the punishment fit the crime," said Bunter. "He put it before the head, and the Head gave the verdict. So the play's dished. I don't think Wibley minds much."

"Oh, Wibley does not mind?" asked Mr. Clifford.

"No. You see, he was awfully ratty at having the play taken out of his hands," explained Bunter.

Mr. Clifford gave a start.

"The other fellows are no end wild," said Bunter. "They're going to give the play all the same, so they say—and they're going to get you to back them up all the same."

"My hat!" said Martin Clifford.

"Are you going to do it, old top?" asked Bunter. "I—I say, don't go so fast!"

But Mr. Clifford did not seem to hear this time. He drove on the car at a spanking rate, which deprived him of the further pleasures of Billy Bunter's conversation.

They arrived at Greyfriars very quickly. In the gateway Harry Wharton and Co. could be seen, evidently awaiting the arrival of the celebrated author. They were all looking grim and thoughtful. Like the course of true love, the course of the Remove play was not running smooth. The heroic measures adopted to rescue Martin Clifford the previous





Tap! The study door opened, and the trim maid announced: "Mr. Prout!" The Fifth Form Master bustled in, crimson with hurrying, and glanced at his two colleagues. "Rely on us, my dear Lambe!" said Mr. Prout. "Pray state the circumstances!" (See Chapter 10)

day from the tender mercies of Mr. Quelch, Mr. Hacker, and Mr. Prout had had disastrous consequences. The three masters had naturally been "wrathy." The Head had been called into the matter, after the examination in the form-room. And the fiat had gone forth. For the remainder of that term the Remove Dramatic Society were condemned to a masterly inactivity.

"Here he is!"

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Clifford!"

Mr. Clifford was very warmly welcomed. There was no doubt that the heroes of the Remove were very glad to see him. But Martin Clifford's feelings were mingled. He deeply sympathised with the disappointed

dramatists. But he realised that the situation was awkward.

The car was put up, and Mr. Clifford walked in with the crowd of juniors. They marched him into No. 1 Study, where all the members of the dramatic society foregathered. Only one face wore a smile. It was William Wibley's. Wibley was not feeling disappointed. It was unpleasant, of course, to have the play postponed till the next term, when Martin Clifford would no longer be available. But then it would be entirely in the hands of Wibley, and William regarded that as a great improvement on previous arrangements. The too-powerful ally was to render back the kingdom he had inadvertently swallowed,



"Has Bunter told you, sir——" began Harry Wharton.

"Yes."

"The play's prohibited," said Vernon Smith. "But we're not taking it lying down."

"No fear!"

"The no-fearfulness is terrific."

"We're jolly well going to stand up for our rights!" said Bob Cherry.

"You bet!" said Squiff emphatically.

Martin Clifford looked rather dismayed.

"But——" he said.

"Mr. Quelch isn't really a bad sort," said Wharton. "But you know what form-masters are, Mr. Clifford!"

"Ah!"

"He thinks we were awfully cheeky in ringing him up to get you out of his clutches," said Nugent. "What else could we have done?"

"The only way, what?" smiled Mr. Clifford.

"Exactly."

"Of course, it must have been rather awkward when they all met at the vicarage," said Wharton. "But Quelchy shouldn't have bagged our author."

"And Hacker shouldn't!" said Vernon-Smith.

"And Prout shouldn't!" said Bob Cherry.

"Quelchy doesn't understand, you know," continued Wharton. "He actually thinks we've bored you and bothered you, Mr. Clifford, in getting you into our play, and he says your time is too valuable to be taken up with such stuff. He called it stuff!"

"Stuff!" said Bob Cherry, in tones of deep and thrilling indignation. "Our play! Stuff!"

"But—but the word of the Head is law, I suppose," said Martin Clifford, glancing round at the determined faces that surrounded him.

"Well, that depends," said Wharton cautiously.

"The dependfulness is terrific."

"We're not going to stand it," explained Wharton. "Having justice on our side, we're going to give the play all the same. Greyfriars fellows never shall be slaves."

"We're standing up against it," said Johnny Bull, "and we want you to be our leader, Mr. Clifford."

Mr. Clifford jumped.

He liked the Greyfriars juniors immensely, and he was prepared to put himself at their service, even to the extent of postponing the despatch of "copy" to his editor in London. But to find himself selected as the leader of a rebellion at Greyfriars was rather disconcerting.

Evidently the thing was impossible. The excited and exasperated juniors did not see the impossibility. But Martin Clifford did—clearly.

"Now the question is one of ways and means!" said Harry Wharton. "I vote that we turn this meeting into a council of war, with Mr. Clifford in the chair."

"Hear, hear!"

"But——" gasped Martin Clifford.

"If necessary, we shall have a barring-out," said Bob Cherry.

"A—a—a barring-out!"

"Yes, rather! I've heard that you were mixed up in a barring-out when you were a schoolboy, Mr. Clifford."

"Ye-es," said Mr. Clifford, with a faint smile. "But—I—I was very young at the time——"

"You're not exactly a Methuselah now," said Bob. "You'd enjoy it."

"I—I——"

Martin Clifford paused. His dismay was great.

"One moment," he said. "I—I remember that I must telephone—if I may use the telephone——"

"Don't use Quelchy's—he will bag you again——"

"Or Hacker's!"

"Or Prout's!"

"I'll take you to the prefects' room, sir," said Bob Cherry. "Wingate will be glad to see you, and he won't bag you like those bores."

"Thank you very much."

And Martin Clifford followed Bob Cherry down the stairs, while the meeting in No. 1 Study proceeded to pass excited resolutions. Upon one point they were all agreed. They weren't going to stand Mr. Quelch's nonsense, and Martin Clifford was going to be their leader in a revolt which should break all previous records at Greyfriars!



## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

### Exit Martin Clifford!

WINGATE of the Sixth greeted the celebrated author cordially when Bob Cherry showed him into the prefects' room. The telephone was placed immediately at the service of Mr. Martin Clifford. Bob Cherry left him there—Mr. Clifford knew his way back to No. 1 Study when he was finished.

The "Gem" author took up the receiver, and asked for his number.

"Fleetway House!" came a voice on the wires.

"Put me through to the editor of the 'Gem,' please."

"Hallo!" came a deep voice a minute later.

"Martin Clifford speaking. Do you still want that copy for Monday?"

"Yes, rather!" said the "Gem" editor emphatically. "Shall be pleased to get it."

"Righto! It's coming along. I'm making one jump from here to the typewriter."

"Good man!"

Martin Clifford had a cautious expression on his face as he looked out of the prefects' room. The coast was clear.

He walked quietly away; and his steps did not lead him in the direction of No. 1 Study.

In that study, the prospective rebels were engaged in warm discussion, while they waited for the return of their prospective leader.

Martin Clifford strolled quietly into the quadrangle.

"I say, Mr. Clifford——"

It was Billy Bunter.

Martin Clifford smothered an exclamation. The fat junior blinked at him curiously through his big spectacles.

"Not going already?" he asked.

"Hem!"

"I had something rather important to say to you, Mr. Clifford," continued Bunter, "I was going to say it in the car, only you were talking all the time——"

"Oh!" Mr. Clifford turned away.

"I couldn't get a word in. The fact is—don't walk away while I'm talking to you, Mr. Clifford."

"I have to see to my car," said Mr. Clifford.

"But you're not going yet?"

Mr. Clifford did not answer, but he quickened his pace. Much as he liked the heroes of the Re-

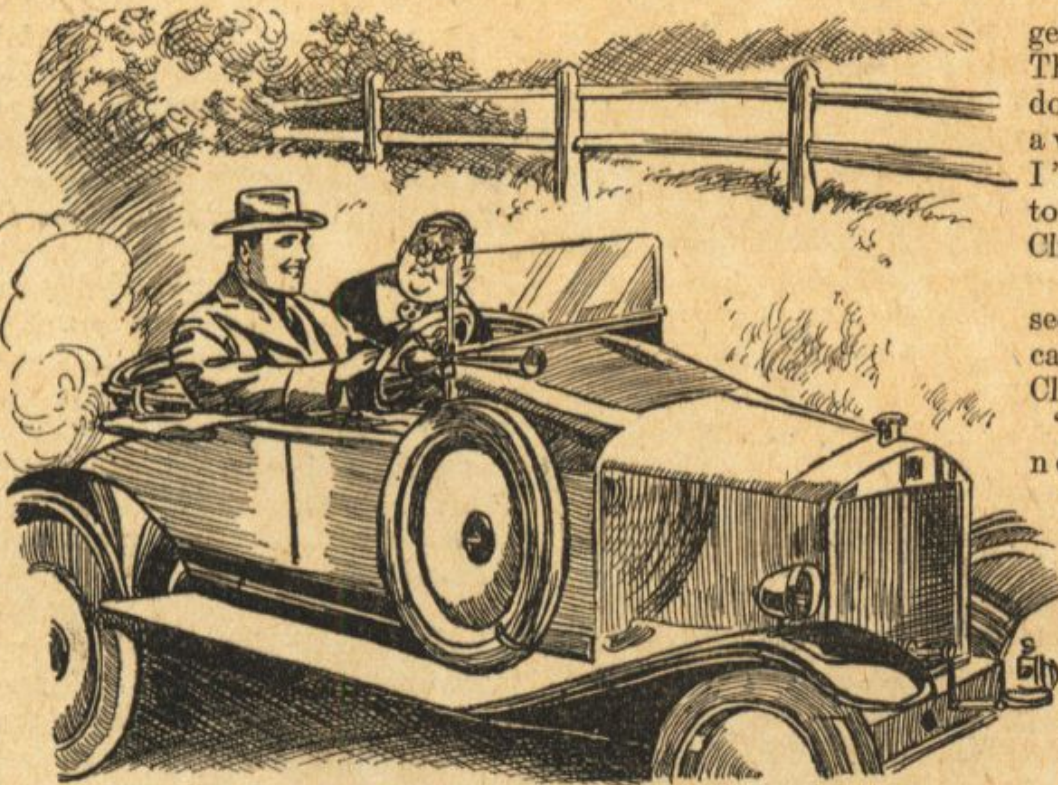
move, he felt that it would be judicious to leave Greyfriars without another meeting—explanations were awkward. Awkward explanations were much better made by post.

Bunter trotted along by his side. He had something very important to say, and he meant to say it.

"The fact is, Mr. Clifford," he resumed, "I was expecting a postal order to-day——"

"Eh!"

"From one of my titled relations," said Bunter.



Billy Bunter shivered as the car gathered speed. "Not so fast!" he said.

"I like to take my motor-drives easy!" (See Chapter 11)



"Oh!"

"It hasn't come!" said Bunter. "You know what it means when the Post Office is run by the Government—chap never gets a postal-order he's expecting. It leaves me in a rather unpleasant position. At the present moment, Mr. Clifford, I am actually stony."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Clifford.

He turned into the garage, and gave his attention to the little two-seater. Bunter blinked at him anxiously.

"We've become jolly good friends, haven't we, Mr. Clifford?"

"My dear boy," said Mr. Clifford, "I have never had of any other person such an opinion as I have of you."

Bunter smiled with satisfaction.

"Good!" he said. "That's right! You wouldn't mind lending me——"

"Perhaps you had better stand aside, while I am starting the car," suggested Mr. Clifford.

"If you are not insured, Bunter, it would be judicious, to say the least."

Bunter hopped out of the way very quickly.

"Don't start for a minute, Mr. Clifford. Ten shillings——"

Buzzzzzzz!

"Which I would return by registered post immediately my postal-order arrived——"

Buzzzzzz!

"Look here, Mr. Clifford——"

"Stand clear!"

"Yah!" roared Bunter, in great wrath, as the car glided away. "Look here—yah! Beast!"

That was Bunter's parting valediction to the celebrated "Gem" author as the car glided away.

Bunter stood and blinked after it for a few moments, with an enraged blink that bade fair to crack his spectacles.

Then, with a snort, he rolled away to the schoolhouse.

By the time he reached No. 1 Study, Martin Clifford's car was far in the distance.

Billy Bunter put a grinning face into No. 1 Study. He had been disappointed in his expectation of "raising the wind" with Mr. Clifford. But there was a greater disappointment in store for Harry Wharton and Co.

(Continued on page 81).

## Visit of Queen Elizabeth to Greyfriars.

A Landmark in the History of the Old School.

**I**N the Year of Grace, 1564, Greyfriars School was favoured with a Royal visit.

It was in the sixth year of her thrilling and prosperous reign that "Good Queen Bess," as she was popularly called, decided to pay a visit to the famous Kentish school, where many gallants of her Court had received their education.

The arrival of the Queen on horseback, accompanied by Sir Walter Raleigh and two attendants of less note, caused a profound sensation at the old school. There was, of course, a whole day's holiday to mark the event, and Greyfriars made high festival for Queen Bess was beloved by the boys of Britain.

That period was a remarkable one, because of the number of truly great men that adorned it. William Shakespeare, the greatest writer of all time; Sir Philip Sidney, the flower of perfect knighthood; Francis Drake, Martin Frobisher, and other gallant "sea-dogs"—all flourished in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

An ancient scribe thus records the memorable visit of the Queen:

"Her Majestie did arrive late in ye forenoon, attended by Sir Walter Raleigh and others of her train. When her noble steed cantered into ye quadrangle, 'twas the signal for a mighty cheer from ye goodly assemblie of scholars. Ye venerable headmaster, having made humble obeisance to her Majestie, did assist the Queen to alight from her steed, and did forthwith conduct Her Gracious Majestie around ye stately building.

"The Queen, having dined at Greyfriars and expressed great satisfaction withal, did take her departure; whereupon her Majestie was followed from ye precincts by a cheering throng, whose plaudits the Queen graciously acknowledged.

"'Twas in sooth a memorable occasion, which will endure for all time in ye school's annals."







(Continued from column 1, previous page.)

That was a solace to W. G. Bunter. So he grinned.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Scat!" said Bob Cherry. "Don't you come bothering now, Bunter—we're expecting Mr. Clifford any minute——"

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "Martin Clifford's gone!"

"What?"

"Gone!"

"Rats!"

"Kick him, somebody."

Bunter chortled.

"He's gone! I've just seen him off in his car! I was the only fellow he said good-bye to. He said he couldn't leave without saying good-bye to me, as I was the only fellow here he thought anything of. He—yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter broke off as half-a-dozen pairs of hands seized him, and he sat down in the doorway.

Harry Wharton and Co. rushed out of the study. Most of them trod on Bunter in passing, and they left the Owl of the Remove in a breathless state, gasping like a newly landed fish.

They sped downstairs in an excited crowd. Martin Clifford gone! What was to become of the revolt of the Remove, which he was to have led?

Harry Wharton ran into the Head's garage, and looked round.

"The car's gone!" he said.

"Come on!" panted Bob Cherry.

They rushed down to the gates.

In the distance, there was a rapidly moving

speck in a cloud of dust. They stared at it, and it vanished as they stared.

Martin Clifford was gone!

The next day there was a letter from Martin Clifford, which a crowd of Greyfriars juniors read eagerly.

It expressed the great author's deep regrets, as well as his thanks for a really jolly time at Greyfriars.

Important affairs claimed him; but he hoped to renew his agreeable acquaintance with the Greyfriars fellows at a later date.

It was a very pleasant and polite letter; in fact, Hurree Janset Ram Singh justly remarked that the politeness was terrific.

But—Martin Clifford was gone!

"After all, it doesn't matter," remarked William Wibley thoughtfully. "In fact, I may say that it's all for the best."

"What?" howled Bob Cherry.

"I shall take the play in hand," explained Wibley. "I shall re-write it, and I shall play the leading part when it comes off. So you fellows will see, surely, that things couldn't really have happened better——"

"Oh, bump him!" grunted Johnny Bull.

The Remove Dramatic Society bumped Wibley, with energy and satisfaction. It was the only solace left to them, and they made the most of it.

The rebellion of the Remove never came off; and Mr. Quelch never knew what a narrow escape he had had.

He, as well as Harry Wharton and Co., retained very pleasant recollections of Martin Clifford at Greyfriars.

## THE END.



# Comical Coker!

By DICK PENFOLD

COKER is a comic creature,  
Burly as can be;  
Very plain in every feature,  
No Adonis he!

Coker had a motor cycle  
When the term began,  
Sent to him by Uncle Michael  
(What a generous man!)

When he set the thing in motion,  
Greene and Potter cried,  
"Don't go tumbling in the ocean;  
Careful how you ride!"

Like a streak of lightning flashing  
Coker sped from sight;  
Down the highway he went dashing,  
Fowls flew left and right.

Waggoners withdrew their horses  
To a safe retreat;  
Ev'n the comets in their courses  
Blinked at Coker's feat!

Onward at a mile a minute  
Was the side-car hurled;  
Lucky there was no one in it  
As it wheeled and whirled!

Coker, like a mad fanatic,  
Scattered crowds that day;  
Old gents, gouty and rheumatic,  
Hobbled clear, they say.

Then the climax! Coker pitches  
O'er the handle-bars;  
Drops into the worst of ditches,  
Seeing scores of stars!

Coker's costly motor cycle  
Now lies strewn in bits;  
And his worthy Uncle Michael  
Will have fifty fits!





# QUEER—BUT TRUE!

Some Interesting and Amusing Animal  
Stories, related by Leslie G. Mainland.\*

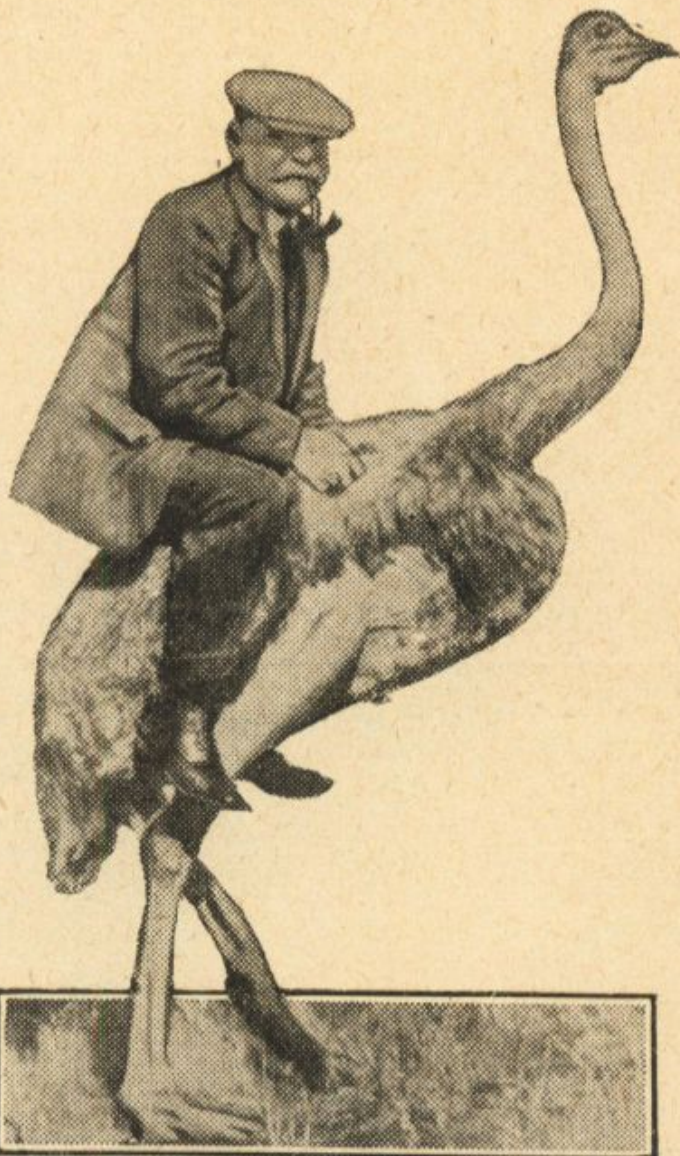
Illustrated by photographs, reproduced by permission of the "Daily Mail."

Now here are a lot of extraordinary things about the animals at the Zoological Gardens, and you *must* believe them because they are perfectly true.

There is never any need to "make-up" stories about the birds, beasts, reptiles, and fishes there, because nothing could be so funny, so wonderful, and so curious as the things that actually happen.

They are always surprising the people who have lived among them all their lives. Take the ordinary toad. You would think there are no surprises left about *him*—the ugly, common-place creature.

Well, there was just one thing we humans wanted to know about him, and that was how he uses his tongue when feeding. It is much too quick for the eye to follow. He bends over a grub or a meal worm, something flashes, and the grub simply *isn't*!



The Ostrich *can* be ridden—if you know how to do it!

"We will soon solve this little mystery," said the clever men. "We have a cinema camera here which will take 250 pictures in a single second. These photographs will show us how the toad uses his tongue, and then there will be one more secret solved."

So they gave a hungry toad at the Zoo a little heap of grubs to eat, and took a film of him as he had his lunch.

When they developed that film, they found the toad had beaten them after all. They were only just able to see the toad's tongue in three of the 250 pictures, which meant that—threes into 250—he took less than a *sixtieth* of a *second* over his grub, and how he used his tongue to lick up his prey was as big a mystery as ever.

There was the case of the Zoo otter, too, which surprised a very learned zoologist in a most annoying way.

\*Mr. Mainland is well known to many "listeners-in" as "Uncle Leslie."



A little girl threw a bun inside the otter's cage when the great man came by.

"Little girl," he said, stroking his beard, "you clearly know nothing about otters, or you would not give it a bun. Otters are water-loving creatures and live on fish. It is a waste of good food to throw buns to them. He would not like the taste, and his dentition—" he meant the otter's teeth—"is not fitted —" But at that moment he turned his head and saw that the wretched otter was actually eating the beastly bun!

So he had to cut short his lecture on the habits of the otter and walk off. And it was all so muddling for that small child, too!

There is a curious thing, too, about the cellars under the Reptile House, where they heat the hot-water pipes that keep the snakes warm and snug through the winter.

Years and years ago when the first American rattle-snakes were unpacked at the Reptile House, *something* escaped from the box and scuttled away into the cellars. Ever since then the *somethings* have multiplied there, and there are lots there to-day. If you were blindfolded and they put a bowl of these *somethings* under your nose and told you to sniff very hard, you would say at once, "Why, I am smelling a bowl of lovely roses!" Then the keepers would laugh and take the bandage off your eyes, and tell you to look; and you would be disgusted, for the beautiful scent comes from some huge black beetles, much larger ones than we are used to in this country. The things are called "Blatta Americana," and students—grown-up schoolboys—often ask for some to study.

Feeding is the cause of some of the greatest surprises at the Zoo; especially the kinds of food a creature takes. Some astonish you—reptiles especially—by doing without meals for years. There is a 20-foot python which has lived for *two and a half years* without a single meal. It is still too early to get anxious about him, for one lived in the Paris Zoo for *over three years* without a single bite of anything.

A tiny blind newt, called the "Proteus," has been known to live for *five years* without food. It is found in an underground cave in Austria, known as the Grotto of the Maddalena. Hundreds of feet of solid rock lie between the grotto and the sun, and there you will find a pool with a bed of mud. The Proteus is not always found there, but sometimes, from



The Cat Bear.

even deeper caves, an underground flood comes which swells up to the Maddalena pool. When the flood sinks down into the depths of the rock, a shoal of these pinky-grey newts is left behind, thrown up from some mysterious cavern no one has ever seen. Let a single ray of sunshine fall on one of these queer creatures and, in spite of its blindness, it squirms as if in terrible pain.

When the Zoo has a Proteus in the Reptile House, water-creatures from the Alligator's Pool are put in its tank, so that it *can* feed if it wants to.

Compare the five-year fast of the Pro-

teus with the case of the tiny humming bird, which starves to death if it goes for more than a single night without food. When a French collector was catching humming birds last year, he found that every one he trapped after midday died in the night. This is why.

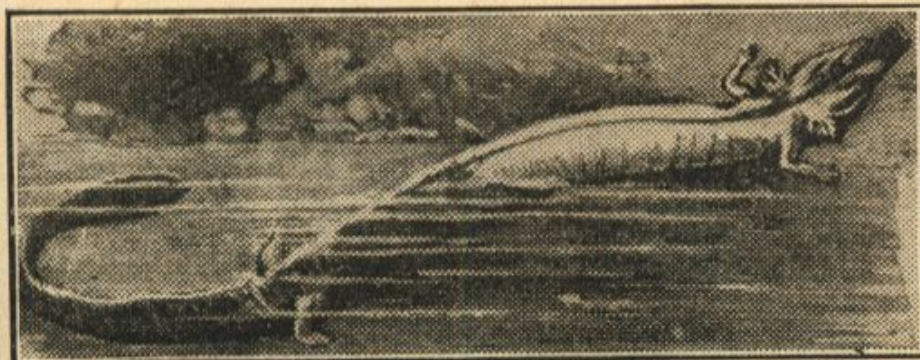
The little things—about the size of a bumble-



The Toad, who is a lightning feeder.



bee—had to be taught to feed in a new way, instead of sipping honey out of a flower. A mixture of condensed milk and honey was placed in a tin with a hole in it. He dipped their beaks into the hole every ten minutes until they learned that the tin was just as



The Proteus, which has been known to live for five years without food.

useful as a flower at meal-times, and then they fed themselves about once a minute. But all birds stop feeding when the sun sets—even chickens in the poultry run. Humming birds caught in the afternoon could not learn the trick of feeding from the tin in the few hours of daylight which was left to them, and so they died. Those caught in the morning *just* had time to learn the trick and save their lives.

Sometimes a queer new creature comes to the Zoo, and no one knows what its proper food is. When the "Panda," or Cat Bear, first came from the mountains of Thibet, the keepers had to experiment to find out what it ought to eat.

"The Cat Bear will know what suits its own tummy," they thought. "We will give it a little bit of everything, see what it eats, and learn the secret of its food."

So they got a lot of tins and filled them with: Dates from Egypt, potatoes from Ireland, nuts from Brazil, grapes from Italy, lettuces from France, sparrows from London, apples from California, mutton from New Zealand, bananas from Jamaica, bread and milk from

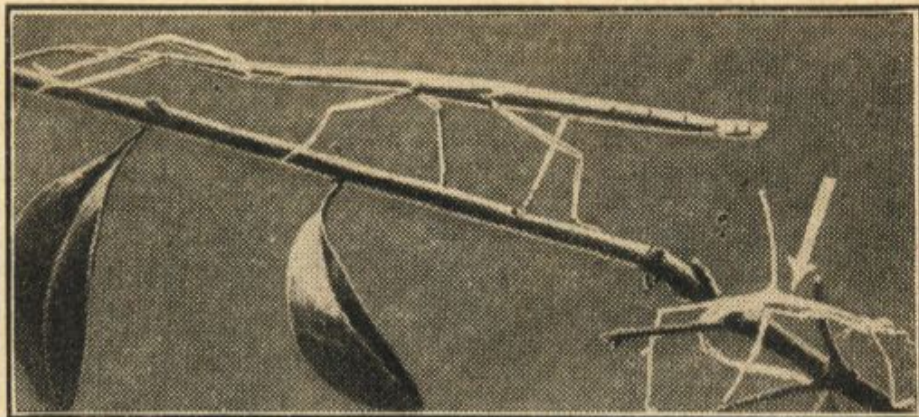
England. Then they watched the Cat Bear choose its "natural food."

The aggravating little beast chose the British bread-and-milk, and lived on *that!* Now, it does not seem likely that the creature *can* get bread-and-milk in the forest round the mountains of Thibet, so another natural history puzzle was unsolved.

Now and then the keepers at the Zoo hear something which surprises them about creatures they have known all their lives. Take the ordinary ostrich, which is not a rare bird at all, and which has been kept in this country ever since there was a Zoo.

A year or two ago a great expert, who looks after the ostrich farms of the South African Government, paid a visit to the Zoo in London. When he got to the Ostrich House he saw there was a drinking-place for them. "What!" he said. "Do you give your ostriches anything to drink? Didn't you know that ostriches *never* need anything at all to drink?"

He explained that on the great ostrich



The queer Stick-Insect, which casts off its skin. The insect is shewn here feeding on a privet-twig, having just cast its old skin (arrow).

farms these birds were never given water or any other liquid, because the green food they ate contained all the moisture they needed. So, nearly two years ago, the Zoo's ostriches were given no more water, and they have not had a drink since!



You can say that the ostrich is the bird that eats anything and drinks nothing. An ostrich will swallow any mortal thing which takes its fancy—from a bunch of keys to a pen-knife. If nothing more interesting is offered, ostriches pick up pieces of stone to swallow. Of course, there is a reason. They are not swallowed because they taste nice, nor does the ostrich expect to satisfy its hunger on such queer diet. There is a kind of grinding mill inside the ostrich, made of very strong muscles. Pieces of stone which are gulped down go into this mill, to act as grindstones and powder the hard corn—which is part of the *real* food of the bird—into flour which is more easily digested. So, you see, that instead of this queer taste for stones giving the bird indigestion it actually *prevents* that malady.

You can give the birds shillings or sixpences, but pennies are bad for them, because copper is poisonous. The keepers get the silver coins after the bird has died, but they are all worn thin by the action of the grinding mill.

When ostrich eggs are laid at the Zoo they are often "blown" and divided among the keepers' wives. They are just as good for cooking, "scrambling," or omelettes as hen's eggs. The "blowing" is done into a bowl with the help of a bicycle-pump, to which is fixed a special brass nozzle. One ostrich egg will make an omelette large enough for thirty people.

Another creature which will take anything, of course, is the monkey. But the monkey does not eat anything until it has carefully

sniffed and smelled it to see if it is safe. If it is not good to eat, then the monkey will play with it until it gets bored. There was a Chacma baboon, called "Daisy," in the Monkey House who once wrenched half-a-sovereign from a visitor's watch-chain. She had jaws like a steel trap, so no one liked to go inside the cage and argue with her. She played with it and then hid it in one of her cheek-pouches, as if it were a nut, and the poor owner went away in a great rage. She took it out and played with it day after day, and the man it belonged to used to pay to

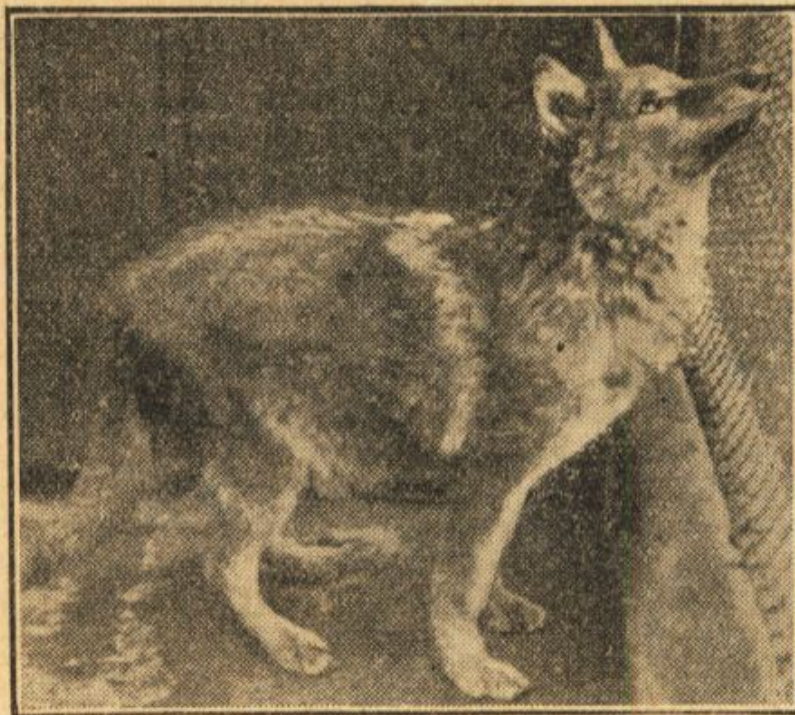
go to the Zoo in the hope of being able to snatch it back. "Perhaps she will get tired of it," he thought, "and leave it on the floor of the cage where I can rake it out."

Daisy used to go to the "purse" in her cheek when she saw him, and gloat over her ill-gotten gains, as if she knew she was tormenting a human. The poor chap must have spent 7s. or 8s. to watch the wretched baboon playing

with his property. At last he decided it was not worth throwing good money after bad!

"Jack"—another baboon—stole a medal from a soldier. Having been a regimental pet during the war, I suppose Jack felt he ought to have a medal himself. Another of Jack's crimes was to clutch a man's watch chain, drag him to the bars and then make a clever cunning snatch at his valuable tie-pin.

Of course, scarcely a week passes without the monkeys' stealing the eye-glasses off someone's nose. One monkey was sent to the Zoo for that very crime.



A fine European wolf-cub, which was presented to the Zoo by King Boris of Bulgaria.



He was a pet on board ship until he snatched a pair of gold-rimmed eye-glasses off the nose of a passenger and then climbed the mast with them. Every minute the owner expected to hear them come clattering down to smash on the deck, but this monkey hung on to them somehow, biting and sniffing at them until he got tired of them—like a child with a toy. Then the monkey fixed them on the ship's wireless gear and came down without them.

Now and then you hear of an animal breaking out of its cage at the Zoo. Barbara, the big Polar Bear, got away once and caused no end of excitement. She went to the refreshment rooms, and was very peevish because they were not opened. She wandered round, scaring the keepers until some one hit on a happy idea. She was very fond of fat—all creatures are that live in cold climates—so they laid a regular "Hop o' my Thumb" trail of fat along the paths. Barbara came to the first piece and ate it. Then she went on to the next and the next and the next. She was so busy eating that she did not notice where the trail was leading her, and when she got to the last lovely bit she heard a clanging noise and looked round. She had eaten her way back into her own cage again, and they had just slammed the door on her.

One of the most desperate prison-breakers they ever had at the Zoo was a "Goffin's Cockatoo." This bird had a tremendous beak. He could crack Brazil-nuts as if they were so many peas. He soon found that he could use his beak as a pair of wire-cutters and escaped from his cage. They trapped him three times and repaired the wires, but the old scoundrel only bit his way out again and lived in the trees as free as air.

"We'll let him alone, then," said the keepers. "Good riddance to the pest." But the cockatoo could not let things stay at that, for he flew back to the out-door cages, and bit away at the wire *so as to let the other cockatoos escape*, and the keepers' lives became a burden to them for they had to be "shooing" him away all the time.

Sometimes there are guests who sleep in the Zoo and work anywhere they like. There

are the bees, who have a glass hive in the Insect House with a hole in the back of their cage so that they can go out and gather honey from the flowers in the Zoological Gardens.

If you are lucky, you may see a very queer creature in the Insect House—the Giant Stick Insect. This is the biggest of all creepy things, the females being nearly a foot long. They have a wonderful dodge for their eggs. If they were laid in a branch some animal might eat them, for they are quite large eggs—looking something like a small black pea. The mother's idea is to distribute her eggs over a large area so that they cannot *all* be unlucky. Nature has given her a wonderful kind of spring pistol in her tail. With this egg-gun she can shoot much farther than across an ordinary room. She shoots about 250 eggs, and if you are on the spot, you can hear them "ping" like little stones as they hit the glass of her cage.

One of them was taken out once to be photographed. Just as the photographer was getting ready to take her picture *she shot him in the waistcoat!*

Photographers have a very hard life at the Zoo sometimes, especially when the animals are very tame and curious. The King of Bulgaria helped a British officer to secure a very rare young wolf, which was presented to the Zoo. Then they wanted to photograph the wolf so as to send a copy to the king. For days the photographer tried to get that picture. The wolf—which was as friendly as a collie dog—came up and breathed on his lens. Then it licked the blacking off the man's boots, or tried to kill his socks or wanted to kiss him, or tried to knock his hat off, or pulled his coat sleeve. It would do anything but stay still. Three dozen plates were wasted. They showed blurs instead of a wolf, or a wolf with three heads and eleven legs, or just plain den without any wolf at all.

It was just as disappointing as the toad who would not take longer than the sixtieth part of a second over his meal.

However, a photo was obtained at last—there it is on the opposite page!

THE END.



# FATHER KNOWS BEST!





This is a wonderful story of schoolboy daring and courage, of particular interest since it concerns one of the most amazing adventures of FRANK RICHARDS, at the school in the Backwoods. Frank Richards now is one of the foremost authors of boys' stories. This story is written by his equally famous friend, MARTIN CLIFFORD, and illustrated by R. SIMMONS.

# How Father Christmas came to White Pine !



## THE FIRST CHAPTER

### A Canadian Christmas Eve

“CHRISTMAS EVE—and jolly cold!” said Frank Richards.

Bob Lawless laughed.

The chums of Cedar Creek School were standing in the doorway of the ranch-house, looking out on the white plain.

The Lawless Ranch glimmered with white, under a sky of steel.

Snow was still falling.

The air was clear, and keen, and crisp, refreshing as wine. Far away in the distance the giant Rockies loomed on the horizon, snow-clad.

It was Frank Richards' first experience of a Canadian Christmastide. The cold was a new experience to him. It was sharp, sharp as a knife. But the gloriously keen, fresh air was health-giving, invigorating.

Frank had never felt better in his life than when he stood there, in the deep porch of the ranch-house, looking out on the snow-covered plains.

“Colder than Old England?” asked Bob Lawless.

“Yes, rather. But isn't it ripping?” exclaimed Frank, his eyes glistening.

“You don't want to snuggle indoors and sit on the stove?” grinned Bob.

“No fear.”

“That's lucky, for we've got to work this morning,” said Bob Lawless, with a laugh. “A good four hours' sleighing. Don't come if you don't feel up to it, though.”

“I feel up for anything,” said Frank. “Who's going to drive?”

“I guess I am. I'll give you a turn with the ribbons in a safe place.”

“And where are you going?”

“School first, to see Miss Meadows and Mr. Slimmey. Then along to Cedar Camp to pick up the Cherub, and then round the clearings with messages from popper. We shall have a good crowd here to-morrow.”

“Good!” said Frank Richards.

“Come and get your things on, and mind you wrap up well. Winter in the Canadian



West is no joke, I can tell you. There's such a thing as frost stroke, and you want to keep your napper well covered."

Bob Lawless went back into the house to speak to his father. Frank Richards hurried up to his room for his fur coat and cap and leggings.

He looked a bundle of furs when he came down, his healthy boyish face glowing from the midst of them.

Outside there was a musical tinkle of sleigh bells.

Billy Cook had brought the sleigh round and Mr. Lawless had come out to see his son and nephew off.

"Don't land in a drift, Bob," said the rancher, "and don't try the ice at Indian ford; it mayn't hold. Well, Frank, how do you like December in Canada?"

"Topping!" said Frank cheerily.

"Keep the rugs round you," said the rancher, tucking his nephew in the sleigh. "Now, then, Bob."

Bob Lawless jumped into his seat, and took the "ribbons" and the whip.

"So-long, popper."

The whip cracked, and with a merry jingle of silver bells the sleigh glided away down the trail.

The long, well-worn trail by which Frank and his cousin rode to school earlier in the year was hidden from sight now under a thick carpet of snow.

With an easy gliding motion the sleigh slid along the smooth surface, behind the two mettlesome horses.

Frank Richards breathed deep as the keen wind blew in his face, fluttering light snowflakes over him.

Bob Lawless gave all his attention to his horses.

Jingle, Jingle!

The music of the sleigh-bells rang far over the silent plains, and echoed among the giant trunks as the gliding vehicle followed the trail through the timber.

Two horsemen coming along the trail drew aside, crushing into the blackened larches, to let the sleigh pass.

Frank glanced at them.

He recognised them; he had seen them

before at Cedar Camp—Euchre Dick and Dave Dunn, the two worst characters in the section.

"Merry Christmas!" called out Bob Lawless in passing.

The two rustlers did not reply to the greeting.

They sat their horses, staring after the sleigh as it dashed on up the trail towards the creek.

Euchre Dick glanced at his companion as he pulled his horse out into the trail again.

"I reckon that outfit would fetch a thousand dollars, Dave, sold down the valley," he said, in a low voice.

"And I guess the Mounted Police would fetch us if we tried on that game in this section," was Dave Dunn's reply.

And the two "bulldozers" rode on.

"Hallo, here's the school!"

Cedar Creek School was in sight.

With a rattle and a jingle the sleigh dashed up to the lumber school.

Bob brought the steaming horses to a halt outside the gates, and jumped down, followed by Frank Richards.

The school grounds presented a very different aspect from that which the chums had been accustomed to during the school term.

The wide enclosure was deserted and carpeted with snow, and deep silence hung over the place, save where the horses moved and champed in the corral.

Bob Lawless thumped on the school-house door with his whip-butt, and it was opened by Black Sally.

"Merry Christmas, Sally!" roared Bob jovially, and in the exuberance of his spirits he threw an arm round the big negress and waltzed her round the porch.

"Loramussy, Mass' Bob!" gasped Sally; "you done took away dis chile's breff."

"Where's Miss Meadows?" asked Bob.

"Missy am out," said Black Sally, gasping for breath; "Missy done gone visit de sick piccaninny way down at White Pine."

"Oh gum!" said Bob. "And I've got to take a message back. Where's Mr. Slimmey—in his cabin?"

"Mass' Slimmey done gone wid Missy."

"We've drawn the school blank, Franky,"



grinned Bob Lawless. "We'd better buzz along to the shack and pick up Beauclerc, and then hustle for White Pine. We can give Miss Meadows a lift back, perhaps. Jump in!"

And once more the sleigh went merrily on its way, with cracking whip and jingling bells, whizzing gaily through the powdering snow.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### The Home of the Remittance Man

VERE BEAUCLERC was seated on a log outside the shack by the bank of the frozen creek.

An axe rested against his knee, and there was a flush of healthy vigour in his handsome, finely cut face. Beauclerc had been at work that morning chipping logs and he had paused to rest.

The silence of the great West was around him. Hardly a murmur came from the timber, where the trees were stripped of foliage.

The creek, which bubbled and sang past the shack in the summer days, was silent as the grave in the icy grip of winter.

The boy was thinking as he sat there, his far-away gaze fixed upon the frozen forest.

He thought of Christmas-tides in far-off England in days

that were like a dream to him now, before his father's fall—before Lascelles Beauclerc had become an unsuccessful emigrant and a "remittance man."

Beauclerc had known more than one Christmas in the Canadian West, a time of grim hardship to the son of the remittance man.

What work was done at the little shack was mainly done by the boy.

There was no other habitation near the shack, but there were distant neighbours, all willing and ready to be kind to the remittance man's son, and to show him the hearty and unbounded hospitality of Western Canada.

But the sensitive lad had always shrunk from accepting kindly advances.

With all his father's faults, Vere was an affectionate and respectful son. He made allowances for his father that he could not expect others to make.

He knew how the remittance man was regarded by the quiet and hard-working Canadian settlers. They had no use for a loafer in the Thompson valley.

And all his nature shrank from accepting kindness from people who, he could not help feeling, despised his father.

His life had been very lonely.

But he was thinking now of the difference it made to him since he had become friends with Frank Richards and Bob Lawless.

With his usual sensitive distrust he had repulsed both of them at first. But that had passed.

They were firm friends now—Frank

Richards, the sunny-tempered English lad, Bob Lawless, the sturdy young Canadian, and Vere Beauclerc, the descendant of an old and noble family of the Old Country fallen upon evil days.

This was the first Christmas of his Western life that was to be anything like Christmas to him.

He was to spend it at the Lawless Ranch



"Merry Christmas, Sally!" roared Bob jovially, and in the exuberance of his spirits he threw an arm round the big negress and waltzed her round the porch. (See Chapter 1.)



with his chums, and with a crowd of the neighbours, "neighbours" being a wide term in the West, covering distances up to fifty and sixty miles.

The chums were to call for him that morning to take him to the ranch, and Mr. Lawless had sent a kind message to the remittance man, asking him to come with his son, and spend a homely but hearty Christmas at the ranch.

Mr. Beauclerc, though with great urbanity, had declined the invitation for himself. He had other engagements, as it happened.

Beauclerc knew that the other engagements probably were poker games and faro with Poker Pete and his set at Thompson.

But it was not for a son to criticise his father, and he said no word.

He was glad that he was going to the ranch. It would have been deadly solitary at the shack during the grim Christmas with his father absent at the town. Work was his only resource, and there could be too much of that.

He started from his deep reverie and looked up, as there was a jingle of bridles and hoofs over the snow.

His face brightened as he looked up the trail, expecting to see the sleigh from Lawless Ranch.

Then it darkened again.

It was not the rancher's sleigh. Two horsemen rode out of the wood towards the shack.

A darkly troubled look came over Vere's face.

Every time he saw Euchre Dick or Dave Dunn at the shack it gave his very heart a chill.

He knew their evil influence over his father. He had only too much reason to know that Lascelles Beauclerc, once at least, had almost been led into crime by his rascally associates.

A querulous voice called from the interior of the shack. It was the voice of the remittance man.

"Vere!"

The boy rose from the log.

"Yes, father."

"Who is on the trail?"

"Two friends of yours, father," said Beauclerc, with an unconscious bitterness in his voice.

"Good!"

Lascelles Beauclerc appeared in the doorway.

He glanced up the trail at the approaching horsemen, and then glanced rather uneasily at his son.

"Were not your friends calling for you this morning, Vere?" he asked.

"Yes, father. I expect them any minute."

Lascelles Beauclerc frowned. It was easy to see that he would have preferred his son to be gone before his friends arrived at the shack.

But the sleigh was not yet in sight, and Dave Dunn and Euchre Dick rode up through the powdering snow, and dismounted and followed the remittance man into the little habitation.

There was a murmur of voices, and the sound of a bottle clinking on a glass within. Beauclerc, with a sigh, picked up his axe and resumed his work.

With a heavy heart but a steady hand he chipped the logs that were needed to banish the bitter winter cold from the shack by the creek.

His father looked out of the doorway again.

"You may as well go down the trail to meet your friends, Vere," he said, without meeting his son's eyes.

"Very well, father," said Vere in a low voice.

He went into the shack for his coat and leggings, passing the two rustlers without a glance. They watched him curiously, without speaking.

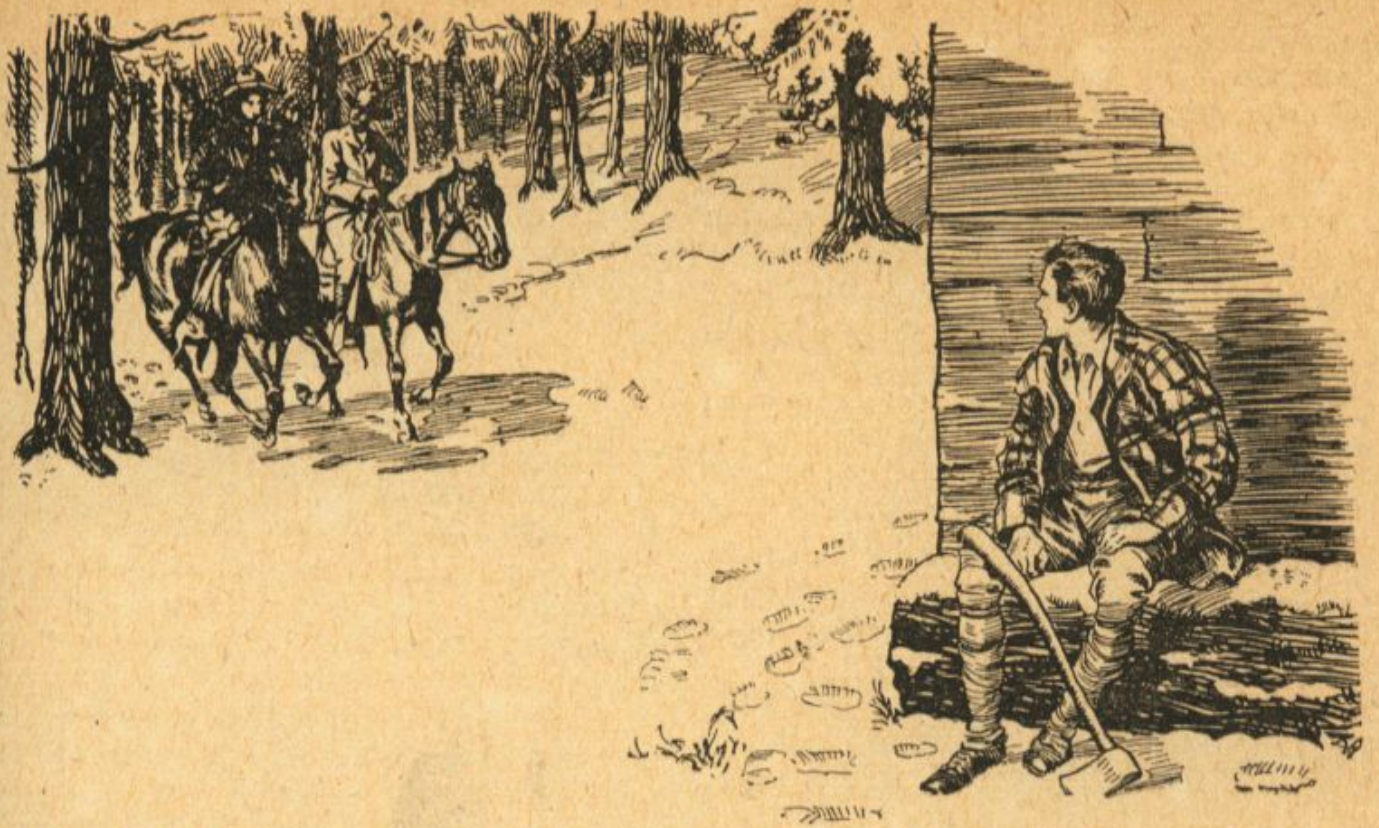
The remittance man's son was a good deal of a puzzle to Lascelles Beauclerc's associates.

As he dressed himself in the inner room the murmur of voices came to Vere's ears. Euchre Dick was speaking.

"I guess the outfit's worth a thousand dollars. Look at us now—frozen broke. Poker Pete rounded up my last cent last night. A thousand dollars of the best, if we ran the outfit down across the line. And that kid could help. He's friends with them young scallywags. He could contrive——"

"Silence!" broke in Mr. Beauclerc's deep voice, with a note of anger in it. "Are you mad?"





A darkly troubled look came over Vere's face as two horsemen rode out of the wood towards the shack. They were Dave Dunn and Euchre Dick, two of the worst characters in Thompson. (See Chapter 2)

"I guess I'm talking hoss-sense. I tell you the kid could help."

"If he could he would not."

"You're his popper, ain't you? Won't the young jay do as he's told?" demanded Euchre Dick sullenly. "A cowhide laid round him would make him step up to time, I calculate."

"Not a word more, I tell you!" snapped the remittance man savagely.

"Look hyer, Beauclerc——"

"Hold your tongue!" muttered Lascelles Beauclerc, as Vere came out of the inner room.

Euchre Dick scowled suddenly. Mr. Beauclerc followed his son from the shack, leaving the two ruffians muttering together.

"Good-bye, my boy!" said the remittance man, not unkindly. "I hope you will have a happy Christmas at the ranch."

"I wish you would come, father. Mr. Lawless would really be glad to see you there," said the boy wistfully.

"I should not care for it, my boy. I cannot come, anyway. Good-bye."

"Father, I could not help hearing what the man said!"

"You must not hear what is not intended for your ears, Vere. But if you heard him you heard how I answered him."

"But, father——"

"Good-bye!"

Lascelles Beauclerc turned back abruptly into the shack. Vere, with a sigh, strode away down the trail to the forest.

His heart was heavy.

What the "outfit" might be that Euchre Dick had alluded to he did not know, but he knew that some villainy was simmering in the mind of the ruffian, in which he would doubtless seek the remittance man's help—in which, indeed, his words showed that he thought Vere might help.

There was anxiety in his heart as he strode away, but there was nothing he could do but hope.

"Hallo, Cherub!"

Half a mile from the shack sleigh bells rang merrily out over the snow, and Bob Lawless'



hearty voice called him. The sleigh halted in the snow.

"Coming to meet us, Beau?" asked Frank Richards brightly.

Beauclerc smiled. The sight of his chums' cheery faces banished for the moment the dark doubts and sadness from his breast.

"Yes, Frank. What a ripping day!" he exclaimed. "And how ripping of you fellows to come along for me!"

"Bow-wow! Jump in!" said Bob. "Isn't your popper coming?"

"I'm sorry, no."

"Oh, rot!" said Bob. "I say, let's rush in on him, and make him come. We'll rope him in, Beau."

"Yes," exclaimed Frank. "The three of us should be able to persuade him."

"No, no!"

"Why not?" said Bob exuberantly. "We'll pitch him in the sleigh, and run him off!"

"Ripping!" exclaimed Frank Richards, laughing.

"No, no!" Beauclerc thought of the two ruffians even now in discussion with his father at the shack, and shivered. He did not want his chums to see them there. Neither was Bob's hare-brained idea quite likely to please the remittance man. "No. Let's get off, Bob."

"Oh, all serene! Jump in!"

"Are we going straight to the ranch?" asked Beauclerc, as he drew the buffalo robe and bearskin about him, sharing them with Frank.

"Nix. We're going on to White Pine—first," said Bob. "Miss Meadows is there, visiting Muldoon's kid; the poor little beggar's ill, you know. Slimmey's gone with her. We're going to round them up, and I'll get some messages to drop at half a dozen places. You're booked for a long drive, if you don't mind, Cherub."

"First-rate," said Beauclerc brightly. "Go ahead."

And the sleigh jingled away down the trail, halting at many a homestead on the round-about way, where cheery Christmas greetings were given and received.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER

### Bridget of White Pine

"WHITE PINE!" said Bob Lawless at last.

It was still early in the afternoon, but shadows were creeping over the snowy plains.

Frank Richards and Vere Beauclerc looked about them with interest as Bob drove up to White Pine.

It was a lonely spot. There had once been several clearings in the district, but they had been abandoned by settlers, who had moved on to fresh fields and pastures new.

Only one habitation remained—a small cabin of mingled logs and lumber. It was plain, at a glance, that the place belonged to the poorest kind of unsuccessful emigrant.

Poor Micky Muldoon and his wife had come up from Chicago, to take up a grant of land in the North-West.

Life in the city of canned pork had not well prepared them for a life on the land. Lacking both capital and experience, Micky Muldoon had a hard row to hoe.

But he had worked hard, and kept up his Irish cheerfulness, and hoped for the best.

And there was the child. Little Bridget was six—a pretty and delicate child, ill-fitted to face the north-western winter in a frontier cabin.

With the coming of grim winter, little Bridget had become ill. Miss Meadows, the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek, visited the lonely cabin regularly, to help in tending the little invalid.

Kind neighbours would ride ten miles to bring little gifts for Bridget, and to ask how she was doing.

Frank Richards caught sight of burly Micky Muldoon, at work at a distance from the cabin. In a foot of snow, the hardy emigrant was hewing logs.

Bob drew the sleigh to a halt at a little distance from the cabin, in order not to disturb the sick child.

The three schoolboys alighted, and went softly towards the place, through the snow that deadened their footsteps.



Bob Lawless tapped on the door and opened it softly.

A fire, fed by pine chips, was burning smokily in the cabin. A pale and trembling woman was tending it.

Mr. Slimmey, the assistant master of Cedar Creek School, sat in a corner, very grave and quiet. He glanced at the boys with a grave nod and a smile.

Miss Meadows was beside the little cot where the child lay, near the fire.

The schoolboys stopped, irresolute, just within the cabin, Bob closing the door softly to keep out the bitter wind.

The child was speaking, in a low and weak voice.

"Mummy!"

The worn woman by the fire came to the cot.

"Yes, dearie?"

"It's Christmas to-morrow, mummy."

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Muldoon, with a sigh.

"Is Father Christmas coming?"

Mrs. Muldoon did not answer.

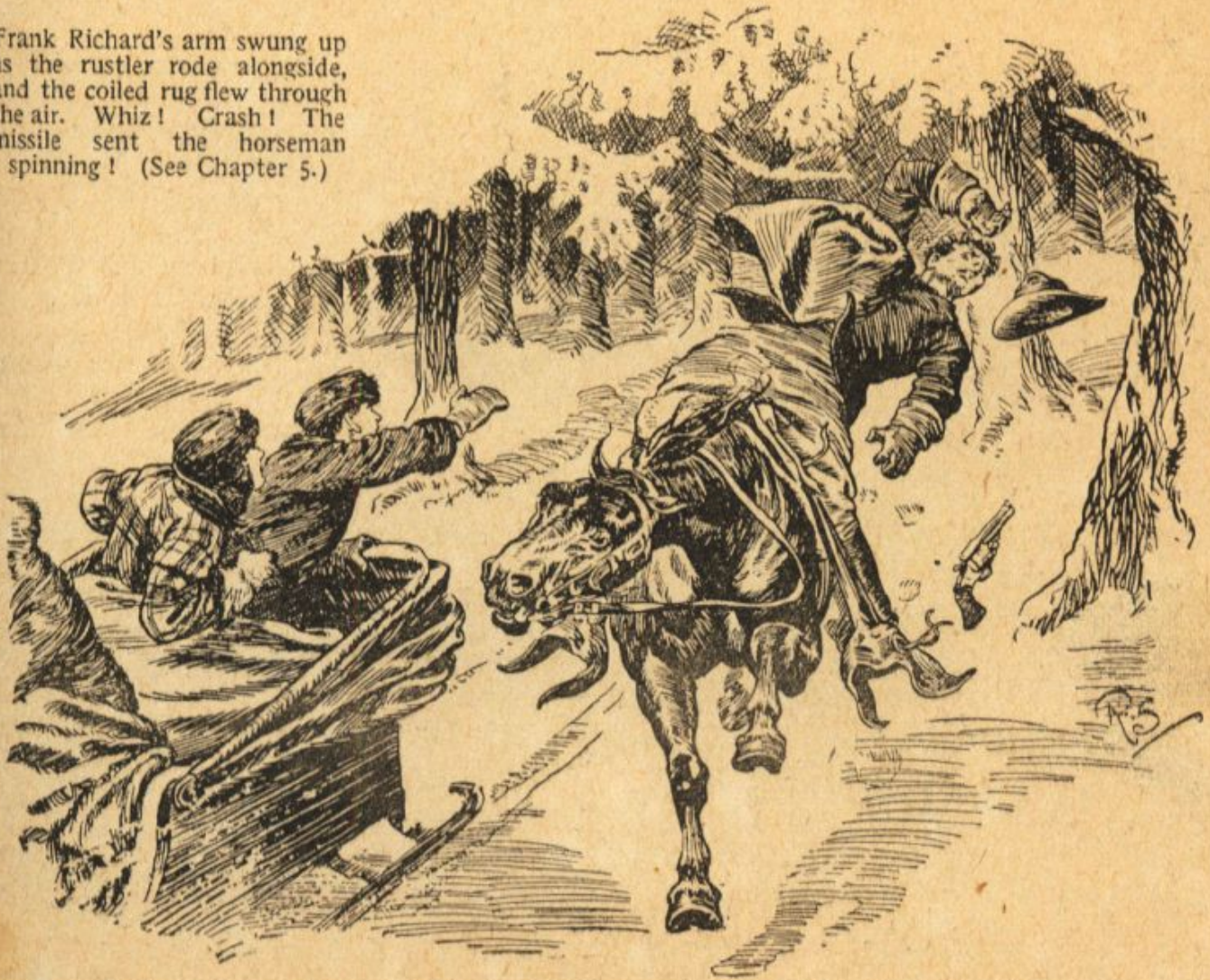
Father Christmas was not likely to come to the lonely emigrant's cabin, bound in the grip of winter and poverty.

The child's pale face turned towards the troubled mother.

"Mummy, will Father Christmas come?"

"Sure, the snow's too heavy for Father Christmas to come, alanna," said poor Mrs. Muldoon.

Frank Richard's arm swung up as the rustler rode alongside, and the coiled rug flew through the air. Whiz! Crash! The missile sent the horseman spinning! (See Chapter 5.)





"But Father Christmas doesn't mind the snow, mummy, and he always used to come at home."

"Yes, dear; but——"

"You'll hang up my stocking, mummy, for Father Christmas to-night," said Bridget, her bright eyes on her mother's face. "Sure, he'll come. He don't mind the snow. He always came at home."

The poor woman's eyes filled with tears.

In the far-off city Father Christmas had always come. There, a few pence had been enough to purchase some poor little gift to be placed in the stocking overnight.

On the North-Western frontier it was different.

Children's toys were not to be had in the upper Thompson valley. For those who could afford them, they came at great expense from different towns.

But it was hard to tell the unsuspecting child that her old friend Father Christmas, who had never failed her yet, would fail her at last.

Miss Meadows' kind face was gravely troubled. Mr. Slimmey, in the corner, wiped his gold-rimmed spectacles.

Frank Richards and Co. stood silent and uneasy.

The child's voice went on.

"I want Father Christmas to bring me a doll, mummy. Do you think he will bring me a doll if he comes, mummy?"

"Sure, I can't tell, alanna."

"I hope he'll bring me a doll, one that moves its eyes," said Bridget. "Sure, Father Christmas won't forget us, mummy; he never has."

"Sure, I hope he won't, dearie. But——"

"I'm sure he won't!" said the child confidently. "He won't forget us. You'll hang up my stocking, mummy?"

"Yes, dear."

Miss Meadows rose quietly and moved towards the door. Bridget raised her head. She had caught sight of the three schoolboys inside the cabin.

"Bob! It's Bob!"

Bob Lawless came towards the cot.

"Hallo, Bridget, old girl!" he said. "You look ever so much better."

Bridget nodded and smiled.

"I'm thinking about Father Christmas," she said. "Last Christmas I told mummy I wanted a Teddy Bear, an' Father Christmas brought me one. Do you think he'll bring me a doll this time, Bob?"

"I—I guess——" stammered Bob.

"He's sure to come. I sha'n't believe in him any more if he doesn't. But he'll come, sure," said Bridget, with a confident nod. "You'll see."

"I—I hope he will!" stammered Bob. Certainly Father Christmas would have come to the lonely cabin if Bob Lawless could have contrived it. But a doll was not to be obtained for love or money in the Thompson valley.

The child's look grew troubled with the expression on Bob's honest face.

"You don't think he'll come this time, Bob?"

"I—I guess he will, kid," said Bob, alarmed at the change of expression. "He's—he's a good sort, you know; he never forgets good kids at Christmas."

The little face brightened again.

"I'm sure he'll come," said Bridget. "And I guess he'll bring me a doll. Father Christmas always guesses what you want most."

"You bet," said Bob, as heartily as he could.

"You must sleep now, dear," said the mother softly.

"Yes, mummy."

Bridget's eyes closed. But they opened again immediately.

"Mummy!"

"Yes, dear?"

"You won't forget the stocking. I'm sure he'll come."

"I—I won't forget, alanna. Go to sleep now."

"Yes, mummy," said Bridget drowsily.

Her eyes closed again.

Bob Lawless and his chums quietly left the cabin. Miss Meadows and Mr. Slimmey were outside now.

Frank Richards drew the door shut.

The three chums were strangely troubled. The child's faint words, her confidence in



"Father Christmas," had moved them to the very heart.

And they knew that Father Christmas could not come. There were no children's toys on the banks of the Thompson river.

"Poor little kid!" muttered Beauclerc.

"It's rotten," said Frank, in a low voice.

"It's rotten."

Miss Meadows was speaking to Mr. Slimmey in a low voice, evidently discussing the doll question.

But their looks showed that no solution had been found.

"I'm going to drive you back, Miss Meadows, if you'll let me," said Bob, "and Mr. Slimmey, too."

"Thank you; I shall be very glad," said Miss Meadows, with a smile.

"I suppose, Lawless, you do not know of any way of satisfying poor little Bridget?"

Bob shook his head ruefully.

"Nothing nearer than Fraser!" he said.



Before the schoolboys knew what was happening, they were tossed in the snow amid the maddened, plunging horses. (See Chapter 6)

"I—I suppose there's nothing doing, Bob. I'd ride twenty miles like a shot——"

"Nothing doing," said Bob, with a shake of the head. "Kid's dolls ain't quite in our line in this section. Things like that have to be ordered weeks ahead, and come up by the store wagons. Nothing nearer than Fraser, I reckon."

"And that is thirty miles—and across the river."

"Yes, ma'am. I—I wonder——"

"You must not think of that," said Miss Meadows. The ice is not safe at Indian ford. There is a blizzard coming on, Mr. Muldoon has told me. Poor little Bridget! I am afraid Father Christmas will not come, and she will



lose her faith in her old friend." Miss Meadows and Mr. Slimmey stepped into the sleigh, and the schoolboys followed.

They were silent as they drove to Cedar Creek.

The clear sky was darkening in the direction of the Rockies, with a drift of clouds laden with the coming snowfall.

In the winter dusk they arrived at Cedar Creek.

All of them were thinking of little Bridget, and the bitter disappointment that was in store for her when she found her stocking empty on Christmas morning.

At the lumber school, the school-mistress and Mr. Slimmey alighted, and the schoolboys jingled away in the sleigh for home.

But their faces were not bright now.

Somehow the thought of the pale little face in the emigrant's lonely cabin haunted them, and they were still thinking of little Bridget when the sleigh jingled up to the Lawless Ranch.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### A Reckless Venture

**F**RANK RICHARDS was very thoughtful during dinner at the ranch.

It was a late dinner for the schoolboys, for the drive had taken up the greater part of the day, and Mr. and Mrs. Lawless had dined long before, with the guests that had already arrived at the ranch.

Frank's thoughtful mood was shared by his chums.

After dinner Bob made his comrades a sign to follow him, and they left the ranch house.

Outside, deep dusk was on the snowy country-side.

The snow was falling more heavily than before.

Bob stopped at the opening of the porch, with a wrinkle deep in his boyish brow. He looked at his chums.

"What are you thinking of Frank?" he asked.

"Bridget Muldoon and her doll," said Frank, half laughing. "So were you, old scout."

"Same here," said Beauclerc. "I wish something could be done."

Bob Lawless drew a deep breath.

"Are you fellows game?" he asked.

"Game as pie!" said Frank. "But for what?"

"Look here!" Bob sunk his voice. "I can't get that kid and her Father Christmas out of my mind. It will fairly knock her out, you know—she believes in Daddy Christmas; kids do. It's a shame for her to have to give it up, before she's old enough to know that Father Christmas is spoo. And—and the poor little beggar wants a doll. Blessed if I know what for, but girls do, you know."

"They do!" agreed Frank.

"Well, suppose——"

"Well?" said Frank and Beauclerc together.

"They've got dolls at Fraser," said Bob. "Heaps of 'em. We've got the cash—we'd pool supplies if necessary——"

"You bet! That's not the difficulty!"

"Dolls and such things come pretty high out here, of course. But never mind that—we can manage that part. Bother that! But—but Fraser's a good thirty miles away—and night's coming on." Bob wrinkled his brows again. "Are you chaps game for a run over to Fraser in the sleigh?"

"Bob!"

"I know it sounds potty, just for a doll," said Bob, colouring a little. "But—but that kid, you know—poor little beggar! She'd be no end chirpy if Father Christmas came, after all. It's worth a bit of a risk!"

"A bit?" said Frank gravely. "The snow's coming down heavier to-night, Bob. We couldn't get back before morning, if——"

"If we got back at all," said Bob, with a nod. "I understand. I know the popper would jump on me if I suggested it to him. There's risk——"

"The ice isn't strong at Indian ford," said Beauclerc quietly. "We should have to cross the river near there, or go fifteen miles round—and that would knock it on the head."

"I know! There's risk. I guess I'm not going to confide in the popper. He would be mad with me. But—but after we came back, he would be pleased right enough. Are you fellows game?"



"Fathead!" said Frank. "Of course we're game. If it's barely possible to do it—"

"I think it is. We could get back to Muldoon's cabin before dawn—in time for the doll to go into the stocking. But—but there's no need for you chaps to risk it, either, one's enough—"

"Do you want your nose punched, you ass?"

Bob laughed.

"Well, is it a cinch?" he asked. "I can get the sleigh round with fresh horses—the popper wouldn't ask any questions. There's no reason why we shouldn't do it safely. And—and I want Father Christmas to come to Bridget Muldoon to-night—I do!"

"It's a go!" said Frank.

Beauclerc nodded quietly.

"It's a go!" he said. "And a jolly good idea. I'm with you, Bob. I think it's a ripping idea."

"Not a word about it, though," said Bob. "I don't quite know whether the popper would object—he might and he mightn't—but the mopper would be anxious. I wouldn't like her to be anxious."

"Right-o!"

"Then it's a cinch!" said Bob. "Get on your warmest things. I'll see to the sleigh!"

The chums of Cedar Creek had made up their minds.

It was, perhaps, a hare-brained scheme. Snow-covered plains, and ridges barred with drifts, lay between them and the distant rail-head town—and the frozen river was between. And the ice was not known to be strong enough to bear.

There was risk—terrible risk. But the excitement of that wild drive through the winter night appealed strongly to the imaginations of the chums.

They would be out all night—driving through blinding snow, facing a hundred perils. And it was all for the sake of a child—in order that the sick girl might not be disappointed on Christmas morning.

But the motive could not have been a more generous one. And the schoolboy chums did not hesitate.

Half an hour later, the sleigh was standing on the trail, with three horses this time harnessed to it.

Mr. Lawless was busy with his guests in the ranch-house, and he was not even aware that his son was arranging a sleigh-drive. But the rancher would have raised no objection to that; he could trust the hardy Canadian lad to take care of himself.

Certainly he would not have been likely to suspect that Bob was planning a wild night drive to the distant town on the railway.

Frank and Beauclerc stepped into the sleigh, and Bob took up the reins, after wrapping the bearskin closely round him. The cold was bitter and intense.

"Look out for the drifts, Bob, if you're going to Cedar Camp," said Billy Cook, as the rancher's son gathered up the reins.

"Right you are, Billy!"

"And if you see Dave Dunn on the trail, give him a wide berth," went on the ranch foreman. "I passed those two scallywags half an hour ago—Dunn, and Euchre Dick, coming up from the creek."

Beauclerc started.

He could guess that the "scallywags" had been coming away from the shack, when the ranchman met them.

"Those two galoots are fairly asking to be roped in by the sheriff," went on Billy Cook. "They're dead broke and desperate. They looked at me on the trail, and if I hadn't had a shooter handy, I calculate they would have held me up—and gone through me, sonny. Steer clear of them if they're still on the trail. I warn you they're looking for trouble."

"Only those two, Billy?" asked Vere Beauclerc, whose handsome face was troubled.

"Them two, on their lonesome," said the ranch foreman. "What are they doing in the saddle at a time like this hyer? Looking for trouble, I guess. Steer clear of them!"

"You bet!" said Bob. He hesitated a moment. "Billy, when my popper asks after me to-night—he's bound to miss me at bed-time—tell him we've gone for a long drive, and mayn't be back before dawn."

"What?" ejaculated the ranchman.

"Tell him we're all O.K., and mother's not to be anxious," said Bob. "Gee-up!"

The sleigh started.

"But——" shouted the ranchman,



But the sleigh was going now, and Billy Cook was left shaking his head very solemnly.

With a musical jingle of bells and harness, the sleigh glided down the snow-covered trail.

"Keep an eye open for those two bulldozers, you chaps," said Bob. "I don't trust them half an inch—I know they're ripe for mischief. They're not going to play the same trick with this outfit that they played once with an emigrant's wagon. They would if they got half a chance."

"This outfit!" muttered Vere Beauclerc, the word, recurring to his mind. "That is what Euchre Dick was speaking of, then!"

"What did you say, Cherub?"

"N-nothing! But—but if we meet those two scoundrels, Bob, I'm certain they will try to stop us and collar the sleigh. They think they could sell it for a thousand dollars at a distance from here."

"I guess they could—easy!" said Bob.

"They'll try it on, if they get a chance."

"They won't get a chance!" said Bob.

The sleigh jingled on, away

over the deeply shadowed plain—away at a spanking speed. Three splendid horses were pulling, and the sleigh glided behind them as if on glass. Snowflakes dashed in the faces of the schoolboys.

Far off, through banks of clouds, there was a hint of a coming moon. Through the falling snow the stars glittered like precious stones.

The well-known trail through the timber-belt lay before them; and as the gaunt trees loomed up there was a beat of hoofs in the snow, and a horseman rode alongside the sleigh.

A hoarse voice shouted from the dusk, and Bob Lawless cracked his whip and the sleigh drove on faster. The first danger of that wild night's drive was at hand.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### Rushing the Rustlers

**B**OB LAWLESS sat like a bronze image, looking neither to right nor to left, with an iron hand on the reins. All his attention was needed to handle three powerful and mettlesome horses.

But Frank and Beau looked round at the ghostly stranger who had so suddenly loomed up from the night.

A squat figure, wrapped in furs was all they could see. He sat his horse within two yards of the sleigh, keeping pace with it.

The hoarse voice shouted again.

"Bob Lawless! Is that Bob Lawless?"

"I guess so!" called back Bob, without looking round.

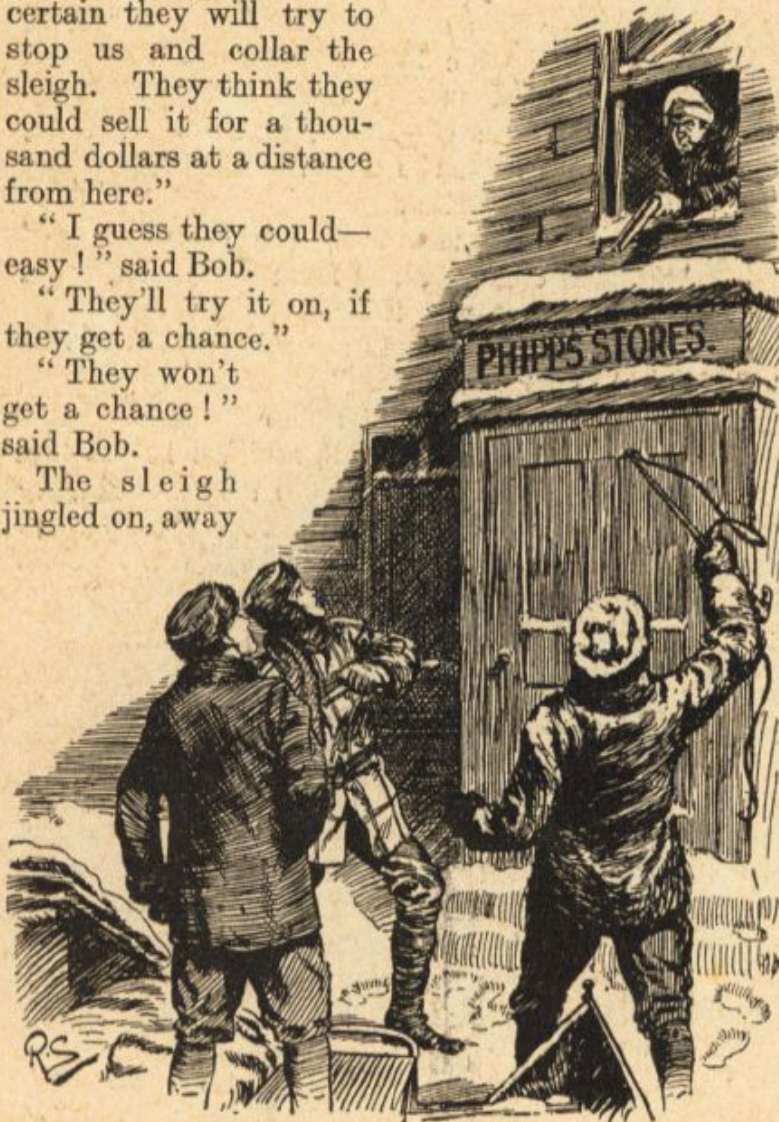
"Halt!"

"I guess I'm in a hurry, Euchre Dick!"

"So you know me," muttered the horseman, pulling a little ahead so as to ride abreast with Bob's team.

"You know me, you young cub!"

"I guess I'd know your gallows-face anywhere, Euchre Dick," said Bob coolly, "and your goul-bird voice, too!"



The window above the store flew up, a red and wrathful face glared out, and the barrel of a shotgun came into view. "I've got you covered!" roared Mr. Phipps. (See Chapter 7)





The schoolboys looked back as the sleigh fled on. Wolves were in sight, and Frank Richards and Co. could see the gleaming jaws. "Are they gaining?" asked Bob, as he drove the terrified horses for all they were worth. (See Chapter 8)

"Halt!"

"Not this evening!"

Euchre Dick put his fingers to his lips, and a loud, sudden whistle rang far through the gloom of the timber ahead.

Well enough the schoolboys knew what the signal meant.

It meant that the ruffian's partner was ahead of them on the trail, and that Dave Dunn was warned to stop the sleigh as it came up.

The intention of the ruffians could not be doubted now.

The sleigh and horses were too valuable a prize to be missed, now that that prize had ventured fairly into their hands, in the dark night on the lonely prairie.

Having captured the sleigh, it would be easy for the two rascals to drive it away, and to get clear of the country before pursuit could possibly be started on their track.

The three boys would be left to tramp home wearily in the snow, deprived of the sleigh, the horses, the furs, and rugs, and any money they had about them.

With such a prize in their grasp, the two rustlers could well afford to abandon the section, and, commence their rascally career in another part of the country, or over the "Line" in the United States.

There was no doubt as to their intention. The question was whether they could carry it out. Not if Frank Richards & Co. could prevent them, that was certain.

"Halt, you fool!" snarled Euchre Dick, as he rode abreast of the steaming horses. "You'll be stopped on the trail, anyway!"

"Rats!"

"Will you halt!"

"No!"

Euchre Dick's hand groped among his furs. Something that shone and glittered in the starlight came into view.

"Halt, Bob Lawless, or I'll bring down your leader!" the ruffian shouted savagely. "I guess you'll have to halt then, with a broken neck, maybe!"

Bob Lawless did not answer. His teeth set, and he touched the team with the whip, and the horses leapt onward in response.

Euchre Dick was left behind for the moment.

But he spurred on furiously, and in a few minutes was level with the team again, and his right arm swung up, the revolver in his hand.

Frank Richards half rose in his seat.

In his hand was a thick rug, coiled up as hard as he could make it. His arm swung up as the rustler rode alongside, and the coiled rug flew through the air with a whiz.



Whiz! Crash!

The unexpected missile struck the horse-  
man fairly on the side of the head, and sent  
him spinning.

The revolver dropped into the snow, as  
Euchre Dick spun over the flank of his horse,  
grasping desperately at rein and mane to  
save himself.

The horse dashed madly on, with the  
dismounted rustler clinging wildly to its back.

Bob Lawless lashed at it with his whip as  
it fled frantically by, and the startled animal  
wheeled from the trail, dashing off into the  
open prairie.

Horse and man vanished from sight among  
the whirling snowflakes.

"Good man, Frank!" muttered Vere Beau-  
clerc, his eyes glistening.

"Good man, by gum!" gasped Bob. "I  
guess that rustler is sorry he spoke! Gee-  
whiz! Here's the other scallywag!"

Just as the sleigh entered the timber, the  
schoolboys sighted a horseman ahead, halted  
in the middle of the trail, facing them.

"Halt!" he thundered out.

Bob Lawless did not heed.

The sleigh rushed on, three powerful horses  
rushing right down on the rider in the trail.

Had Dave Dunn stayed to await the shock  
of collision he would certainly have been  
swept over and trampled down, whatever had  
happened to the sleigh.

But he was too wise to wait.

As the sleigh thundered down on him, and  
he realised that Bob did not mean to stop,  
he leaped his horse desperately out of the  
trail right into the frost-blackened larches. It  
was the only way to escape death, and he took  
it, and he was only just in time.

The horseman crashed into the larches, and  
the sleigh thundered by, with a crash of bells  
and a thudding of hoofs.

Before the ruffian could drag himself from  
the trampled thicket the sleigh was gone,  
vanishing at terrific speed round a bend of the  
trail.

"Hurrah!" shouted Frank Richards.

Bob Lawless chuckled breathlessly.

"I guess those bull-dozers are kenoed this  
time!" he gasped. "We shan't see their  
cheery faces again this side of Christmas."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The merry laugh of the schoolboys rang  
through the frozen woods.

Frank Richards looked back.

For some moments he thought he could hear  
the thud of hoof-beats in pursuit, but the  
sound died away into silence.

The rustlers were left far behind. The first  
peril of that wild night was passed.

In the starlight, Cedar Creek School loomed  
up for a minute or two to the right, as the  
sleigh swept out on the plain.

Then they dashed on into the open prairie,  
with the bright stars above their heads, the  
waste of untrodden snow round them, and the  
frozen river ahead.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER

### The Peril of the Ice

LIKE points of fire in a velvet sky the stars  
glittered down upon the wide waste of  
snow.

Warmly wrapped in furs and bear-skins, the  
schoolboy chums did not feel the cold, bitter  
and searching as it was.

Not a habitation, not a light, was to be  
seen on the lonely waste. They were ascend-  
ing the ridge now, and beyond the ridge lay  
the river, frozen fast, a hundred yards of ice.

Would it hold?

As they came down the slope of the ridge  
the wide river came in sight. It was still and  
silent in the grip of King Winter.

Snow lay on the ice like a mantle of white  
velvet.

Surely the ice would hold! For weeks it  
had been freezing. Up by the ford there was  
danger. But Bob Lawless had struck the  
river lower down, where the water was deeper  
and the ice thicker.

If it did not hold they knew what it meant.  
They could picture the crash of breaking ice  
in the middle of the wide river, the yelling of  
the drowning horses, the fierce struggle for life  
in freezing water among the ice-chips.

But it would hold—it was sure to hold!  
Hold or not, they were going to risk it. The  
sleigh never paused a second.

The well-worn trail was hidden from sight  
under the carpet of snow, but Bob Lawless  
followed it as if by instinct.



And in the glittering starlight they could see traces of runners left in the snow, showing that another sleigh had passed the trail before them.

The sight of the runner-tracks encouraged them. Where others had gone they could go.

Down the slope to the frozen river the sleigh went jingling. They were upon the ice now.

Would it hold?

The schoolboys sat tight and waited with grim calmness. Under the runners the frozen river glided back.

Frank Richards' heart gave a throb as he heard a low, wailing sound from the river. He knew that it was the voice of the ice-pack.

Crack!

Bob Lawless' whip rang out like a pistol-shot.

He, too, had heard that warning wail of the straining ice. The horses, as if they, too, realised the peril, were straining hard. The sleigh flew.

Beauclerc's grasp closed on Frank Richards'

arm. Frank looked at him. The son of the remittance man was quiet and calm, even smiling.

"We shall get through, Frank!" he whispered.

Crack, crack!

The last crack was from the ice, not from the whip. The schoolboys set their teeth.

But the leader was trampling the frozen rushes of the bank now. The horses strained ashore, and the sleigh glided up the slope.

Crack!

It was not the whip.

Frank Richards, his heart thumping, looked back at the surface of ice lighted by glittering stars.

The runner-tracks lay through the snow clean-cut as by a knife, but across the white surface there appeared a dark bar, where the ice had split. Dark water was welling up through the snow-covered ice.

Frank caught his breath.

"A close shave, Beau!" he muttered.

Beauclerc nodded and smiled.



Frank tossed the great, heavy bearskin into the snow behind. In a couple of seconds the wolves had reached it, and were tearing at it madly! (See Chapter 8)



The danger had been very close, but it was past.

The sleigh glided on.

It was a clear run now, and the perils were from snowdrifts in the gullies. Bob Lawless slackened speed a little. He did not want to pump his team. There was hard work before them yet.

"Snow again!" muttered Beauclerc, pulling his fur cap closer to his head.

It came down in masses.

The light of the stars was dimmed. In a ghostly twilight the sleigh plunged on like a phantom of the night.

Distant hills loomed like white spectres to right and left. Bob Lawless pointed with his whip to some landmark indistinguishable to his chums.

"Ten miles more to Fraser!" he called out.

"Hark!" exclaimed Frank.

From the silent waste there came a sudden, strange, eerie sound—a long-drawn, wailing cry.

So strange, so eerie was that cry of the winter night that Frank felt the blood throb to his heart as he heard it.

"Beau did you hear——"

"I heard, but——"

"What was that, Bob?"

Bob Lawless did not answer. He did not seem to hear. Frank Richards leaned forward and touched him on the shoulder.

"Bob, did you hear that?"

"I guess so."

"What was it?"

"Nothing," said Bob.

"Don't be an ass, Bob! You know what it was. Tell me."

There was a moment's silence, and then Bob Lawless answered:

"Wolves!"

Frank Richards sank back into his seat.

"Wolves!" he repeated.

He scanned the dim plain with his eyes. Wolves! In spite of his courage, it was a word to chill the heart.

"It's hunger that's driven them down from the hills," said Bob. "They're unknown here, but sometimes in winter——"

He drove on without finishing.

The wailing cry was heard again, but faintly, afar. The sleigh rushed on at greater speed, and there was silence. The mournful, echoing howl died away in the far distance.

Crash!

There was a sudden, shrill neigh from one of the horses, and the other two reared and plunged. It was a snowdrift at last, and the sleigh was fairly in it.

Before the schoolboys knew what was happening they were tossed into the snow, and the sleigh rolled over in the drift amid the maddened, plunging horses.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

### Shipping in Fraser

FRANK Richards sat up dazedly in the snow.

For a moment or two he could not realise what had happened.

His brain was whirling.

A strong grasp on his arm drew him to his feet. It was Bob's hand that helped him. Vere Beauclerc was scrambling up.

"All serene?" asked Bob, panting.

"All serene, old chap! And you——"

"Right as rain."

"Nobody hurt," said Beauclerc, "but the horses——"

"I guess I missed the trail by a few yards," said Bob ruefully. "It couldn't be helped. I don't know this trail well."

"It's a miracle to me that you've kept to it at all," said Frank.

Bob laughed.

"Lend a hand," he said.

The sleigh was overturned, and rugs and blankets were tossed in the snow. The three horses, almost buried in the drift, were kicking and plunging wildly.

It was no tempting task to venture among the lashing hoofs of the maddened animals; but Bob Lawless had known horses from childhood, and he was at home with them.

Without a moment's hesitation he plunged into the drift to the rescue of the team. Frank and Beauclerc followed him at once.

With a steady hand and murmured words Bob soothed the leader, and dragged him up and out of the drift. The horses were



got upon their feet, trembling but soothed, and almost buried in snow.

The overturned sleigh lay upon a slope, and care was required, for if it had rolled lower in to the drift no human means could have extricated it or the horses. And that was—death! For no one on foot could have reached safety from the heart of the snow-swept plain.

The three schoolboys grasped the sleigh when the horses had been quieted, and with combined efforts righted it at last.

They stood panting, almost exhausted, when the sleigh was once more upon its runners, but Bob only paused a few moments to recover breath.

He examined the sleigh with an anxious eye, fearful that injury might have been done, but there was no damage from the tumble in the soft snow.

"All serene!" called out Bob, in great relief.

The rugs and buffalo-ropes were gathered up and shaken clear of snow, and the sleigh was led back to the trail. There the schoolboys took their seats in it again, and Bob Lawless drove on at a more cautious pace.

The snow had ceased to fall, and the stars were shining out brilliantly once more. Bob Lawless pointed with his whip at last.

Far in the distance ahead a light glimmered.

"What is it, Bob?"

"Fraser!" said Bob briefly.

"Oh, good!"

The sight of the distant town gladdened the hearts of the chums of Cedar Creek. The half of that perilous ride was nearly over at last.

It was long past midnight and Fraser was silent and buried in slumber when the sleigh glided into the streets.

Bob halted before the door of a store.

"The gee-gees will be all the better for a rest," he said. "Shove these rugs over them.

They've got a bit of a job before them yet to get back. And now for Bridget's doll!" added Bob, with a grin.

He dealt a thundering blow at the door with the butt of his whip. It rang and echoed down the silent, frozen street.

Bang, bang!

There was a sound of movement in the house at last. An upper window was opened, and a night-

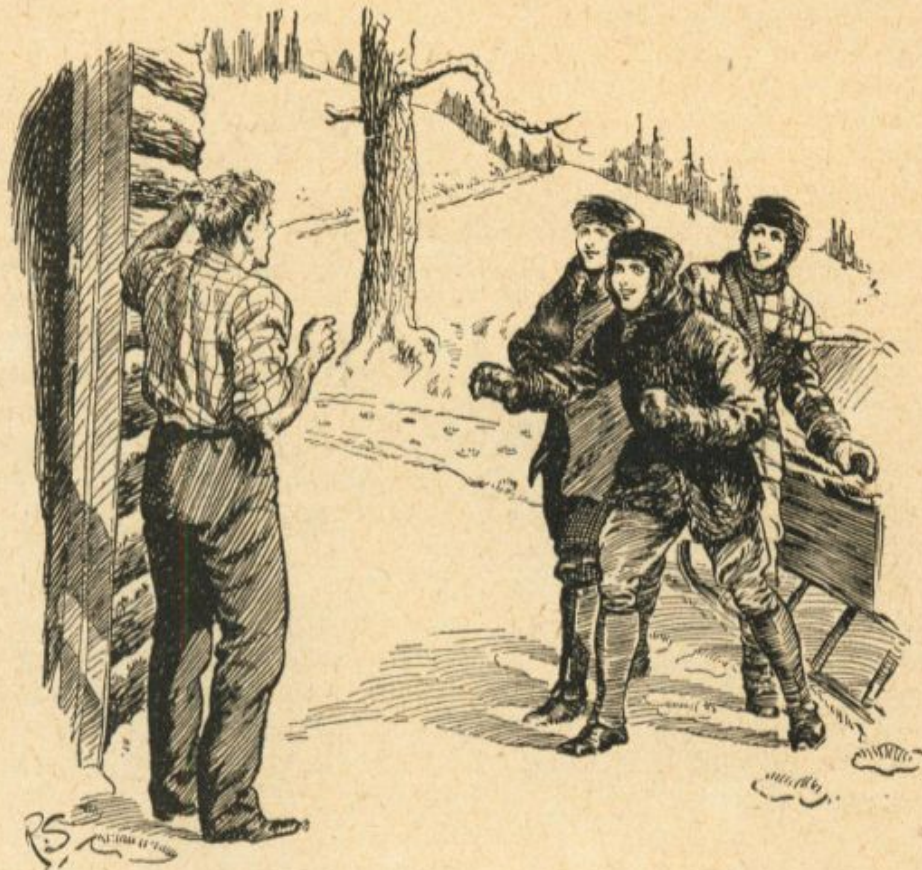
capped head, with a fur-coat wrapped round the neck, looked out, and a fierce voice demanded:

"Who's there? Vamoose, you noisy jays, or I'll pitch a bucket of water on your dunderheads! Hop it!"

"Good-evening, Mr. Phipps!" said Bob cheerfully.

"Great snakes! Is that young Lawless from the Thompson Valley?" yelled the storekeeper.

"You bet!"



"We've just come from Fraser," said Bob cheerily. "And we've got the doll!" "The—the—the doll!" repeated the astounded backwoodsman. (See Chapter 9.)



"Well, what in thunder are you knocking a man up for at this hour?" demanded Mr. Phipps in tones of deep indignation.

"I've come to buy a doll."

"What?"

"A doll."

"You young coyote!" yelled Mr. Phipps.

"You—you—you've come to me at one in the morning to buy a doll! Are you mad?"

"Nope!"

"Go home with you! I'll ask your popper to lay a cowhide round you for this!" shouted the storekeeper.

Slam!

The window closed with emphasis.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Frank Richards in dismay.

Bob Lawless laughed softly.

"The dear man doesn't quite savvy," he remarked. "After all, it's a bit disturbing to be woke up after midnight by a chap who wants to buy a doll."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But he's going to sell us that doll all the same," said Bob. "Dear old Phipps has got to come down! Here goes!"

Bang, bang, bang!

The heavy butt of the whip crashed on the door of the store. Frank and the Cherub lent the aid of their boots, and the din was something terrific.

Dogs began to bark along the street.

In five minutes the infuriated Mr. Phipps could stand it no longer. The window above the store flew up, and a red and wrathful face glared out, and the barrel of a shotgun came into view.

"I've got you covered!" roared Mr. Phipps. "Now, if you don't want a charge of buckshot into your carcass, you light out! You hear me yaup!"

"I guess I'm not deaf, Phipps, old scout," said Bob sweetly. "I rather reckon half Fraser can hear you. But I'm set on that doll."

"I give you one minute to vamoose before I let buckshot into you!" shouted Mr. Phipps.

"We're not vamoosing, old pard. Look here, Phipps, it's something special. We've come all the way from the Thompson Valley for that doll."

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered Mr. Phipps.

"Honest Injun!"

"You've loped thirty miles in the snow for a doll!" gasped the astounded storekeeper. "You ain't staying hyer in Fraser, young Lawless?"

"Not a bit. You see, it's for a sick kid, who won't be pleased with anything else," explained Bob. "You don't want us to have the journey for nothing, Mr. Phipps. Be a good white man, and come down."

"Wal, I swow!" said Mr. Phipps. "Wait till I get into my trousers, Bob Lawless. I'll be down in a brace of shakes. Blowed if I ever heard the likes of this!"

The window closed, and Bob smiled contentedly.

"Phipps ain't a bad sort," he said. "I guessed he'd play up when he knew what it was for. All O.K. now."

In five minutes there was a rattling of a chain and the grinding of a bolt, and the door opened.

A lamp glimmered out into the snowy street, held aloft in Mr. Phipps' hand. The storekeeper seemed restored to good humour now.

"Amble in, you young scallywags!" he said amiably.

The three chums entered the store, and Mr. Phipps pushed the door shut. The snow was blowing in after them.

"Now, I guess you've surprised me, some," said Mr. Phipps, looking very curiously at Bob. "You've humped all the way from Thompson to get a doll for the kid—hay?"

"That's it," said Bob. "Kid expects Daddy Christmas in the morning, and we're not going to disappoint her—see?"

"Wal, carry me home to die!" said the storekeeper.

He set down the lamp.

"Hyers my stock," he said. "Purty near sold out, of course, but there's a few left. Take your choice, gents."

The storekeeper's stock of Christmas toys, brought up on the railroad for the season, had been greatly depleted by the purchases of Fraser's citizens. But there were some goods left, and the schoolboys looked over them.



"I say, that doll looks a corker!" said Bob, picking up a huge doll, the eyes of which opened and shut of their own accord as it was moved. "Why, it's a good two feet long! That's a good 'un!"

"You bet it is!" said Mr. Phipps. "That doll's fifteen dollars, and no galoot wanted to stump up to that tune, and I guess it goes back on the railroad after Christmas. It's a bit too rich for Fraser."

"I guess it doesn't!" said Bob Lawless emphatically. "I guess that doll goes to Micky Muldoon's little girl at White Pine!"

"Fifteen dollars!" said Mr. Phipps laconically.

"How are you fixed, Franky?" asked Bob. "I've got the ten-dollar bill the popper gave me for Christmas."

"I've got the same," said Frank, "and some odd dollars besides."

"And I have one dollar," said Vere Beauclerc quietly. "Little enough, but it goes in. Here you are!"

"Right you are, Cherub!" said Bob Lawless. "Change these bills, please, Mr. Phipps, and wrap up the doll."

"By gum!" said the storekeeper. The big, burly Canadian storekeeper hesitated a minute, and then went on: "I guess I'm not making any profit on that doll, young Lawless. I paid twelve dollars for it, and you're goin' to have it at that. So it's twelve you're stuck for, and not a cent over!"

"You're a white man, Phippy!" said Bob. "We'll tell Bridget that Father Christmas' other name is Billy Phipps."

The storekeeper laughed and replaced the big, handsome doll in its cardboard box, and proceeded to wrap it up carefully.

The twelve dollars were paid over—five

dollars and fifty cents from Frank and Bob each, and one dollar from Vere Beauclerc, all he had.

Gladly enough the chums would have refrained from using Beauclerc's little contribution, but he had a right to share, as far as he could, in helping Father Christmas to come to White Pine.

"There you are, sonny!" said the storekeeper, handing the box to Bob Lawless. "You've got a long run back."

"All serene, if Father Christmas gets in before Bridget wakes in the morning!" grinned Bob. "So-long, Mr. Phipps! Sorry we've spoiled your beauty sleep."

"That's all right lads," said the storekeeper, "don't you worry about that." The boys thanked him.

Mr. Phipps opened the door, and the chums trooped back to the waiting sleigh where the box containing the doll was packed away safely. Mr. Phipps called out from the doorway as they stepped into the sleigh.

"Say, young Lawless!"

"Hallo?"

"I've heard that there are wolves on the range. Keep your eyes peeled goin' back!"

"You bet! Good-night, Mr. Phipps, an' a Merry Christmas!"

"Same to you! Good-night!"

The sleigh jingled gaily away into the starlight, and the storekeeper closed his door. Down the silent main street of Fraser the sleigh-bells jingled, and once more the white waste lay before the adventurers. Through the lightly-falling flakes the stars glittered down upon the speeding sleigh.



Little Bridget hugged the doll and crooned over it. "Bob! Father Christmas has come!" she exclaimed, and laughed happily. (See Chapter 9)



## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

### From the Jaws of Death

JINGLE, jingle!

The snow had ceased to fall. The sky was like sapphire, the stars set in it like diamonds. The merry music of the sleigh-bells rang and echoed through the vast silences of the prairie.

The speed was not so great now. Hardy and strong as the Canadian horses were, the journey was telling upon them. But there was ample time to reach White Pine before the dawn whitened the summit of the Rockies, if all went well.

The chums were silent as the sleigh glided on. They were thinking of the wild and mournful howl they had heard on the prairie on the outward run. Their eyes swept the dim expanses on all sides.

Frank Richards caught Beauclerc's arm suddenly.

"Listen!" he muttered.

Eerily through the night came the howl, faint and afar. Without the crack of the whip the horses started into greater speed. Well they knew the whine of the prowling wolf.

Driven by hunger from their lairs in the northern hills, the savage animals had ventured nearer to the habitations of man. Gaunt and hunger-stricken, they were terrible foes to approach.

And there were no weapons in the sleigh. The chums had not even thought of them. Not that weapons in the schoolboys' hands would have been of much use against a hungry wolf-pack.

The sleigh jingled on.

The howl was repeated again and again. It was coming nearer. With thumping hearts the chums realised that the prowling brutes had heard the sleigh-bells or scented the horses.

Beauclerc raised a steady hand to point.

In the dimness, where the starlight lay on the drifting snow, a dark form appeared, looming through the shadows. Two fierce red eyes glittered as they caught the light.

It was a wolf.

The whining howl sounded again, and there

was a whinny of terror from the horses. Another and another dark figure leaped into view from the snow.

"They're after us!" said Frank between his teeth.

Bob's whip cracked like a pistol.

But it was hardly needed. The horses were straining now. Fatigue was forgotten in the terror inspired by the howl of the wolf.

The schoolboys looked back as the sleigh fled on. Five wolves were in sight—gaunt, haggard, wasted by famine—the famine that had drawn them far from their accustomed haunts.

As they loped behind the sleigh the schoolboys could see the gleaming jaws, from which the hot breath poured like steam.

Once within reach of those hideous fangs it was all over with the occupants of the sleigh.

Bob Lawless sat as steady as a rock, driving, holding his terrified team well in hand, and getting every ounce of speed out of the horses.

"How many, Frank?" he asked, without looking round.

"I can see five."

"Are they gaining?"

"I think so."

"We're not far off the river now," said Bob quietly.

Bob had taken a slightly different route, to cross the river lower down than before, to avoid the place where the ice had cracked. But the river was not yet in sight.

With fascinated eyes, Frank and Vere Beauclerc watched the gaunt animals that loped after the sleigh in ferocious pursuit.

In the fierce race two of them dropped behind and were lost to view amid the powdering snow.

But three of the fearful animals were close in pursuit, and gaining on the sleigh.

"And we have no weapon!" muttered Vere Beauclerc.

"How far off now?" asked Bob, in tones of quiet calmness. He did not look round. He dared not take his eyes from the straining team and the snow-driven trail ahead.

"Twenty yards the nearest," said Frank Richards quietly. "Only three keeping up."

"When they're half the distance, throw out the bearskin rug."



"Right!"

The three schoolboys were calm and quiet. The very nearness of the terrible danger seemed to calm them.

Frank and Vere loosened the big bearskin rug, ready to throw. They had heard of such a device to delay a pursuing pack. Bob Lawless had thought of it at once. Closer and closer came the ravenous three, with red, rolling eyes and snapping jaws.

"Now!" muttered Beauclerc.

Frank tossed the great, heavy bearskin into the snow behind.

In a couple of seconds the three wolves had reached it, and were tearing it madly with their teeth. The three gaunt animals struggled for it, gnashing their teeth ferociously, and the schoolboys heard the horrid sound as the sleigh fled on, unpursued for the moment.

Then came a wild uproar of snarling and yelling. Snapping teeth had caught a paw in the struggle for the bearskin, and the bitten animal turned savagely upon the assailant, biting in return.

Two savage brutes were rolling over in the snow, tearing and snarling and foaming as if in madness. The third was rending the bearskin to tatters.

The sleigh raced on.

"The river!" panted Beauclerc.

The frozen river gleamed ahead in the starlight. There was a long, low howl behind, and Frank looked back. A single wolf was

keeping up the chase, and faintly from the far distance came the echoes of the savage conflict still proceeding between the other two.

But the sleigh had gained a long stretch. It swept down to the frozen river, and glided out on the snow-clad ice.

The juniors almost held their breath.

But the ice was thicker here. It stood the strain almost without a sound. Like an arrow the sleigh passed across the frozen surface, and rushed up the bank. Frank Richards stood up to look back.

On the far side of the river the last wolf was disappearing from view in the snow. The sleigh had won the deadly race.

"All serene!" panted Frank, sinking back into his seat. "My hat! I don't want to go through that again!"

"All's well that ends well," said Beauclerc, with a faint smile. "Father Christmas has had a narrow shave, but he will get to White Pine now."

For several miles more the sleigh kept up good speed. But the weary horses slackened at last. The danger of the wolves was past, and Bob allowed his team to fall into an easy trot.

Clouds had hidden the stars again. There was darkness round the sleigh, save for the white gleam of the snow. But this was familiar ground to Bob Lawless, and he drove on without a doubt or a pause.

Through the dimness a pale gleam crept in the eastern sky. Like spectres in the dark



"Three cheers!" roared Billy Cook, waving his hat. And the crowd of guests and ranchmen joined heartily in the cheers, till Frank Richards and Co. were glad to hide their blushes in the ranch-house. (See Chapter 10.)



the distant summits of the Rockies loomed into view, whitened by the dawn.

It was the dawn of Christmas.

Till now the schoolboys had hardly been conscious of fatigue. But as the pale winter dawn crept up the sky they realised that they were very tired. Darkness rolled away from the mountains and the plain. Trees loomed up dimly, and then more clearly. But they were close to White Pine now.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER

### Father Christmas at White Pine

**A** YELLOW sun looked down from a grey sky as Bob Lawless brought his weary team to a halt at White Pine. Even as he halted, the door of the emigrant's cabin opened, and Micky Muldoon came out.

The settler stopped and stared at the sight of the sleigh.

Bob Lawless jumped down followed by his comrades.

"Merry Christmas, Mr. Muldoon!" he sang out cheerily.

"Merry Christmas to you, sorr, begorra!" said Mr. Muldoon. "And phwat are yez doin' so far from home at this hour?"

"We've just come from Fraser."

"Phwat!" gasped Mr. Muldoon.

"And we've got the doll."

"The—the—the doll!" repeated the astounded backwoodsman.

"Lug it out, Franky."

Frank Richards dragged the box out of the sleigh. Micky Muldoon was staring at them blankly. He did not understand yet.

"Don't you catch on?" said Bob. "It's Father Christmas. He's brought the doll for Bridget."

"Oh, begor!"

"Is she awake yet?"

Mr. Muldoon shook his head.

"Not yet."

"Good! Mrs. Muldoon up?"

"Yis, sorr. Sure, I'll call her."

The settler stepped back into the cabin, and reappeared in a few moments with his wife. The tired, troubled woman looked in amazement at the three schoolboys. Bob Lawless removed the lid of the big cardboard box.

Mrs. Muldoon's eyes fairly bulged at the sight of the great doll.

"Will that fill the bill?" grinned Bob, with great satisfaction. "We've brought it from Fraser for the little 'un, Mrs. Muldoon. You're to put it in her stocking before she wakes—if it'll go into her blessed stocking though!"

"Bless my heart!" said the amazed woman. "Oh, Master Lawless——"

"Father Christmas, if you please!" chuckled Bob.

"The blessings of the saints be on you this Christmas, young jintlemen!" said Mr. Muldoon. "Sure, the little one would have broken her heart if Father Christmas had passed her by. And, faith, it's little I could do. But—but——"

"You've been to Fraser?" said Mrs. Muldoon. "You've been sleighing all night for the sake of the little one! And sure, I heard that there were wolves on the range, across the river!"

"Never mind the wolves," said Frank Richards, laughing. "Shove the doll where the little one will see it when she wakes, ma'am."

"Heaven bless you all!" said Mrs. Muldoon with tears in her tired eyes, as she took the doll.

The settler's wife went into the cabin.

"Now it's about time we got home to bed," grinned Bob. "Come to think of it, I'm a bit tired."

"Hark!" said Frank.

They stepped closer to the doorway of the cabin.

A weak, childish voice could be heard. Bridget had awakened.

"Mummy!"

"Yes, dearie."

"It's Christmas, mummy."

"Yes, dear, it's Christmas."

"Has Father Christmas come?"

Frank Richards and his chums looked at one another. But for the arrival of the schoolboys poor Mrs. Muldoon would have had a bitterly disappointing reply to make to the child's question.

At that moment the chums of Cedar Creek felt more than repaid for the stress and the danger of that wild night's ride through the snow.



In silence they listened.

"Has he come, mummy? I'm sure he would come. See if Father Christmas has been, mummy."

"Sure, I'll see, darling."

The poor woman's voice was happy now as she answered.

There was a pause, and then from the cabin came a cry of delight.

"Oh, mummy!"

It was a cry so full of infantile joy and satisfaction that it went straight to the hearts of the listeners.

"Begor!" murmured Micky Muldoon.

"Begor, an' sure heaven will bless you, young gentlemen, for phwat ye've done."

"Oh, mummy! Isn't it a beauty? I knew Father Christmas wouldn't forget us, mummy. Oh, mummy!"

Mrs Muldoon stepped to the door, and signed to the schoolboys to enter.

They looked in.

Little Bridget was sitting up in her cot with the doll in her arms. It was such a doll as the child had never seen before, such a doll as she had never dreamed of possessing. Her pale face was flushed now, her eyes were sparkling. She hugged the doll and crooned over it.

She looked up brightly and smiled to the schoolboys.

"Bob! He's come."

"Has he?" exclaimed Bob; "who has, Bridget?"

"Father Christmas!" Bridget laughed happily. "I knew he would, Bob, and you said he would, too. Some folks don't believe in Father Christmas. Look what he's brought me!"

"It's ripping!" said Bob. "Good old Father Christmas. He was bound to come, Bridget."

"You can hold it if you like, Bob," said Bridget, generously.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob.

He took the doll for a moment, Bridget watching it hungrily. And the child was evidently glad when her little arms closed once more upon her treasure.

"It's eyes open and shut, Bob. Look!"

"Fancy that!" said Bob, in great surprise. Bridget laid her head on the pillow again,

the doll cuddled in her arms. Bob Lawless rejoined his chums.

"Come on, you chaps," he said. "By gum! It was worth that drive!"

"Heaven bless you!" was all poor Mrs. Muldoon could say. "Heaven bless you, young gentlemen, for this."

With happy hearts the chums of Cedar Creek stepped into the sleigh. At an easy pace Bob drove away from the lonely cabin. They left happiness behind them there.

"Home now," said Frank.

"We'll call at the school!" said Bob. "Miss Meadows was to be fetched to the ranch early this morning. We'll take her along, and the popper can't rag us with Miss Meadows looking on—see?"

"Ha, ha, ha."

And they drove on merrily to Cedar Creek.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER

### A Merry Christmas

MISS MEADOWS was expecting to be called for at the school that morning. The rancher's sleigh arrived a little earlier than was expected, that was all.

Miss Meadows and Mr. Slimmey entered the vehicle, and Bob turned his team in the direction of the ranch.

"You boys look tired," Miss Meadows remarked, as Frank Richard's chin was dropping on his chest.

Frank straightened up rather guiltily.

"Nunno—not at all!" he stammered.

"Not a bit," said Beauclerc.

Miss Meadows looked at them rather keenly.

"The horses are tired, too," she said. "You must have been out a very long time; yet it is still early morning."

"Tell Miss Meadows, and she'll make it all right with the popper, Frankie," said Bob Lawless, over his shoulder.

"What have you to tell me, Richards?" asked the schoolmistress, a little severely, and Mr. Slimmey blinked at the chums over his gold-rimmed glasses.

"We've been out all night, Miss Meadows," confessed Frank.

"What! Where have you been?"

"To Fraser."



" Bless my soul ! " exclaimed Mr. Slimmey. " My boys—Fraser—and there are wolves on the range. "

" The wolves have had Mr. Lawless' bear-skin rug, " said Beauclerc. " I hope he won't mind, as they had to have that or us ! "

" Good heavens ! " exclaimed Miss Meadows. " Tell me at once what you've been doing. "

Frank Richards told the whole story. He wondered whether Miss Meadows would be angry ; but as he looked at the schoolmistress' face when he had finished, he saw that her eyes had filled with tears.

" My dear, dear boys ! " said Miss Meadows ; " my dear, dear boys ! You should not have gone—it was too terribly dangerous ; but—but I am proud of you ! I do not think Mr. Lawless will be angry when he knows ! "

" So Father Christmas came to White Pine after all ! " said Mr. Slimmey, wiping his spectacles.

" You bet ! " chuckled Bob Lawless, " and if you'd seen the kid's face, Mr. Slimmey, you'd have thought it was worth it. "

The sleigh jingled up to the ranch. Mr. Lawless ran to meet it, and Mrs. Lawless, in the porch, breathed a deep sigh of relief at the sight of her son safe and sound.

" You young rascals ! " shouted the rancher as the sleigh halted. " Good morning, Miss Meadows ; good morning, Mr. Slimmey ; Merry Christmas ! You young rascals, where have you been ? "

" Bob ! " exclaimed Mrs. Lawless.

" You weren't alarmed, mother ? " asked Bob remorsefully. " I gave Billy Cook a message— "

" Billy gave us the message, " said the rancher gruffly ; " but your mother was anxious all the same, you young scallywag. Do you think you are old enough to take a night out on the prairie in a sleigh ? "

" Under the circumstances, popper, " said Bob. " You tell him, Miss Meadows—I can see he is going to be mad with us. "

The rancher was in rather a difficulty. His son's escapade could not be passed over, but a dozen guests were gathering round to see the returning wanderers, as well as Miss Meadows and Mr. Slimmey.

But Miss Meadows hastened to explain, and

the cloud cleared off from the rancher's brow.

Several of the Cedar Creek schoolboys had arrived at the ranch with their parents for Christmas Day, and they gathered round Frank Richards and Co. There was a buzz of amazement from all as Miss Meadows told the story of Father Christmas coming to White Pine.

" The young rascals ! " gasped the rancher. " Oh, the scallywags ! Bob, you young villain—suppose the wolves— " He gasped again.

" They've had your bearskin rug, popper, " said Bob, cheerfully.

" You've been to Fraser, Bob ! " exclaimed Chunky Todgers, catching Bob's arm. " Well, it beats the Dutch ! I say, old fellow, did you think of bringing back any maple sugar with you ? "

" Never thought of it, Chunky, " said Bob.

" You young rascals ! " repeated the rancher. " You ought to be cowhided for running such risks. But if your schoolmistress thinks you can be forgiven, I'd better think the same, I guess. "

" Hear, hear, " said Bob, cheerily. " I—I say, mother, I—I'm sorry if you were anxious. I—I thought you'd like that kid to get the doll, though what anybody wants with a doll beats me hollow. You're not waxy ? "

Mrs. Lawless bent and kissed her son with tears in her eyes.

" I have been alarmed, " she said. " I should have been terribly alarmed if I had known what you were doing. But I am proud of you, Bob, and of your friends, too ! "

" Three cheers ! " roared Billy Cook, waving his hat.

And the crowd of guests and the ranchmen joined heartily in the cheers, till Frank Richards and Co. were glad to hide their blushes in the ranch-house. And that Christmas Day was spent by the chums of Cedar Creek in deep slumber.

But in the evening they were quite themselves again. It was a merry Christmas at the ranch—one of the merriest Frank Richards had ever known—and it was made all the happier to the chums by the knowledge that they had brought happiness to others. And a dozen times, at least, the story had to be told of how Father Christmas came to White Pine.

THE END







# A RAMBLE ROUND ROOKWOOD!



LET us suppose that by the stroke of a magic wand you could suddenly transport yourself to Rookwood School.

You would see many strange sights and meet many strange people.

At the first glimpse of the historic Hampshire school you would be thrilled.

Rookwood stands on elevated ground, and its stately tower is a landmark for miles around.

Two huge buildings adjoining one another would greet your gaze—one ancient and ivy-clad; and the other, in striking contrast, bare-walled and comparatively new.

The old ivy-clad building is the original Rookwood—the Classical Side. The other “goodly pile,” as a novelist would describe it, is the Modern Side.

If you were going to Rookwood as a new boy, you would probably be keen on getting into the Modern Side, which is thoroughly up-to-date, and replete with every modern convenience.

But the Classical Side, though draughty and ill-lighted, and possessing damp walls and crumbling masonry, has much to commend it. For it is rich in traditions, and it

represents the real Rookwood. It dates back many hundreds of years.

You would be greeted at the school gates by a somewhat grumpy-looking individual in uniform, with an ancient hat flattened down upon his semi-bald pate.

This is John Mack, the porter and lodge-keeper. Mack is a counterpart of the Greyfriars Gosling and the St. Jim’s Taggles. He is one of the landmarks of Rookwood, having been at the school longer than anyone else, the Head included.

Mack would greet you something like this: “Wot I says is this ’ere—state yer business promp, or I’ll send you packin’, as sure as heggs!”

On your requesting an interview with the Head, the flat-footed Mack would shuffle across the quadrangle, beckoning you to follow.

Unless you happened to be a fellow of exceptional nerve, you would feel rather awed in the presence of the Rev. Henry Chisholm D.D., M.A., headmaster of Rookwood School. For the Head has what is known as a “presence.” His keen eyes seem to search your very soul. If your knees started wobbling,



and your heart beating faster, you could console yourself with the reflection that thousands of knees had wobbled, and thousands of hearts palpitated, in like circumstances.

The Head's face is stern in repose; but when he smiles the whole atmosphere is changed as if by magic. For there is a genial side to Dr. Chisholm's nature, and if you are fortunate enough to be on good terms with him, you will find him a very pleasant and charming gentleman.

The Head is a great scholar, and in his younger days he was a Trojan on the playing-fields. The number of sporting trophies which adorn his sideboard bear witness to this.

Dr. Chisholm would chat to you for some moments in a kindly manner. But he is a busy man, and you would be tactful enough not to take up too much of his valuable time. Besides, you have many more people to see. Some you will warm to at first sight; others you will instinctively dislike.

Mr. Herbert Manders, M.A., is the senior master at Rookwood, and has control of the Modern Side.

You won't like Mr. Manders. Nobody likes him. He is a lean, hatchet-faced man, with steely-grey eyes and a rather cruel mouth.

You have doubtless heard the well-known verse commencing "I do not love thee, Dr. Fell." It can be applied, with variations, to Mr. Manders.

"I do not love thee, Mr. Manders,  
To thee no Rookwood fellow panders.  
For thou art much too fond of 'handers,'  
I do not love thee, Mr. Manders!"

To put it plainly, Mr. Manders is a tyrant. And although some of the other masters are heavy-handed at times, none is so cordially disliked as the senior master at Rookwood.

The other masters are Mr. Edward Greely, B.A.; Mr. Percy Jasper Mooney, M.A.; Mr. Richard Dalton, M.A.; Mr. Frank Bohun, M.A.; Mr. Samuel Wiggins, M.A.; Mr. Arthur Flinders; Mr. Harold Bull; and Monsieur Guillaume Monceau, the French master.

Mr. Dalton is probably the best known of these gentlemen, for he has charge of the

Classical Fourth, the Form to which Jimmy Silver & Co. belong. Few of us envy Mr. Dalton's task of preserving order in the most unruly Form at Rookwood!

After a brief handshake with each of the masters, you would start on the second stage of your tour.

#### IN THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY.

George Bulkeley, captain of Rookwood, head prefect, and head of games, will take your hand in a powerful grip, and smile down at you—for it is highly improbable that you would be as tall as Bulkeley. He is by way of being a giant.

A fine fellow is Bulkeley, and an ideal skipper in every way. He is immensely popular, especially among the smaller fry. The youngsters tumble over each other for the honour of fagging for Bulkeley. He is a tower of strength to Rookwood, and you will like him tremendously.

You will like Lawrence Neville, too. He is Bulkeley's right-hand man, and cast very much in the same mould. A mighty sportsman is Neville, and a rattling good sort. As a boxer he has no equal at Rookwood.

The rest of the seniors on the Classical side will not interest you very much. Dickinson, and Jones major, and Lonsdale are typical Sixth-formers, inclined to be rather easy-going, perhaps, but with no serious faults. Merton is weak, and too easily influenced by Carthew. The last-named is a thorough black sheep, with no redeeming characteristics. He is a bully and a law-breaker, and on numerous occasions he has come within an ace of expulsion.

Over on the Modern Side you will meet its head prefect, James Knowles. He is as shady a person as Carthew—in fact, more so, since he claims the unenviable distinction of being the worst fellow at Rookwood.

Knowles has no use for juniors and fags. He gives them a warm time, and his pal, Catesby, backs him up in his tyranny. Frampton is also a confederate of Knowles.

Kingsley Brayne is the best senior on the Modern Side. You should see him play football! His generalship on the field of play is remarkable, and, as a certain punster in the



# Rookwood Personalities.



George Bulkeley  
Captain of Rookwood  
A Splendid  
All-Round Sportsman



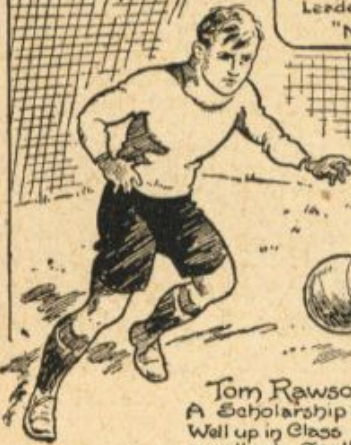
Adolphus Smythe  
Leader of the  
"Nuts"



John Maek  
Porter and  
Lodgekeeper



Mark Lattrey  
The Cad of the  
Fourth Form



Tom Rawson  
A Scholarship Junior  
Well up in Class and an  
excellent Goalkeeper



The HEAD.

Reginald  
Muffin.  
Shown at his  
Favorite  
Pastime!



## The Famous Fistical Four.



Jimmy  
Silver.



George  
Raby.



Arthur  
Newcome.



Arthur Edward  
Lovell.



Lawrence Neville  
Chum of George Bulkeley  
and Captain of Boxing



Mr. Herbert  
Manders, M.A.  
The Unpopular  
Modern  
House Master.



Valentine  
Mornington



Mark Carthew.  
The Black Sheep  
of the  
Classical Sixth



"Dicky"  
Dalton.  
The Popular  
Master of the  
Classical Fourth

A few of the well-known characters you would meet in the course of a ramble round Rookwood.



Fourth remarked, he relies on "Brayne" rather than brawn.

The other fellows in the Sixth are of a nondescript order. Tom Hoke and Martin Myers are bullies on a small scale. Horace Tresham is a great pal of Brayne's. Michael Medway is a curious mixture of good and bad, selfishness being his cardinal fault. And in Joseph Ledbury we have a good sportsman, who is not often in the limelight.

You will not fail to be struck by the cosiness of the Sixth Form studies.

When a senior sets out to furnish his study, he makes it "a home away from home." Luxurious carpets, restful couches, easy chairs, and cushions galore will greet your gaze. And if you are lucky enough to be invited to tea by one of the prefects—But, of course, you would decline, preferring to wait and have tea with Jimmy Silver & Co., the heroes of the Classical Fourth.

#### THE FIFTH AND THE SHELL

A lightning visit to the Fifth Form quarters, Classical and Modern, will show you some interesting personages.

The leader of the Classical Fifth is Edward Hansom—a really wonderful fellow, who is far and away the cleverest fellow at Rookwood—in his own opinion!

Hansom is always coming to loggerheads with Jimmy Silver & Co., but he gets precious little change out of them. If there is a feud between the Fifth and the Fourth, it is safe to say that Hansom's brigade will get the worst of it. Poor old Hansom! He has a great opinion of himself, but if only he could see himself as others see him, he would fade away and hide his diminished head!

Philip Lumsden and Cecil Talboys are Hansom's two lieutenants. The latter rather prides himself on being a first-class pianist. When he puts on the loud pedal, the fellows scatter in all directions. Music hath charms; but not the sort of music served up by Talboys of the Fifth.

Faith, an' if it's a rare good sportsman ye're seeking, ye needn't look farther than Cecil O'Rourke, from the Emerald Isle. A jolly good fellow is O'Rourke. In the opinion of many, he ought to be skipper of the Fifth

in place of the conceited and cocksure Hansom.

You will like O'Rourke. You will also have a friendly handshake for Harry Duff and Tobias Jobson. The latter, to use a time-honoured phrase, is "as poor as a church mouse." But, although Jobson lacks cash, he has a good headpiece on him, and is more than capable of holding his own.

Of Harry Brown, it need only be said that he is almost as conceited as Hansom. He will talk to you for hours of the achievements and the great genius of Harry Brown—if you let him!

Before crossing over to the Modern Side, it will be as well to give Paul Muggins a look-in. Muggins is a rugged sort of fellow, with the strength of an ox. He has no finesse and no tact. He is always blundering about like a bull in a china-shop. But he is quite a good fellow in the main.

On the Modern Side, the leading lights of the Fifth Form are Laurie de Montmorency and his three chums, Tom Evans, Roderick Flowers, and James Waterson. They are of the nuts nutty. They dress stylishly; they have plenty of money to throw about; and they mimic the drawling tones of the aristocracy, omitting the final "g's."

These fellows are not likely to appeal to you very much; and Adolphus Smythe, of the Shell, will appeal to you still less.

Smythe is the leader and founder of the "Smart Set." He is the Beau Brummel of Rookwood; and his pockets, like those of De Montmorency, are well lined with cash.

Here are the names of the fellows who follow in Smythe's train:

Aubrey Howard and Allan Tracy (Smythe's study-mates), Alec Chesney, Robert Gilbey, Murray Seaton, Jack Selwyn, and Paul Waugh.

#### "THE FISTICAL FOUR"

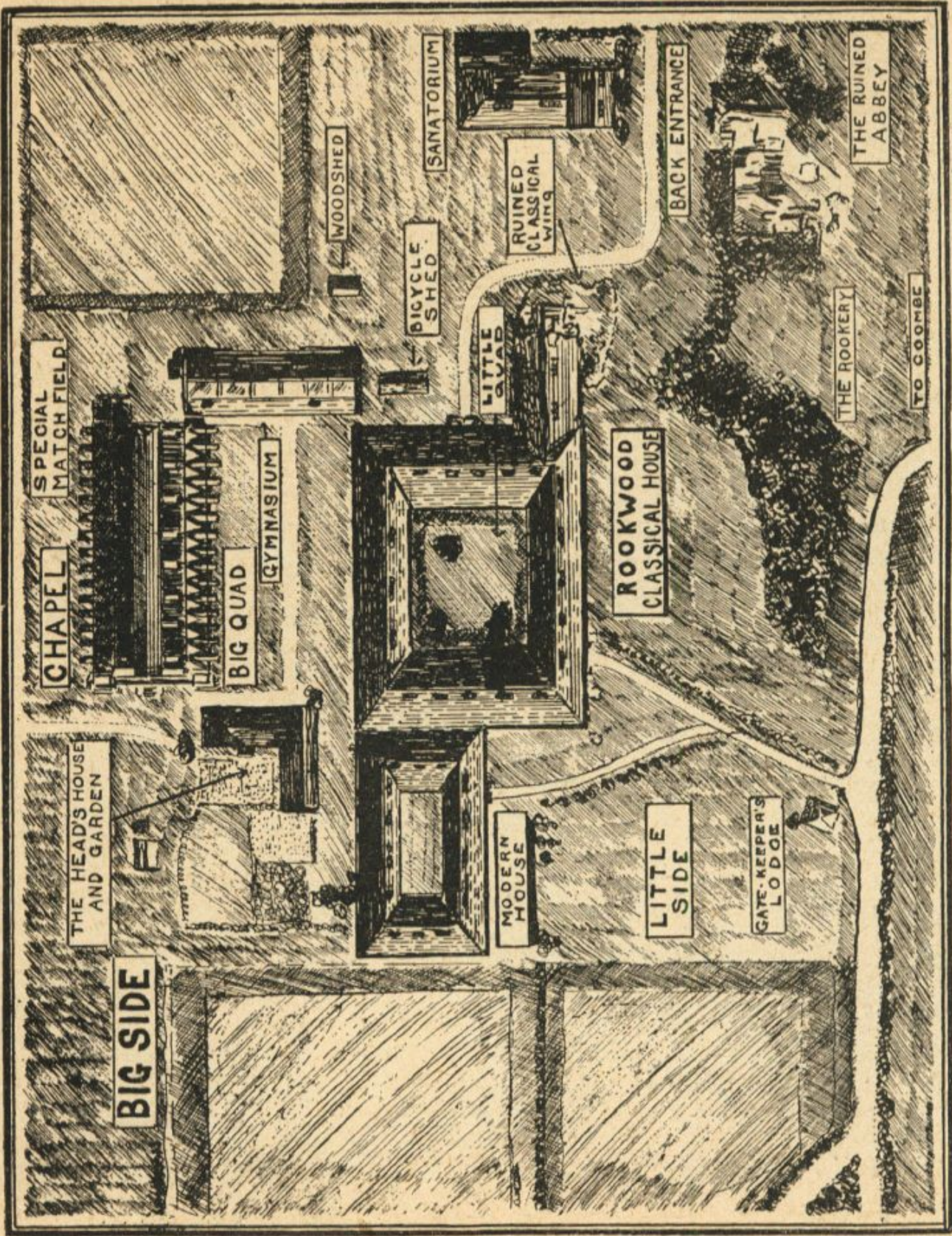
And now your heart gives a bound, for you realise that you are going to see somebody worth seeing.

The heroes of the Classical Side, and the most prominent people at Rookwood, are Jimmy Silver, Arthur Edward Lovell, Arthur Newcome, and George Raby.

Let us take them in due order.



AN AEROPLANE VIEW OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL



This plan, drawn from an aeroplane photograph by one of the boys, forms a useful accompaniment to Mr. Owen Conquest's stories of this famous school.



You will have no difficulty in picking out Jimmy Silver from the rest, on account of his sunny smile. Jimmy is invariably smiling. His motto is "Always Merry and Bright," and it is only on very rare occasions that you find him in the doldrums.

Jimmy is the leader of the Fistical Four, and the junior captain of cricket and football. He is a thrustful, go-ahead fellow, with an abundance of animal spirits. As an inventor of "japes" and "wheezes" he has no superior at Rookwood. He is the soul of honour, and a splendid fellow in every way.

Jimmy Silver will chat to you frankly and gaily. He will press you to stay to tea—not that you will need any pressing!—and you will seat yourself at a laden table and thoroughly enjoy yourself.

Arthur Edward Lovell will claim your interest. He is Jimmy Silver's best chum, but he is not so cheery as Jimmy. He is more concerned with the serious things of life. He won't prattle to you so pleasantly as Jimmy Silver, either. He will grunt and grumble a bit, but he doesn't mean anything. He is sound as a rock and true as steel. Jimmy Silver is fortunate in having such a staunch pal.

Arthur Newcome is a good-looking, well-built junior, somewhat quiet in disposition, but a sterling performer on the playing-fields. Jimmy Silver and Newcome, in the Rookwood forward line, form a formidable pair. Newcome is a good scholar, and he has an excellent taste in reading, without, however, being a "swot."

George Raby, the fourth member of the Fistical Four, differs from all the others. He is a big, burly fellow, and inclined to be slow-witted. But George throws himself heart and soul into his work and play, and he is a valuable member of the famous quartet.

Whilst you are sitting at tea with the Fistical Four, a fat figure will probably loom up in the doorway of the study. And a high-pitched voice will exclaim: "I say, you fellows!"

The intruder will be Reginald Muffin, commonly called "Tubby."

Tubby is dense and stupid and amusing, but there is very little vice in him. When he

does wrong, it is generally through ignorance. Tubby will be simply bursting to tell you all about himself, but Jimmy Silver & Co. will probably pitch him into the passage before he has a chance!

After tea, you will meet the other fellows in the Classical Fourth.

Kit Conroy and Kit Erroll will strike you as being fellows of the best type. The same remark applies to Dick Oswald, Tom Rawson, and Teddy Grace. The last-named used to be called "Putty," because he was supposed to be "soft." But he soon proved to Rookwood that there was nothing soft in his make-up. Teddy is simply bubbling over with japes and wheezes, and in this respect he is almost as renowned as Jimmy Silver.

Van Ryn, a Colonial from South Africa, is also a decent fellow. So is Ernest Hooker. Evans minor has a clean sheet, and Sidney Dickinson is all right since he was cured of the habit of reading lurid literature.

A fellow of outstanding interest, who has played a prominent part in many Rookwood stories, is Valentine Mornington. Morny's appearance is as dandified as that of Adolphus Smythe. The colour scheme of his fancy waistcoat will stagger you. But Mornington is something more than a mere fop. He is a brilliant fellow—almost a genius in some ways—but he is inclined to be erratic. He flouts the conventions, and is utterly fearless. He is the "deepest" fellow in the Classical Fourth, and even his best chum, Kit Erroll, does not understand him thoroughly.

Having met all these fellows, you will not wish to waste much time over Peele & Co., the black sheep of the Form.

Cyril Peele is the leader of the fast set, and Gower, Lattrey, Townsend, and Topham generally take their cue from him.

A fellow you will like is Charles Pons, a French-Canadian junior, with a marked propensity for playing practical jokes.

Jones minor is a lively spark, but by no means a bad sort. And Alfred Higgs, who used to be the official bully of the Fourth, has faded away into comparative oblivion. Jimmy Silver & Co. have a short way with bullies! Higgs has "asked for" trouble more than once—and got it!



### "THE THREE TOMMIES"

Over on the Modern Side, you will be introduced to three very remarkable young gentlemen.

Tommy Dodd is the acknowledged leader of the Modern Fourth, and Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle give him valuable support in his frequent japes on the Classics.

Tommy Dodd is a bright, breezy fellow, and a sterling sportsman. Of course, he will tell you that the Moderns are top-dogs, and that the Classical Side is nothing more or less than a home for incurables. Jimmy Silver would have told you exactly the reverse. Your best policy will be to agree with both!

Tommy Cook is strong and sturdy, and his friendship for Tommy Dodd is very deep and real.

Tommy Doyle is from the Emerald Isle, and is one of the liveliest fellows in the school. His rich, Irish brogue is amusing, and so are many of his japes.

You will find the three Tommies such good company that you will be loth to leave them. But there are others to meet yet.

Clarence York Cuffy, another member of the Modern Fourth, is an absolute duffer. He is sublimely innocent, and utterly free from guile. His leg is pulled from the rising up of the sun unto the going down thereof. But Clarence is quite good-hearted, and you will enjoy chatting with him awhile.

Walter Lacy is one of those queer mixtures that abound in our public schools. There are two distinct sides to his character. Like the child in the nursery rhyme, "when he is good, he is very, very good; and when he is bad, he is horrid!" He is one of the best junior

sportsmen at Rookwood—when he cares to exert himself.

If you are wise, you will scorn to shake hands with Albert Leggett. This individual is a toad. He is the sneak of the school, and he is lots of other unpleasant things.

James Frederick Towle and Richard McCarthy are horses of a different colour. Both are sound and decent. And Robert Wadsley, who is not often in the limelight, follows closely in their style.



Jimmy Silver is a "good man on a horse," as he has proved on more than one occasion.

scrapes, and being hauled out of them by his watchful major.

The most detestable youth in the Third is Bertie de Vere, who is always trying to "cut a dash." He would like Algy Silver and young Lovell to join him in his escapades; but, wilful though they are, they draw the line at chumming with De Vere.

Other "babes" of the Third are Grant, Hamley, Hawes, Lucas, Peters, Pipkin, Stacey, Smithson, Wegg, Wylie, and Wyatt.

### "THE KINDERGARTEN"

Before leaving Rookwood, you will naturally wish to have a look at the inky-fingered tribe of fags.

The leader of the Third Form is Algy Silver, the younger brother of the immortal James.

Algy is by no means a model youth. He is wayward and cheeky, and he causes his major any amount of trouble. He is often running a halter round his neck, owing to his thoughtless disregard of rules. Algy is not nearly so likeable as Jimmy, but he will probably grow out of his present waywardness.

It is curious that Edward Lovell, the minor of Arthur Edward Lovell, should be just as troublesome a young rascal as Algy Silver. But it is so. Lovell minor is continually getting into





W. H. BRYANT



# FLOODED OUT AT ROOKWOOD

A Remarkable Scene in the School's History

**T**HE great Flood of 1642 is almost as memorable in the minds of Rookwooders as the original Flood which devastated the world

A torrential downpour of rain, lasting for many days on end, caused this alarming catastrophe.

It is feared, however, that the boys of that period did not view the affair as a catastrophe. On the contrary, they regarded it as a huge "jape."

The majority of the rooms on the ground floor became flooded, with the result that the dormitories had to be converted into classrooms. They were Form-rooms by day and dormitories by night.

When masters and boys wished to leave the school building, they were compelled to "take to the boats." And the quadrangle resembled the Serpentine on a summer day. Boats of every description glided to and fro; and well might one of the juniors have remarked, "Prithee, is this Rookwood or Venice?"

There were many humorous aspects of the Flood. Our artist has cleverly portrayed one of them.

Those were indeed stirring times at the old school. Note the two juniors perched high and dry in the tree-tops, gazing down with enjoyment, not unmixed with alarm, at the scene below.

The school authorities were naturally relieved when the flood subsided; but the high-spirited scholars were, we imagine, vastly disappointed.

Jimmy Silver & Co., the present heroes of Rookwood, would cheerfully sacrifice a term's pocket-money to be able to enact these scenes over again. But the famous Hampshire school has not been flooded out since the Stuart period; and many years will doubtless elapse before the cry again goes up:

"Every boy to the boats!"

## A Ramble Round Rookwood!

(Continued from page 120)

You will find them round the common-room fire, toasting herrings or baking chestnuts. And they will turn grinning and grimy faces towards you as you smile down at them.

In the Second Form there are no doubtful characters. Mornington minor is the best known. His is quite a romantic history, and he is greatly devoted to Morny.

Arthur Montgomery Jones—Jones minimus—is a reckless young scamp, always up to mischief.

The other "babes" in the Second are Tracey, Fisher, O'Toole, Roberts, Snooks, Scott, and Ernest Vincent.

### A FINAL SURVEY

A goodly interval having elapsed since tea, Jimmy Silver & Co. will probably pilot you to the school tuckshop, where you will make the acquaintance of Sergeant Benjamin Kettle, who fought in numerous campaigns and bears many honourable scars. He is the proprietor of the little shop, and can be trusted not to profiteer. He will want to tell you how he helped to relieve Ladysmith, and how he led a thrilling charge at Spion Kop. By the time he has told you all his adventures, you will begin to wonder whether it really was Wellington who won Waterloo or Sergeant Kettle!

You will have a friendly chat with the kindly old matron, and with Mrs. Maloney, the House Dame. Finally, having dropped a shilling into the eager palm of Tupper, the page-boy, you will prepare to depart.

In the course of your ramble, you will have seen the gym, and the spacious playing-fields, and the weather-beaten old tower, as well as the picturesque school chapel. And when the time comes for you to shake hands with Jimmy Silver & Co. at the school gates you will give a last wistful glance at the tall spire of Rookwood, and say:

"Never has a day sped more swiftly!"

—  
THE END  
—



# A PEEP AT THE PUNISHMENT ROOM.

By GEORGE BULKELEY  
(Captain of Rookwood.)



**T**HE punishment-room at Rookwood School is situated right at the top of the oldest part of the building—very close to the historic tower.

For the purpose of writing this article, I have paid a special visit to the dingy apartment, which, if it could speak, would tell us many thrilling and awesome tales of the past.

It is by no means a pleasant room, this punishment-room, where so many offenders have passed their last night at Rookwood. A prison cell would compare favourably with it. It is almost innocent of furniture. There is a table, a rough bed, and a prehistoric washstand, which has neither jug nor basin in it.

The walls are not papered, and they are damp and musty. Spiders have been busy on the ceiling, which is covered with their webs. There is one small window—smaller than that at Carisbrooke Castle, where King Charles the First made his famous but futile effort to escape.

I cannot linger long in this place, for it fills me with gloomy thoughts and a vague, nameless dread. But for the benefit of my readers I will examine the walls, on which various names, initials, and dates have been inscribed.

Here we have the initials "R.B.H." These, if I mistake not, are the initials of Harcourt of the Sixth, who was expelled from Rookwood as long ago as 1885, for inciting his schoolfellows to rebellion.

Harcourt's last night at the old school was spent in this gloomy place; and in order to leave a permanent record of the event, he carved his initials boldly and deeply in the wall. We can picture him performing the task by candlelight—a tall, pale-faced fellow, penned in the punishment-room for the night, and knowing that he was to be expelled on the morrow.

A little further along the wall we find two sets of initials bracketed together, thus:

(J.R.B.  
(E.K.B.

These are the initials of Browne and Bertram, two close chums in the Fourth Form, who were expelled in 1906 for attacking a master. It is said that the master in question had occasion to flog them, and that he did so in a brutal manner; whereupon the two boys hurled themselves upon him, and wrenched the cane from his hand.

There was much sympathy for Browne and Bertram; but every level-headed fellow will agree that they acted very wrongly.

We now come to the name Trelawny, boldly engraved upon the opposite wall. And underneath the name appear the words, "Expelled 1856."

But Trelawny was a bit premature. He was the ringleader of the Great Rebellion of 1856, and when the campaign was over he was sent to the punishment-room to await his fate. But he was not expelled, after all. There were extenuating circumstances, and Trelawny merely lost the office of prefect he had held.

There are other names and initials, not less interesting, but I cannot linger any longer in this uncanny place.

My readers will forgive me, I know, for electing to go down into the bright sunshine.





# GRUNDY'S MERRY CHRISTMAS



By  
MARTIN CLIFFORD

Illustrated by  
R. J. MACDONALD

This story throws an interesting new sidelight upon the character of George Alfred Grundy, of the Shell Form at St. Jim's.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### A Message Through the Gloom!

"IT will be simply ripping!" It was George Alfred Grundy who spoke. And he addressed the words to himself, as he strode along in the gathering dusk.

Grundy had been over to Wayland to do some shopping, and he carried a large parcel under each arm. His step was light, and his heart likewise. For it was the eve of breaking-up day.

The burly Shell fellow had been invited to spend the Christmas holidays at the residence of his Uncle Grundy. And Wilkins and Gunn, his two study-mates, were included in the invitation.

"What a stunning, slap-up time we shall have!" muttered Grundy, as he footed it briskly in the darkening lane. "Plenty of grub, plenty of fun, plenty of everything that goes to make life worth living!"

Grundy laughed gaily at the prospect. He

was finding the world a very pleasant place to live in.

Another of his uncles—a gentleman of considerable means—had sent Grundy a ten-pound note. Such a princely remittance would enable George Alfred to buy heaps of good things for himself.

For himself, be it noted. Grundy was not thinking of others. He rarely did.

Decent enough fellow though he was in many ways, there was no denying that George Alfred Grundy was self-centred. He made far too much use of the first personal pronoun. It was "I am this" and "I am that," with Grundy. He was a sort of tin god—in his own estimation.

And now, as he went striding along the dusky lane, plunged in a pleasant reverie, a voice came to Grundy.

It was not a human voice. It was a still, small voice, yet unmistakably clear.

"George Alfred Grundy, you are selfish!" Grundy stopped short in his stride.



"My hat!" he muttered.

"You are selfish, do you hear?" repeated the voice. "You are thinking of the grand time you will have at your uncle's place. You are thinking what a merry Christmas it will be—for yourself."

"Well, that's so," stammered Grundy. He was shivering a little. This was an uncanny experience.

Where was the voice coming from?

Grundy looked this way and that way, half-expecting to see a human being within call. But, save for himself, the lane was deserted.

"George Alfred Grundy!"

It was the mysterious voice again, and it was insistent.

"Yes?" muttered Grundy.

"Has it ever occurred to you that there are others on this planet, besides yourself?"

"Of—of course!" faltered Grundy.

"Do you realise that many of these people are—to use an everyday expression—down and out?"

"Y-e-e-s."

"Are you aware that in this small town of Wayland alone there are upwards of a hundred unemployed?"

"Y-e-e-s."

"And do you realise that Christmas will be merely a sham and a mockery to these men and their dependents?"

"I—I've never thought about it," Grundy confessed.

"No; you have been too much wrapped up in self."

Grundy walked on. He had mastered himself a little by this time. His hands were clenched as if in defiance.

"Who is speaking to me?" he demanded.

"You must not ask that question," came the voice.

"Well, whoever you are, I don't see why you should lecture me like this," said Grundy.

"It isn't my fault that there are a hundred unemployed in Wayland. Your quarrel lies with the Government—not with me."

"Enough!" said the voice sternly. "Have you ever done anything to lighten the load of poverty and misery which these people bear?"

"No," answered Grundy. "Why should I?"

"Because it is your duty."

"What rot!"

"It is not 'rot,' as you call it. It is the duty of every individual to make bad better, and to stretch out a helping hand to those who are in need of it."

Grundy walked on, silent and thoughtful.

"Perhaps you're right," he muttered, at length.

"There is no perhaps about it. I am right!"

"Are you asking me to give a helping hand to the unemployed of Wayland?"

"I am not asking you to do anything. Whether you help or not is for you yourself to decide."

"Oh, all right," said Grundy. "I suppose there's a certain amount of truth in what you say. These men who are out of work will have a pretty putrid Christmas, and their wives and kiddies will have to go short. I think I ought to help them—yes, and I'll do it, too! I've got plenty of cash. I'll send a couple of quids to the Unemployment Relief Fund that's being run by the local paper."

"And have your subscription in next week's issue? 'George Alfred Grundy has kindly subscribed two pounds.'"

"That's it!" said Grundy.

"Do you imagine for one moment that that is true charity?"

"Of course!"

"Pardon me, it is nothing of the sort. It is thoroughly and utterly selfish."

"What!" gasped Grundy.

"You will have the satisfaction of seeing your name in print, and your schoolfellows will say, 'Grundy's an awfully good sort. Look what he's done! He's subscribed a couple of pounds to the Unemployment Fund.' That will be your reward—the plaudits of the crowd. And a true philanthropist neither seeks nor expects a reward. He does good by stealth."

Grundy was silent. And the mysterious voice continued.

"If you are thinking of sending two pounds to the Fund, do it anonymously. Sign yourself 'A Cheerful Giver,' or something of that sort. Then nobody will know the source of the donation."





Wilkins and Gunn were waiting for Grundy in the school gateway. "Brought the crackers?" asked Wilkins. "Yes; but I don't think we shall want them!" said Grundy. "There are others who need them more than we do!" (See Chapter 2.)

"But I should get no credit, that way!" protested Grundy.

"Of course you wouldn't. And it would be wrong of you to seek credit."

"My hat!"

"Now, what do you propose to do in this matter, George Alfred Grundy?"

Grundy debated a moment.

"I'll send the money anonymously," he said.

"You mean that?"

"Yes."

"Well, I will put an alternative plan before you. Instead of proceeding straight to your uncle's house to-morrow, why not spend a few days in Wayland?"

"What on earth for?" exclaimed Grundy, in amazement.

"You could then personally investigate cases of hardship. I am not asking you to give away all your money, or to make absurd sacrifices. Just give a little help to the worst cases you can find, and do it in such a way that they will not know from whom the help comes."

"I see," said Grundy.

"Will you do this?"

The junior hesitated. He was thinking of the morrow—of the projected visit to his uncle's country house.

What a splendid time he would have there! Much better than fooling about in Wayland, doing the Good Samaritan stunt.

Then there were Wilkins and Gunn to be considered. What about them?



Again the voice spoke.

"If you explain the matter to your chums, I feel sure they will gladly join you."

Grundy frowned as he tramped on his way.

"What you're really suggesting, in a nutshell, is that we should give up several days of the Christmas Vac., and devote them to helping cases of hardship?" he murmured.

"That is so."

"But—but a lot of poor people have only themselves to blame for being poor," said Grundy.

"True."

"And lots of people are unemployed simply because they're too lazy to seek employment—in fact, they wouldn't take it if it was offered to them."

"True again."

"Well, then," said Grundy, "how do you expect me to sort out the deserving cases from the undeserving?"

"You need not worry your head about that."

"But I may go and help the wrong sort of people."

"That will make no difference. Listen to this passage from the work of a great writer. 'The true philanthropist is the guide and support of the weak and the poor; not merely of the meritoriously and the innocently poor, but of the guiltily and punishably poor; of the men who ought to have known better—of the poor who ought to be ashamed of themselves.' Is that clear to you?"

"Quite," said Grundy.

"Very well, then. You will know how to proceed. Once again, I am not asking you to do miracles. With the limited means at your disposal, you could never hope to help all the cases of hardship in Wayland. But even a little help will go a very long way. And think of the tremendous joy you will bring into the lives of those who are now without hope! That thought will repay you over and over again. I will leave you now. Think this over and do what you feel to be right."

"One moment!" said Grundy. "Won't you tell me who you are?"

There was no response. Grundy walked alone. No voice addressed him. Everything had become normal again.

For a moment, the junior imagined he must have been dreaming. But he presently decided that it was no dream—that his unusual experience in the dusky lane had been a very real one.

Grundy approached the gates of St. Jim's, deep in thought. And it was not of himself that he was thinking now. It was of those "under-dogs" to whom the term "A Merry Christmas" was empty and meaningless.

"I'll help them!" he exclaimed, aloud. "They want help, goodness knows, and they shall have it. And I'll persuade others to help, too!"

A strange feeling of happiness came into Grundy's heart as he uttered those words.

Happiness! That elusive state which so many were seeking in vain—that will-o'-the-wisp that everyone was chasing, and few could capture. But it came to Grundy now; and it bore out the truth of that saying, so often despised, that true happiness can only be achieved by helping others.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Brighter Christmas Society!

"HERE he is!"

"Good old Grundy!"

"Finished your shopping?"

Grundy nodded abstractedly. Wilkins and Gunn were awaiting him in the school gateway.

"Bought the crackers, old man?" asked Wilkins.

"Yes."

"And the model railway?" inquired Gunn.

"Yes."

"That's good! And what about the rest of the things?"

"They're all here," said Grundy. "But I don't believe we shall be wanting them, after all."

Wilkins and Gunn stared at their chum in blank amazement.

"W-w-what do you mean?" stammered the former.

"Just this," said Grundy quietly. "There happen to be others whose need is greater than ours."



"Good old Sir Philip Sidney!" said Gunn. "Whatever has come over you, old chap, to make you talk like this?"

"I've been thinking——"

"Quite a novel experience for you!" said Wilkins crushingly.

"I've been thinking that I've been thinking——"

"Then you weren't really thinking at all?" chuckled Gunn.

"Don't keep chipping in! I've been thinking that I've been thinking too much of myself, and not enough of others."

"Oh!"

"It didn't occur to me until just now that there are heaps of poor kiddies over at Wayland who won't get any toys this Christmas."

"Well, that's not our fault," said Wilkins.

"I know it isn't. But we can help to remedy matters."

"My hat!"

Wilkins and Gunn were frankly amazed. This was a new Grundy. They had never heard him "spout any of this sentimental stuff," as Gunn expressed it, before.

The trio remained in the school gateway, talking.

"What has come over you, Grundy?" repeated Gunn.

"I'll try and explain," said Grundy. "I was coming along the lane, thinking of the ripping time I should have this Christmas, when a voice suddenly spoke to me."

"Whose voice?" asked Wilkins.

"That's just what I can't make out. It wasn't a human voice, but I heard it just as plainly as if it had been."

Wilkins and Gunn exchanged glances.

"Delusions!" said the former.

"First stage of insanity!" said the latter.

Grundy flushed.

"Nothing of the sort!" he said hotly. "I tell you, I distinctly heard this voice——"

"But you saw nobody?" said Wilkins.

"Not a soul."

"Well, listen to me. When a fellow fancies he hears voices——"

"It wasn't all fancy!" said Grundy indignantly.

"All right; I'll begin again. When a fellow hears voices, and they are not human voices, there are several constructions that can be put upon it. Firstly, it may be sheer delusion——"

"It wasn't delusion in my case."

"Secondly, it may be the voice of conscience——"

"My hat!"

"Thirdly, it may have been your subconscious mind speaking to you——"

"What rot!"

"Fourthly, it may have been

what is known as telepathy—somebody else was putting the thoughts into your mind——"

"Piffle!"

"And, lastly, it may have been a spirit voice."

Grundy gave a violent start.

"Oh, I say! Do you really mean——"

"It's not a subject we can jaw about," said Wilkins gravely. "People who are a jolly sight wiser than we are have quarrelled on this topic. Some say that spirit communication is possible, and actually does take place; others sneer at the bare notion of such



Grundy knocked at the door, and when someone came he thrust forward a sock. "With Father Christmas's compliments!" he said. (See Chapter 3.)



a thing. There we must leave it. But, personally, I think in your case you were the victim of a delusion."

"Same here," said Gunn.

"Delusion or not," said Grundy, "I'm going to act on the messages I received. I'm not going to my uncle's place to-morrow—I'll wire him not to expect me till Christmas Day."

"What!"

"I'm going to stay in Wayland for a few days, and give what little help I can to the poor beggars who are in need of it. I should like you fellows to come over and give me a helping hand—but I don't suppose you'd dream of doing that."

Wilkins and Gunn were silent a very long time. Grundy's earnestness had at last impressed them.

They, too, began to think less of themselves and more of others.

Their thoughts were now turned to the poor and destitute, who were dreading Christmas rather than looking forward to it.

Presently Wilkins turned to Grundy.

"I'm with you," he said.

"Count me in, too," said Gunn.

Grundy's face brightened.

"That's fine!" he said. "Between the three of us, we shall do quite a lot of good in Wayland. And I'll ask the other fellows to help, too—Tom Merry and the rest. They needn't worry about Wayland. We'll see to that. But wherever they happen to be going for Christmas, they can give a helping hand to those who are down and out."

"Here comes Merry!" said Wilkins. "Mention it to him now."

Tom Merry was approaching the school gateway with Manners and Lowther. Grundy beckoned the captain of the Shell.

"I've got a suggestion to make, Merry," he said. "I don't take any credit for it, because it really isn't my own. It was put into my head by somebody else."

"Let's hear it," said Tom Merry good-naturedly.

"I propose that we form a Brighter Christmas Society."

"With what object?"

"With the object of making it a happy Christmas for those who are counting on getting a miserable one. You know what I mean. It's the kiddies that matter most at Christmas. They like to dream of Santa Claus, and all the rest of it. And when he doesn't turn up—when there are no toys or sweets or crackers—why, it's an awfully big disappointment—"

Grundy broke off, with a catch in his voice.

He half expected that Tom Merry and Co. would laugh at him. But the Terrible Three were not laughing. On the contrary, they were fighting hard to prevent themselves doing the other thing.

Tom Merry's voice was strangely husky as he replied to Grundy.

"That's the happiest wheeze I've heard for a long time," he said. "And we were selfish beasts not to have thought of it before. Yes, we'll form a Brighter Christmas Society, with the greatest of pleasure. What do you say to calling a Form-meeting in the common-room, and putting the proposition to them?"

"Ripping!" said Grundy.



"We ain't got no home!" said the little girl, half defiantly. "We're orfings!" "Then you come along with us!" said Grundy. (See Chapter 3)



The meeting was summoned forthwith.

Tom Merry took the chair, and he made an eloquent plea on behalf of those who seemed doomed to an unhappy Christmas.

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed Tom. "We can all do something, however small, to relieve the general distress. A parcel of food here, a half-crown there, will work wonders. As things stand, Christmas Day is merely a joy-day for the rich and for the middle-classes. The poor—the real poor, I mean—are shut off from all enjoyment. And these are the people we are going to brighten Christmas for."

"Hear, hear!"

"We shall all be working in one great cause," Tom Merry went on. "And it won't be wasted effort. So let's pile in, and make this Christmas as happy as possible for those who are worse off than ourselves."

"Bravo!"

There were a few dissenters. Aubrey Racke remarked that the poor were always with us, and that they never appreciated help when it was given to them. And Crooke declared that he could find better use for his time and money than by helping gutter-snipes.

For these uncharitable remarks, both Racke and Crooke were soundly bumped. They refused to join the Brighter Christmas Society; but there was no doubt that the society would get along very well without them.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

#### A Merry Christmas!

IT was Christmas Eve. Not the traditional Christmas Eve, when the snow lay thick on the ground.

Out of doors it was the coldest and most cheerless evening imaginable. Sleet was falling, and the pavements of Wayland were slippery and slushy.

Grundy was walking those pavements. He had walked them for days together, in company with Wilkins and Gunn. And the trio had done "good turns" by the dozen. Not with a flourish of trumpets, but quietly and by stealth. Coins had been slipped into grubby hands. Bags of sweets had been stuffed into the pockets of unsuspecting urchins. Parcels of Christmas fare had been distributed anonymously.

Grundy, Wilkins and Gunn had pooled their resources, and they now had only three pounds left, besides the money necessary to pay their fares down to Uncle Grundy's.

But three pounds could buy quite a lot, even in these days of inflated prices. And Grundy had decided to spend it all on this, the last evening of their operations in Wayland.

The juniors were staying at a small private hotel, and Grundy was now on his way to join his chums.

He strode along briskly.

Like the youth in "Excelsior,"

"In happy homes he saw the light

Of household fires gleam warm and bright."

But he saw other homes, too, where happiness had not crossed the threshold, and where "household fires" were rendered impossible owing to the price of coal.

"We'll have a final tour of Wayland to-night," muttered Grundy. "I'll tog up as Father Christmas; then nobody will know who I am. We'll buy up a stock of toys and Christmas stockings, and go round doing the Santa Claus stunt. It will be top-hole!"

Grundy was surprised to find how much happiness sprang from doing good. On first coming to Wayland, he had been inclined to regard it as a bit of a bore. But the days had sped merrily by, and the trio were now loth to leave the scene of their activities. In bringing joy to others, they had automatically brought joy to themselves. And Grundy felt indeed grateful to the "mysterious voice" which had prompted his actions.

He found Wilkins and Gunn awaiting him at the hotel.

"Our last night here, isn't it?" said Wilkins.

"Yes," replied Grundy. "And I was thinking it would be a good stunt for me to tog up as Father Christmas. I've got a costume in my trunk. Wore it last Christmas at a fancy-dress ball, you know. We've got a matter of three pounds left, and we can spend that on the kiddies."

"Ripping!" said Wilkins and Gunn, together.

"We'll have some grub first," said Grundy. "Then we'll set out on our merry tour."



A meal was prepared in the small, cosy dining-room of the hotel. Grundy and Co. did full justice to it, for they had been out in the open air all day.

"Wonder how Tom Merry and the others are getting on?" said Wilkins.

"They can't possibly have had such a happy time as we've had," said Grundy. "Everything's worked like a charm."

"And we're leaving Wayland in a better state than we found it," said Gunn.

"Yes, rather!"

As soon as the meal was over, Grundy retired to his room, and dressed himself in the garb of Father Christmas.

Wilkins and Gunn assisted their chum.

The quaint costume, bordered all round with white fur, completely transformed George Alfred Grundy. And the flowing beard reached down almost to his knees.

"You'll have all the kids bawling 'Beaver!' after you!" said Wilkins.

"I shan't mind a scrap," said Grundy, with a grin. "Anything to give 'em a bit of fun on Christmas Eve. Pity you fellows haven't anything special to wear."

"We'll get some comic masks," said Gunn. "Then nobody will know who we are. We don't want ourselves advertised as Good Samaritans."

"No, rather not!"

"We must borrow a sack from somewhere, too," said Wilkins. "Santa Claus won't be complete without his sack."

The sack was obtained without much difficulty. And then the three chums went along to one of the biggest toyshops in the town. Here they purchased all sorts of

Christmas novelties, which were crammed into Grundy's sack.

Grundy's quaint appearance caused quite a sensation in the shop, and also in the streets. On emerging from the shop with his chums, he was followed by an excited crowd of youngsters.

"Where do we go first?" inquired Gunn.

"I've got a list of addresses here," said Grundy. "Every house on my list contains some kiddies—the children of parents who are wretchedly poor. They won't be expecting anything for Christmas, and these toys and things will come as a joyful surprise."

Each separate article had cost one-and-sixpence, so with the three pounds the juniors had been able to buy forty items. It would take a long time to distribute these at the various addresses, and it was not at all a pleasant sort of evening for being out of doors.

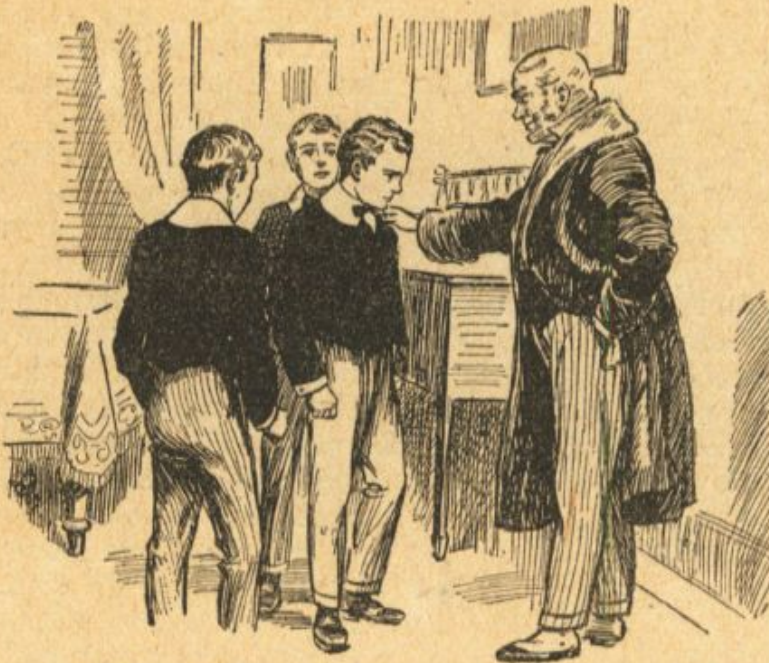
But Grundy, Wilkins, and Gunn cared nothing for the elements. If a raging blizzard had been in progress,

they would have carried on just the same.

Grundy's method of delivering his gifts was as follows. He would knock at the door of each poor, ramshackle house, and when some one came he would thrust the Christmas stocking, or whatever it was, into their hands, with the remark, "For Jimmy, with Father Christmas's compliments," or, "For Doris, with love from Santa Claus."

Before the amazed householder could recover from his delighted astonishment the three Good Samaritans would be half-way down the street.

And so the good work went on, until



"I think it was perfectly splendid of you!" said the old gentleman cordially. (See Chapter 3.)



the sack which was slung over Father Christmas's shoulder was empty.

The hour was late, and Grundy & Co. were tired and footsore, for they had covered a wide area.

But they were happily tired, and it was with a feeling of contentment that they retraced their steps to the hotel.

"We'll take a short cut down this side street," said Grundy. "Hallo! What's this?"

Huddled together in a doorway, seeking protection from the falling sleet, were a boy and a girl. They were wretchedly clad, and shivering with cold. The boy was about seven, and the girl—apparently his sister—a little younger. Not only were they cold and ill-clad, but their faces were pinched and drawn with hunger.

Grundy stopped short, and glanced down at the waifs.

"Do you live here?" he inquired, pointing at the house.

"No, Farver Kiss'mus," was the boy's reply.

"Where do you live, then?"

"We ain't got no 'ome," said the little girl, half-defiantly. "We're orfings."

"You mean to say you wander about from pillar to post, without food or shelter?" said Wilkins, aghast.

The boy nodded. A couple of tears coursed down his grimy cheek. He was not so stoical as his sister.

"This is a shocking state of affairs," said Grundy.

"Can't help them," muttered Gunn. "We've blued all our cash."

"There's the money for our fares to-morrow," said Grundy.

"We can't break into that."

"Can't we? Well, we're jolly well going to, even if it means hoofing it down to my uncle's place!"

Wilkins and Gunn looked a bit startled at first. But they soon sided with Grundy.

"You come along with us," said the latter, addressing the two outcasts. "Don't be afraid. Father Christmas won't hurt you. And these fellows in the masks aren't nearly so terrible as they look. Come along!"

Late though the hour was, there was a restaurant open in the High Street. The "orfings" were taken inside, and plied with as much food as they could consume at one sitting. After which, Grundy & Co. found lodgings for them, and paid for their keep for a week.

"In the meanwhile," Grundy informed the landlady, "I'll ask my uncle to get in touch with an orphanage, so that these kids can be taken in."

Having performed the last and best good deed of the day, Grundy & Co. returned to the hotel. They were now "broke," and it was fortunate that their hotel bill had been settled right up to date.

"We've got a fifty-mile tramp in front of us to-morrow," said Wilkins, as the three chums turned in.

Grundy yawned sleepily.

"The morrow can take care of itself," he replied. "I've an idea that something's going to happen."

And something did. Something totally unexpected.

Uncle Grundy drove up to the hotel in his car. He had found out—from what source nobody ever knew—that his nephew, and Wilkins and Gunn, had been devoting their time to helping the poor of Wayland.

"I think it is perfectly splendid of you, my boys!" said the old gentleman cordially.

"Cut it out, uncle," said Grundy. "We only did what was right."

"I shall insist that you behaved splendidly!" said Uncle Grundy. "And now you are coming home with me in my car, to reap the reward of your labours in a really merry Christmas."

Shortly afterwards, the car was speeding through country lanes. And the strains of carol-singers were borne on the breeze.

"God rest ye, merry gentlemen!

Let nothing you dismay."

And merry indeed were the Christmas revels at Uncle Grundy's house. Happiness and high good-humour reigned supreme.

And happiest of all, as he plunged into the whirl of pleasure, was George Alfred Grundy.

THE END



# MODEL SAILING YACHTS

AND

## HOW TO SAIL THEM

BY EDWARD W. HOBBS, A.I.N.A.

How would you like to be a sailor? To roam across the seas of the world, to visit strange ports and see wondrous sights? Such delights cannot be yours until you are old enough; and you must know how to sail a boat. What you can do is to get a model sailing yacht and learn how to sail it properly;

in doing so, you will have many happy days, watching your little ship sailing away to the westward, or perhaps beating up channel in the teeth of a gale.

If you had a real pilot boat, and not only a model, like the Seagull, shown in Fig. 2, you would want to know just what to do in a gale, for a pilot must put out in all weathers to the aid of a ship that needs guidance and help.

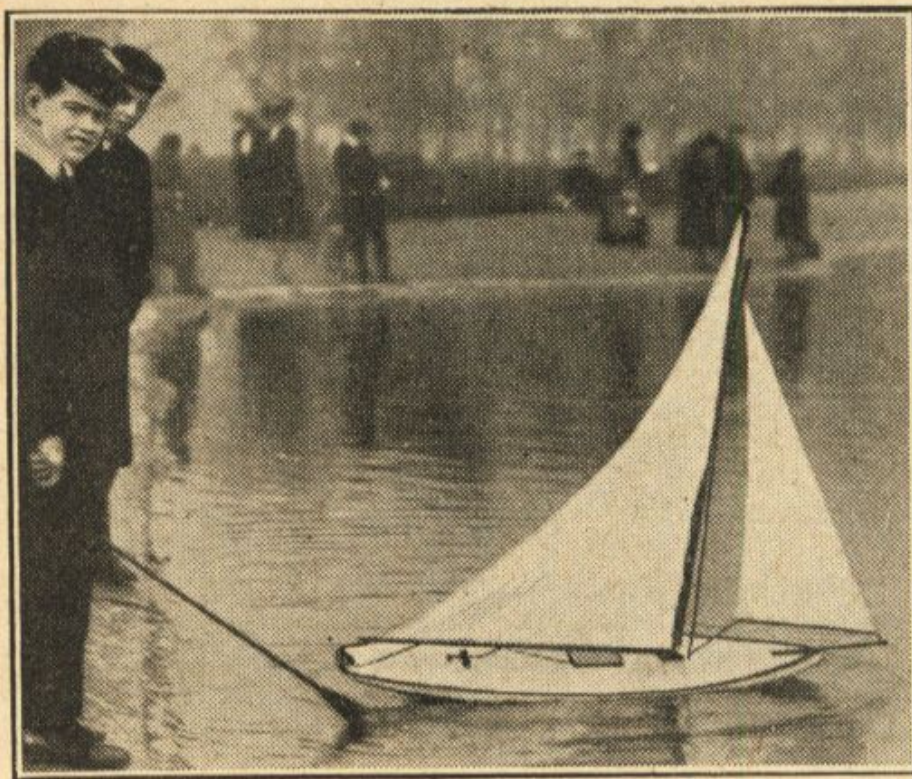
The Seagull, as made by Bassett-Lowke, Ltd., is a regular little pilot boat, rigged as a sloop—that is to say, it has only two sails, the foresail, as the sail in front of the mast is called, and the larger one called the mainsail.

When the boat is bought the mast and sails will be detached from the hull, so the first thing to do is to “step” the mast, as a sailor would call it, by pushing the mast through the hole in the deck until the bottom or “heel” of the mast goes into a little hole cut to receive it in the bottom of the hull.

Then hook on the two shrouds or ropes that keep the mast upright, and slide the ivory bowsies or adjusters along the rope until it is tight, or “all a-taut-o.” The foresail hooks on to the bowsprit at the outer end; the upper part or halliards hook on near the top of the mast. The “gaff” of the mainsail

must be tightened up with the bowsie until it is just sufficiently taut to keep the sail in shape, but no more.

The “sheets” are the names of the ropes used to tighten or slacken the booms on the bottom of the sails, and these have hooks which hook into an eye or “a hawse”—and



Photo]

A young enthusiast trying out the paces of his new model yacht.

[Topical



they also are fitted with a bowsie for adjustment.

Everything is now ready for the trial trip, so look and see in which way the wind is blowing, and put the boat into the water with the bows towards the wind. Suppose the wind is blowing straight in your face, as you look at the pond or wherever the boat is being sailed, and that you want her to sail to your left. She will then have to sail on the starboard tack. So slacken the fore sheet until the foresail boom is nearly in line with the side of the hull, and slacken the main sheet so that the mainsail can swing over a little further. Now point the boat towards the left of direction in which the wind is blowing, and let the wind fill out the sails—when you can release the boat and she will sail away. If you wanted her to sail in the opposite direction, or port tack, all you need do is to point the boat in that direction and allow the sails to swing over

until they are full of wind. That is when the wind blows on the sails and keeps them taut and without flapping about.

At first it will be found very difficult to make the boat sail just where you want it to go; but practice makes perfect, and some further experiments will teach you a whole lot about sailing.

Suppose the boat did not sail towards the wind, but across it. This is called "reaching," and shows that the mainsail is too slack, or not near enough to the centre of the boat; so

tighten it up until the main boom is nearly in line with the hull sides, and tighten up the foresail just a little bit. Now try her on the port tack, and she will sail much closer to the wind, or will be "beating to windward," as a sailor would say.

If you want to make your boat sail "down the wind" or the same way as the wind is blowing, you must slacken out the mainsail and the foresail as far as possible, and if all goes well we shall reach the starting-point again. The whole secret of model-yacht sailing is the correct adjustment of the sails. It can only be learnt by experiment and by actually trying to sail

a model. Once you try to do this you are sure to get enthusiastic about it, but do not be discouraged if success does not come with the first day's sailing. Remember that to make the boat sail towards the wind, you must have the sails as tightly "sheeted in" as the boat will stand without going "into

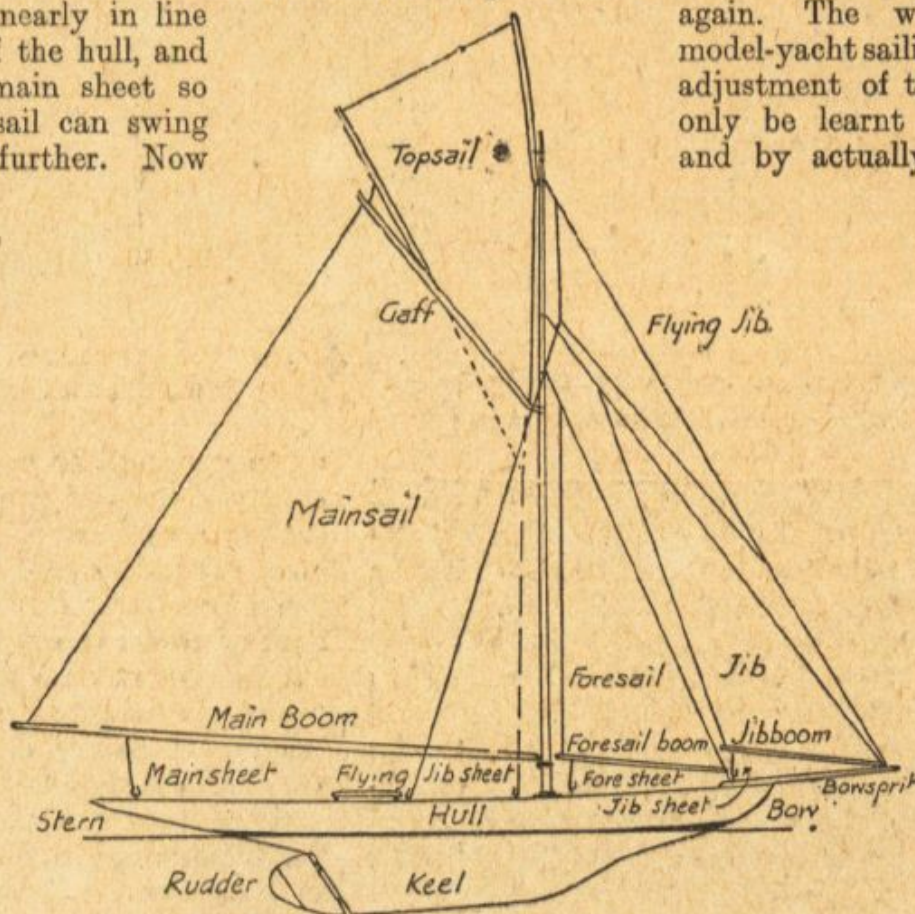


Fig. 1. This diagram shows the names of all the principal parts of a model racing yacht.

irons," which means that the boat will try to go first this way and then the other way, and mostly stop in the same place. Cure this by slackening the sheets a trifle. To sail across the wind, slacken the sheets still more; and to sail away from the wind, called "running" or "down wind," the mainsail must be slacked right out until the boom is at right angles to the boat.

Though it will give you an unusual amount of fun, of course you cannot expect to do everything with a cheap little boat like the



Seagull. If you get a racer like the Shamrock, shown in Fig. 3, much better results are obtained, but there are more sails to attend to, so remember what you have learnt about the Seagull and apply this knowledge when you sail the Shamrock. This has five sails and is just like a real racing yacht; the names of all the parts are shown in the diagram, Fig. 1, so that you will know what is meant when the topsail or the flying-jib is referred to. All these sails can only be used when the wind is light. They are set up in the same way as on the smaller boat, and have to be adjusted in exactly the same manner. But the rudder will have to be attended to on this boat—or on any other like it.

When you are beating to windward or reaching, do not use the rudder at all; it should be unhooked and carried in the pocket until wanted, which is only when running before the wind. You will probably have discovered by now that a boat will not sail very nicely straight before the wind—she keeps on working

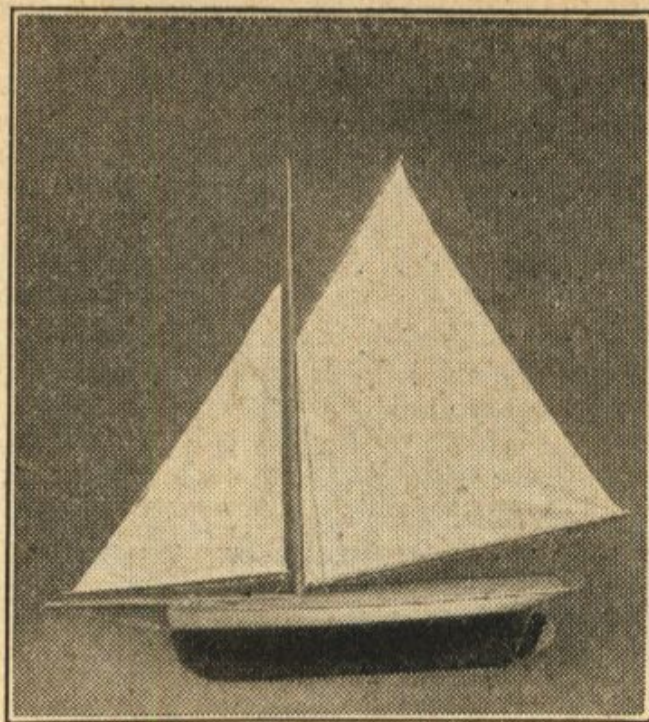


Fig. 2. The "Seagull," a typical sloop-rigged model pilot boat.

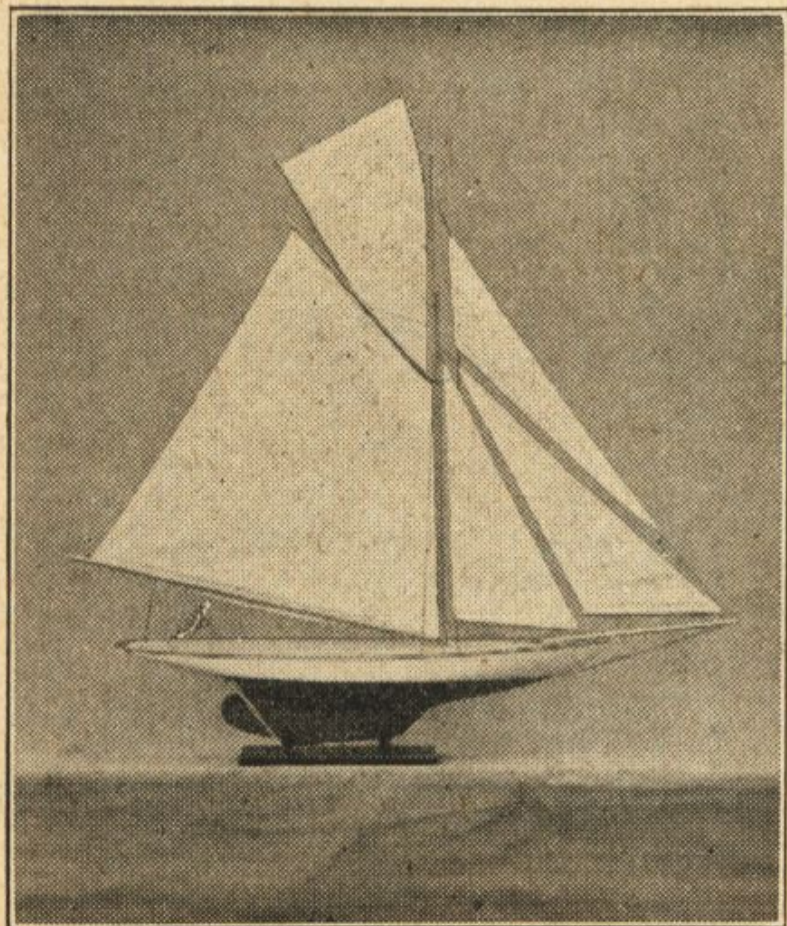


Fig. 3. The "Shamrock," a real racing model.

off to starboard or port. But this is largely corrected by using the swing rudder, because as the wind heels the boat, the rudder swings over and acts like a helmsman, and steers the boat back on to her course. Several different sizes of rudders are a great convenience, as the stronger the wind the heavier the rudder needed to correct the course of the boat.

When it is possible to afford a proper "automatic rudder," it is very useful to have one fitted, as by its aid a model boat can be made to sail in almost any direction.

They can be obtained and fitted by Bassett-Lowke, Ltd., of 112, High Holborn, London, W.C., or in Edinburgh at No. 1, Frederick Street. This automatic rudder is a most ingenious but simple device; it is nothing more than a T-shaped tiller, fixed on the top of the rudder-post and connected by it to the rudder. Instead of hooking the main sheet to the eye or "hawse" on the deck, it is attached to the tiller, consequently as the wind blows on the sails, it



exerts a pressure on the main sheet, which then pulls over the tiller and thus puts the rudder over.

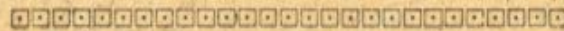
By using *two* main sheets instead of one, and crossing them over and leading them through two pulleys fixed on the deck, you can put the tiller over either to port or to starboard, whichever may be required.

It sounds complicated, but the makers fit it up all ready for use, and when once fitted it never needs attention, except to replace a cord, should it accidentally be broken. A rubber band is used to keep the tiller on the middle line of the boat, and pegs are provided to check the movement of the tiller, the different amounts of movement corresponding

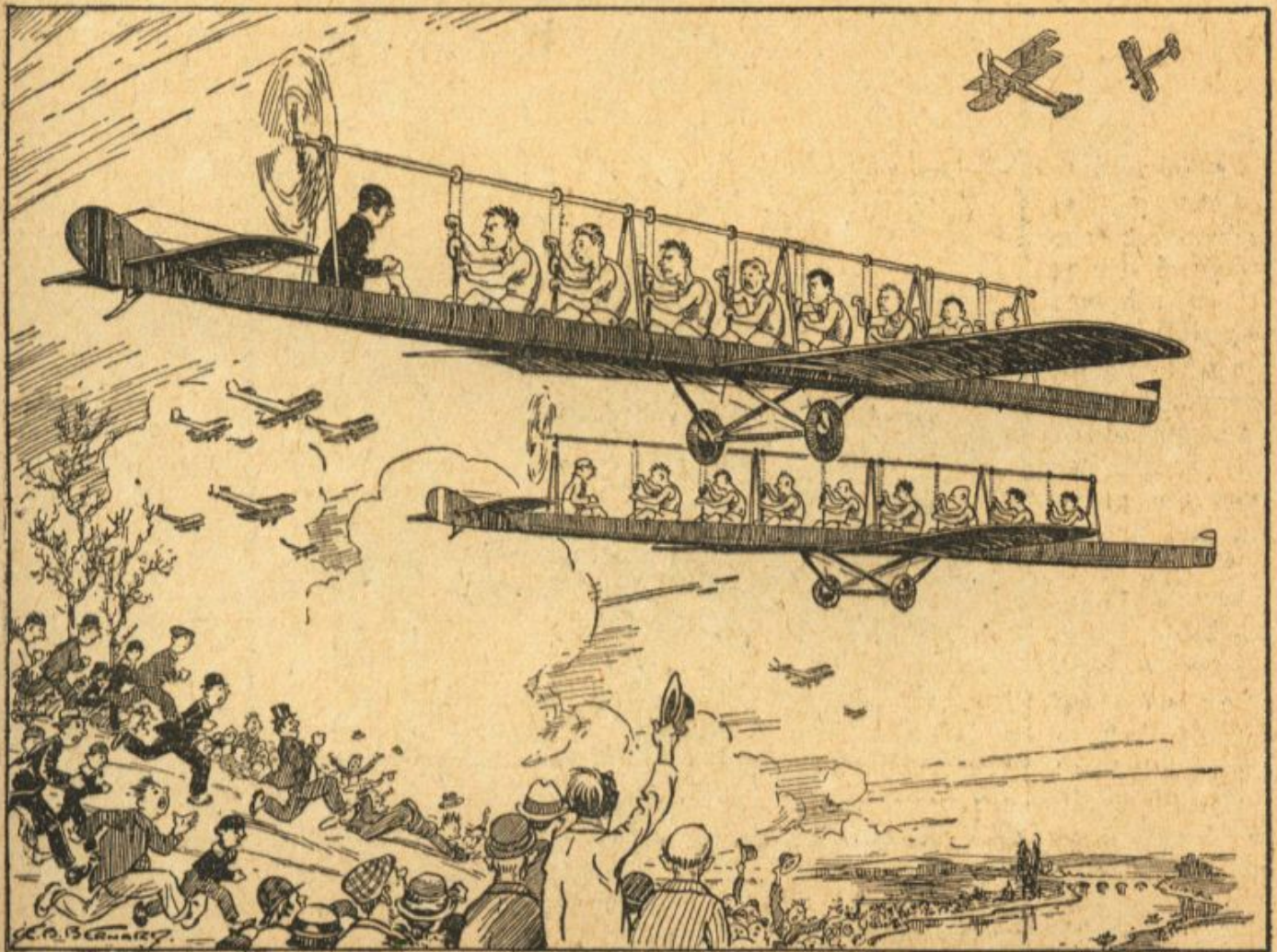
to the different weights of the swing rudders. Thus, in light winds, the movement is limited by the pegs; but in heavy winds the pegs are adjusted to allow the tiller to move a greater amount. In very heavy winds the Shamrock will sail well with only the mainsail and the foresail; in moderate winds add the jib; and in very light weather use the topsail flying-jib as well.

When proficiency has been gained with these small and simple models you can begin to think about a regular racing model built to a rating rule, and go in for class racing, and perhaps win a challenge cup or championship award, or even aspire to owning a real yacht of your own.

THE END



## A FAMOUS ARTIST'S FORECAST



How the Oxford and Cambridge Boat-race will be contested in 1934! (Specially drawn for the HOLIDAY ANNUAL by C. E. B. Bernard.)



# Greyfriars Comments

By HARRY WHARTON

A lot has been published about Greyfriars in the past; much more will be said about Greyfriars in the future; a fine budget of stories about Greyfriars is written in this HOLIDAY ANNUAL.

\* \* \*

Henry the Eighth put the lid on a large number of monasteries during his reign, but he failed to put the lid on Greyfriars.

\* \* \*

The enemy made many attempts to destroy this famous public school during the war; bombs did fall perilously near; yet Greyfriars still rears its grand old towers to greet the morning sun.

\* \* \*

Doctor Locke has been Head-master since the stories commenced. That he is almost indispensable has been proved. The attempt to institute an outsider culminated in a barring-out.

\* \* \*

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth Form, according to his own statements, is supposed

to have shot buffaloes and grizzlies in the Rockies when he was younger. The only pieces of evidence which remain at Greyfriars are the marks on Mr. Prout's study walls where bullets have ploughed their way in.

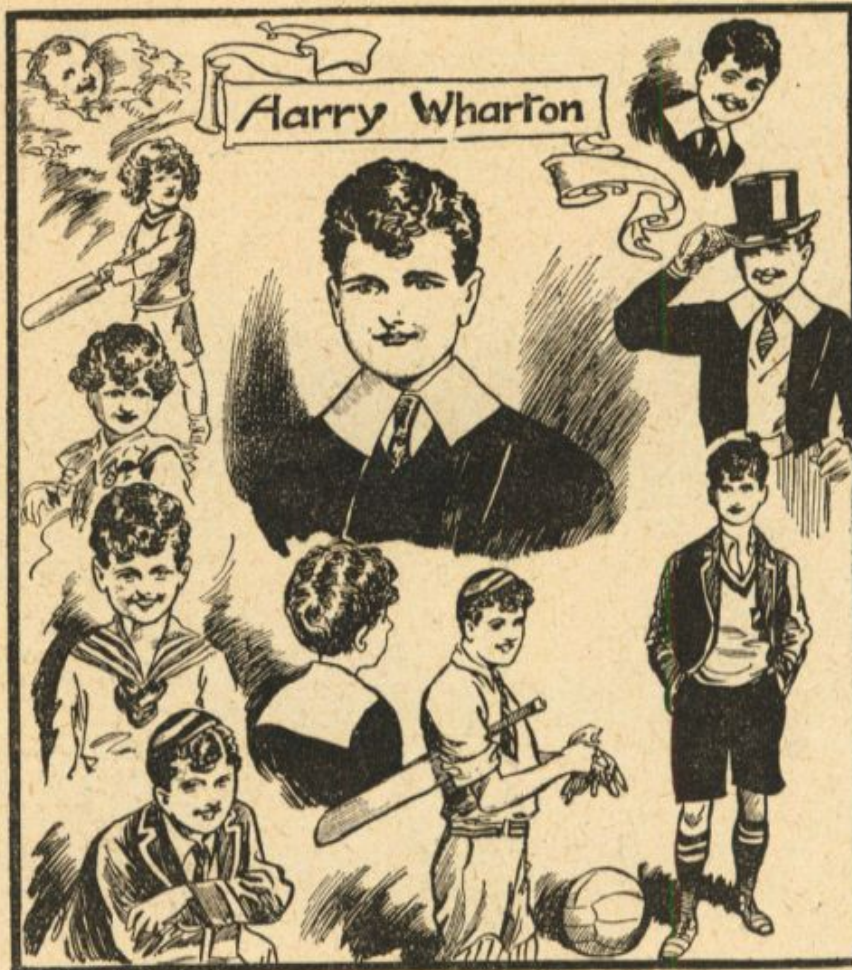
Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell, according to his own statements, has the ability

to use anything. Hobson, of his Form, adds that his chief ability seems to be in using the cane.

Mr. Capper, of the Upper Fourth, is sometimes called a very reliable man. Dabney, of that Form, says that, as far as he knows, Mr. Capper is only reliable for handing out at least ten thousand lines every week.

Mr Horace Henry Quelch, the master of the Remove, according to the remarks of his pupils, is the best master

at Greyfriars. Old Quelch is not a detective, but the boys know he isn't a fool. And, in face of the fact that he has the most unruly set of boys in the school to deal with, he manages to inspire more confidence in them than any other master at





Greyfriars. The Remove, on the whole, call him "Good old Quelchy"—except Billy Bunter, who calls him a beast.

\* \* \*

It is rumoured that the Head asked Gosling, the porter, recently if he would like to retire on a pension. Gosling, however, is very touchy on the subject of his age, and (rumour says) indignantly refused the Head's well-meant offer. "Wot I says is this 'ere," Gosling probably remarked. "A man's as young as he feels, and I'm sticking it!"

\* \* \*

Sports Day is always one of the red-letter days in the Greyfriars calendar. It is a tradition at the school that every boy, unless he is medically unfit, goes in for at least one event.

So the fun is fast and furious. The athletic, fit fellows come into their own, of course, while the slackers have "bellows to mend." The sight of Mr. Prout panting round in the Master's Race is an annual treat, which the boys greatly appreciate!

\* \* \* \* \*

Alonzo Todd, the duffer of the Remove, takes Sports Day very seriously. His Uncle Benjamin usually comes down for the occasion, and Uncle Ben approves of athletics for boys! So poor old Lonzy goes in for nearly every event—and invariably comes in last! But Alonzo keeps on trying, and his cousin Peter says he may win a prize one day—if a booby prize is ever instituted at the Greyfriars Sports!



# SPORTS DAY AT GREYFRIARS





# Some Greyfriars Queries

*Answered by Frank Nugent*

"Does Billy Bunter ever suffer from indigestion?" Does an ostrich?

"How is Percy Bolsover keeping?" You mean what is he keeping. Everything he happens to borrow, without any intention of returning it.

"I can't quite believe what my friend told me. He said Billy Bunter weighed fourteen ton twelve and a half hundredweight."

Imaginationitis, old chap. Billy weighs fourteen stone twelve and a half pounds.

"If they can't find the Greyfriars treasure, why don't they pull down the school to look for it?" To spare the comments of Dr. Locke if it failed to come to light afterwards.

"When will Billy Bunter bust?" Su-s-sh!

"I paid ten and six to see a show the other night, and it was rotten!"

Pay six shillings to get a HOLIDAY ANNUAL—we never have any grumbles.

"I can't understand why the 'Greyfriars Herald' should be edited by Remove kids instead of by Sixth Form chaps." Brains, my dear chap. When the Sixth edit papers they backfire and shut up shop.

"How many things have been invented at Greyfriars during the last term?" There have been five explosions.

"Is Billy Bunter very fond of flattery?" He prefers jam-tart.

"If a Bulstrode into a Field, and Bolsover a Nugent with Wun Lung eating a Brown Cherry, would he Singh or Hop Hi?" The answer's a lemon.

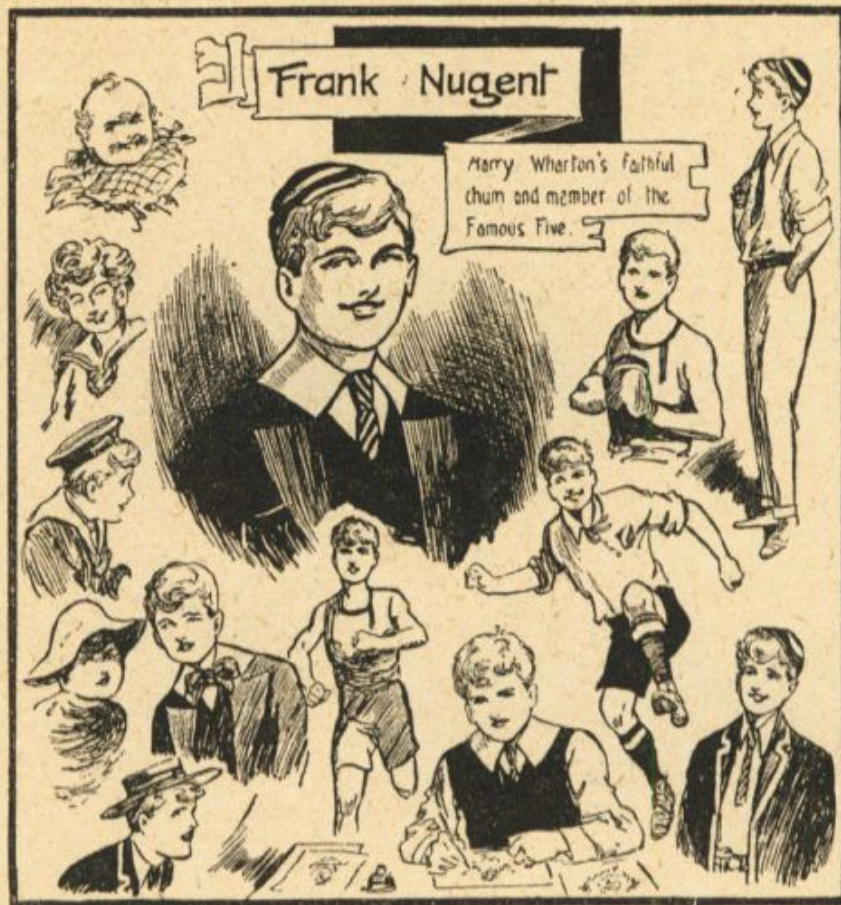
"How many countries have heard of Billy Bunter?" Don't you mean planets?

"How many motor-cycles has Horace Coker had?" He has had three or four different machines. He had some fault to find with each of them, but it was the general opinion at Greyfriars that the fault lay with Coker more than with the motor-cycles!

"Does Sammy Bunter eat as much as his brother Billy?"

No; but then he's not so big! Give him time, and he'll beat the record yet—or burst!

"Have either of the Bunter brothers ever been up in an aeroplane?" No. Haven't you ever heard that pigs cannot fly?





# NEWSPAPER EXTRACTS

Which may appear in the year 1940

BY PETER TODD

**M**R. WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER has been appointed chief chef at the Hotel de Gorge. His salary—like himself—will be a fat figure!

\* \* \*

Followers of sport will be delighted to learn that Mr. H. Vernon-Smith, the celebrated sportsman, has been appointed Chairman of the English Football Association.

\* \* \*

Great excitement has been occasioned in the Dartmoor district by the escape of a convict from Dartmoor prison. The man's name is Harold Skinner, and the circulated description of him is as follows: "Age, 32; height, 5 ft. 6 in. Sallow complexion, wart on nose and scar on left cheek. Not likely to be violent."

Skinner was undergoing a term of penal servitude for fraud.

\* \* \*

At the Holborn Stadium last night, Battling Bolsover secured the heavy-weight championship of Great Britain by knocking out Ben Bashem in the third round. (Official.)

\* \* \*

The great motor-cycling race in the Isle of Man was won by Horace Coker on his "Lightning Express" machine.

\* \* \*

Dr. H. H. Locke, the distinguished scholar, has resigned the headmastership of Greyfriars School.

The performance of "Julius Cæsar" at His Majesty's Theatre proved a triumph for the well-known actor, William Wibley. His masterly rendering of the part of Brutus has never been excelled on the English stage.

\* \* \*

Flight-Commander Robert Cherry, R.A.F., started yesterday on his flight round the world. He was accompanied by his observer, Captain Mark Linley.

\* \* \*

Lord Mauleverer, one of the best-known figures in society, has gone to the South of France for a rest-cure. Interviewed by our correspondent, his Lordship remarked that he found the strain of moving in society "too much fag."

\* \* \*

Mr. Richard Penfold has been appointed Poet Laureate. Thus his greatest boyish ambition has been realised.

\* \* \*

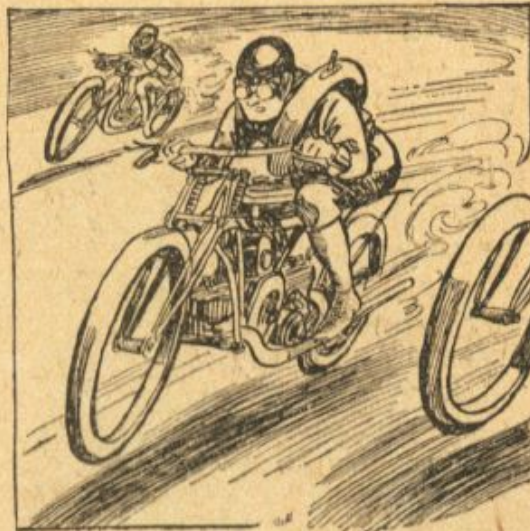
The famous explorer, Captain Tom Redwing, R.N., is about to sail for the Antarctic.

\* \* \*

Playing for the M.C.C. yesterday at Lord's, G. Wingate compiled a century—his third this season.

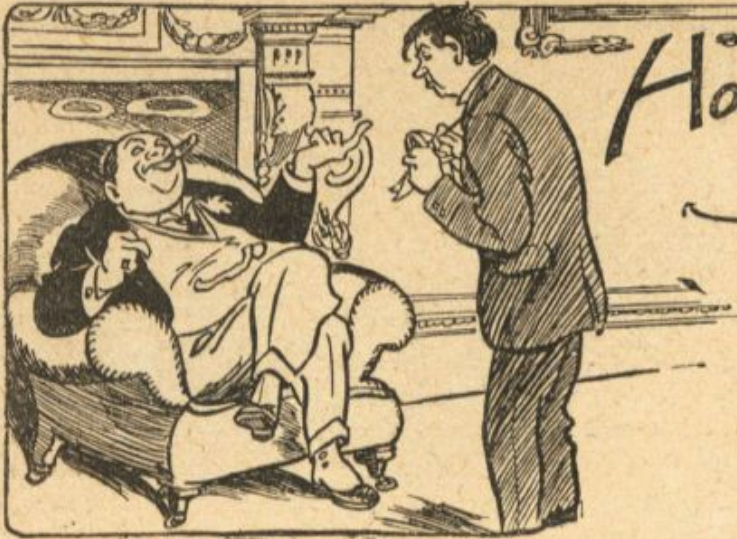
\* \* \*

Samuel Tuckless Bunter, the fat man who is now exhibiting himself on the music-halls, is said to turn the scale at 28 stone!



Coker Wins!





# How to Edit a Paper!

By **BILLY BUNTER.**

(Editor of the famous Weekly  
which bears his name)

**T**HE HOLIDAY ANNUAL for 1924 would not be complete without an article from my fassile pen.

(I am not quite certain if I have spelt "fassile" correctly, but you must excuse an occasional slip, as the novice said when he went skating for the first time.)

I am going to tell you how to edit a paper. And if there is any person living who can give sound and valuable advice on this subject, that person is W. G. Bunter!

Except for a brief period when I was away in the Congo, on a tour of adventure, I have edited my WEEKLY since its commencement.

Week in, week out, my wonderful paper has appeared, to delight the hearts of billions. And it will continue to appear, I hope, until I am a doddering old josser in a bathchair. (The bathchair, by the way, will have to be drawn by horses on account of my weight. Mere man-power would not be sufficient to push me along.)

But I must proceed with my main toppick.

In the first place, editors are born and not made. An editor is born with a distinctive bump on his cranium. It is situated between the bump of knowledge and the bump of self-esteem.

When I was barely three years old, my mater took me to a frenologist. A frenologist, I may say, is a man who is skilled in the science of bumps.

After making a careful scrootiny of my massive dome, the expert informed my mater

that I possessed the bump of editorship to a marked degree.

"This boy, ma'am," said he, "will be an editor, and you are not to dissuade him from this calling. Do not try to make a pork butcher or a chimney sweep of him. Do not send him into the Army, the Navy, or the Flying Corpse. It is in the capassity of editor that he will make his mark."

Did not that man speak truth, dear readers? Have I not made my mark as the editor of the most widely-read journal in the world? Ha, ha! The answer is in the infirmative.



"This boy, ma'am," said the frenologist, "will be an editor! Do not make a pork butcher of him!"





If a burly lout demands to see you, let the office boy interview him first!

Now, we will assume that you are a born editor, and that you have arrived at years of discretion, and are simply bursting to start editing something. The question naturally arises, what will you edit?

Your best plan will be to bring out an entirely new paper. Although the market is overcrowded with jernals of all sorts, there is still room for more.

What about a paper called "The Food-hog's Fortnightly," or "The Gormandiser," or "The Grub Gazette"? Such a paper would command a ready sale.

Although lots of people pretend not to be interested in tuck, they simply dote on it, in their hearts. And they would buy "The Food-hog's Fortnightly," and devour its columns in secret, and sleep with it under their pillows. The editor of such a paper would be a multi-millionaire in a matter of months.

But before you can start editing a paper, you want a staff. You need at least half-a-dozen people to do all the donkey-work. It is not an editor's job to fool about with scissors and paste. He should be a sooper-visor, not a drudge. He should lie back in a luxurious chair, puffing at a fat cigar, and giving his subs their orders.

Now, before I launched my WEEKLY, I appointed a fully qualified staff of sub-editors.

I engaged my miner, Sammy, to sweep and scrub the editorial sanctum; I engaged Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble to be the St. Jim's representatives; and Tubby Muffin to be the Rookwood representative.

You see the wisdom of this, don't you? If I had to do all the work myself, I should soon waste away to a shadow. I should be the skeleton of the Bunter family's cupboard. But now that I have four fat subs under me, I can afford to slack.

How nice it is to know that if I should happen to be taken ill one week, or feel disinclined for work, there will be somebody to carry on! And even if my miner had the misfortune to be taken ill at the same time, there would still be three others to keep the flag flying.

Now, having appointed your staff, you must select a sweet of offices. Fleet Street is the ideal place to edit a paper; but if your supply of pocket money happened to be scanty, I am afraid you would find it rather difficult to rent premises in the "Street of Adventure." You must be content with making a modest beginning; but in selecting your offices, mind you take a private room for yourself—a sanctum sanctorum, where you can shut yourself off from the clash of the typewriters and the clang of the tellyfones.



When you've got your sweet of offices, you must engage artists.



An editor should always have a private room. He will find it useful for dodging unwelcome callers.

If some burly lout should come along with the intention of giving the editor a black eye, he will first of all have to interview the office-boy, then the junior sub-editor, then the second junior sub, and so on; and he will never be able to fight his way through the lot, and lay hands on the sacred person of the editor himself.

There is just one little point which I omitted to mention.

Before you can start to run a paper, you will need capital. If you already possess capital—capital! If you don't—well, you're done.

You see, you will have to buy a printing plant. And printing plants don't grow in hothouses! Then you will have to employ printers, and so on. You will also have to lay in a huge supply of paper. On top of all this, you must engage authors and artists. But these little things need not discourage you, if you are a fellow of determination and metal.

In the course of my wide experience, I have found that the best way to edit a paper is to keep it bright and breezy. The public wants to be cheered up, not cast down.

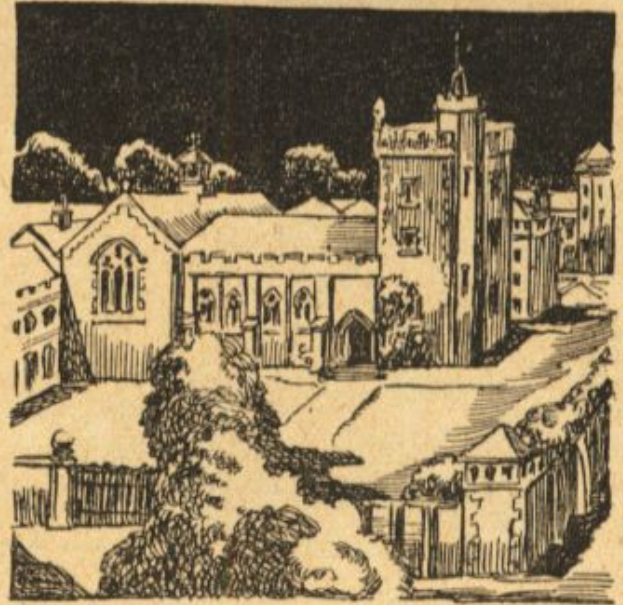
If your paper deals with tuck, see that you treat of tuck in a cheerful manner. Don't tell your readers that too much tuck is bad for them, or that roast pork and apple sauce will give them indigestion. Don't tell them that they must chew each mouthful of food thirty-six times, or any tommy-rot of that sort. Prate to them of the joys of tuck! Let the motto of your paper be "Eat not to live, but live to eat."

But the very best way you can learn how to edit a paper is to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the issue of **BILLY BUNTER'S ANNUAL**, which appears in this volume. There you have, in a nutshell, the key to successful editorship. If you conduct your paper on these lines, you can't possibly go wrong.

Now that this article of mine has been given to the world, editors will spring up all over the place like mushrooms. And thousands of fellows will rise up and bless the name of W. G. Bunter for planting their feet firmly on the pathway of successful jernalism!

## Great Days at Greyfriars

### Christmas Day



The old school tower stands grey and grim  
Beneath the snow's soft pattering;  
And silence broods in Close and gym,  
No crowds, no cheers, no chattering.  
For Greyfriars' boys are gone away  
To homely Yule festivities;  
For which (as Lonzy Todd would say)  
They show pronounced proclivities!

No sounds of laughter fill the air,  
No outbursts of hilarity,  
Upon this festival so rare,  
That speaks of joy and charity  
The school is silent as a tomb,  
Deserted, cold, and desolate;  
No sound disturbs the common-room,  
Where happy boys played chess o' late!

At Wharton Lodge, and Bunter Court,  
Are signs of gay frivolity;  
And there is heaps of fun and sport,  
Of jest and youthful jollity.  
The mistletoe is hung on high,  
And gorgeous coloured papering;  
While happy boys go romping by,  
Careering, cheering, capering!

But Greyfriars School will silent stand,  
In solemn, stern austerity;  
While winter storms, on every hand,  
Are raging with severity.  
The only creature at its post,  
While winter days drag wearily,  
Will be the celebrated ghost  
That haunts the place so eerily!



## SPORTING RECORDS OF GREYFRIARS

By H. VERNON-SMITH  
(Sports Editor of "The Greyfriars Herald.")



"Clean over the roof of the gymnasium!"

### CRICKET.

**T**HE highest score ever made by the Greyfriars senior eleven was 640 for 5 wickets (declared). This was against Friardale Village in 1899.

\* \* \*

The record individual score for the Greyfriars senior eleven is 244 not out, made by H. V. Clifton in the match referred to above.

\* \* \*

The highest score ever made by the Greyfriars Remove was 720 (all out). The innings occupied two days. This colossal score was put together as far back as 1850 in a match between Greyfriars Remove and Courtfield Juniors.

\* \* \*

The record individual score for the Greyfriars Remove is 226 not out, scored last summer by Harry Wharton against Billy Bunter's eleven.

\* \* \*

No less than twelve Old Boys of Greyfriars are now playing as amateurs in county cricket.

\* \* \*

Playing for Greyfriars seniors in 1906, R. B. Standish hit a ball clean over the roof of the gymnasium. This feat has never been equalled.

\* \* \*

The finest bowling feat in the annals of Greyfriars cricket was performed by E. W. Dartforth in 1911. Playing for the senior

eleven against Courtfield Wanderers, he captured all 10 wickets for only 2 runs!

### FOOTBALL.

The Greyfriars first eleven had its most successful season in 1907-8. They won every fixture except one, which was drawn.

\* \* \*

The record victory for the senior eleven is 14-0, and for the Remove eleven 17-1. These amazing triumphs were scored against Friardale Athletic and Wapshot Juniors, respectively.

\* \* \*

Greyfriars and St. Jim's (junior elevens) have met on no less than 100 occasions. Greyfriars have won 40 games, St. Jim's 38, and the remaining 22 have been drawn.

\* \* \*

The Public Schools' Challenge Cup has been won by Greyfriars on three occasions—in 1895, 1896, and 1904.

### ATHLETICS.

The 100 yards' record is held by Bob Cherry, who covered the distance in 11 secs., dead. This is splendid time for a junior, but the senior record is 10 secs.

\* \* \*

Bob Cherry also holds the quarter-mile record. The mile record is shared by Harry Wharton and Tom Brown, while Mark Linley has the Marathon record to his credit.

\* \* \*

At the time of writing, the boxing champion of the Remove is Bob Cherry. Dick Russell, who won the Public Schools' Light-weight Championship at Aldershot, runs Bob very close.

\* \* \*

The finest swimmer in the Remove is Harry Wharton.



# HOME MAGIC!

There are many boys and girls who, during the long winter evenings or when parties are being held, wish they could "do something." The following simple tricks are both effective and easy to perform.

## No. 1.—The Magic Case

HERE is a simple yet amusing trick which you can perform at your next party. Get a gas mantle case and take off the cap from one end. Place the case upright on a piece of card, and mark round the card with a pencil as shown at A. When you have done this



No. 1

cut out the circle of card you have marked. Now black this disc on both sides and also black the inside of the mantle case. Then fix the circular piece of card inside the centre of the case as indicated at B.

Finally, replace the caps one on each end of the case.

To perform the trick take off one of the caps and show the case empty. Then borrow a small handkerchief and place it in the case, replacing the cap. Now while you talk to your audience, quietly turn the case round in your hands so that they do not notice the action. Take off the opposite cap and show the case empty. Of course, the handkerchief is still in the case, but it is behind the black disc, and therefore cannot be seen.

## No. 2.—The Magic Walking-Stick

This topping little trick always puzzles people, and now I am giving the secret of it away to my reader chums for the first time.

First of all obtain a piece of thread about sixteen inches long, and sew it through the edge of the left coat-sleeve in the form of a small loop—see A. Take care, however, that the coat you use is either black or a dark blue shade of cloth. Next get the walking-stick which should be dark brown in colour, or, at least, have a dark-tinted handle. In case you cannot get one of dark enough shade, colour the handle of any stick with Indian ink, which can be washed off afterwards.



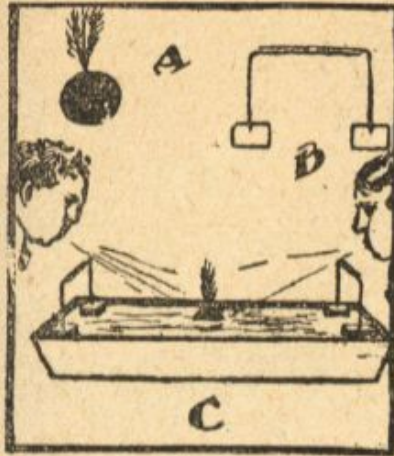
No. 2

Now, to perform the trick, hold the stick in the manner shown at A. Tell your audience you are going to put the "fluence" on the stick, and while making passes over it, quietly slip the ferrule end of the walking-stick through the loop in the thread in the way also indicated by *diagram A*. Then hold the stick upright with the right hand, while you get the thread taut—see B. Now let go with the right hand, and waggle the fingers of the left hand above the stick as though you are supporting it in the air by means of some strange "fluence." The black thread will not be noticed against the dark background of your coat.

Of course, you don't want to perform this trick before friends until you have tried it by yourself a few times!



### No. 3.—Table Water Polo



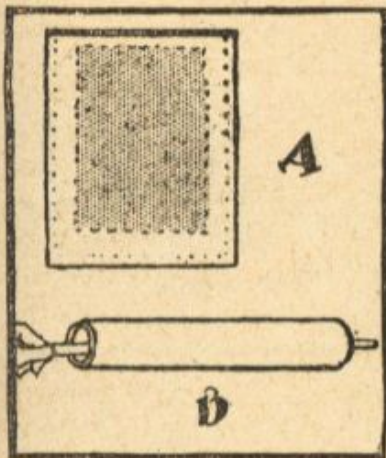
No. 3

pieces of wood to form goal-posts in the manner shown at B.

The two goals thus formed must be placed in a tin of water as shown by *diagram C*. The "ball" is placed in the centre of the tin or dish of water to start with, and the players must try to blow it into their opponents' goal.

### No. 4.—A Handkerchief Trick

Obtain two sheets of ordinary white paper—or newspaper—will do—and paste them together round three sides (see the outer dotted line in *diagram A*.)



No. 4

end down with the fingers and thumbs. Next roll the papers into the form of a hollow tube, and put a stick through this tube to show that you have not inserted anything in it (*see B*). Finally, wave the stick over the tube, and pull out the handkerchief from between the papers.

The game can be made quite easily in the following manner: Get a round piece of cork and stick a feather in it (*see diagram A*). Next get four hairpins and four square pieces of wood. Now fix the bent hairpins in the

### No. 5.—The Disappearing Egg

Save the half shell of a breakfast egg and through one side of it push a bent pin. Fix the pin in position by dropping over the head of it a little sealing-wax. The sealing-wax should be put inside the shell so that the pin is fixed firmly in position (*see A*).

The shaded portion in this diagram represents the sealing-wax, though, of course, in reality you would not be able to see it through the eggshell.



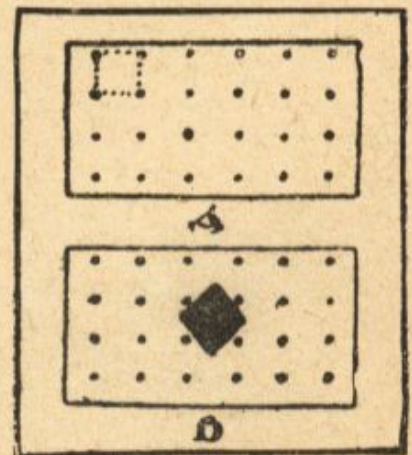
No. 5

Now place the shell in an egg-cup with the pin-point away from your audience (*see B*). Put a handkerchief over the egg-shell and tell your chums that you will make the "egg" disappear. When pulling the handkerchief away, catch the pin-point in it as shown at C, and your audience will find the egg-cup empty.

### No. 6.—The Carpenter's Problem

A carpenter once wanted a square piece of wood with which to finish a certain job. But all he had left was a piece of board with holes in it. Unfortunately he found that if he were to cut out a square between the holes—as indicated by the dotted lines in *diagram A*—the piece thus cut would be too small for his purpose. The problem is: How did he manage it?

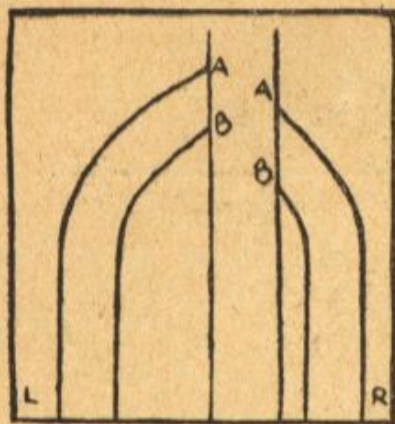
The way that the carpenter obtained a larger square which suited his requirements will be seen in *diagram B*.



No. 6



### No. 7.—An Optical Illusion

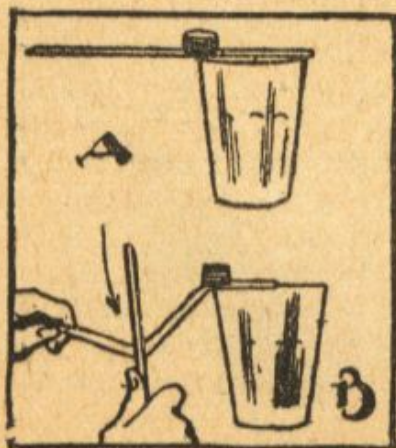


No. 7

As you may know, the eye can be very easily deceived. Here is a case in point. The two curved lines on the right side of the sketch appear to be drawn at a different slope from those on the left side. You would not dream, from just looking at them, that the lines *A* and *B* on the right side would meet the tops of lines *A* and *B* in the centre of the sketch, would you? Yet if you continue the lines on the right you will see that they will meet the others, thus forming an arch with both sides exactly equal.

### No. 8.—Balancing the Coins

Obtain a strip of paper three-quarters of an inch wide. Place one end across the top of a glass tumbler, and on the paper at the edge of the glass balance three or four pennies or half-crowns—the latter coins are better because they are heavier. Note the position of the coins and the paper in *diagram A*. The trick is to get the paper away from under the coins without upsetting them. If your friends cannot perform the feat, show them how to do the trick in the following way: Hold the loose end of the strip of paper in the fingers of the left hand, and, with a stick held

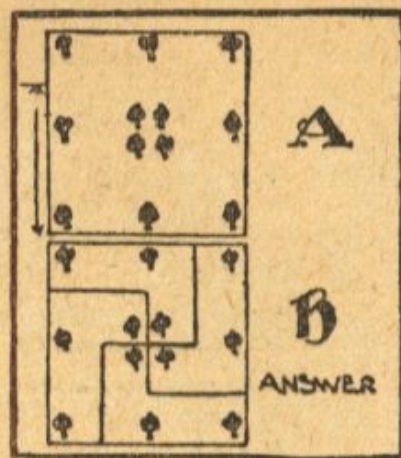


No. 8

in the right hand, strike a sharp blow downwards on the paper in the manner indicated at *B*. The effect of the blow will be to bring the paper away, leaving the coins balanced on the edge of the tumbler.

### No. 9.—A Land Problem

Four men once bought a square piece of land which contained twelve trees. A plan of this piece of land is shown at *A*. They decided to divide the land into four, but each man wanted a frontage of three-quarters of



No. 9

the length of the ground and also three of the trees in his portion. The arrows to the left of the plan at *A* show the length of the frontage each required. The problem is: How did they divide the land so that each of the four men obtained what he wanted? The way they solved the difficulty may be seen at *B*.

Cut out the top diagram or else re-draw it on a piece of paper, and try the problem on your chums. Tell them to indicate with a pencil the way the land could be divided to fulfil the requirements of the owners.

### No. 10.—Another Balancing Trick

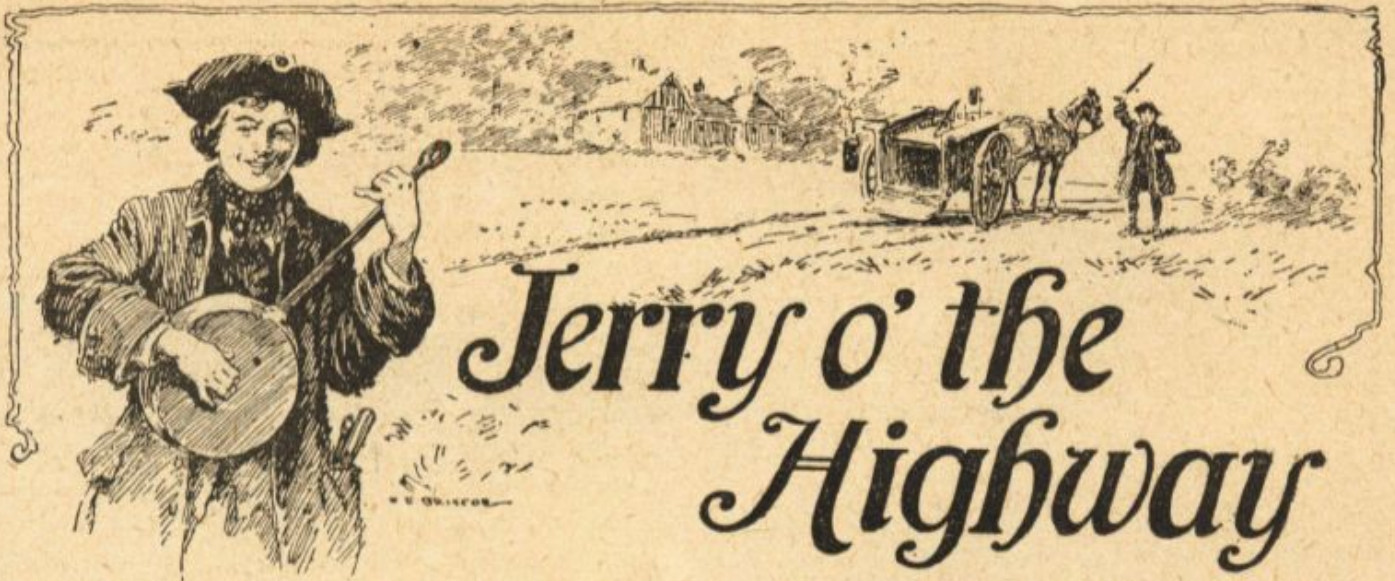
For this trick take a walking-stick and tie a piece of string round the bottom, about three inches from the ferrule. Make a long loop in the string, as shown at *A*. Now slip the stem of a pipe through the loop, and balance the other end on a pin.

Without holding the stick with the left hand or allowing it to touch the floor, you will find you can quite easily do this balancing trick, as shown by *diagram B*, notwithstanding the weight of the walking-stick.



No. 10



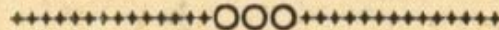


# Jerry o' the Highway

*A Rousing Romance of the Olden Times, Introducing Will o' the West, the Highwayman.*

By REGINALD WRAY.

[Illustrated by E. E. Briscoe]



## THE FIRST CHAPTER

"Haste to the Fair!"

RED ROGERS, the tinker, hurled the saucepan from him with a force that threatened to make a bigger hole in it than the one he had just mended.

"Jerry, you long-limbed loon! Jerry, you lazy, skulking lump of impertinence! Jerry you—— Oh, there you are, are you? Been with that carrot-haired, red-faced, snub-nosed wastrel, Jo, I suppose. Just let me catch him hanging round my pitch, that's all," he cried, rising from the shaft of the tilted cart on which he had been sitting, and turning threateningly upon a merry-faced lad of about sixteen, who, his hands in his pockets, a battered three-cornered hat perched jauntily over one ear, had strolled out of the copse near which the travelling tinker had elected to pitch his tent.

"Well, what is it now?" demanded the boy.

"Pitch the tent, feed the 'oss, clean up the pots and pans, and mind you've something nice and tasty for supper," ordered the tinker.

Jerry looked at his father in dismay.

"I want to go to the fair," he objected.

"Then want will have to be your master," snapped Rogers, his red head bristling, as it

had a habit of doing when its owner was angry. "Think I'm going to leave all this valuable tinware lying about for any sneak thief to pinch? So you do as you're bid, an' no more lip."

"Shan't!" retorted Jerry.

Almost in one movement Red Rogers seized his son by the arm, a large stick from the ground, and brought the latter down with no little force upon the rebel's shoulder.

"You won't, eh?" he roared. "I'll—whack—show yer—whack—if ye won't—whack—I'll——"

He broke off and clasped his hand to his cheek, the flesh of which had been grazed by a well-aimed fir-cone.

Turning, his eyes fell upon a boy, with a tangled mass of red hair and a round merry face, who was standing some ten yards behind him. The boy was clad in a tattered shirt and a pair of faded knee-breeches, many sizes too large for him.

Too angry to realise that unless he was able to throw round a corner, the boy could not possibly have hurled the missile, Red Rogers released his son and made a dash at the newcomer.

"Run, Jo, run!" yelled Jerry excitedly.

The advice was unneeded, for the red-haired



one was already fleeing across the moor with Rogers, shouting blood-curdling threats, close at his heels.

"Sling your hook before the old 'un returns, Jerry," advised a merry, laughing voice from a tree on the boy's right.

The boy looked up, and saw a roguish, nut-brown face, surmounted by strands of silky black hair, with ripe, red pouting lips and a pair of laughing eyes as black as sloes.

"What, Mai, the gipsy! I might have guessed where the fir-cone came from. It was a passing good shot, for a girl," Jerry admitted graciously.

"But that's a better," retorted the girl in the tree, as a brown arm flashed from out the leaves and a deftly thrown blackbird's egg broke on the boy's forehead.

"That comes of having a yellow mop, instead of hair of a decent colour. Of a surety, Mistress Blackbird mistook your poll for her nest," laughed the girl, and vanished, springing from branch to branch with the agility of a squirrel.

"Haste, haste, haste to the fair!

Blind Tom, Will West, and I will be there," Jerry could hear her singing long after he had lost sight of her.

With a glance across the moor, which showed that Red Rogers had been brought to a standstill by shortness of breath, and was shaking his fist in impotent rage at the elusive Jo as he disappeared over an undulating ridge, Jerry plunged into the copse, and made off as fast as his legs could carry him.

Nothing short of being chained to a wheel of the tinker's cart would have kept him from the fair now; he knew that Mai had been sent to tell him that the best and truest friends he had in the world, Blind Tom, the fiddler, and Will o' the West, would be there.

It was true Will o' the West was a highwayman. But such a highwayman! Never has the King's highway been graced—or disgraced, if you choose—by such a wild, reckless, laughter-loving rascal.

A quip on his lip, and a smile in his eyes, he would rob a coach with a courtesy and grace all his own.

Huge rewards had been offered for his capture, dead or alive, but the peasantry

worshipped him, and though, doubtless, there were some whom the money might have tempted, they did not dare to injure the idol of the people, to say nothing of the fact that Will was far too clever, and Silver Sprite far too swift, for either to be easily captured.

Taking advantage of every hedge, dip in the ground, or clump of bracken that would hide him from the view of the outraged tinker, Jerry continued on his way for some three-quarters of a mile, a confused medley of merry voices, blaring trumpets, and hard-beaten drums growing louder at every step, until he topped a slight rise to find himself gazing down, with swiftly beating heart, upon a veritable town of canvas which had sprung into existence on the outskirts of the flourishing little town of Brantor since he had passed that way, three-days before.

A fair in the good old days was a very different thing to what it is in the present year of grace.

Brantor Fair was noted, far and wide, as the biggest thing of its kind in all the Western Counties. Hither came merchants from Russia with furs for the "Quality," spices from the East, wondrously carved woodwork from Central Europe, wines from France, silks from Italy—for it was then the custom for housewives to re-stock wardrobes and larders at the fair, and thus save themselves the long and perilous journey to London by road.

But it was not all business at Brantor Fair, as Jerry found when, having waited on the outskirts of the booths for the breathless but triumphant Jo, he made his way to the portion of the ground devoted to pleasure.

Here were sideshows enough in all conscience.

Two-headed girls, three-armed boys, five-legged calves, two-tailed pigs, fat women, thin women, giants and dwarfs, astrologers to cast your horoscope, "quacks" to cure every ill under the sun, dentists who performed their operations on a platform in full view of a grinning public, wrestling booths, boxing booths, gambling booths—to say nothing of a canvas "Theatre Royal," adorned with blood-curdling pictures of the fearful tragedies to be witnessed within, whilst on a platform outside stood the actors, clad in armour, in full state regalia of tinsel, or



as our old friends Harlequin and Columbine. As each booth had its leather-lunged attendant to draw the attention of the public to his own particular show, either by voice, the blaring of trumpets, or the beating of drums, the noise was deafening.

But no one seemed to mind the tumult, for all were in holiday mood.

Farmers and their labourers, miners from the tin mines, squatters from the moor, ostlers, grooms, herdsman, shepherds, red-coated soldiers with stiff stocks, tail-coats and enormous shakos, home on leave; tramps from every part rubbed shoulders with the parsons from the adjoining villages, squires and their ladies, townsmen, clerks, and attorneys, with a sprinkling of the Quality from the surrounding estates.

Open-eyed and open-mouthed, Jerry and Jo wandered among the booths, stopping now and again to exchange rough witticism with wayfarers, gipsies, and others who, like themselves, were "Free of the King's Highway" or, in other words, had no permanent abodes.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER An Interrupted Dance

JERRY and Jo did not linger amongst the booths.

Soon the quavering notes of a fiddle reached their ears. Hastening towards it, they found themselves in an open space where a number of people had gathered in a half-circle, before an oak-tree, beneath the spreading branches of which a stoutish man, clad in threadbare, but neat brown coat, corduroy breeches, and thick woollen stockings, was seated on an upturned cask, drawing music which spoke of a master hand from his instrument.

He had a frank, open face, a humorous mouth, and it was only that peculiar, alert appearance the blind often show that proclaimed him sightless.

Elbowing their way through the crowd, the boys stepped to the blind fiddler's side.

"What ho, Tom! How goes it?" demanded Jerry, glancing towards where Mai the Gipsy, clad in a dark, sequin-covered dress, her raven locks surmounted by a red, tasseled cap, was dancing with the ease and grace of a wood-nymph.

"What ho, my Prince of Tinkers," returned the blind man, in a deep, rolling voice. "Hast had thy fortune told?"

"Nay, Blind Tom, Mai has already seen to that. Only last week she told me that I might live until I was hanged—with luck," laughed Jerry. "Where's Will?" he added, in a whisper.

"Ask the fortune-teller. She's able to read your palm like an open book. If a man wants his sweetheart's love, she'll give him a potion; if he wants an enemy removed she'll show him how to make wax figures, and stick pins into them so that he'll waste away. She'll tell to a day when your rich uncle will die, or who stole the corn out of the sack Farmer Bossy took to the mill," replied Blind Tom, in such loud tones that Jerry knew he was speaking for the benefit of the crowd, for Blind Tom was an adept advertiser.

As he spoke he continued to play, whilst Mai circled round, keeping time to the music with her tambourine.

Suddenly she ceased dancing.

"I'll step it no longer without a partner," she declared.

A dozen young fellows pressed forward, each eager to be chosen as the spirited little fairy's partner.

Mai contemptuously waved them aside.

"Like to like, my masters! I dance only with Freemen of the King's Highway," she cried, with a rippling laugh. Then, snatching up her tambourine, she tripped lightly to where Jerry was standing, and dropping a mocking curtsey, cried:

"Trip a measure with Mai the Gipsy, Jerry o' the Pots and Pans?"

The boy hesitated, and glanced inquiringly at the fiddler.

"Toe-and-heel, lad; the fortune-teller can wait!" urged Blind Tom, sensing his dilemma.

Nothing loth, Jerry sprang into the circle of grinning spectators, whose cries were soon hushed as they gazed in admiring silence at the boy and girl. Their flying feet scarcely touched the short, green turf as they went through the mazes of an intricate dance which, truth to tell, Mai had taught the tinker's boy in many a hastily-snatched lesson when her caravan and the tinker's tilted cart had



chanced to be together, for these two were friends of long standing.

And a handsome couple they made. Though his clothes were shabby they showed Jerry's tall and straight figure to advantage, whilst Mai, nearly as tall, though some two years younger, looked, what indeed she was, a free, wild thing of the open.

"Heavens, what a dancer! She'd make a fortune at Drury Lane!" ejaculated a tall, elaborately dressed man of about thirty.

"But the boy! Look at the boy! He's the very lad we want," whispered his companion, who wore a shabby, black, full-bottomed coat, with frayed lace breeches of the same sombre material and plain cotton hose, all too short for his slender legs.

The tall man dragged his unwilling eyes from Mai's graceful form, and fixed them on the lithe, agile figure of her companion.

"He's a likely-looking youngster, friend Cawne, but no better fitted for the part than a score of others we have seen," he replied in guarded tones.

"It is well that you have an attorney with eyes in his head, Timotheus Trent!" growled Cawne, with a sidelong glance of contempt at his friend. "Canst see no likeness to anyone, in the lad?"

Timotheus Trent, secretary and factor to the late Lord Rackness, of Rackness Castle, in the county of Devon, shook his head.

"I grant you it's not a strong likeness, but I miss my mark if, when dressed in silk and brocade, with a cocked gold-laced hat on his head and a sword by his side, there'll be few who'll venture to swear he's not a Rackness born and bred!" continued Cawne.

For the first time Trent took more than a passing interest in the dancing boy.

"By my soul, you're right. Who is the brat? Where does he come from?" he whispered eagerly.

The question was answered more speedily than the speaker could possibly have anticipated.

With a roar that would not have discredited the renowned bull of Bashan—or any other bull, for the matter of that—Red Rogers burst through the crowd and made a grab at Jerry.

"Come here, you young varmint. I'll

teach yer to leave yer father to pitch camp, whilst you go kicking your heels about with a gipsy wench!" he cried furiously.

So unexpected was Red Rogers' appearance that he would doubtless have secured his truant son, had not Mai brought her tambourine down on his nose with a force that made the little brass discs rattle again, and caused the irate tinker to see stars.

Red Rogers staggered back, whilst Jerry, darting through the spectators, made off as quickly as his legs could carry him, darting round booths, through booths, and under booths, until, confident that he had thrown the tinker off his trail, he came to a halt, and, placing his fingers in his mouth, sent a loud, shrill whistle reverberating through the air.

It was answered by a scarcely less piercing reply, and a few minutes later Jo hastened up.

Jerry turned angrily upon him.

"Nice sort of a chap you are. The old 'un nearly had me that time!" he complained.

"I was listening to a brace of queer coves, who seemed kind of to know you, Jerry," returned his chum in aggrieved tones. "How was I ter know Red would be on you so quick-like?"

Jerry looked uneasily around. Jo and himself had a habit of making things lively in the places they visited, and he strongly suspected that many victims of his mischievous pranks would be quite glad to lay hands upon him.

"Who were they?" he demanded.

"One was Lawyer Cawne of Brantor. T'other, one of the quality, I should say, judging by his clobber," returned Jo, and proceeded to repeat the conversation that had taken place between the factor and the lawyer.

Jerry shook his head with a puzzled frown.

"Rackness? The name seems familiar," he mused.

"There's Rackness Castle down Exmouth way," suggested Jo. "I've heard tell as how old Lord Rackness—he as died the matter of a year ago—lost his only son, a kid of about four, who got away from his nurse. Some say as how he fell over a cliff into the sea, or was swallowed up in the quicksands near the mouth of the river, and some think he was





“The boy! Look at the boy!” said the tall man standing at the edge of the crowd. “He’s the very lad we want!” All unconscious of the interest he had aroused, Jerry danced on with Mai, the gipsy. (See Chapter 2.)

stolen by gipsies. Mercy on us, Jerry, what if you should turn out to be a real live lord?” he added excitedly.

Jerry laughed scornfully.

“Not I! Red Rogers is my father, sure enough!” he declared.

But the idea had taken root in Jo’s fancy, and he was loth to be laughed out of it.

“How do you know? You’ve only his word for it! ‘Sides, I’ve always said you weren’t one of us,” he persisted. “Lor’, wouldn’t it be fine if you were a lord, and——” He ceased speaking, and the excitement died out of his face as he continued, “I forgot. You’d leave the road, an’ all to do wiv it, and I’d never see you again. It aren’t in reason that you’d want to be seen with a ragged Freeman o’ the Highway, and you wearing gold lace and fine linen.”

“What do you take me for, Jo?” demanded Jerry indignantly. “If I woke up one morning to find myself King of England, I wouldn’t sit easy on my throne unless I had you on a chair besides me. Tinker or lord, Jerry Rogers isn’t one to go back on his friends.”

“Course you aren’t, Jerry. I knows that, and thank ye kindly for the promise,” cried Jo as seriously as though his friend’s good fortune was anything but a wild fancy.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER Will o’ the West!

**B**Y this time they had reached the outskirts of a fair-sized crowd that was gathered in front of a round-topped gipsy tent.

Here the fun of the fair seemed to have taken a more serious turn, to judge by the



lowering faces of many, though others were laughing loudly, apparently enjoying themselves to their hearts' content.

"A plague seize the old hag," growled a well-to-do citizen in sombre brown. "She promised to tell me how to double my fortune for a crown, and when I, like a simpleton, gave her the money, she told me to put double the amount of sand in my sugar before I sold it!"

"Dan, the horse coper, turned as white as a sheet when she asked him why he painted out the white star on his bay cob's forehead," declared a bystander.

"That's the hoss he picked up in the forest over Exmoor way," whispered Jo.

Jerry nodded and thrust his way through the crowd.

Crouched before a smouldering fire, over which a tripod supported a steaming cauldron, was a woman muffled in a shabby black cloak, and a pointed hat, beneath which appeared stray curls of matted hair.

Nothing could be seen of the fortune-teller's face save a pair of dark shining eyes, which seemed to have a strong magnetic power, for the hardiest among the spectators turned pale whenever they were turned upon him.

"Oh, ho, Tom Winnel, it was a starry night for a ramble yester eve when you kissed Moll Sindors at the Four-Cross-roads," cried the old hag, pointing a long, claw-like hand at a gaping young rustic.

"Ho, Farmer Horrocks, land watered by orphans' tears brings forth evil weeds," she shrilled, addressing a thin, weasel-faced farmer amongst the crowd.

The farmer started as though he had been stung, and those present, who knew how he had defrauded his dead brother's children of part of their heritage, exchanged significant glances.

"Hold your tongue, you old witch, or I'll——" began the farmer, when the fortune-teller, interrupted him, saying, with a shrill laugh:

"Set your dogs on me, as you did on the blind beggar, until Will o' the West came up and thrashed decency into you."

Leaving the farmer to back shamefacedly away, she went on telling home truths about

men in the crowd, until shouts of rage drowned the laughter of the spared.

"She's a witch! She's got the evil eye!" cried two or three of her victims.

Then somebody shouted:

"Duck the old witch. Let's see if she can swim, cullies!" And as drowning witches was a popular amusement of the period, the cry was taken up on all sides, and those in front, pushed on by their comrades in the rear, surged towards the old woman.

But ere a hand could be laid upon her, she rose to her feet, and a gasp of amazement burst from the onlookers when they found that the wizened and shrunken form became a majestic figure, a good seven feet in height from the point of her sugar loaf hat to the ground.

"Avaunt, ye creeping curs, whose evil souls I have laid as bare as the moor in winter time. Avaunt, I say, lest I summon those to my aid who will tear you limb from limb," she cried shrilly, waving a long forked stick as though it was some magic wand.

Overawed the crowd shrank back.

"At her lads! What! Are you craven that the scoldings of an old hag frightens you?" cried the horse coper; and beside himself with rage, he rushed at the tall figure.

But ere his outstretched hands could reach her, a fist shot out from the black cloak and struck him a blow between the eyes that sent him reeling backwards.

The next moment the cap was sent hurtling through the air, carrying with it a grey wig, and the long cloak fell to the ground, revealing a tall, well-built young man of about four or five and twenty, with a pair of dark eyes, dancing with mischief, shining from a handsome, open face.

He was clad in a blue coat, rich with gold lace, beneath which could be seen a gay brocade waistcoat, and white small-clothes which disappeared in a pair of enormous riding boots, whilst at his side swung a gold-hilted sword.

Taking a three-cornered hat from beneath his arm, he held it above his head, crying:

"What-o, my masters, is this the witch you would duck? Methinks the truth is bitter, even from one's friends," he cried with a merry laugh.



His words broke the spell amazement had cast over the crowd, and, his infectious laugh sweeping away their ill humours, they burst into a loud cry :

"Will o' the West. The smartest high toby-man that ever cried 'Stand and deliver!' on the king's highway."

Pressing his hat to his heart, Will bowed his response to the greeting, whilst those in the back of the crowd took up the cry :

"Will o' the West! Will o' the West!"

Suddenly the highwayman started, for, from the copse behind the gipsy tent had sounded, like a sinister echo, the cry :

"Will o' the West! It is the scoundrel himself! Seize him, men."

At the same moment six horsemen, led by the Sheriff of the county himself and followed by ten well-armed men on foot, burst from amongst the trees.

Sir Aylmer Arden, the Sheriff, was a man of many inches, especially round the middle; he was of a fiery temper and of a red complexion.

He was something of a fop, too, and on this occasion was clad in well-cut clothes of white silk, laced with silver braid.

It was not the costume he would have chosen for a bout with the famous highwayman, but he was at the Fair with a party from a neighbouring mansion, when a note had been thrust into his hand advising him to consult the fortune-teller if he would learn how to run Will o' the West to earth.

Now there was nothing in the wide world Sir Aylmer desired more than to lay the elusive highwayman by the heels, for Will o' the West was a veritable thorn in his flesh.

Twice had the daring highwayman bade him "Stand and deliver!" on the king's highway, and had flouted him so often that he had sworn to rest neither night nor day until he had seen him swinging from the gibbet outside Exeter goal.

Consequently he had lost no time in summoning as many of his men as he could gather, and in laying his plans to secure Will.

That the fortune-teller was none other than his hated foe had never for a moment entered his head, but he felt convinced that Will would be somewhere in the neighbourhood,

and was determined that this time he should not escape.

And neither did he.

With the rasping voice of the Sheriff ringing in his ears, Will turned and bowed courteously.

"A very good e'en to you, Sir Aylmer. I am flattered by the attention you would show me, but other business calls me hence," he cried with a merry laugh, as he sprang into the midst of the crowd, who opened to let him pass.

A look of anxiety swept into the Sheriff's face, followed by a look of triumph, as he saw the noted highwayman struggling in the arms of four of his men, who, mingling with the crowd, had been waiting to cut off their prey.

Despite the odds against him, Will o' the West put up a good fight for liberty, helped by his many friends in the crowd, who did everything in their power, short of actual violence, to embarrass his would-be captors.

Using the staves of their pikes to clear a way through the crowd, the footmen from the copse had soon formed into a compact body round their struggling comrades, whilst the mounted men, forcing their horses into the midst of the crowd, scattered them in all directions.

Finding further resistance vain, Will o' the West ceased to struggle, and was hauled, none too gently, to his feet.

Throwing himself from his horse, the Sheriff waddled to where his prize, bound hand and foot, was standing in the custody of two stalwart men.

"So, Will o' the West, I've got you at last, eh? You've had your last ride over the moor, my flaunting game-cock," he cried exultantly.

"I've been in your hands before, I believe, though such trifles are apt to escape one's memory," retorted Will carelessly.

"Ay, but I'll wager one hundred guineas you will not give me the slip this time," cried the Sheriff, flushing at the recollection of how the wily highwayman had beaten him a few months before.

"It's a bet, and be sure, I will not fail to collect the money," cried Will gaily.

The Sheriff opened his mouth to reply, but



ere he could do so he was alarmed by a cry of terror from the tent.

"Heaven guard us, what's this?" burst from his lips, as he saw the canvas slowly moving towards him.

The next moment the tent fell to the ground, revealing a magnificent silver-grey horse, saddled and bridled, and with pistols sticking from the holsters.

Then the Sprite caught sight of Will, and, with flashing eyes and bared teeth, rushed at his master's captors.

"Whoa, Sprite, would'st impale yourself on those pikes? Off to the moors, lass, I'll join you anon!" shouted Will.

Men said that Silver Sprite was almost human, and if she could not speak she could at least understand her master's commands.

Such indeed seemed to be the case, for she came to an abrupt halt within a few inches of the pikes, and stood, stamping angrily and threatening the pikemen with bared teeth, whilst her eyes seemed to flash flame.

It was then that Sir Aylmer made one of the great mistakes of his life.

Fearing lest so valuable a beast should escape his clutches, he seized her by the bridle.

A cry of warning came from Will o' the West's lips.

But it was too late.

Sprite seized her would-be captor's shoulder in her strong teeth, and, heavy man though he was, shook him as a terrier would a rat.

"Steady, Sprite, don't kill the worshipful Sheriff, or I lose my hundred guineas!" shouted Will.

At her master's orders the beautiful animal released her victim, and the Sheriff rolled on the grass.

Smarting with pain, Sir Aylmer rolled on to one elbow, and, dragging a huge horse pistol from a pocket inside his coat, aimed it at the horse's head.

And now, for the first time, Jerry found a chance of taking part in the game.

Foremost amongst Will's friends had been a sweep, who had left the marks of his grimy hands upon the face of more than one of Will's captors, until he had found the attempt hopeless, when he had fled, leaving his bag of soot behind him.

This bag now lay between Jerry and the prostrate Sheriff.

As Sir Aylmer drew his weapon, Jerry and Jo snatched up the bag and emptied its contents over the enraged man just as his finger closed over the trigger, with the result that the bullet skimmed harmlessly over Sprite's ears instead of lodging in her brain.

"Good lads, I'd have lief have lost my own life as have seen the mare killed," cried Will gleefully. "Up and away, or yonder white gull you have turned into a black raven will have you whipped at the cart's tail."

Almost before the words had left the highwayman's lips, Jerry and Jo had sprung on to the mare's back, and held on like grim death as the intelligent creature reared on its hind legs and pawed at the men who attempted to seize her, then, leaping forward, shot like an arrow from a bow over the moor.

Coughing, sneezing, and spluttering, Sir Aylmer Arden struggled to his feet, the white suit, of which he had been so proud, irretrievably ruined, but, feeling more keenly than anything the undoubted fact that, though bound and a prisoner, Will o' the West had so far scored the most points against him.

"After them, you slow-witted scullions!" roared he furiously. "Fifty guineas if you bring them back. It shall be the Plantations for the boys, my stable for the mare!"

"Bah! D'ye think tailors on horseback like you scum can catch Silver Sprite?" cried Will scornfully. "But lest they should lack encouragement I will e'en add to your fifty guineas, if they get within half a mile of her."

"You, at least, shall never see her again, unless it be on the day you are hanged, and then I'll be on her back!" thundered Sir Aylmer, shaking his fist in the prisoner's face, as his men galloped off.

Will greeted the threat with a roar of mocking laughter, which was so infectious that the whole crowd joined in.

"A mirror! I'll give half what I take from the next coach I stop to the man who will show his worship his own face in a looking-glass!" he shouted gleefully.

Sir Aylmer Arden shook with rage.

"Take the braggart to the lock-up, and woe betide ye if ye let him escape," he roared



furiously; then, springing on to his horse, forced his way through the jeering mob.

Truth to tell, he breathed the freer when he had left the crowd behind, for though he was Lord High Sheriff of the county, Will o' the West was King of the Highway, and the idol of the people.

With many an anxious glance at the hostile crowd the Sheriff's men closed round their prisoner.

"A rescue! A rescue!" shouted a dozen voices, and the guard lowered their pikes as the mob surged round them.

"Nay, lads, there's no need. Will o' the West has been trapped before, but has never yet been hung!" cried Will, his clarion voice ringing like a trumpet blast above the tumult.

Obediently the mob drew back, and the Sheriff's men, eager to get their prisoner away ere the crowd could change its mind, hastened at the double towards the town.

Accompanied by a booing, hissing, jeering multitude, they pressed through the streets, not daring to halt until they had deposited their prisoner safely in Brentor Round House, a red-roofed, stone building, which tradition said had once been the stronghold of a robber band.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### "Reynard's Away to the Hills, O!"

**I**N the meantime Jerry and Jo had sped swiftly away, untroubled by thoughts of their six pursuers who, be it said, never got within sight of Silver Sprite after she had topped the first rise in the undulating moor.

Confident that the intelligent beast would carry them to one of the highwayman's many hiding-places, where they could remain hidden until night rendered it safe for them to return to Brentor, Jerry made no attempt to guide her.

In this the young tinker showed his wisdom. Ere long Silver Sprite turned up a gurgling moorland stream, which ran at the bottom of a miniature gorge so overgrown with bushes and small trees that at times the boys had to lean forward to escape the clinging brambles overhead, until at last they reached a tiny lawn of rich, green grass, so hemmed in by

undergrowth that anyone could have passed within a couple of yards of their hiding-place without finding them.

Here the grey mare stopped, and the two boys slid to the ground.

"Oh, you silver beauty!" cried Jerry, stroking the splendid animal's arched neck. "It might have gone hard with us but for you."

The Sprite rubbed her velvety muzzle against Jerry's cheek, then sniffed at his pockets, for she and the boy were old friends, and she was seldom disappointed of a lump or so of sugar.

Nor was she kept waiting long for the dainty. Knowing that he would certainly meet Will o' the West at the fair, Jerry had several in his pocket—how obtained it is perhaps as well not to inquire.

Loosening the saddle-girths and taking the bit from the horse's mouth, Jerry left her to feed on the luscious grass, whilst he and Jo did ample justice to bread and meat, from a pair of wallets buckled to the saddle, washed down with water from the bubbling stream at their feet. Then, stretched on the soft turf, waited, with what patience they might, for nightfall.

It was already dark ere Jerry and Jo again clambered on to Silver Sprite's back, and set off on their great enterprise.

This was no more nor less than the rescue of Will o' the West, though how that feat was to be achieved they had no idea.

All they knew was that everyone in the little moorland town, except, perhaps, the Sheriff's immediate followers, would befriend them in their need.

But their greatest hope lay in Blind Tom the fiddler, whose keen wits they held in great respect.

Beneath the shadow of a small wood, some quarter of a mile from Brentor, Jerry drew rein.

"Stay by the horse, Jo, whilst I go to seek Blind Tom," directed Jerry as the two boys sprang to the soft turf by the side of the road.

"Hadn't we better both go? You know Silver Sprite never stirs from where she is left," suggested Jo, glancing nervously towards four cross roads, where he knew a suicide had been buried shortly before, with a stake through him to keep his restless spirit



from roaming over the countryside and frightening chance wayfarers out of their senses. "Sakes alive! what's that?" he added, as a hollow groan came from the wood close by their side.

Terror-stricken, the boys clung to each other.

They were no cowards, these two young ragamuffins, but they lived in an age when witches, ghosts, and evil spirits, were believed in by both high and low.

"It's—it's the suicide from the Cross Roads," stammered Jerry.

Again that awful groan caused the hair to rise on their heads, and Jo had already turned to flee, when Silver Sprite whinnied.

Jerry grasped Jo by the arm, and held him tight.

"Show yourself, Mai, we knew who it was from the first," he cried, too relieved to trouble about the truth.

"Skeery Jerry and trembling Jo

Run like rats if a girl say boo,"

trilled a musical voice, and the next moment the gipsy girl emerged from the wood.

"We didn't run," growled Jo.

"You would have done if Silver Sprite hadn't recognised me," asserted Mai, laying her soft cheek against the mare's velvety nose.

"But I haven't been waiting an hour or more to talk to a pair of frightened kids," continued Mai laughing. "Blind Tom sent me to meet two brave boys who would snatch Will o' the West out of the Round House, not a couple of trembling children."

"What have we to do?"

"How did Blind Tom know we would be here?" asked the two boys in a breath.

"Don't ask me how Blind Tom knows anything. P'raps the loss of his eyes has made him sharper than the rest of us," returned Mai seriously. "At anyrate, I can give you his message as we walk towards the town. Woods sometimes have ears, as well as walls."

As she spoke the little gipsy girl moved towards the twinkling lights of Brentor, the boys, on either side of her, listening intently as she spoke, whilst Silver Sprite followed close behind them.

On the outskirts of the town the two boys lead Silver Sprite no to the moor, there to

continue their anxious vigil on the deserted countryside whilst the girl, avoiding the brilliantly lighted fair-ground, made her way by a succession of narrow, side streets—as familiar to the gipsy girl as her own woodland glades—until she came to the end of Brentor's main street, at the end of which rose the gloomy, loopholed walls of the Round House.

Crouched in the carved, wooden porch of an ancient house, she waited, unseen by the few passers-by, until, roaring out a rousing chorus, a score of men came arm-in-arm down the street.

As they approached, the Sheriff's men, who were gathered beneath a lamp which swung before the lock-up's solitary door, glanced apprehensively at each other, as though they feared a rescue.

But their fears were allayed when they saw that the newcomers were unarmed and in merry mood.

"Let's give Will o' the West a merry rouse, lads! It'll cheer him up for his journey to Exeter and the gallows on the morrow!" suggested one of the light-hearted band.

"Well spoken, Nick o' the Shears! And we won't lack music, either, for here comes Blind Tom!" cried another, as the blind fiddler, playing a merry lilt which set all feet shuffling, strode from out a by-street.

Pausing before the Round House door, Blind Tom ceased playing and, looking round as though his sightless eyes could see the features of those present, cried:

"I've done well to-day, my bold boys; so we'll e'en make a night of it! You drink at my expense!"

As he spoke he waved his bow, and two tapsters, each wheeling a barrow with a tapped cask of beer before him, appeared on the scene, and were soon busy pouring nut-brown ale into pewter pots, and handing them around to the thirsty crowd.

"A toast, gentles; a toast! To Will o' the West, king of highwaymen!" Then, as the Sheriff's men hesitated—not for lack of will to honour the toast, but lest spies should be about who would carry the tale to their master—he added: "An' ye who do not like drinking Will's health drink to the Sheriff. I care not who ye toast!"





“Avaunt, I say, lest I summon those to my aid who will tear you limb from limb!” cried the old witch, waving a long, forked stick as though it was some magic wand. Overawed, the crowd shrank back. (See Chapter 3.)

Thus urged, the Sheriff’s men emptied their pots with the best amongst the townsmen, whilst as the news of what was taking place near the Round House spread about, the crowd swelled until it filled the whole open space before Will o’ the West’s prison. Ere long all were quaffing deep draughts of Blind Tom’s beer, and shuffling their feet to the music of his fiddle.

“Mai! Mai!” arose suddenly from a hundred lips as, darting from out the porch, the gipsy girl whirled into the centre of the throng.

Those nearest her drew back with cries of

alarm as what looked like a slender rod with a big top which Mai carried, sent forth a shower of sparks, and a rocket soared into the air to burst high above the houses.

A long-drawn “Oh-o-o-o!” came from the spectators, for rockets were not so common then as they are now.

But their thoughts were swiftly drawn back to earth as Blind Tom struck up a wild, tuneful air, and Mai glided round a quickly-formed circle, on her toes, ere she threw herself, with the vigour that was her chief charm, into a pas-de-seul that held all on-lookers entranced.



At length she sank gracefully on one knee, to a thunderous roar of applause, accompanied by the jingle of coin as the delighted crowd showered coppers upon her, drowning the loud beat of a horse's hoofs for which the gipsy girl had been listening, even as she danced.

Springing lightly to her feet, Mai faced the fiddler.

"After a dance, a song, Tom!" she cried.

"Ay, ay, a song! One with a rousing chorus!" cried two or three voices.

With more haste than he usually showed, Blind Tom began:

"Old Mother Bubble-chock jumped out of bed!

Reynard's away to the hills, O! (roared the crowd.)

Out of the window she popped her old head! (sang Tom.)

Reynard's away to the hills, O!

John! John! John! the grey goose has gone; and—

Reynard's away to the hills, O! hills, O!  
hills, O! hills, O!

And Reynard's away to the hills, O!"

chorused his audience, in a thundering shout that drowned all other sounds, as Blind Tom quite intended it should.

There are between twenty and thirty verses of the old Jacobite song, and Blind Tom struggled manfully through them all, his deep bass voice often leading the crowd on to sing the chorus over and over again until his throat ached and his mouth grew so parched that towards the end he was croaking like a raven.

But he cared nothing for that so long as his scheme worked, and he could save Will o' the West from the gallows.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

How Will o' the West Cheated the Sheriff.

**I**N the meantime, Jerry and Jo had waited impatiently on the moor until Mai's signal rocket, bursting in the heavens, warned them that the time for action had come.

Jumping on Silver Sprite's back, Jerry helped Jo on to the crupper behind him and

headed the mare towards the town, where they arrived just as Blind Tom commenced the song intended to cover any noise they might happen to make whilst engaged on the difficult task before them.

Steering Silver Sprite close to the wall of the Round House, Jerry stood up in the saddle, a coil of rope over his shoulder, a stout axe in his leather girdle, and a saw slung behind his back.

Grasping the lead guttering that circled the old building, he braced himself against the wall whilst Jo climbed up his body to the roof.

Kneeling on the tiles, Jo dragged Jerry to his side, and, clambering a few feet to the right so that the débris should not fall on the waiting mare, they attacked the red tiles with their axes.

"Reynard's away to the hills, O!" roared the chorusing men before the Round House door.

Bang! crash! went the axes of the two boys on its roof.

A very few minutes sufficed to lay bare four rafters, which the boys tackled with their saws.

But this proved a long, tough job, for the rafters were of good old British oak that was hardened by time, and the perspiration was rolling in streams down their faces ere they had sawn a hole big enough for the highwayman to pass up when the time came.

But the song was already drawing to its close, and Jerry knew that they had little time to spare.

Tying one end of the rope from his shoulders to the nearest whole rafter, he flung down the slack end, which fell with a sullen thud on bare boards a short distance below the would-be rescuers.

But this Jerry quite expected, for Blind Tom had told him that immediately beneath the roof was a loft and trap-door through which they could gain Will o' the West's prison cell.

Dropping on hands and knees, Jerry groped about in the dark until he found a heavy iron ring.

But tug as he might, it was not until he



had called Jo to his aid that the two boys succeeded in throwing back the heavy door.

"Art there, Will?" cried Jerry, on hands and knees beside the dark opening in the floor of the loft.

"What, Jerry! So it is you who have aroused me out of the sweetest sleep I have enjoyed for many a long day, with your thumping and banging overhead," replied the light-hearted highwayman.

"It may have been that a tile or two slipped through our hands and aroused your highwaymanship from his slumber," laughed Jerry. "But haste ye! Blind Tom is nearing the end of his song, and Jo and I want to join in the final chorus. Can'st climb, Will?"

"Aye marry can I," came back the response, and Jerry dropped the slack of the rope into the cell.

Half a minute later, Will had gained the loft and was shaking hands with his two young rescuers.

"Gallant lads, I owe ye much for this, and when did Will o' the West forget to pay his debts?" cried the highwayman, then paused and listened intently, for during a comparative lull in the singing the night wind brought to his ears the sound of galloping horses.

"Quick, lads, out of this and mingle with the crowd. It's his worship the Sheriff, and a troop of cavalry come to escort me to Exeter," he cried, gathering up the rope, and throwing it down the outside of the Round House.

Without stopping to argue the point the two boys slid down the rope, and made off, followed by the highwayman, who hastened towards his mare which was whinnying a welcome to its master.

Lightly, Will o' the West leaped into the saddle.

"'Tis fine to feel you beneath me once more, sweetheart," he whispered, leaning over the mare's withers and playing with her ears. "Nay, lass, nay!" he added, as Silver Sprite scraped the ground, impatient to be off. "His Worship the Sheriff has ridden hot-foot to Exeter to see me, and it would show but ill-breeding to let him have his ride for nothing."

Keeping well within the shadow of the Round House, Will moved cautiously forward until he could see the crowd around Blind Tom, who lowered his fiddle, and, mingling with the crowd, disappeared, just as Sir Aylmer Arden rode up at the head of half-a-score mounted dragoons, each with his short, clumsy musket on his knee.

"Out of the way, ye scum, unless you want the flat of my troopers' swords across your backs!" shouted the Sheriff, as, followed by the dragoons, he forced his horse through the mob.

Tired after his long ride to Exeter and back, yet well content, inasmuch as he would soon have the elusive highwayman—who had so often slipped through his fingers—safely lodged in the County Jail, the Sheriff threw himself off his horse.

Bidding the corporal in charge of the men he had left on guard to throw open the door, he strode into the cell crying:

"Rouse ye, cut-throat and thief, my men await to take you for your last ride."

But his pleasantry was met with a silence that sent a thrill of apprehension through Sir Aylmer's veins.

"A torch! Quick a torch! I' faith there shall be whippings at the cart's tail to-morrow if Will o' the West has escaped," he added in a loud shout.

In fear and trembling, for well they knew that the Sheriff had both the power, and the will, to put his threat into execution, the Corporal and another of the Sheriff's men rushed into the cell with torches, which sent a ruddy glare over the wooden chair and stout table that formed the only furniture of the cell, but showed only too plainly that the highwayman had gone.

Almost besides himself with rage, Sir Aylmer Arden rushed from the Round House, and he literally foamed at the mouth when the crowd, swaying close on the heels of his troopers' horses, burst into a perfect tornado of laughter.

"Silence, ye fools, or by——" began the Sheriff, when he was interrupted by the shrill notes of a fiddle a little distance away, and a clear baritone voice singing:

"John, John, John! The grey goose has



gone, and Reynard's away to the hills, oh!"

The next moment, Silver Sprite, with her master in the saddle, leapt into the street.

Sweeping his three-cornered hat from his head, Will bowed gracefully to the Sheriff, then, wheeling round, darted off just as, in obedience to a rage-maddened shriek from the Sheriff, the troopers emptied their muskets in a useless volley at the spot where he had been but a moment before.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER

### How Jerry Became a Peer

THAT night, Jerry and Jo slept the sleep of the just, though their couch was but dry leaves and their chamber a sheltered nook in the wood near which Red Rogers the Tinker had pitched his camp.

The knowledge that a grim reckoning awaited him when he presented himself at the tilted cart, which had been his only home as long as he could remember, troubled Jerry not at all.

He was as used to a thrashing as an eel is said to be to skinning, and deemed the excitement of the previous day well worth the whipping his loving father would surely bestow upon him.

Usually Jerry rose with the sun, but then he generally went to bed with the same, but it had been well after midnight ere he had fallen asleep and now the sun was high up in the heavens ere he awoke to the certainty that Red Rogers would have had to cook his own breakfast, and that would surely mean at least a dozen extra cuts with the ruffian's broad leather belt.

"Slash me, Jo, but I am in for it," he remarked lugubriously to his bed-mate as the two boys sat up, rubbing the sleep from their eyes. "You'd better lie low until the old 'un has taken it out of me, then, maybe, I can get you a bit of grub when he isn't looking."

To this Jo, somewhat unwillingly, agreed. Putting as brave a face on the matter as he could, Jerry strolled to the edge of the wood and peeped out, then pursed up his lips in a noiseless whistle of dismay.

Red Rogers was seated on the shafts of the cart, a thick slice of bacon on a plate, which

he balanced on his knees before him, and a handleless jug of steaming coffee by his side.

His dark, lowering face was full of danger signals. His eyes were blood-shot and heavy, whilst now and again, he drew his hand across his forehead in a way that told the boy that the man had drunk, not wisely, but too well, the previous night.

"Better get it over. That bacon does smell good," muttered Jerry as, rising to his feet, he scrambled through the hedge.

"Mornin', old 'un," was his filial greeting, as he paused at a respectful distance from his father.

"Where ha' you been?" demanded Red Rogers, his mouth full of bread and bacon. "Had any breakfast?" he added with unwonted consideration.

Jerry shook his head and eyed the plate wolfishly.

"Lay hold o' this. I aren't got no stomach for vittles this mornin'," returned his parent, holding out the plate.

Eagerly Jerry stepped forward, and thus placed himself within his father's reach, who, dropping the viands on the ground, seized him by the wrist.

"Got ye, ye young varmint," cried the man exultantly. "Sakes, won't I lam ye. I feel just up to it this mornin'. Go to the fair, would ye? Leave yer poor old father to fend for hisself, and he with a head as big as Brentor Round House. I'll learn ye!"

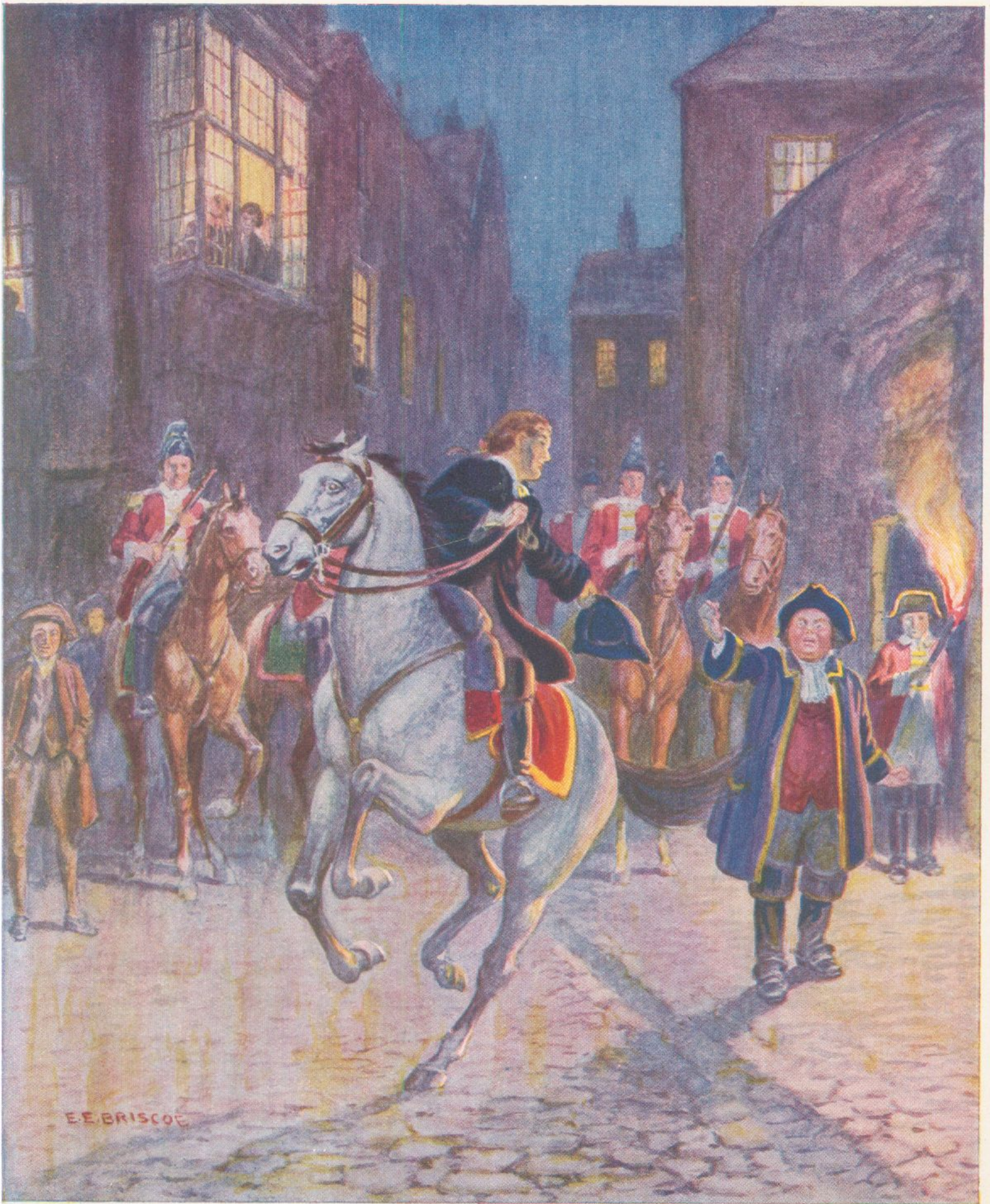
As he spoke Red Rogers tore the lad's ragged garments from the upper part of his body, and Jerry knew he was in for something extra in the way of a thrashing.

Still he wasted no words in what experience had long since taught him would prove useless attempts to soften the pumping machinery which did duty as a heart in Red Rogers' body; nor did he struggle much, for he knew the Tinker to be an expert in the art of holding on to a victim once he had him in his power.

"Come along. Ye won't know yer own back by the time I've done with ye!" roared Red Rogers, dragging the boy to the off-side wheel of the cart and tying him to it by his wrists.

"Now you're going through with it. Be





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WILL O' THE WEST TRICKS THE SHERIFF !  
The Daring Highwayman Makes Good His Escape Under the very Noses of the Troopers !





The highwayman was struggling in the arms of four of the sheriff's men, but, despite the odds against him, Will o' the West put up a great fight for liberty. (See Chapter 3.)

sure to tell me if I don't hit hard enough," grinned Red Rogers, as he made the heavy leather belt whistle above his head.

Jerry gripped the piece of wood, he had thrust into his mouth to prevent him from calling out, between his teeth, and awaited the impending blow.

But it never came. Even as Red Rogers leant back to give additional force to the blow, a loud "Stop!" caused him to wheel swiftly round to find that Timotheus Trent and Simon Cawne, with both of whom he was well acquainted, had ridden up and were watching the white, but hard-set and determined face of the threatened boy.

"Service, gentles," said the Tinker subserviently tugging at a coarse lock of red hair that hung down his forehead.

"Fie, fie, friend Rogers, surely you would

not mar the child's fair flesh with that fearful belt?" expostulated the lawyer.

"Don't know that it's any business of yourn, Master Cawne. A man can surelie do what he likes with his own son," growled the Tinker sullenly.

"But is he your own son, friend Rogers?"

"On course he is. Haven't I got his birth certificate to show them as has the rights to see it?" cried Rogers, after a moment's hesitation.

"Look here, Cawne, it's no good beating about the bush. You take Rogers aside and talk things over with him, whilst I have a chat with our friend here," interposed Trent, dismounting and approaching Jerry, who gazed suspiciously at him. He had been called many names in his time, but "young friend" was certainly not one of them.



Simon Cawne nodded, and dismounting more slowly, took a well-filled leather bag from his pocket and jingled it as he beckoned Red Rogers to follow him a short distance from the camp.

"There, my lad," said Trent, as he cut the boy free. "Put on your shirt and coat, and then we can talk."

Wondering that anyone, least of all a gentleman like Timotheus Trent, who was known far and wide as the late Lord Rackness's factor, should want to talk to him on any conceivable subject, Jerry obeyed.

"Do you live in that cart, Jerry?" asked Trent, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder. Then, without giving him time to reply, he continued: "Do you know, we wouldn't let one of our dogs sleep in a place like that at Rackness Castle."

"Maybe not; but p'raps the dogs aren't none the happier for that," returned Jerry, feeling that it was incumbent on him to defend the only home he had ever known.

"Are those the only clothes you've got?" pursued Trent, ignoring Jerry's remark.

"Of course they are. What's the good of more? One can only wear one suit at a time!" retorted Jerry impatiently.

"Quite true, but I daresay you will change your mind before long," agreed Trent. "Now, who lights the fire, cooks the food, washes up the dishes, and cleans up generally?"

"Ye don't think the old 'un would do it, do ye?" demanded Jerry scornfully.

"No, I don't think he would," smiled Trent. "Now what do you say to living with me in Rackness Castle, having servants to wait on you, the best of food, the warmest of clothes, and as much money, in reason, as you can spend?"

"What do I say? Why, that either you ought to be in a madhouse for talking such balderdash, or I for listening to you," cried Jerry angrily.

"But it's not balderdash, Jerry. I mean it," cried Trent eagerly.

The boy looked incredulously at him.

"Why?" he demanded.

Timotheus Trent hesitated, then led Jerry towards the wood. Why, it is difficult to say, as there was no one nearer than Cawne and

Red Rogers, who were well out of earshot, except the broken-winded, broken-kneed old horse, and he could have been depended upon to have kept the secret.

"You have heard of Lord Rackness, Jerry?" asked Trent.

"The bloke that died a few months back?" asked the boy.

Trent nodded.

"You may have heard, too, that his only son was lost when he was a mere babe of three," he continued. "Some think he was swallowed up in a bog, others that he fell into the river and was carried out to sea. Others, including his late lordship, held that he had been stolen by gipsies. Be that as it may, nothing was ever heard of him again, and they say that Lady Rackness died of a broken heart."

Jerry was conscious of an unwonted lump in his throat, and his voice was suspiciously husky as he asked:

"What's all that to do with me?"

"I am coming to that directly," declared the factor impatiently. "Lord Rackness always believed that his son was alive, and when he died, left a will to the effect that unless the boy was found within a year and a day of his death, Rackness Castle, and all his property, save for a few unimportant legacies, is to go to various hospitals and charitable institutions throughout the western counties. If, however, the boy is found, I am appointed his guardian until he comes of age, when in the old lord's own words, 'his young lordship will doubtless deal generously with him according to his deserts.'"

Jerry looked up quickly.

"I see what you're driving at. You want me to help you look for him," he cried.

Timotheus Trent smiled.

"There is no need, my lad; you are the boy!" he declared.

Jerry regarded the speaker with wide-staring, incredulous eyes.

"Me?" he ejaculated.

"Yes, you," returned Trent. "At any rate, for the next five years; whether you are Lord Rackness or not after that depends entirely upon how much you offer Lawyer Cawne and myself to keep our mouths shut."



The last sentence came somewhat unwillingly from the factor's lips. He had wanted to keep the truth from the boy until the last, but Cawne had overruled him, pointing out that they would have a much greater hold on the boy if he was as deeply involved in the plot as they were.

Neither Trent nor the villainous old lawyer deemed it possible that Jerry would refuse their offer; consequently the former was taken aback when Jerry turned angrily upon him, crying:

"So it's a fake, is it? Then you may e'en get somebody else to do your dirty work! The old 'un has never been able to make me steal, beat me as he might, and I'm not going on the cross to do honest folks out of their rights for the likes of you!"

Trent turned white with rage.

"Don't be a fool, boy! I'll wager there isn't another lad living that would not jump at the chance," he cried.

"That is as may be, but——" began Jerry, when he was interrupted by a loud shout of "Clinch it, Jerry! Clinch it! Better be a lord for five years than a tinker all your life!" and Jo, almost beside himself with excitement, sprang out of the wood and seized his chum by the arm.

Jerry shook his head obstinately, and it was not until Timotheus Trent had assured him that Lord Rackness had neither kith nor kin to be defrauded out of their inheritance, that he gave a reluctant consent, just as Lawyer Cawne and Red Rogers joined them.

The tinker was in the very best of spirits. Jerry had never seen him so good-humoured before.

He seemed literally bubbling over with merriment.

"To the gallows wi' me if this aren't the rummiest thing I ever did see. To think that I've been a nussin' a real live lord in my bosom all these years, and never knowed it!" he roared, his hands thrust deep into his breeches' pockets, from which came a musical jangle of gold. "I've been a good father to ye, Jerry, no one can say I haven't. Not a day has passed since you were old enough to toddle, that I haven't lammed you for the good of your

soul. I've made a man of ye, and a lord as well! Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

"Cease your babbling, fellow, and get ye gone!" cried Trent, impatiently. "You know what you've got to do?"

"Ay, ay, master. I've to pocket a pound a week, ax no questions, don't come within twenty mile o' Rackness Castle, and keep my mouth shut," grinned the tinker.

"And if you don't keep the last two conditions, friend Rogers, you may e'en whistle for the first," interposed Simon Cawne, a world of threat underlying the smooth, oily tones in which he spoke. "Hullo, who have we here?" he added, in alarm, as his eyes fell on Jo, who was talking earnestly with Jerry.

"Get thee gone, ye young varmint, or I'll tear ye limb from limb!" cried Red Rogers, moving threateningly on Jo, who would have made off had Jerry not detained him.

"Jo is one of the few friends I have in the world, and where I go he goes. If he stays behind, so will I; and ye may find another Lord Rackness!" declared Jerry, ignoring the tinker, and turning to Timotheus Trent.

"Impossible!" cried Trent.

But though he sought to show a score of reasons why Jo could not be received at Rackness Castle, and Red Rogers, fearing to lose the promised pound a week, used threats, entreaties, and abusive language, in about equal parts, Jerry refused to budge unless Jo went with him.

The only one who did not speak was Simon Cawne, and he, with a cunning grin, signed to the tinker to be quiet, and led the factor a little distance away.

"This comes of your talking secrets near a wood," he snarled as soon as they were alone. "I suppose the red-headed little rat overheard all you said to this tinker's boy?"

"How should I know what he overheard?" growled Trent sulkily.

"Anyhow, he has heard too much to be let go. We must take him to the castle, and get rid of him as quickly as possible. Trust bold Captain Blackbane to take him off our hands," suggested the lawyer.

Trent nodded an assent, and the pair of villains returned to where Jerry and Jo were



impatiently awaiting the result of the discussion.

"All right, my lad, have it your own way. Rackness Castle is but a gloomy place for a boy, and ye may be all the happier for having a companion of your own age with ye," said the factor indulgently.

Jerry shot a grateful look at Timotheus Trent, whilst Jo showed his delight by turning a succession of cart-wheels with bewildering rapidity.

"If your lordship will mount behind me, Lawyer Cawne will give your friend a lift, for we have a long ride before us," said Trent, flinging himself into the saddle.

Although not yet able to realise that what had just taken place that morning was not all part of a mad dream from which he would awaken to find himself still Jerry of the Pots, the boy thrilled as he heard himself addressed by the title for the first time, and grasping Trent's extended hand, swung himself on the crupper of that worthy's horse, not quite certain whether he stood on his head or his heels.

Jo grinned, but Red Rogers seated himself on the shafts of his tilted cart, and laughed until the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"What's the witless fool laughing at?" cried Trent angrily. "See that ye are well away from Brentor within the hour, or ye stand in danger of losing the weekly dole Lawyer Cawne has promised ye!"

Red Rogers nodded, apparently too overcome with laughter to speak; and wheeling round their horses the worthy couple, the boys clinging tightly to their waists, set off at a brisk trot.

When the horses were but dots in the distance, Red Rogers rose to his feet and, shading his eyes with his hands, muttered:

"Fooled 'em both! If yonder two knew what I know, they'd be as wise as I am. Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

### An Established Claim!

"PINCH me, Jo. Pinch me hard! Ouch! I didn't tell ye to take a piece out of my leg!" cried Jerry, and, turning on his friend, he chased him

round the huge, luxuriously furnished bedroom in Rackness Castle into which the two boys had been escorted by bowing servants a minute before.

"Fanits, I'll never do as you ask me again," cried Jo dodging behind a tall-backed, old armchair near the carved oak fireplace.

"At any rate, I know now that I'm not dreaming!" declared Jerry laughing.

Jo grinned, then fidgeted uneasily.

Truth to tell, the short jacket and silk breeches of sombre brown cloth, stockings of the same hue, and shoes with plated buckles, cramped the limbs of one accustomed to the loose freedom of rags held together by pieces of string.

Nor were Jerry's gaily embroidered coat, sky-blue silk waistcoat, and stockings, more comfortable.

Besides, the fit was atrocious, for at four cross roads, two miles from the Tinker's camp, they had found a huge old-fashioned coach awaiting them, in which were two suits of different sizes Trent had brought for his new ward, the plainer of which had been given to Jo.

But a small army of tailors was to be sent from Exeter, who would fit out the two boys as became their new station in life.

Whilst the boys were changing, Lawyer Cawne had ridden on ahead to prepare for Jerry's reception at the Castle, with the result that the magnificent oak drive was lined with tenantry, whilst the whole staff of servants had been paraded beneath the fine marble portico before the castle, to welcome the new Lord Rackness.

As the coach rolled up the drive it was greeted by hearty cheers from the farmers, farm labourers, and as many of their wives and families as could be got together at such short notice.

As the heavy vehicle came to a standstill at the foot of a flight of marble steps the carriage door was opened by a footman, in gorgeous livery, who bent almost double in a low bow, when Jerry alighted leaning on Timotheus Trent's arm.

"Your future master, my good people. I need scarcely ask you to extend to him the same loyalty and willing service you gave the



late lord," said Trent, introducing Jerry to the servants, who responded with cheers, in which the shrill voices of the women mingled with the deeper bass of the men.

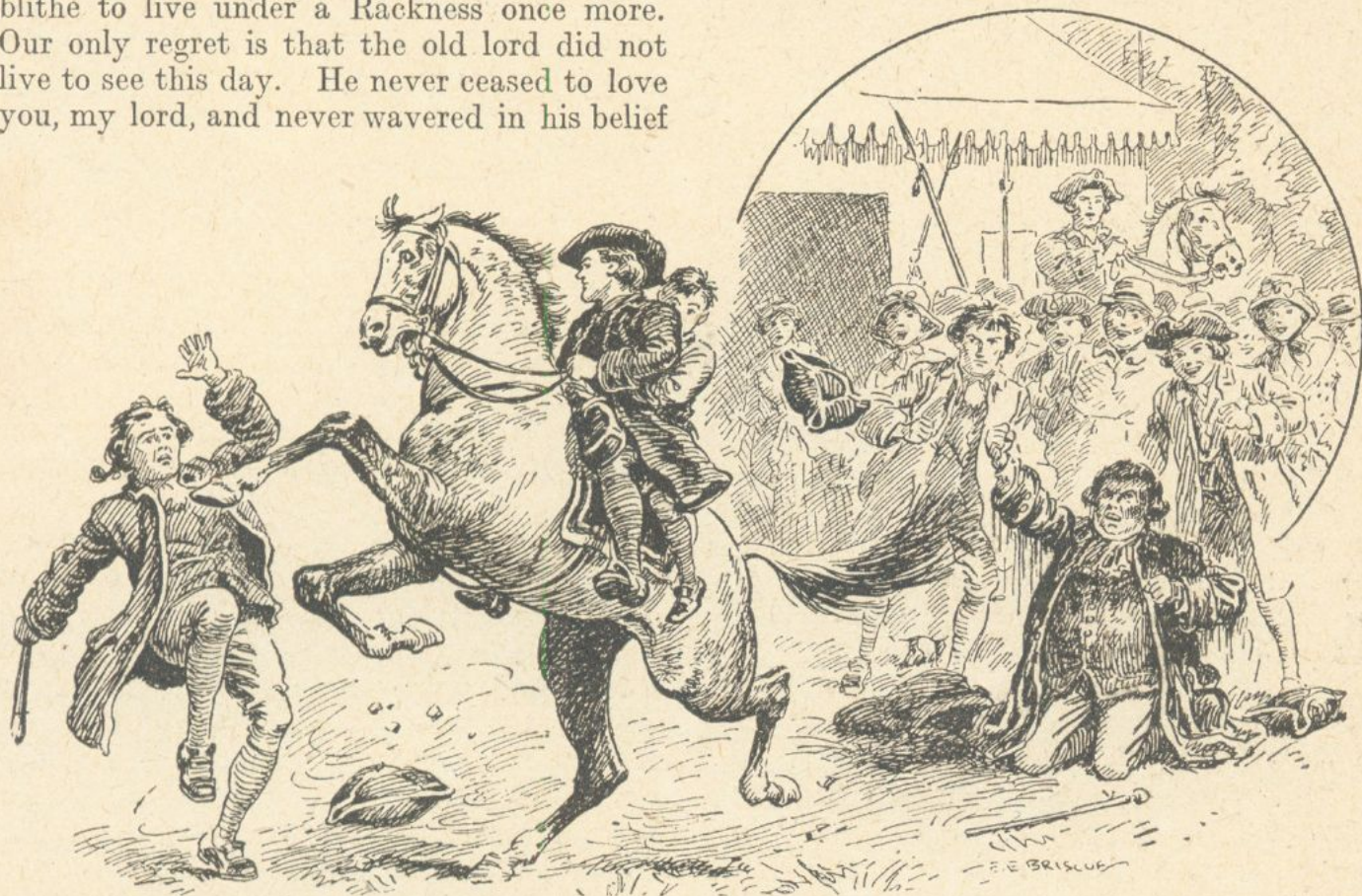
Then a stout, dignified, old gentleman—who Jerry thought must be at least an archbishop, but whom Trent whispered was Jasper Mond, the butler—stepped out from the centre of the crowd of servants.

"Welcome to the castle, my lord. There is not a man or a woman amongst us but is blithe to live under a Rackness once more. Our only regret is that the old lord did not live to see this day. He never ceased to love you, my lord, and never wavered in his belief

the boys during the drive to the castle, but it answered its purpose, and the two boys passed into the big entrance-hall, where Cawne met them with bows and smiles of welcome as he led them into the dining-room, where a sumptuous banquet awaited them.

Jerry went through that repast like one in a dream. Even Jo was so awed by the magnificence around him that, though fearfully hungry, he scarcely ate a dozen mouthfuls.

The signs of wealth on every side—the silver



Jerry and Jo hung on as the intelligent horse reared on its hind legs and pawed at the man who attempted to seize it. "After them, you slow-witted scullions!" roared the sheriff. "Fifty guineas if you bring them back!" (See Chapter 3.)

that the son he had lost would return. It's glad he would have been to have seen what an out-and-out Rackness you are," he said earnestly.

"Thank ye kindly, Master Mond. Now call up the clodhoppers and fill 'em to the bung wi' old October ale," returned Jerry, jerking his thumb over his shoulder towards the crowd, who had followed close behind the chaise.

This was not exactly the speech which Trent had been at no little pains to instil into

on the huge, polished oak sideboard; the snow-white cloths and napkins; the dishes laden with huge joints, poultry and game; the perfectly trained footmen, and the respect with which both Trent and Cawne treated him—at least when the servants were in the room—seemed so unreal to Jerry that he expected every minute to wake up and find himself sleeping in his rags beneath the gipsy tinker's cart.

"Perchance your lordship is weary, after your long journey, and would like to retire to



your chamber for a short while," suggested Trent, when the last course had been cleared away. "Show his lordship and Master Joseph Wattle up to their rooms, Jenkins," he added, without giving the boy an opportunity to reply.

Accustomed to obey—unless it suited his humour to do otherwise—Jerry followed the man up a broad flight of stairs and along several corridors, hung with priceless tapestry, like one walking in his sleep until at length the man threw open a door and ushered him into the bedroom, where we found him at the beginning of this chapter.

For some time after Jo had so effectually assured his friend that he was not dreaming, the boys were engaged examining their unaccustomed surroundings, peering into chests of drawers, opening huge oak chests, which they found full of rich clothes, exploring cupboards, any one of which would have held Red Rogers cart, horse and all, and tracing out the faded pictures in the ancient tapestry which adorned the walls.

Then they went to the open casement and looked out upon as fair a scene as is to be found in all wide Britain.

Before them was a park, studded with magnificent oaks, over which herds of half-tame deer roamed at will, and beyond a vista of thatched cottages, long, well-built farm-houses, and well-cultivated fields.

A thrill of pride swept through Jerry's veins. "Mine, all mine!" he ejaculated, half to himself, half to his chum. "To think of it! This morning I awoke a tinker's boy; this afternoon I am a lord!"

A scornful laugh and an oily chuckle caused him to turn round, to find that Timotheus Trent, and Simon Cawne, had entered the room.

"It will be well if you bear that ever in mind, Jerry o' the Pots, or you may go to sleep one night lord of Rackness Castle and its broad acres, and awaken to find yourself the tinker's boy once more," sneered Trent.

"Or, maybe, not even that. I have known a starving woman hung for stealing a loaf of bread. What would they do to one who steals a noble castle and the rents accruing thereunto?" interposed Cawne, regarding the astonished boys with a threatening grin.

"Might ha' known there was a catch in it somewhere," ejaculated Jo.

"Silence, gutter snipe, or I'll have the lackeys whip you out of the castle!" fumed Cawne.

Jerry turned fiercely upon the angry man.

"You forget the lackeys you speak of so glibly are in my employ, Master Cawne. Have a care, lest I tell them to show you the door," he said in tones of cold displeasure and with a dignity that caused the two villains to gasp.

Trent burst out laughing, but there was more uneasiness than merriment in his mirth.

"Ho, ho, Jerry o' the Pots! Hast heard the fable of the crow that pretended to be a peacock? He was only a measly crow when they robbed him of his gay tail!" he cried. "Hallo, what maggot's got ye now?" he added in alarm, for Jerry had thrown off his gold-laced coat and embroidered waistcoat.

"I'd rather be a true crow than a false peacock," returned Jerry.

"Don't be a fool, boy. We are too deep in this matter to draw back now!" cried Trent in dismay.

"What's that to me?" retorted Jerry. "Find some other boy to make mock of. I prefer to be a tinker's brat."

As he spoke he continued his disrobing, whilst Jo reluctantly followed his example.

In vain Trent and Cawne raved, swore, threatened, and entreated in turns.

They had made a public acknowledgment of Jerry as the long lost Lord Rackness, and, though they could, of course, declare that they had made a mistake, it would be impossible to bring forward another claimant before the year and a day mentioned in the late lord's will had expired.

"What is it you want, hang you?" cried Trent at last.

"If I am to be a lord I'll be treated as such, and old parchment face must keep his place," replied Jerry, forgetting his new-found dignity.

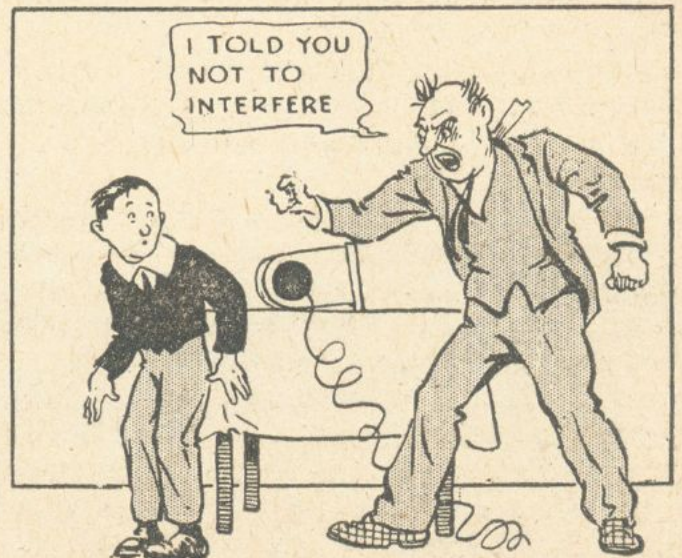
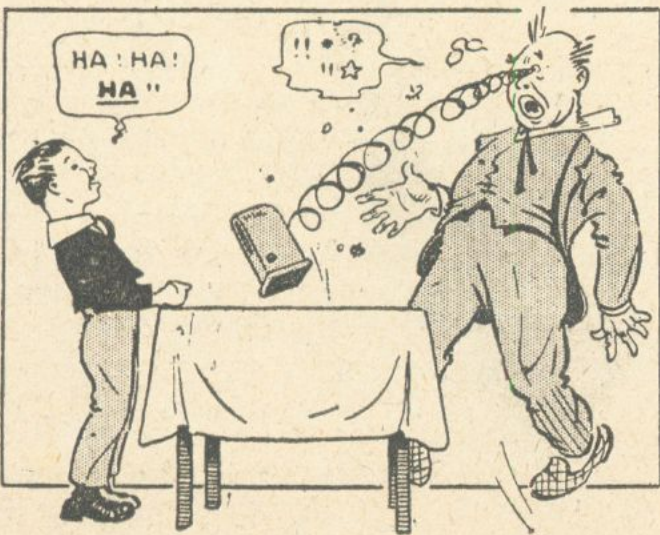
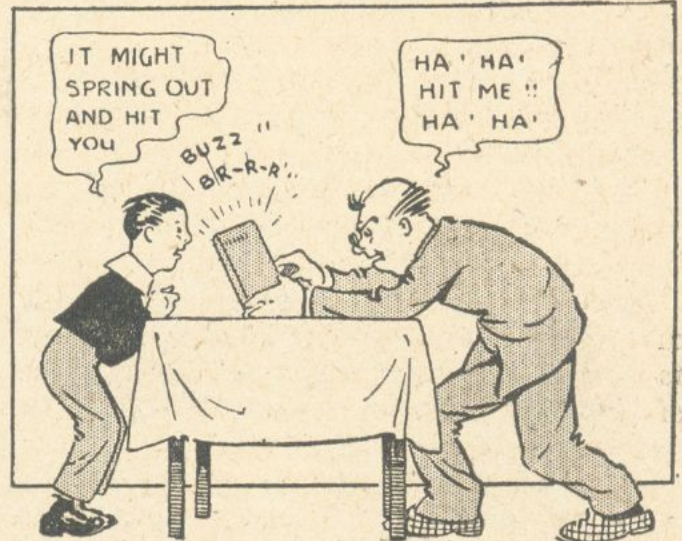
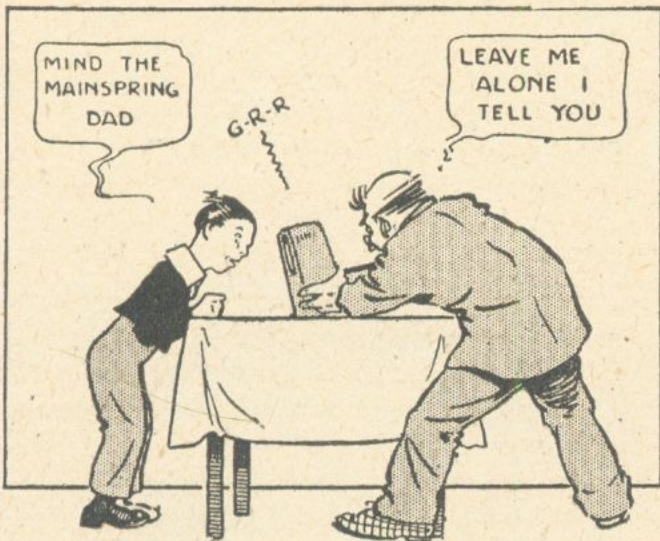
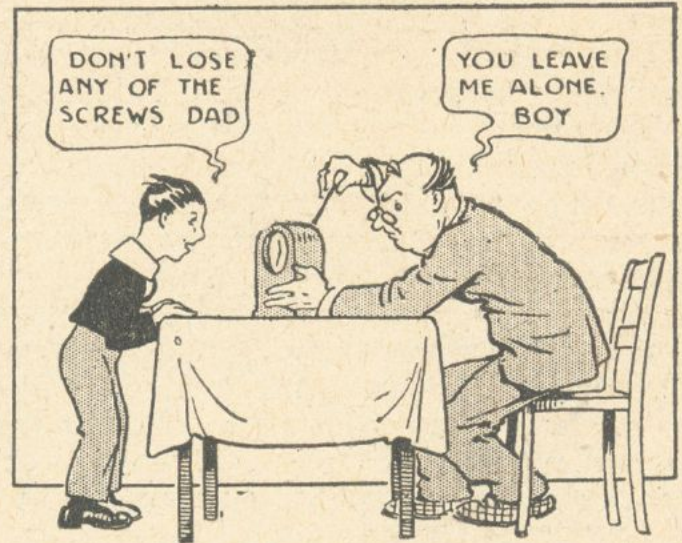
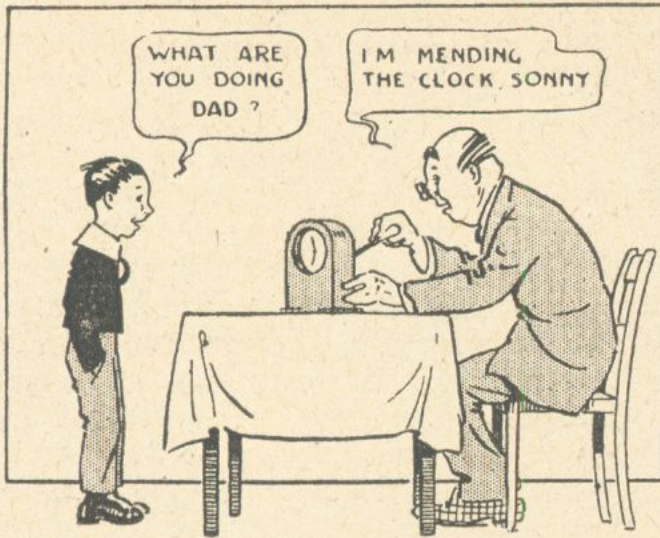
Lawyer Cawne's sallow face turned yellow with suppressed rage as he drew the factor aside, and a whispered consultation ensued.

Presently Trent turned to Jerry with a forced smile.

"Come, come, boy, we depend too much



# LEAVE IT TO FATHER!



LEO BERNARD



on each other to be at loggerheads. I only feared lest you should get puffed up with pride owing to your rise in life and forget to whom you owe it," he said genially, holding out his hand.

Jerry hesitated, then, fearing lest he should already have been ungrateful to one who, whatever his motives, was doing so much for him, he grasped the extended hand and shook it warmly.

"Fair dues atween mates, an' you'll have no cause to complain of me or Jo," he said, lapsing into the mode of speech to which he had been accustomed.

A knock came at the door.

At a sign from Trent, Jerry hastily resumed his coat and waistcoat.

"Come in!" cried the factor, as Jerry arranged his ruffle before a mirror.

A footman entered.

"Sir Richard Averley's compliments, and, as the late lord's oldest friend, he would be the first to welcome his lordship to his ancestral home," he announced.

Trent and Cawne exchanged uneasy glances.

Sir Richard Averley was the most important man in the county, and if he accepted Jerry as the real son of Lord Rackness no one else would dare dispute his decision.

But they need not have been uneasy, for no sooner did Jerry—Jo had been discreetly left upstairs—enter the room than the stately, grey-haired old baronet advanced towards him with outstretched hands, crying:

"A Rackness! A true Rackness! Welcome to your own at last, my lad! Would that my old friend had seen this day!"

Jerry flushed guiltily, and attributing the boy's confusion to natural modesty, the baronet turned to Trent and asked him where, and how, he had found the boy.

Jerry listened to the cleverly interwoven mass of truth and lies with which Trent answered the question, in speechless amazement, for it was all so plausible that he would have found it difficult to have contradicted the scheming factor had he wished to have done so.

"Were there no papers or other means of identification on the child when this man Rogers found him half-dead by the side of the road?" asked Sir Richard.

"You forget, Sir Richard, that he was clad in filthy rags, for the gipsies—or whoever first stole him—had stripped him of his fine clothes. Besides, was it likely that a child of four would be entrusted with papers?" explained Trent.

"True, true!" agreed the old man. "It is fortunate for you, young sir, that you carry your birth certificate in your face, or you might have been a tinker's boy all your life, and Rackness Castle would have been sold to any rich London tradesman with money enough to buy it."

"It is, indeed, sir, and I will try to live up to my new station," said Jerry in somewhat shaky tones.

His heart had gone out to the kindly old man, and, for the first time, shame of the deception of which he was guilty crept into his heart.

"Well spoken, lad!" cried the old baronet. "You and I will be great friends, I can see. I go to London to-morrow, but on my return you must come to Averley Court and be introduced to her ladyship. She will love you for your mother's sake, for they were great friends. Now, Trent, what about making his young lordship secure in his saddle. There is none to dispute the title, so it should be an easy matter. Leave it to me, and I will see it through for you," he added, turning to the factor.

Timotheus Trent breathed a sigh of relief.

He had feared the legal formalities necessary to establish Jerry as Lord Rackness would expose the truth, but if the claim was made by so influential a man as Sir Richard Averley there would be few inquiries made.

Nor was he disappointed, for about a fortnight later a courier from London arrived at Rackness Castle, bearing Royal Letters Patent confirming a decision of the High Courts which established Jerry as Lord Rackness of Rackness Castle.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

### How Jerry found the Secret Staircase

JERRY soon found that being a lord was not all roses.

It is true he wore the richest clothes, slept on the softest down, ate of the very best



had numberless servants to wait on him, horses and dogs—in fact, everything he would wish for, but he missed the wild, free, open-air life of the king's highway; the merry, shiftless folk who tramped the roads; and the wild, dare-devil pranks with which Jo, Mai and himself used to enliven the countryside whenever they chanced to meet.

Not that he and Jo missed many of the opportunities of fun that came their way, and though they soon became prime favourites with the servants inside and the farmers and labourers outside the castle, their various pranks—too numerous to mention in this short history—went far to lighten the humdrum existence that had obtained in the castle and its precincts ere their arrival.

Jerry and Jo occupied adjoining bedrooms connected by a convenient door, which allowed them to spend many hours together, when Jonathan Strowse, their puritanical tutor, was fast asleep.

One night it happened that Jo was more restless than usual, whilst Jerry was sleeping as sound as a top.

Consequently he did not welcome the appearance of his chum by his bedside an hour or so past midnight, although Jo had thought out a merry jape which must assuredly end in the utter discomfiture of the tutor.

“Oh, go and boil your pate!” cried Jerry, turning over in his bed.

“’Twould be as soft as yours an’ I did,” retorted Jo. “Now, listen, Jerry—when Master Strowse sits him down the cane will spring back, and hit him——”

“Like that, and that, and that!” roared the infuriated Jerry, springing up in bed and belabouring Jo with his pillow until that worthy retreated, hastily, into his own room.

But it was only to arm himself. The next moment he had returned, and Jerry springing out of bed, a right royal pillow-fight was soon being waged with unexampled fury. Presently Jerry, who had driven his chum up against the wainscoting at one end of the room, aimed a mighty blow at his head with his pillow.

Jo ducked, Jerry lost his balance, and his hand struck a knot in the oak panelling with a force that caused him to drop his weapon, the better to suck his bruised knuckles.

“Truth, Jo, I’d as lief have——” he began, then ceased speaking to gaze in amazement at the wall, for his fist had struck a secret spring, and the wainscoting had slid back, revealing the entrance to a secret passage leading he knew not where.

With a suppressed whoop of joy Jerry took a wax taper from the mantelpiece and, lighting it at the rush candle which did duty as a night-light, proceeded to examine the secret passage.

Immediately before them was a narrow flight of stairs down which they crept, every nerve a-tingle with excitement.

The staircase ended in a large crypt, to the walls and pillars of which hung rusty iron rings, chains and shackles, showing that in the “good old days” it had been used as a prison, or, perhaps, a torture-chamber, by the former lords of Rackness Castle.

At the further end of the crypt was a second flight of stairs, which they ascended for perhaps a dozen steps until they found themselves in a low tunnel. It was not a pleasant place, for the stone sides and roof were dotted with fungi of a hundred different shapes and hues, whilst the pavement struck cold and damp to their naked feet.

But the boys paid little heed either to the cold or to the numerous toads and lizards with which the place was infested, and which would have sent boys less hardily brought up, scampering back to their beds.

Pressing on they at length came to an iron-studded door.

It was locked and barred, but they experienced little difficulty in wrenching the bolts from the rotten wood.

Thrusting open the door, and moving a screen of ivy which had hid it from view, they found themselves at the foot of a ruined Norman tower some two hundred yards from the castle.

As the tower was surrounded by brambles, they retraced their steps, then closed the sliding panel, and sat up for the greater part of the night discussing how best to make use of their discovery, and forming plans for the future.

The secret staircase enabled them to enjoy their old, free life once more. Three or four

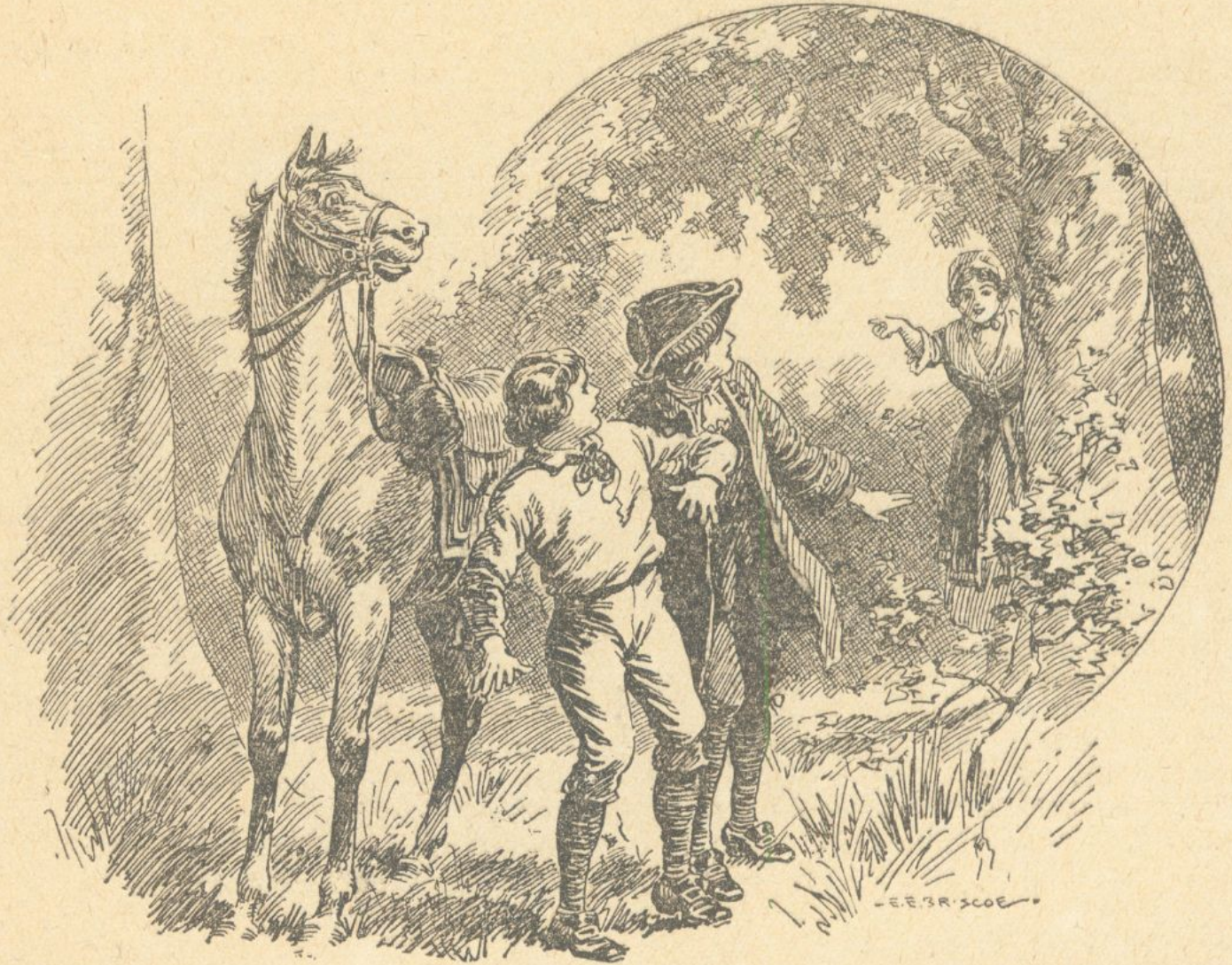


nights a week they would slip out of the castle, when everyone was fast asleep, and, afoot or mounted bareback on ponies taken from the adjoining pastures, would scour the country, revelling in their freedom, and occasionally meeting Mai, the Gipsy, Blind Tom, the Fiddler, and other old friends.

To Blind Tom Jerry unbosomed himself

I will see that ye come to no harm," he replied.

Of the highwayman, Jerry saw but little, but heard much, for his wild pranks, his daring feats, and his unstinted generosity to the poor was the constant theme of the Free-men of the Road with whom the boys foregathered during their midnight trips, when Trent and Simon Cawne believed them sleeping peacefully in their beds in Rackness Castle.



Again an awful groan caused the hair to rise on their heads, and Jerry and Jo had already turned to flee when Silver Sprite whinnied. The next moment Mai, the gipsy, emerged from the wood. (See Chapter 4.)

of his doubts as to whether he ought to remain at the castle as the impostor he felt himself to be.

"I feel I am living a lie, Tom," he said. "Besides, at any moment I may be flung upon the highway again."

But Blind Tom only laughed.

"Stay where ye are, lad. Ye have as much right there as another, and Will o' the West and

## THE NINTH CHAPTER

How the Smugglers came to Rackness Castle.

AND so three months slipped by. With Trent and Cawne Jerry found it impossible to make friends, especially as the lawyer took no pains to hide his hatred of Jo.

Truth to tell, Simon Cawne suffered much



at Jo's hands, for the boy was always playing tricks on him, and making him ridiculous in the eyes of the servants until, at last, he determined to put his original plan into execution, and get rid of one who might easily prove an obstacle to their plans when Trent's guardianship came to an end, and the property ripe for division.

One night Jerry and Jo were making their way over the moors to a secluded combe in which they had left their ponies, after a visit to Mai's camp, when the former, who was leading, sank behind a clump of furze, signing to Jo to do the same.

His quick ear had detected the shuffling of many feet, and he feared lest the newcomers should prove to be one of the bands of outlawed men that infested the West Country.

Presently a man with a cask on his shoulder came into view. He was followed by another, and yet another, until Jerry counted no less than twenty men, clad in the red caps, reefer coats, short, striped skirts and tall boots of seafaring men, and it needed not the cutlass which each ruffian carried at his side, or the brace of pistols thrust into his broad leather belt, to warn the boys that they were smugglers.

With a warning squeeze on his companion's arm Jerry sank lower amongst the furze, for well he knew that they would get but a short shrift if the smugglers discovered them.

Despite their danger it was with difficulty that Jerry repressed an ejaculation of surprise when he saw the long, lank form of Simon Cawne bringing up the rear of the procession.

By his side strode a huge ruffian, as fat as the lawyer was thin, whose belt bristled with knives and pistols. He had a red, weather-beaten face, a broad nose, and an enormous mouth, set with four huge yellow teeth, like the fangs of a famished wolf.

Nor was his appearance improved by an enormous black patch worn where his left eye had been at some remote date.

It was Captain Blackbane, smuggler, wrecker—ay, and pirate, if the opportunity served.

In fact, so sinister a reputation did the smuggler chief enjoy, that Jerry would have made off as soon as it was safe to move but that some instinct warned him that Lawyer

Cawne's presence boded no good to Jo or to himself.

Waiting until the smugglers had been swallowed up in the darkness, Jerry and Jo followed as swiftly as caution would allow.

But it was not easy, even for Jerry and Jo, bred on the moors as they were, to keep to a straight line in the dark, and when, ten minutes later, they stopped on the summit of a small hill and looked around them, no sign of the smugglers could be seen.

"Bust the luck, they've given us the slip!" ejaculated Jo in disgust.

"Seems like it," admitted Jerry. "Let's try the Woodman's Rest. I've heard Red Rogers say Bowline Bill, the landlord, is hand and glove with the smugglers, and that his liquor is all the better for never having paid a penny for duty."

Jo agreeing, the two boys raced down the hill and across the moor. Presently they struck a winding road, along which they ran, until at length they came in sight of a tumble-down, thatched shanty, before which swung a creaking sign.

On the road before the inn stood a wagon, in which the smugglers had hidden the casks beneath a load of peat ready to be carted inland in the morning.

On horseback near the wagon was Lawyer Cawne, who was in the act of shaking hands with Captain Blackbane.

"Do what ye like with the brat, captain," Cawne was saying. "It's all the same to me whether you chuck him overboard or sell him to the Plantations, so long as I never again set eyes on his red head."

"Then the Plantations it shall be. A boy such as you describe should fetch fifty pounds in the American colonies," returned the smuggler.

And with a callous laugh Cawne galloped off.

Realising that there was nothing more to be learned there, whilst some unlucky chance might betray their presence to the smugglers, the boys stole away, and, regaining the combe in which they had left their ponies, rode thoughtfully back to Rackness Castle.

"Forewarned is forearmed, Jo. It shall go hard with us if the villains take one without the other, and I warrant they will not be



over eager to meddle with Lord Rackness of Rackness Castle," said Jerry as they emerged from the secret staircase shortly after midnight.

But when, after sunrise the following morning, for tired out after his night's expedition, Jerry slept later than usual, he burst into Jo's room crying:

"Now, sluggard, are going to sleep all day?" he was alarmed to find the bed empty and Jo nowhere to be seen.

Thinking that his chum had already risen and gone for a walk before breakfast, he turned to the door, to find it locked and bolted on the inside, a precaution they had both adopted since the discovery of the secret passage, lest anyone should enter during their absence.

Then for the first time he noticed that the window was open.

Hastening to it he looked out, and his worst fears were realised when he found the ivy beneath the stone sill torn and bent, as though a heavy weight had been lowered from the window.

Dumbfounded and dismayed, the boy stood gazing round him, uncertain how to act.

Captain Blackbane had struck at once, and had struck home, and merry, light-hearted Jo was already on his way to the living death of an American plantation.

Jerry had very vague ideas about America. All he knew was that it was somewhere beyond the sea, where the off-scourings of the prisons, rebels taken in arms against the king's majesty, and, now and again, innocent people whom their relatives wanted out of the way, were sent to work as slaves on the plantations.

And it was to such a fate Jo was doomed!

"Not if I can help it!" muttered Jerry, shaking off the depression which had for the moment robbed him of strength to move or think.

Hastening back to his room, he drew on breeches, stockings, and shoes, then hastened downstairs.

A footman on duty in the hall stared in amazement at the half-clad figure that sped down the carved oak staircase.

"Where is Mr. Trent?" it demanded.

"In the library with Lawyer Cawne and your lordship's tutor," replied the bowing servitor.

Throwing open the library door, Jerry burst into the room.

"What have you done with Jo?" he demanded.

Cawne and Trent exchanged uneasy glances, whilst Master Strowse held up his hands in pious horror.

"Fie, fie, your lordship! Is that the way to——" he began.

"Silence! And leave the room! My business is with yonder oily scoundrel!" interrupted Jerry, pointing to the lawyer, whose face turned first white then flamed with suppressed fury.

The tutor looked questioningly at Trent, for, as Jerry's guardian, the factor was master in that house.

"Close and lock the door," commanded the factor, answering the unspoken question.

"Now, boy, what is the meaning of this unseemly behaviour?" he added, turning on Jerry with a threatening frown.

"Jo's gone, and——" began Jerry, when Trent interrupted him with a brutal laugh.

"Well, an' I'm not surprised. He will find himself more at home with his tramping friends than he has ever been in Rackness Castle," he replied. "Beshrew me, but I'll e'en tell Mond to see what silver is missing from his pantry."

Jerry would have flown at Trent's throat in his rage, but realising that he could not fight all three, he turned on Lawyer Cawne, saying:

"You know that Jo has not left the castle of his own free will, for I heard you agree with Captain Blackbane to kidnap him!"

Simon Cawne turned livid.

"You lie, you young whelp. I have not seen Captain Blackbane since——" he began.

"Last night at the Woodman's Rest," interrupted Jerry. "No need to ask me how I got my information, suffice it that I know it is so."

"Methinks you know too much," snarled Cawne furiously.

"Ay, too much for you two conspirators, and what I know the whole world shall know."



# Bunter Plays Cricket!



By DICK PENFOLD

BUNTER waddles to the wicket,  
Everyone remarks :  
" Billy Bunter's playing cricket,  
Now you'll see some sparks ! "

Bunter fancies he's a Trumper.  
He exclaims with glee :  
" When the ball comes, I shall clump her  
Over yonder tree. "

Billy smites with vim and vigour,  
Down the wickets go !  
Billy cuts a sorry figure  
(Note his look of woe).

Umpire points to the pavilion,  
Billy starts to sob :  
" Meant to make a merry million,  
But I've got a ' blob ' ! "

Bunter tries his hand at bowling,  
Takes a mighty run ;  
Flannelled fieldsmen, lurching, rolling  
Hold their sides with fun !

Does the leather strike the wicket ?  
Nay—the umpire's nose !  
Victim mutters, " Call this cricket ?  
Hellup ! " Down he goes !

Bunter tries to catch a " skier,"  
Waits with open hands ;  
Higher soars the sphere and higher,  
Billy boldly stands.

" Catch it, Billy ! " chuckled Wharton,  
" Hold it ! " Smithy said.  
Ball descends with loud report on  
Billy Bunter's head !



Billy Bunter's in the sanny,  
Shed a silent tear ;

Hurree Singh (in Hindustani)  
Gives him words of cheer !



Unless Jo is brought back unharmed before nightfall, I will go to the nearest magistrate and tell him that I am——”

“Silence!” roared Trent, springing forward.

Seizing the boy by the throat he thrust him backwards on to a table.

Jonathan Strowse was his tool, but not his accomplice, and he had no wish to introduce a third party into his scheme who would doubtless demand a share of the Rackness estate which Simon Cawne and himself hoped to divide between them when Jerry came of age.

“Mr. Trent, sir, for Heaven’s sake mind what you are about!” ejaculated Strowse, hastening from the door.

But Cawne thrust him back, and, leaning over the struggling boy, drew a small bag made of skin from his pocket and pressed it against Jerry’s mouth and nose.

Immediately Jerry’s struggles grew fainter, until at last they ceased altogether, and he lay so still and motionless that Trent staggered back crying:

“Good heavens, I have killed him!”

Cawne smiled as though in keen enjoyment of the other’s evident terror.

“He is in a trance, caused by the wonder-working preparation Old Elspha, the witch of the Moors, sold me. ’Twas well I had it by me, or nothing but death would have silenced his tongue. It was the contents of this same little bag that sent his fellow scallywag to sleep and enabled me to lower him from the window without arousing his lordship yonder,” he explained in a low whisper.

Trent breathed a deep sigh of relief.

“But when he awakens?” he asked in the same guarded tones.

“He must be confined to his chamber until we have persuaded him that it is to his interest to hold his tongue,” replied Cawne significantly.

A few minutes later the footman in the hall was startled into activity by the tutor rushing from the library, crying:

“Water! Quick! His lordship has fainted!”

Barely had the footman hastened off on his errand, ere Trent, carrying Jerry’s unconscious form, hastened across the hall and up

the staircase to the boy’s room, closely followed by Cawne, whilst Strowse remained behind to take the unwanted water from the menial and hasten upstairs with it.

When, some five minutes later, the three men descended the stairs, they found the hall filled with an anxious group of servants.

“It’s naught, my good people. His lordship somewhat outgrows his strength. A day in bed will do him good,” explained Trent, and, greatly relieved to find that the boy they had all grown to love was in no danger, the servants dispersed about their various duties.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER

### How Jerry met Will o’ the West.

THE last rays of the setting sun were streaming through his bedroom window when Jerry slowly regained consciousness.

His head ached, his throat felt on fire, and his limbs ached strangely.

For some minutes he lay wondering where he was. Then the scene in the library came back to his memory, followed by the racking recollection that Jo, his one and only boy friend, had been kidnapped.

With a moan of despair he sprang up in bed. The next moment he had thrown himself back on the pillow, as a key grated in the lock, and, through almost closed eyelids, he saw Timotheus Trent and Simon Cawne enter the room.

Jerry’s first impulse was to spring up and dart from the room ere the scoundrels who had robbed him of his chum found out that he was awake.

But recent experience had taught him that his slender frame was no match for the two scoundrels, and he determined to recourse to cunning where strength had failed.

Lying perfectly still, he heard the invaders of his room approach to the side of the bed; then heard Trent say, in quavering tones that told he was far from at ease:

“He still sleeps. What if the witch’s simples prove too powerful, and he never awakens?”

“Then a certain Timotheus Trent will be swinging in chains on Exeter gallows ere the month is out,” laughed Cawne mockingly.



"An' I do, thou shalt swing with me," was Trent's vicious retort.

"That is as may be," returned the other carelessly. "At any rate, we will not take our last ride in the tumbrel just yet, for old Mother Elsptha swears that unless the bag of simples is held too long beneath the victim's nose, he will recover in under twelve hours, and by that time Blackbane's lugger, with that red-headed bantling on board, will be far away, for he sails at high tide."

Jerry had to summon every ounce of determination of which he was possessed, to restrain himself at the villainous old lawyer's callous words, but he succeeded in keeping as still as before, until, greatly to his relief, the precious pair took their departure, locking the door behind them.

Only waiting until he felt assured Trent and Cawne would not return, Jerry sprang lightly out of bed, and rushed to the door between the two rooms.

It was locked, and when he hastened to the window he almost burst out laughing when he saw Jonathan Strowse, muffled in a great coat, standing in the shadow of a tree a dozen yards away, and realised that he had been stationed there to make sure that

Lord Rackness did not take into his head to leave the Castle by way of the casement.

Locked doors and guarded windows did not trouble Jerry, for, as the reader knows, he had simply to press the knot in the wainscot-

ting, and the sliding panel slipped back so that he passed through and carefully closed the secret door behind him.

Five minutes later he had reached the old Norman tower. Following a path Jo and he had made through the undergrowth, he ran as swiftly as his legs would carry him in the direction of the distant sea.

As he ran the leaden feeling slowly left his legs, and his head ceased to ache as the keen evening air swept the after-effects of the noxious fumes he had inhaled from his lungs.

On he ran, puzzling his brain for some plan by which to help Jo, if the fates were propitious, and he reached the smugglers' lair before the lugger sailed.

But rack his wits as he might, he could not see how he, a mere boy, could, unaided, rescue his chum from a score or more of well-armed men.

Had he had time to seek out Blind Tom, or, still better, Will o' the West, he knew he could depend upon both their sympathy and their help.

But Blind Tom had disappeared from his usual haunts, and none could tell whither he had gone. As for Will o' the West, when Jerry had last heard

of him, he had been running before a hue and cry, after having held up the London coach on Bagshot Heath.

"Ah, well, I must e'en do my best," he thought, as he cleared the last fence of the



Grasping the lead guttering that circled the old building, Jerry braced himself against the wall whilst Jo climbed up his body to the roof. (See Chapter 5.)



cultivated land and landed on the open moorland that stretched, for a good ten miles, right to the sea.

Before him gleamed a long, white road, along which he sped, for it offered better going than the ankle-deep heather of the moor.

Suddenly he felt a thrill of something approaching fear run through his veins, as the dull beat of a horse's hoofs on the roadside behind him fell on his ears, and the thought that his flight had been discovered, and that this was a horseman sent to haul him back to the castle, swept through his mind.

Despairing, he cast a swift glance behind him.

The next moment he had turned, and was running towards the horseman, crying :

"Will! Will o' the West, what good fortune has sent thee to me?"

A minute later the rider had drawn rein, and the highwayman's smiling face and laughing eyes were fixed in astonishment on the panting boy.

"What, Jerry o' the Highway—I cry your lordship's pardon, my wits must surely have gone a-roving—'tis the Right Honourable Lord Rackness now!" cried Will o' the West, doffing his plumed hat in a mocking bow.

"Jerry to you, Will. In faith I wish I was still but Jerry o' the Pots to all. But let me mount thy crupper, Will, and I will tell ye all as we ride to Tor Head Bay!" cried Jerry, breathlessly.

"To Tor Head Bay, is it? Methought I was riding to a certain four cross roads, six good miles from the sea," laughed Will. He loosened his foot from the stirrup, nevertheless, to allow Jerry to mount.

Waiting for no further invitation, Jerry clambered up behind the highwayman, who gave Silver Sprite the rein, and they were soon clattering merrily along the road.

As they rode, Jerry related all that had happened at Rackness Castle, ending up with an impassioned plea for the highwayman's help.

"Help thee, lad, aye that I will, the more readily for that Blackbane is a scurvy rogue, ready for any dirty work an' the pay be high enough. 'Tis true I have a certain debt to collect of the Lord High Sheriff, whose coach

should pass Danbury Four-cross roads about midnight; but business before pleasure, and maybe I will have time for both," was the highwayman's ready reply; and Jerry felt happier than he had done since Jo's disappearance, for he looked upon the boy's rescue as good as accomplished.

Half an hour's steady canter brought them to a wooded combe. Passing through they came to a small inlet, overshadowed by the precipitous headland which gave the place its name.

Miles from any human habitation, and surrounded by cliffs honeycombed with caves, it had been a favourite resort of smugglers for hundreds of years.

As Will drew rein beneath the shadow of the trees, he laid a restraining hand on Jerry's arm, pointing with the other to where a number of men were passing from the caves to a large boat drawn up on a narrow stretch of sand between the sea and the cliffs, carrying empty casks, that were, doubtless, intended to be refilled with French brandy.

A mile from the shore a low-lying, rakish lugger lay, hove to, in the light of the rising moon.

"Bide thee here, Will. I go to find Jo," whispered Jerry in the highwayman's ear.

"Aye, lad, 'tis best so. We do but grope in the dark until we know where to look for him," agreed Will. "Take this, lest ye find him bound," he added, thrusting a sheath knife into the boy's hand.

Sliding to the ground, Jerry gained the shadow of the beetling cliffs, and crept swiftly, but cautiously, towards the smugglers, until at length he crouched beneath a jagged rock that guarded the entrance to the smugglers' cave.

So close was he to the path from the cave to the sea, that by stretching forth his hand he could have touched one, or the other, of the ruffianly crew, as they passed backwards and forwards between the boat and their hidden lair.

Eagerly Jerry peered to right and left in search of some sign of his missing chum, but in vain; and his heart fell, for he feared that poor Jo was already aboard the lugger.

But the next moment his doubts were set



## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

“Stand and Deliver!”

at rest, for he heard a deep voice within the inky darkness of the cave, say:

“Rise up, ye red-headed little imp; they'll teach ye to dance to a livelier step on the plantations, I'll warrant!”

Then came the thud of heavy sea-boots on the beaten path, and Jerry felt his heart beats quicken as the huge form of Captain Blackbane bulked from out the darkness.

His right hand grasped a ship's lantern; his left, the side nearest Jerry, rested heavily on Jo's shoulder, whose white, scared face showed ghastly in the lantern's flickering light.

Every muscle strung to its highest tension, the boy waited until the smuggler was abreast of where he crouched, then, swift as thought itself, his right hand shot forth, and a howl of rage and pain burst from Blackbane, for Jerry had drawn Will's sheath knife across his wrist, causing him to release his hold of his prisoner.

“Quick, Jo, run!” whispered Jerry, seizing his chum by the arm and drawing him into the shadows.

Jo needed no second invitation, and the next moment the boys were running for their lives, screened by the inky shadows of the cliffs that towered above their heads.

A pistol barked, but the bullet went wide, and almost ere the smugglers had recovered from the panic into which their captain's shout and pistol shot had thrown them, the boys had reached Silver Sprite's side.

“Up, lad, up! The ruffians will be round us like bees, in a minute, unless we can show them a clean pair of heels,” cried Will, bending down and dragging Jo on to the pommel of his saddle, whilst Jerry clambered nimbly on to the crupper.

Wheeling round, Will o' the West sent Silver Sprite clattering up the narrow path to the head of the combe, the beat of her hoofs drawing a dozen bullets from the smugglers that whistled harmlessly amongst the trees.

“Keep your heads down, lads,” cried Will o' the West. “Let the scoundrels waste their ammunition!”

They reached the summit of the cliff untouched, and, with a joyous laugh, Will put his mare's head to the moor.

“**W**HITHER art going, Will?” demanded Jerry, as, leaving the road by which they had come, Will o' the West cantered northwards.

“Hast forgotten what I told ye about Danbury cross roads and the Sheriff?” returned the highwayman gaily.

“And ye will let us help ye, Will?” cried Jerry eagerly.

“Ay, by hiding 'neath a hedge until it is all over. I' faith it would never do for my Lord Rackness to stop a coach ere he has grown a beard,” was the laughing reply.

“What if I care not to go back to the castle, Will? Of a truth I like not the false position I hold, nor the false friends by whom I am surrounded. The freemen of the road are poor and rough, but, at least, they are loyal and true,” said Jerry thoughtfully.

“Ye may never be a freeman of the roads again, Jerry. A lord's a lord, a tinker's a tinker, and——” began Will seriously, then broke off to add hastily, “But more of that anon. Yonder are the cross roads, and, if my ears do not play me false, I hear the roll of coach wheels in the distance.”

Touching Silver Sprite lightly with his heels, for the spirited mare never needed the spur, Will took his station beneath a huge tree where four roads met, and awaited the coming of his prey, whilst, in obedience to his instructions, Jerry and Jo sprang on to a huge limb that stretched half-way across the road, where they lay, waiting expectantly, as a coach, drawn by four horses, lumbered towards them.

When yet the heavy conveyance was within a dozen yards of the cross roads the boys saw Silver Sprite spring at a bound into the centre of the road, and heard her rider's ringing challenge:

“Stand and deliver! 'Tis Will o' the West commands!”

As the name of the famous highwayman fell on their ears the postboys drew their horses back on to their haunches. Then, as the lumbering coach came to a halt, each rider slid out of the saddle, and stood grinning by



the side of the road, certain that no harm would befall him.

"What's this? What's this? Who dares stop the Lord High Sheriff on the King's Highway?" shouted a red-faced, much-bewigged man, thrusting head and shoulders through the carriage window.

"'Tis Will o' the West, your washup!" answered one of the postboys.

"Ay, Will o' the West it is, come to collect the hundred pounds you lost to him at Brentor Fair," cried Will, edging to the side of the coach and clapping a pistol to the sheriff's head. "Hand out the brown leather wallet I can see in your breast pocket, it spoils the set of your worship's London-made clothes."

For a moment the sheriff hesitated, but the touch of the cold muzzle of Will's pistol against his forehead brought him to his senses.

Trembling in every limb, he obeyed.

"There is five hundred pounds in notes there, and our wager was but for a hundred pounds," he remonstrated feebly.

"Ay, I guessed you would not leave the Squire of Denevale until you had plucked him clean," returned Will carelessly. "But, for all that, I take but what's my own."

"Ay, I have always heard Will o' the West was a right good sportsman and the prince of good fellows," cringed the sheriff; albeit in his heart he was registering an oath to rest neither day nor night until he had brought the daring highwayman to the gallows.

Will laughed softly.

"I thank thee for thy good opinion, sweet sheriff. Perchance the poor of Exeter will share your good opinion of me when my agents distribute the four hundred that I have collected, over and above the trifle you have so honourably paid on demand, amongst them. Mount, lads, and take the good sheriff hence—the night air is bad for one of his choleric temperament," he added, turning to the delighted postboys.

Grinning more than ever, the postboys sprang on to their horses.

"Scoundrel, thief, footpad, robber! Thou shalt hang for this!" roared the sheriff, as the carriage began to move.

Much more he said, but the postboys whipped their horses to a gallop, and the coach continued its interrupted journey.

"Drop on to the mare's crupper, lads. We have much to do and far to ride e'er morning breaks," cried Will, guiding his horse beneath the branches from which the boys had been admiring spectators of the highwayman's simple methods.

"What, more coaches to cry 'Stand and deliver!' to, Will?" asked Jerry as, with Jo holding him tightly round the waist, he clung to Will's sword-belt.

"Nay, lad, my night-riding is over," returned the highwayman with a sigh. "There's a bright-eyed lass awaiting me in London, and she loves not my wild pranks, so I must e'en give up the road, and live respectable for the rest of my life."

"An' will I never see you again?" asked Jerry.

"Ay, lad, many a time and oft, I hope, for it is in my mind that you and Jo shall ride to London with me," declared the highwayman.

"To the end of the world an thou wilt, Will; and young Lord Rackness shall disappear as suddenly as he came," replied Jerry earnestly.

"And abandon your lordship, and all that it means?" asked Will, as the mare sped lightly over the moor.

"With a light heart. I am tired of masquerading in a station to which I can lay no claim," was Jerry's reply.

Will o' the West nodded his approval, and for some minutes they rode on in silence.

"This is not the way to London, Will, for yonder is Rackness Castle, and that should be miles on our right," cried Jerry, after a time, pointing to the stately pile, with its countless towers and chimneys rising above the surrounding trees.

"Those who ride with Will o' the West must travel the way he chooses and obey him without question," replied Will.

Jerry said no more, though he wondered greatly when, leaping the sunken fence which surrounded Rackness Park, the highwayman drew rein close to the Norman Tower.

"Hasten to your rooms by the secret



passage, dress in riding-garb, pack each a suit of your finest clothes in a travelling wallet, and meet me here in half an hour!" commanded Will.

The boys would have questioned their friend; but remembering his demand for obedience, slipped to the ground and disappeared through the secret door.

Half an hour later they were back, each carrying a well-filled wallet, which they had secured without interruption, though the state of their rooms, the sound of loud, excited voices, and a clatter of hoofs as horsemen dashed from the courtyards and stables, warned Jerry that his flight had been discovered, and that men were scouring the country in search of him.

They found Will o' the West awaiting them with two led horses, on which they mounted, and easily avoiding the mounted grooms who were hunting for the missing lord of Rackness Castle, they had soon placed that ancient mansion far behind them.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

### How Jerry met the King.

JERRY looked at Will o' the West with an expression in which amazement struggled with dismay.

"What, go to Court? I, Jerry o' the Pots, present myself before the King as Lord Rackness? Why, the imposture would be

discovered' at once, and they would send me to the Tower as a tinker's son, who strove to pass himself off as a lord!" he cried at last, as he looked round the private room in a fashionable London inn, to which the highwayman had brought Jo and himself the previous night.

"It might so fall out an' you *were* a tinker's son; but as it happens, Trent told the truth, though he thought he was lying, for you are the rightful son and heir of the late Lord Rackness," declared Will smiling.

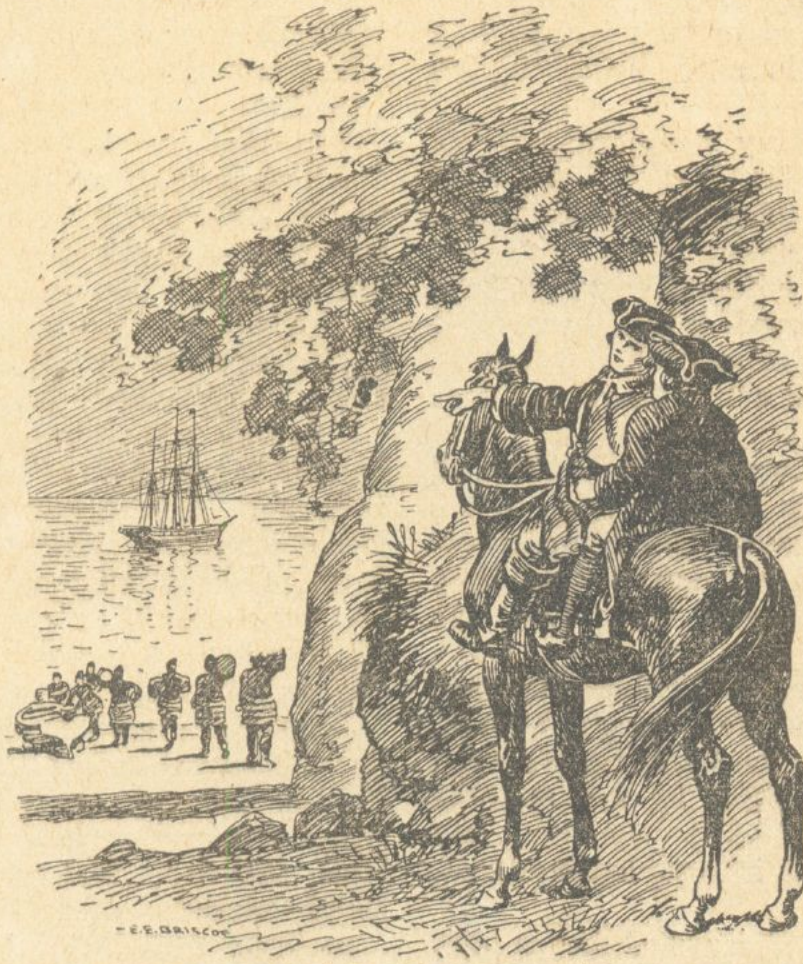
"Hast brought me here to mock me?" demanded Jerry indignantly.

"It is the truth I tell thee, lad. Red Rogers is dead, but ere he died he sent for Blind Tom and confessed that he had stolen you from the castle when a child of four, because the old lord, your father, had sentenced him to be whipped at the cart-tail as a rogue and a vagabond. He kept the truth from Cawne, hoping to be able to blackmail him later on. But the pound a week the

precious pair of villains, Cawne and Trent, allowed him, proved his undoing, for he drank himself to death, fortunately confessing the truth ere he died, as I have told you, so you need have no qualms in presenting yourself before his Majesty, King George," explained Will.

"But, Will——" began Jerry, when the highwayman interrupted him.

"But me no buts!" as Will Shakespeare



Will o' the West pointed to where a number of men were passing from the caves to a boat. "Bide thee here, Will! I go to find Jo!" whispered Jerry in the highwayman's ear. (See Chapter 10.)



has it. Do my bidding, Jerry. It is the last request Will o' the West may ever ask of ye," he interrupted, laying his hand affectionately on the boy's shoulder.

"An' you put it like that, I can do no other than agree," replied Jerry. "But surely Jo accompanies me?"

"'Twould never do to part Jerry and Jo," laughed Will. "But I must be gone, for I have to seek the King myself, and crave a free pardon. Within the hour a carriage and outriders will be here to take my Lord of Rackness to Court in a state befitting his exalted position."

Without giving Jerry an opportunity of questioning him further, Will hastened from the room, leaving the boys gaping at each other in absolute bewilderment.

Jerry scarcely knew if he stood on his head or his heels. The astounding information that he had been Lord Rackness all the time he thought he had been acting the part almost took his breath away.

He had only just begun to regain his usual self-control when he was thrown again into a state of utter bewilderment by the entrance of a footman, clad in the Rackness livery, who, bowing low, announced: "My lord, the carriage waits!"

Like one in a dream, Jerry followed the man to the tavern-door, where a gorgeous coach, all glass and gilt—like the Lord Mayor's coach of the present-day—drawn by four splendid horses ridden by gold-laced postilions, and with two mounted men in livery in attendance, awaited him.

For many a day, Jerry had but a dim recollection of entering the coach and being driven through the streets to St. James' Palace, where a magnificent individual in the Royal livery and carrying a gold-headed staff, took charge of him, and after escorting him through what seemed interminable richly furnished corridors, thrust open a pair of handsome double doors and announced in solemn tones: "Lord Rackness of Rackness Castle seeks audience of the King."

Had he possessed the strength, Jerry would have turned and fled when he saw that the room was crowded with a brilliant assembly of ladies and gentlemen, but he continued to

advance into the room, half expecting to wake up and find it all a dream, when he saw—and then he felt sure he was dreaming—Will o' the West, in full Court dress, coming towards him.

"Will o' the West, here!" he gasped.

"Not Will o' the West, Jerry, but Sir William Kingsley, who, for the sake of the free, wild life the Road offered, became a highway man in his spare moments," replied the Court gallant with Will's own merry laugh. "But come, the King has ordered me to conduct you to him immediately on your arrival," he added.

The next moment the bewildered boys found themselves walking between a double file of lords and ladies to a raised dais, on which was seated a stout, good-natured-looking man, with a number of jewelled orders on his breast, whom Jerry knew must be the King, for he was the only one seated, though a more unkingly person Jerry had never seen.

"So this is zee boy of zee tinker, who a lord has become, hein?" said the good-natured monarch. "I have your tale heard, my goot leetle gentleman, and it has made me to laugh. I like not those men Trent and Cawne, and my officers shall what you call lay them by the heels, is it not so? But you shall be of Chancery a Ward. That pleases you, eh?"

Jerry made some reply—what it was he never knew, but it evidently pleased the King, for he laughed mightily, and bade Sir William Kingsley bring "zee funny leetle tinker-lord to lunch that day," that he might hear more of his adventures.

So Jerry and Jo lunched with the King, who directed that Will o' the West, in other words, Sir William Kingsley, should act as Jerry's guardian until the High Court of Chancery should confirm him in the office.

But, as if they had not had surprises enough for one day, another awaited them when Sir William took them to his house in Pall Mall, where they found Blind Tom and his fiddle awaiting them, and learned that he was a highly valued retainer of the young baronet, who had joined his patron in all his wild escapades to act as his almoner.

THE END.



# A PAGE OF FILM FAVOURITES



*William Farnum.*

*Tom Mix.*

*W.S. Hart.*

*Charlie Chaplin.*

*George Walsh.*

*Wallace Reid.*

*Douglas Fairbanks.*



# HOW TO MAKE A BICYCLE SHED

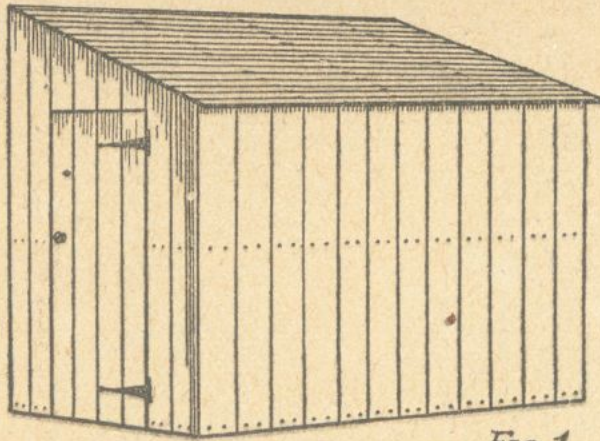


FIG. 1.

A LEAN-TO shed as seen in Fig. 1 can be easily constructed for a bicycle, the measurements being roughly 4 ft. 9 in. high, 6 ft. 6 in. long, 3 ft. 6 in. wide, and 4 ft. at the drop end. The instructions here given are, of course, equally applicable to any similar erection.

The framework, the pieces of which must be entirely completed before the shed is erected, will be made of 2 in. by 2 in. quartering, of which approximately 140 ft. will be required. A square of matchboarding,  $\frac{5}{8}$  in. size, will be necessary for the outside.

The joints throughout are housed, each joint being secured by two nails.

A study of the various diagrams will show the dimensions of the lengths of wood required for the construction of the framework.

The side containing the door is depicted in Fig. 2, from which the method of fastening the framework can be observed.

The other side, of more simple construction, is shown in Fig. 3.

Fig. 4 depicts the elevation of the framework for the front.

The framework of the front and two sides having been completed, these can now be put together against the wall. The front is "buted" or fitted in between the two sides and screwed to them through the thickness of the wood, as shown in Fig. 5, where A and B represent the two pieces of framework.

The wall must now be plugged at the top and bottom to enable the sides to be screwed thereto through the framework.

Having secured the front and two sides,

the rafters of the roof may now be cut as shown in Fig. 6. They are fastened by nailing them to a beam plugged in the wall at the required height from the top of the rafters, whilst the lower ends are nailed to the top rail of the front.

The frame must be carefully squared after the manner shown in Fig. 7, the straight rod being placed from corner to corner, so that it can be proved that the length from A to B is equal to that from C to D, whilst the other corners are treated similarly.

The next thing to do is to nail the matchboarding along the sides and front, naturally leaving the space for the doorway clear. The beading must be left outside, and the boarding should overlap the beams by 1 in. at the top and  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. at the bottom, the latter being embedded in earth or cement.

The overlapping ends at the top, A, must now be levelled with a saw to the height of the top rail, as seen at C, Fig. 8.

The matchboarding of the roof can now be nailed on with the beading inside, and trimmed down at D, to overlap the front rail by 2 in., to serve as eaves (B, Fig. 8).

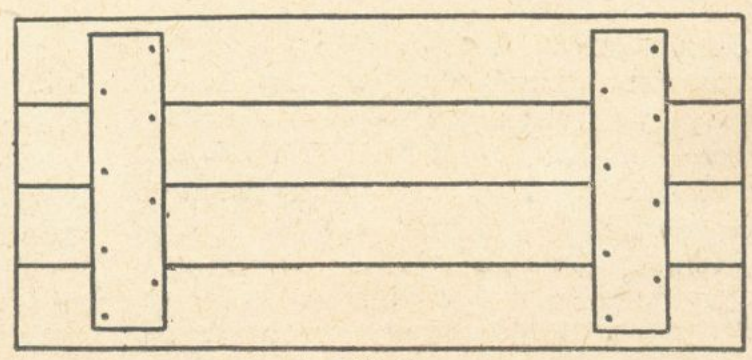
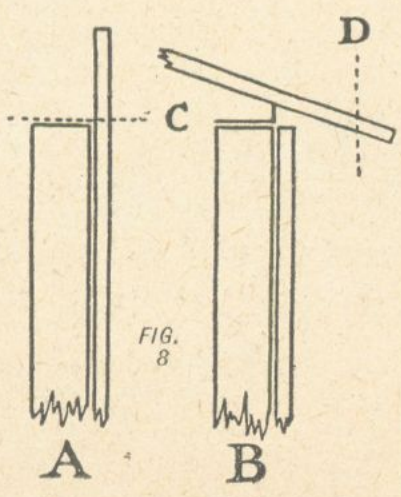
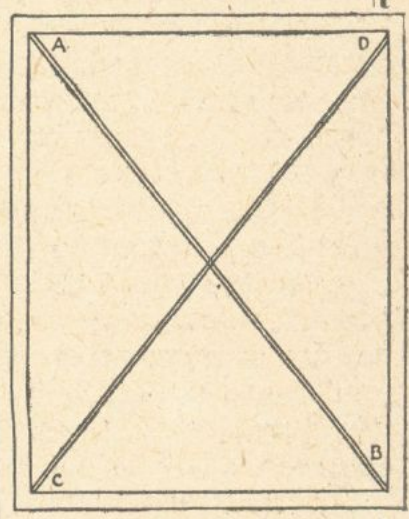
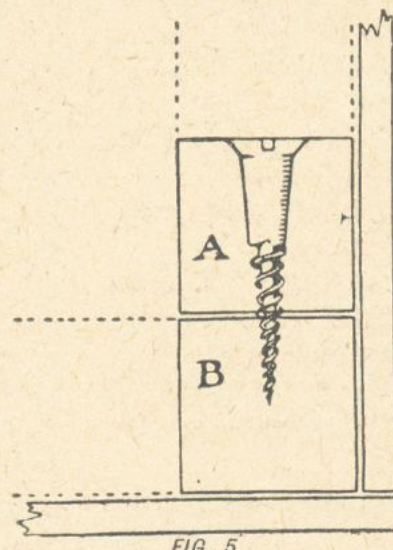
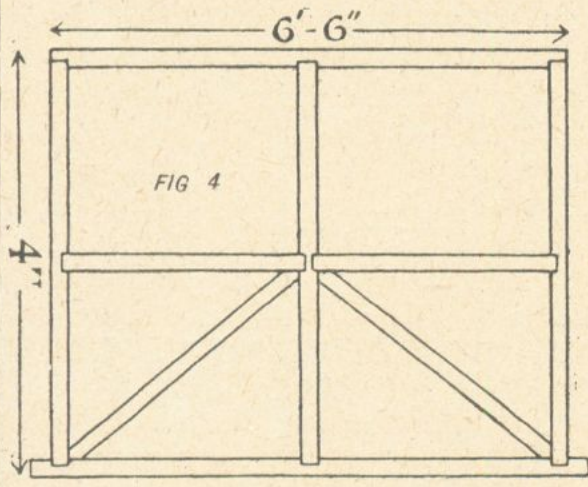
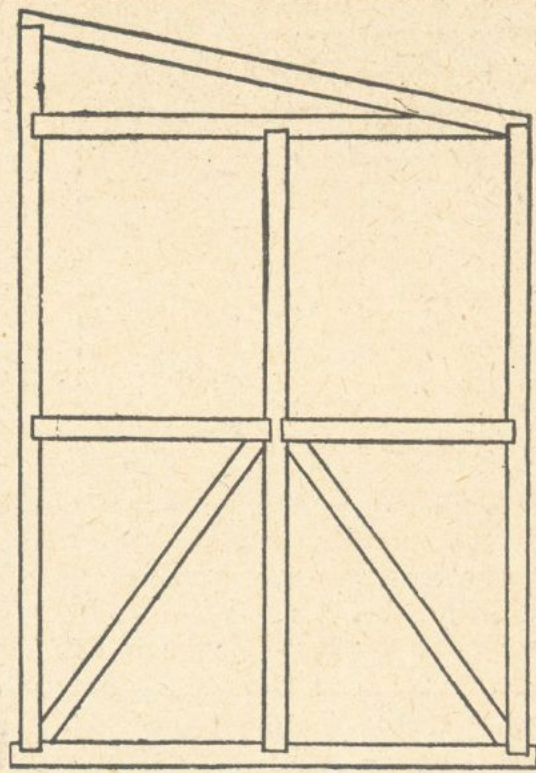
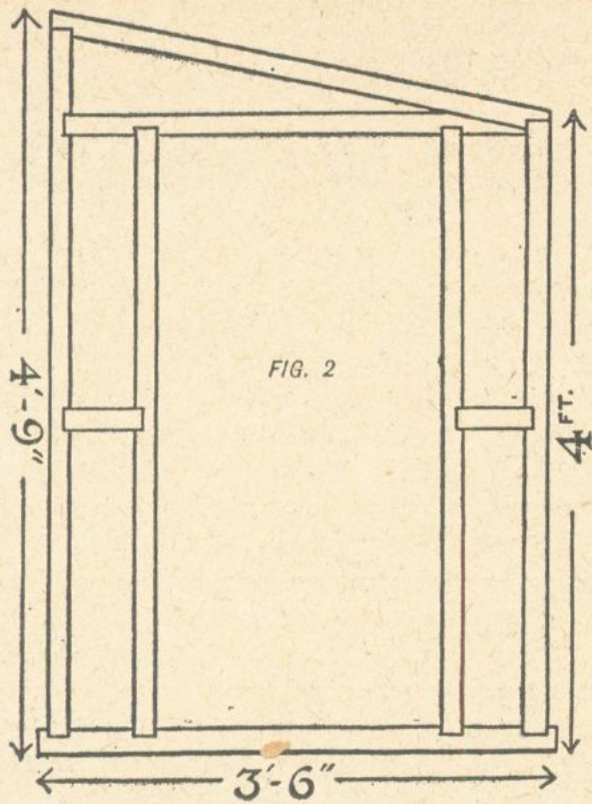
Nothing now remains but to make the door, which is very simply constructed after the manner shown in Fig. 9. Two pieces of deal are laid flat, and matchboarding nailed over them, two nails being used for each board, the lower nail being nearest the side that will eventually be hinged. This serves to lessen the strain on the nails, and renders the door more durable.

The door can now be fastened in place with a couple of cross garnets (or large hinges), and fitted with hasp and padlock.

To preserve the roof against the ravages of the weather, it may be covered with felt or tar.

(Diagrams will be found on opposite page)

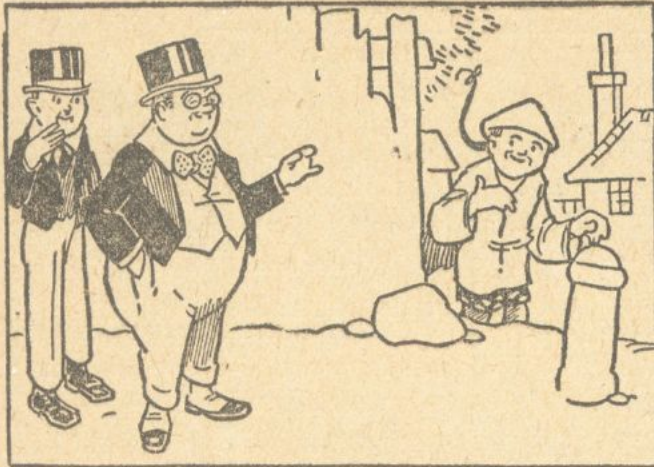




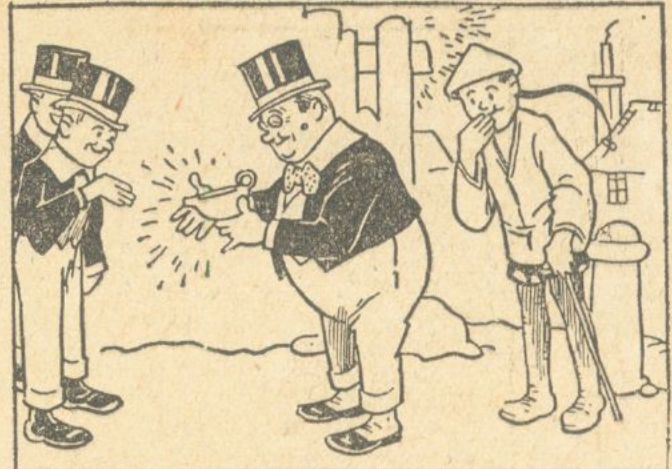


# LITTLE LOO LUMMEE "BONES" BILLY'S FEAST

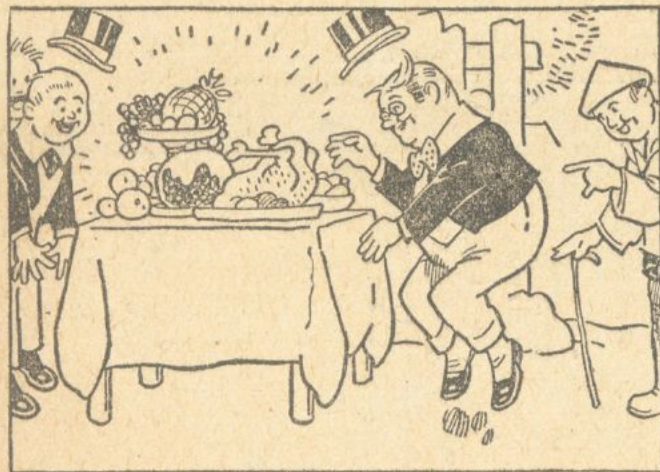
*"Chuckles" Merry Magician teaches greedy Billy Bunter a lesson*



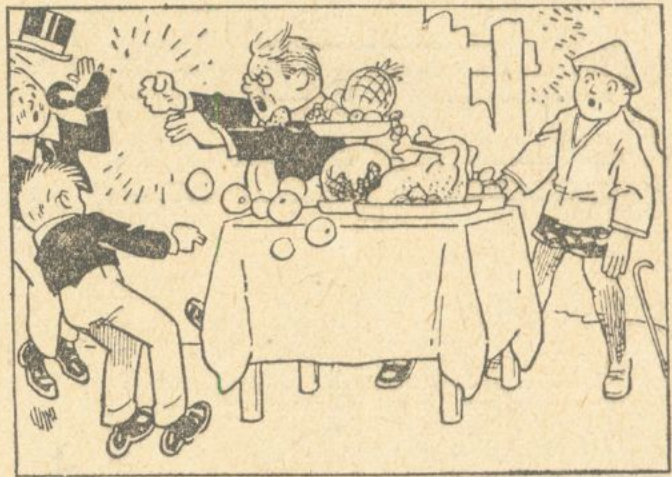
1. "Why, bless me!" said Billy Bunter. "Here's Little Loo Lummee. Hallo, old chappie! Let's have a look at that little Lucky Lamp of yours, will you?" "The pleasurefulness is tellific!"



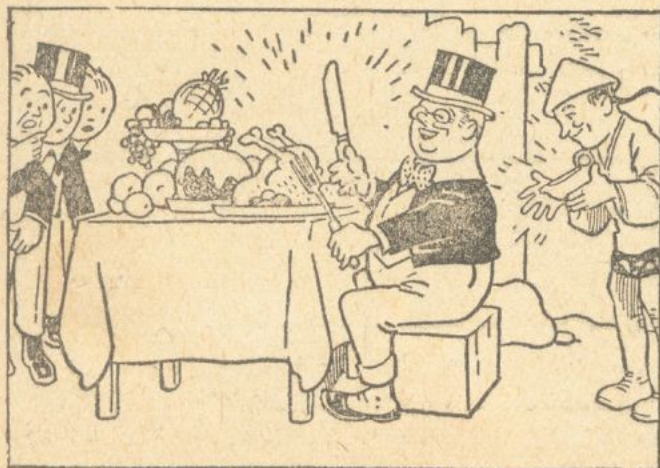
2. And the lamp was handed over. Billy, who usually hates anything like exertion, put plenty of elbow-grease in a stiff rub. "Now let's have a fine feed!" he commanded the geni of the lamp.



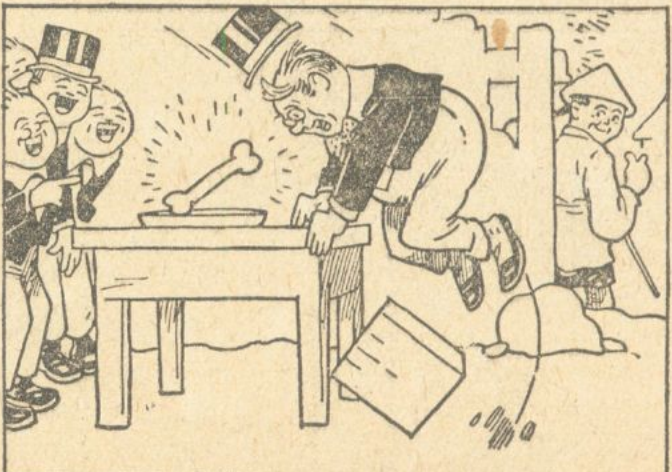
3. "Wow!" Whoosh! Before Billy and his pals could blink, up came the most gorgeous feed one ever saw. "I say, Loo Lummee!" said Billy. "Your geni must have been one of my ancestors!"



4. And now Billy Bunter thought only of "bagging" the whole feed for himself. "You clear off!" he shouted. "There's only enough for one here!" "Blessee me!" gasped Loo Lummee.



5. Then Loo Lummee quietly secured possession of the lamp, and rubbed it in a patent way that was only known to him. "Now you velly much be surprised!" he murmured. "You watchee out!"



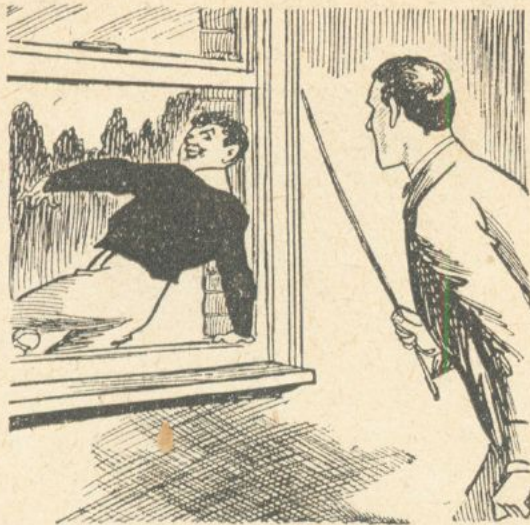
6. "Oh, this is prime!" said Billy, when—hey, presto! Away went that feed, and there was left only a big, meatless bone. "Good-night!" exclaimed Billy Bunter. "Good-afternoon!" chuckled Loo Lummee. Poor Billy went empty away after all!



# A Fag's Diary.

By WALLY D'ARCY

(Leader of the Fag-tribe at St. Jim's.)



"I promptly vaulted through the open window!"

MONDAY.—I woke up. I do this other mornings as well, but it's about the most exciting thing that happened to-day, so down it goes in my diary. I also went to bed. These are the only two things of note which happened to-day.

TUESDAY.—Had a heated argument with Knox the prefect. He said, "I want you to fag for me, young D'Arcy." I said, "I won't!" He said, "You will!" I said, "I won't!" He said, "You will!" I said, "I shan't!" He said, "You shall!" And so on, ad lib., until we were both out of breath. Eventually Knox took me by the scruff of the neck and bundled me along to his study. I could not escape fagging for him, so I decided to do the job thoroughly. I smashed a whole crowd of cups and saucers and plates, and you never saw such a mess! When he came in and saw the damage, Knox rushed at me with an ashplant, but I promptly vaulted through the open window and gave the brute the slip.

WEDNESDAY.—Played footer this afternoon, and was badly in the wars. In trying to head the ball into the net, I butted the goalpost instead; and now I've a bump the size of a pigeon's egg on my cranium. In the course of the game I was sent sprawling ninety-nine times, but I don't think any bones are broken. I shall sound myself all over to-night, to make sure. Footer, as a pastime, is a little too strenuous for frail and delicate infants like me.

THURSDAY.—Ran foul of Mr. Selby, the tyrant who rules our Form with a rod of iron. Before morning lessons began, I fixed up a booby-trap for him on the door of the Form-room. He caught it beautifully; but I caught it as well, when Selby discovered the author of the outrage. He gave me four stinging cuts on each hand, and I don't think the tortures of the Spanish Inquisition could have been worse. That licking inspired me to write a little verse about Selby. Here it is:

"I do not love thee, Selby dear,  
And all my comrades shout 'Hear, hear!'  
You make me shake and quake with fear—  
I do not love thee, Selby dear!"

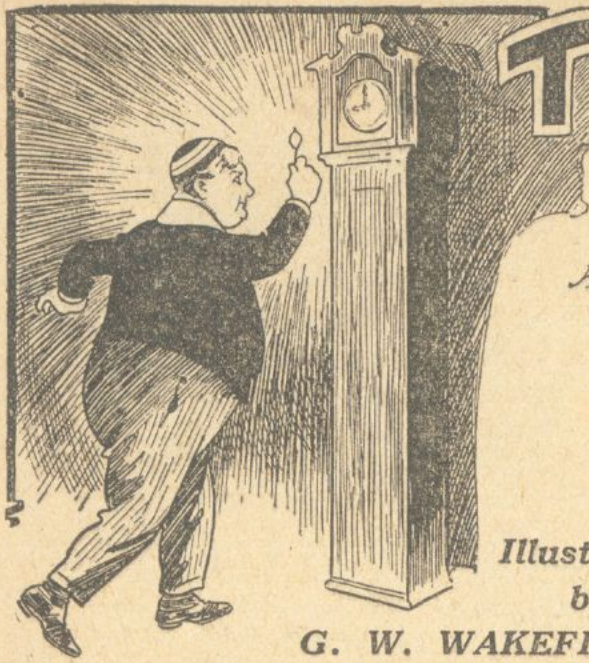
FRIDAY.—Received ten shillings from my pater. Gussy, my big brother, advised me to put it in the post-office savings bank. But I decided to spend it on a midnight feast instead, and there were high jinks in the Third Form dormitory to-night. Old Selby came prowling around in carpet slippers, to see what was going on; but we all pretended to be fast asleep and snoring. So the old tyrant went empty away.

SATURDAY.—We awoke to find there had been a heavy fall of snow in the night, so we had a glorious snowfight in the quad before breakfast. My army attacked Levison minor's army, and got the best of the argument, too! I was plastered from head to foot with snow when I went in to breakfast, and old Selby gave me a hundred lines for disguising myself as a snowman. Apart from the fact that I had fifteen fights at different times, with different fellows, there was no more excitement to-day.

To-morrow, being Sunday, I shan't have to make any entries in my diary. Sundays at St. Jim's are always the same. We put on our best bibs and tuckers, and behave like good little boys.

THE END





# The Manœuvres of Muffin!

*An Amusing Story of Rookwood School  
Narrated by Teddy Grace.*

Illustrated  
by  
**G. W. WAKEFIELD.**

**S**EVEN o'clock in the morning is a ridiculously early hour to get up. So thought Tubby Muffin, the fat junior of the Classical Fourth.

"On these dark, chilly winter mornings," said Tubby, "it fairly breaks a fellow's heart to have to turn out at seven."

"Lazy slacker!" grunted Jimmy Silver. Jimmy had no patience with sluggards.

"Oh, really, Silver! It's all very well for a sturdy fellow like you, strong and in the pink of condition. But a frail and delicate fellow like me finds it simply awful to have to get up at seven. I'm certain I shall get pneumonia one of these times."

Jimmy Silver glanced at Tubby Muffin's ample form.

"Frail and delicate!" he echoed. "Oh, my giddy aunt! Why, you're as fat as Falstaff!"

"What time would you like the rising-bell to be rung, Tubby?" asked Raby

"Eight o'clock, at the very earliest. And we ought to have brekker brought up to us in bed."

"My dear old porpoise," said Lovell, "this is a public school, not a private hotel for prosperous people, who can lie in bed all the morning and be waited on hand and foot by a retinue of servants."

"We can't expect to be mollycoddled, you know," said Newcome.

Tubby Muffin gave a grunt. "I don't see why we should have to get up in the middle of the night," he growled. "It's a beastly state of affairs. And I'm going to make an alteration."

"Going to send a petition to the Head?" asked Jimmy Silver, with a yawn.

"No."

"How are you going to alter things, then?"

"Wait and see."



Tubby very quickly had the window open.



Tubby Muffin rolled away with a determined expression on his fat face.

Tubby felt very strongly upon this subject of early rising. He didn't believe in it.

He had nothing but contempt for the old proverb:

"Early to bed, and early to rise,  
Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

He much preferred the words of the modern song:

"Oh, it's nice to get up in the morning,  
But it's nicer to stay in bed!"

Tubby rolled out into the quad. Dusk had fallen over Rookwood School. Lights gleamed in the windows of cosy studies; but outside all was dark and drear.

It was nearly bedtime. Some people had, in fact, already retired for the night.

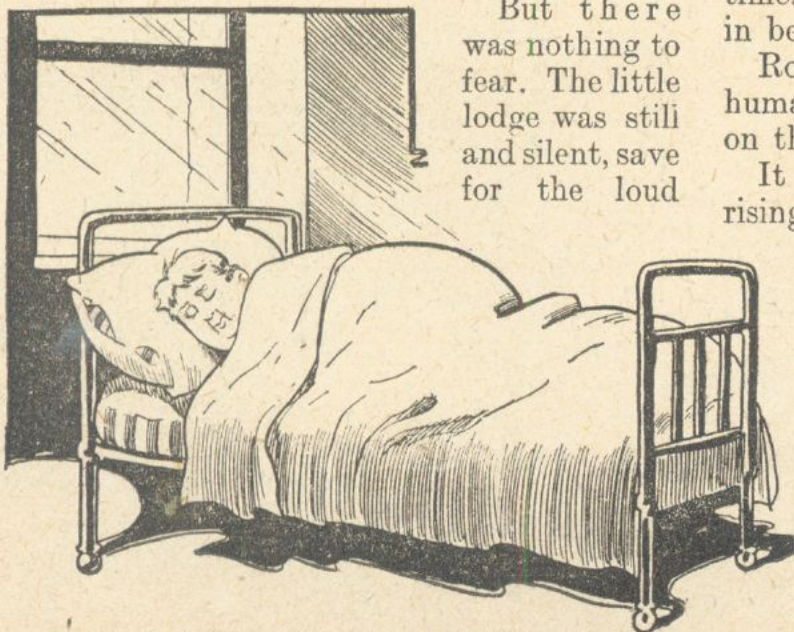
No light gleamed in the window of the porter's lodge. Mack, the porter, had to be up betimes in the morning for the purpose of ringing the rising-bell, and he had gone early to bed.

"If I can only get into his parlour——!" muttered Tubby Muffin.

This proved to be a very simple task. Mack had indiscreetly left his parlour window open, and Tubby Muffin, plump and ungainly though he was, clambered through the aperture without difficulty.

Once inside the room he paused, his heart thumping quickly against his ribs.

But there was nothing to fear. The little lodge was still and silent, save for the loud



Tubby had secured an extra half-hour's sleep.

tick-tock of the grandfather clock in the parlour. Tubby Muffin struck a match, and tiptoed towards the clock. He opened the glass cover of the face, and put the hands back one hour. Then he closed the cover, and beat a retreat as stealthily as possible.

In less than a minute Tubby Muffin was making his way across the wind-swept quad, chuckling softly to himself as he went.

"I've worked the oracle all right," he muttered. "When it's seven o'clock to-morrow morning Mack will think it's only six. And rising-bell won't go till eight."

When he re-entered the school building, Tubby found the fellows trooping up to bed. He joined the procession, and he was in good spirits as he undressed and turned in.

Rookwood retired as usual, and many of the fellows awoke as usual. They opened their eyes at seven o'clock, and sat up in bed.

But there was something missing. The harsh, discordant clanging of the rising-bell was not audible.

"Mack's late," remarked Jimmy Silver drowsily.

"Most unusual for Mack," said Lovell. "He usually rings that blessed bell prompt to the tick."

"P'r'aps he's ill this morning," suggested Raby.

Whatever the cause, Mack did not carry out the duties of bell-ringer at the appointed time. And many of the fellows turned over in bed to have another forty winks.

Rookwood School usually resembled a human bee-hive at seven in the morning. But on this particular morning nobody was astir.

It was not until eight o'clock that the rising-bell sounded.

The school rose an hour late, and the routine of the day was thrown entirely out of gear. The Head sent for Mack, the porter, and demanded an explanation.

"Which my clock was an hour slow, sir," said Mack.

"Did you wind it overnight?"

"Yessir. I can't for the life of me hunderstand 'ow it 'appened. I've' ad that there clock, sir, for five-an'-twenty year, an' it ain't never given me no trouble until now."



"It has probably started to go wrong, Mack," said the Head. "You must get a man in during the day to overhaul it. I cannot have a recurrence of this episode."

"Werry well, sir," said Mack. And he shuffled away.

Tubby Muffin, however, had not yet finished his merry manœuvres. He had secured an extra hour's sleep that morning, but he was far from satisfied. Having achieved success once, he resolved to achieve it again.

"I won't put the clock back to-night, though," he muttered. "Too risky to do that sort of thing two nights running. I shall have to try a fresh dodge."

Shortly before bedtime that evening, Tubby put his new scheme into practice. He borrowed a ladder from the woodshed, reared it against the wall, and climbed up to the bell. Then he deftly tied up the iron clapper, so that when Mack tried to ring the bell next morning, no sound would proceed from it.

Mack had carried out the Head's instructions, and had his clock overhauled. The man who did the job pronounced that there was nothing wrong with the clock, and that it was quite sound in wind and limb, so to speak.

But Mack was so nervous of being late again that he had hardly a wink of sleep that night. He was up and dressed at six o'clock, heavy-eyed and shivering in the raw cold of the new winter day.

At a few minutes before seven, Mack shuffled across the quad. And sharp to the minute he gave a vicious tug at the bell-rope.

No sound came.

Mack continued to tug, muttering to himself the while.

"Wot I says is this 'ere—this blessed bell's bewitched, that's wot's the matter with it! 'Ere am I a-tuggin' and a-strainin', an' it don't make so much as a murmur."

At ten minutes past seven, Bulkeley of the Sixth came striding on the scene.

"What's the matter, Mack?" he demanded.

"Which I can't get this 'ere bell to go, Master Bulkeley."

Bulkeley gazed upwards.

"And no wonder," he said. "Some practical joker has tied up the clapper."

"My heye!"



Tubby was climbing the ladder with an open penknife in his hand, when Bulkeley hailed him. "Muffin, you young rascal! Come down at once!" Tubby nearly fell down!



"Go and fetch a ladder, and I'll shin up and untie it."

These operations took some time, and it was half-past seven before Rookwood was roused by the rising-bell. Tubby Muffin had scored again—to the extent of half an hour this time.

Had Tubby been a wise youth he would have been content with the mischief he had already wrought. But he was a greedy fellow in more senses than one, and he determined to outwit Mack for the third time.

That third time prove fatal.

Tubby conceived the brilliant idea of cutting the bell-rope completely away, and then hiding the ladder, so that the bell would be inaccessible.

It so happened, however, that Bulkeley of the Sixth did a little detective work that evening.

Tubby had reared the ladder against the wall and was climbing it with an open penknife clutched in his hand, when he was suddenly hailed from the shadows down below.

"Muffin, you young rascal! Come down at once!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Tubby nearly fell down the ladder in his agitation. When he reached terra firma, Bulkeley's strong grasp closed on his collar.

"It is quite clear to me, Muffin," said the captain of Rookwood, "that you have been responsible for these outrages. I have caught you red-handed! You were about to cut the bell-rope."

"Oh, really, Bulkeley——"

"You will accompany me to the Head's study!" said Bulkeley grimly.

Tubby Muffin pleaded and entreated and cajoled, but all to no purpose. He had been fairly bowled out, and now he had to face the music.

The Head naturally took a serious view of Tubby's conduct, and he was called upon to endure the ordeal of a public flogging in Big Hall.

Tubby will not soon forget that flogging. It was one of the severest he had ever received. And the fat junior's campaign against early rising ceased from that moment.

THE END

## Great Days at Greyfriars

By Dick Penfold

### Guy Fawkes' Day



A day of flame and fury this,  
When bonfires blaze right merrily;  
A day of happiness and bliss  
For all concerned; yea, verily.  
When lads and lassies all unite  
In Guy Fawkes' celebrations;  
They set their effigies alight  
And cheer the conflagrations.

Long years have passed away since Guy,  
A scoundrel sleek and sinister,  
Plotted a plot to blow sky-high  
The King and every Minister.  
But year by year we celebrate  
That great event of history;  
And then retire to bed quite late  
With fingers scorched and blisterly!

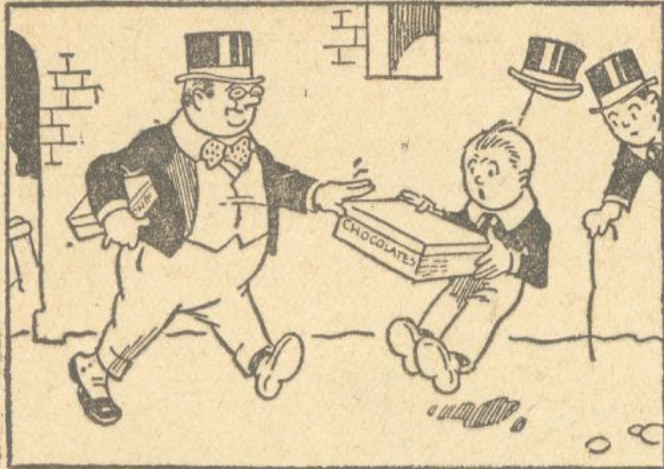
Rockets are screaming overhead  
And crackers dancing under us;  
The din's enough to wake the dead,  
So loud it is and thunderous.  
O never were such lively scenes  
Of rapture and of revelry!  
Big fires on all the village greens  
Commemorate Guy's devilry.

The Greyfriars fellows all enjoy  
This gay and gladsome holiday;  
I've never heard a British boy  
Call it a melancholy day.  
When it comes round again, what larks!  
We'll celebrate it mirthfully;  
It is (as Hurree Singh remarks)  
The happiest day on earthfully!

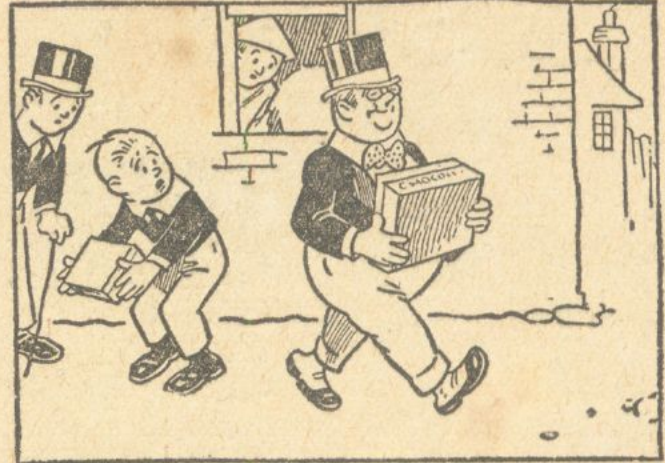


# Billy Bunter Changes His Chocolates—He's Sorry!

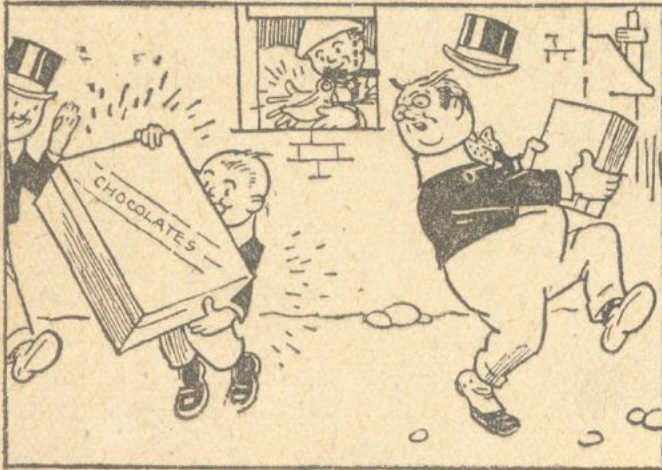
*Little Loo Lummee's Magic Lamp does some more good work!*



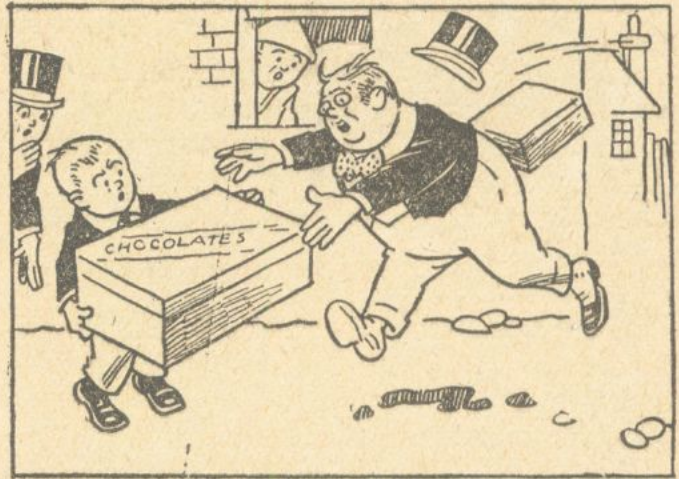
1. "Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, as he came round the corner and saw a little Second-Former with a much bigger box of chocolates than he himself possessed. "Gimme those sweets!"



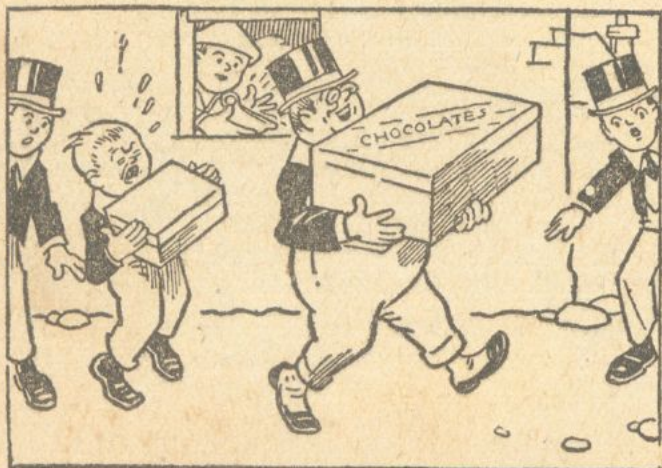
2. Billy snatched the big box of chocolates and walked off. "Chocolates are bad for little kids!" muttered Bunter, with a chuckle. "Him gleedy fat boy!" said Loo Lummee softly.



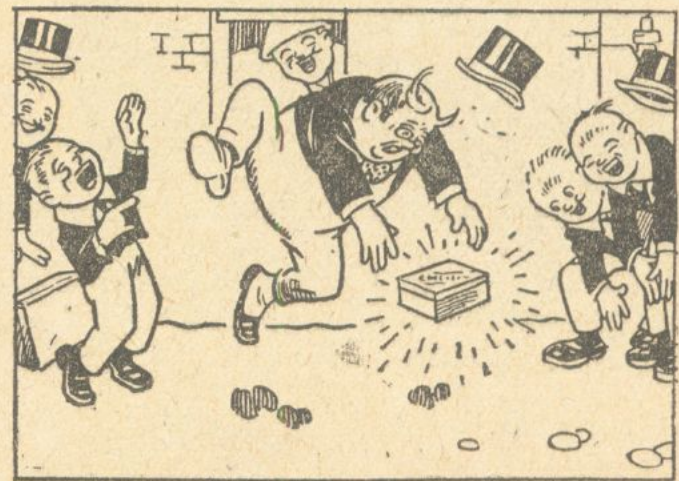
3. That merry magician gave his magic lamp an extra bright Saturday afternoon polish, and the box in Percy's hand suddenly grew so big that he was nearly smothered. Billy Bunter fairly jumped with surprise.



4. "Hi, you've got another, have you?" roared Billy. "Here—gimme that! You can have this small box back again!" "Woo-hoo!" wailed Percy Parsnip. "Loo Lummee! Loo Lummee!"



5. "Just you waitee little minute!" chuckled Loo Lummee, as Billy marched off with the big box of chocs. "Me givee 'nother lub, me tinkee!" And he did so, and Billy didn't know what was coming.



6. But he very soon did know. His box of chocs. became so small that he nearly had a fit. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the chappies. "Little Loo Lummee is always too good for bullies, Billy!" Billy thought so, too!



# GOSLING'S GRIEVANCE

By

BOB

CHERRY



"THIS 'ere Progress," said Gosling, "it keeps on keepin' on."

A remark which has been made before, and will be made again, by elderly gentlemen who cannot keep pace with the times.

William Gosling, the keeper of the gate at Greyfriars, did not approve of modern conditions. If he had been given a magic wand he would have wafted himself back to the sleepy Victorian era.

"Wot I says is this 'ere," said Gosling, standing in the doorway of his lodge and surveying me with a jaundiced eye, "this 'ere craze for noo-fangled things is the curse of this jennyration. Now, when I was a boy—"

"That must have been about a century ago," I observed.

Gosling frowned.

"Don't be imperent, Master Cherry! When I was a boy, there was no sich things as motors an' sharrabongs an' hairy-planes. Everythin' was quiet an' restful like."

Even as Gosling spoke a couple of motor-lorries came thundering past the school gates, raising dust and din. Above our heads an aeroplane went whirring through space.

"Why, there wasn't even bicycles when I was a boy!" said Gosling. "I can recollect when the tricycle first come out. When I first come to take up my dooties 'ere, the 'Eadmaster 'ad one. When 'e used to come whizzin' down to the school gates on it, I used to say to 'im, 'Ave a care, sir—ave a care! You'll be a-breakin' of your neck, as

"Wot I says is this 'ere!"

ever was!' But 'e didn't care. He used to go tearin' down to the vil-lage at five miles an hour at least."

"What an awful road hog!" I said, laughing.

"Ah, you can larf, Master Cherry, but things ain't wot they was, an' more's the pity! I don't deny that some of these

noo-fangled inventions 'ave 'elped 'umanity. 'Lectric light, f'rinstance. That's a boon an' a blessin' to men. But look at these 'ere telephones. Wot use are they? I 'eard Mr. Quelch say only the other day that it was far quicker to send a letter to a person than to ring 'im up on the 'phone. The telephone's no time-saver. It's a time-waster. You 'angs on an' shouts 'Allo!' and you never gets nowhere."

"You're right there, Gossy," I said. "But the other things you speak of—motoring, flying, and so forth—are splendid. All progress is splendid. Mankind must go forward, not backward. Why, the time will come when we shall all be living in the air!"

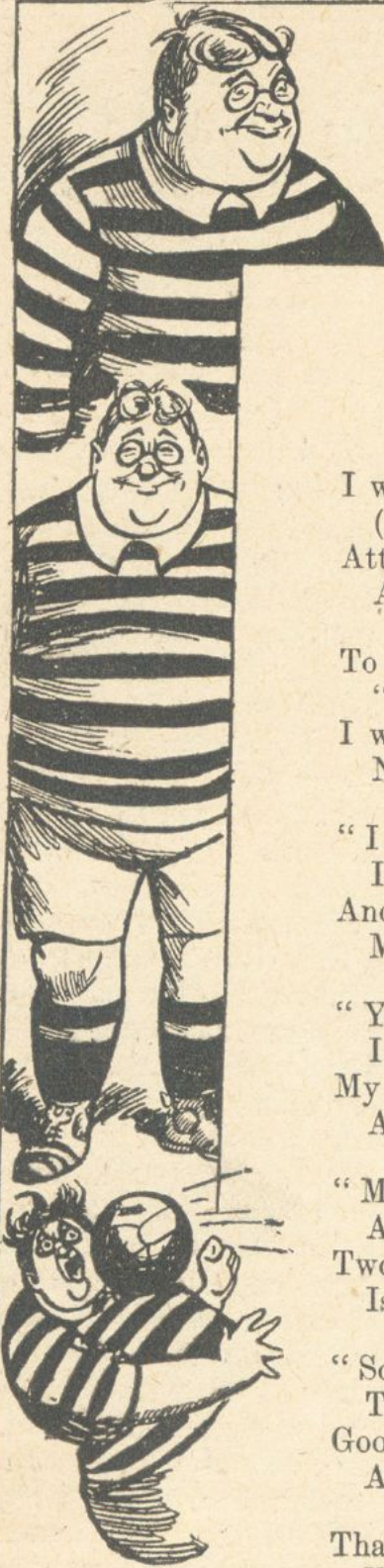
Gosling shuddered.

"Let's 'ope I don't live to see it, that's all," he said. "This 'ere Progress puts years on me. Wonder wot noo-fangled noosance they'll be bringin' out next? I shouldn't be surprised if them hengineers didn't put an injin on 'ouses, so that when you wants to move to the country, you only 'as to turn the 'andle! Ugh!"

And Gosling, shaking his head sadly, shuffled into his lodge, to console himself with the contents of a bottle which was labelled "Ginger Wine."



# A Famous Footballer!



By BILLY BUNTER

I went one day to Liverpool  
(A fishing village on the Mersey)  
Attired in shorts, and hefty boots,  
And a tight-fitting football jersey.

To an official I exclaimed,  
"I'm Bunter, late of Friardale City.  
I wish to play for Liverpool.  
Not heard of me? Well, that's a pity!

"I played for Pigville in my youth,  
I played for Chelsea in my prime;  
And now for Liverpool I'll play;  
My form is great, my speed sublime

"You ought to see me on the wing!  
I gallop like Dick Turpin's mare.  
My shooting, why, it breaks the net,  
And makes the goalie stand and stare.

"My present club will let me go  
At a most modest transfer fee;  
Two hundred thousand pounds in cash,  
Is all that they require for me.

"So sign me on without delay,  
Then you'll agree that there is still a  
Good chance for you to lick the 'Spurs,  
And Sunderland, and Aston Villa."

That club official looked at me,  
With mingled rage, contempt, and scorn.  
Said he, "You are undoubtedly  
The biggest duffer ever born!

"We want no plump and podgy youths  
To bring discredit to our team."  
And, saying this, he kicked me out,  
And promptly shattered my fond dream.

My name is on the transfer list,  
So if you are a bargain-hunter  
Make application right away  
For that star player, Billy Bunter!



# AT BAY!

*A Nature Story.* By CLIVE FENN

IT had been an extraordinarily busy day for the otter—called by some folks who are keen on Latin names, *Lutra vulgaris*—and there had not been any worrying incidents except the bark of a dog some distance off down the fields. The otter had had some narrow squeaks in her time, but of late life had been fairly peaceful, and the family of young ones in the snug burrow reached from the river bank, the entrance to the sanctuary being under where the reeds grew thick, had been well provided with fish.

But the children were almost in a position now to fend for themselves, which was fortunate, considering the hard season for their mother, with ever-growing appetites to cater for and all the risks inevitably attendant on the career of an otter.

To be sure, the home was all right, safe out of harm's way, and though Mr. Greensmith, the farmer, through whose land the river ran, kept dogs, and subscribed to the otterhounds, he was not accounted a bad man, from the point of view of the otter.

He was rather proud of his own stretch of the Brawl River. He kept it stocked, and clear of the trailing green reeds, which would have choked the water-course had they been left free to grow as they choose. Moreover, the farmer had never grumbled about the loss of his gooseberries. That is another tale.

Greysides, the otter, was more than partial to gooseberries, and the small orchard was quite handy to the river. Greysides had encountered Mr. Greensmith on several occasions. There had been no introduction. Greysides had been taken unawares the first time. Crouched in the long, wet grass, as she went back to her snugger in the river bank, the farmer had found her, and had stooped and rubbed her nose before she really understood exactly what was happening.

Somehow, the farmer took a real fancy to Greysides. He had been much interested in

otter hunts in days gone by. Now things were different. He was too busy to take part in the sport. You never saw him in the regular rig of the otter hunter—breeches, stockings, brogues with light nails, and with plenty of ventilation about them. After he had struck up a friendship with the otter, Greensmith felt quite different about otters in general. Greysides used to keep a look out for her new friend; she was bashful yet, but she knew she had nothing to fear from the big, kindly fellow who always came down the river path two or three times a day.

But Greysides remained shy. All her training had taught her that the world was crammed full of peril—especially for an otter in a sporting countryside. She felt she could trust the farmer, but, all the same, one had to be careful.

Then one thing led to another, and—well, there it was: the friendly little otter felt that the farmer was not, take him all in all, a bad sort, and she was dwelling on this side of the case that identical day in early spring as she moved cautiously out of the water and gained the rough bit of country from which you could see the old mill and the red gables of the farm.

She had left a nice fish for the youngsters to play with. She had caught it an hour before, as she was moving up against the stream. The fish came to meet her, and that finished that part of the story.

It was a joyous morning. She overlooked the fact that the farmer owned a terrier and an otterhound, and, moreover, that he knew another person who was keen on otter hunting, a form of sport which the Houses of Parliament ought to put down. It was a wonderful day. The sometimes careworn mother of a large family—Percy was, as a matter of fact, getting a bit out of hand; and Clorinda was becoming anxious concerning the sit of her fur; but what will you? the world is for the young, take it or leave it!—felt happy.



Winter was past and gone. There would be fresh young gooseberries in a month or two, or three—springs were getting later—and the air was soft and delightful. There was a flash as a bright-hued beetle skimmed over the river. Greysides pushed on, when suddenly, from out of nowhere, as it seemed to her, there was a frenzied rush, and the otter hound dashed at her, while the uncertain little

Her assailants could bark. They made plenty of noise. That was their undoing, for, as the three stood facing each other, there was a heavy tramping, and Mr. Greensmith himself, in his brown leggings and with his old soft hat on the back of his head, stood looking down at the combatants.

And what should he do but stoop down and stroke the otter. Greysides was trembling,



The old fighting spirit of her race was strong in the otter, and she faced the attackers with grim resolution.

terrier, whom the otter had always sedulously avoided, tried to grab her by the throat.

Greysides thought of her responsibilities, of the inexperienced youngsters who still looked to her. They knew practically nothing of fish catching yet, and had neglected the continuation classes on food, and what to avoid. She could not afford to die. The old fighting spirit of her race was strong in her just then, and she faced the attackers with grim resolution.

but her fear was leaving her. She remembered that incident in the orchard when she sampled the gooseberries. It was all right. The farmer picked her up. The dogs hung their heads, then made friends. The little family party in the cosy den of the river bank did not wait in vain for the return of their mother. Greysides has come to recognise that even dogs are all right—when you know them!





## ODE TO AN UMBRELLA.

By DICK PENFOLD.

I SAW you standing in the hall,  
 The rain came down in gentle patters ;  
 " I'll borrow thee ! " I cried with glee,  
 " The owner will not know ; what matters ? "

I opened you, and then prepared  
 To take a walk to Courtfield Town ;  
 The way was long, the wind blew strong,  
 And soon the rain came *pelting* down !

I clutched you as a drowning man  
 Clutches at the proverbial straw.  
 Blindly we went ; without intent  
 You cannoned into Gosling's jaw.

You tried to knock a lamp-post down,  
 You poked pedestrians in the eye ;  
 Even the Head shrank back with dread  
 To see us both go blundering by !

And as we fought our way along  
 A mighty deluge still descended.  
 Little I cared ; I just declared,  
 " The way you keep me dry is splendid ! "

I did my shopping in the town,  
 And shouted, as we homeward started,  
 " Let the rain pelt ! I've never felt  
 So joyous and so merry-hearted ! "

No sooner had I spoken thus,  
 I gave a panic-stricken shout ;  
 A fierce gust came, and (to your shame)  
 You suddenly turned inside-out !

You lifted me from off my feet  
 And wafted me towards the moon ;  
 I hung on tight, and yelled with fright,  
 " You're acting like a kite-balloon ! "

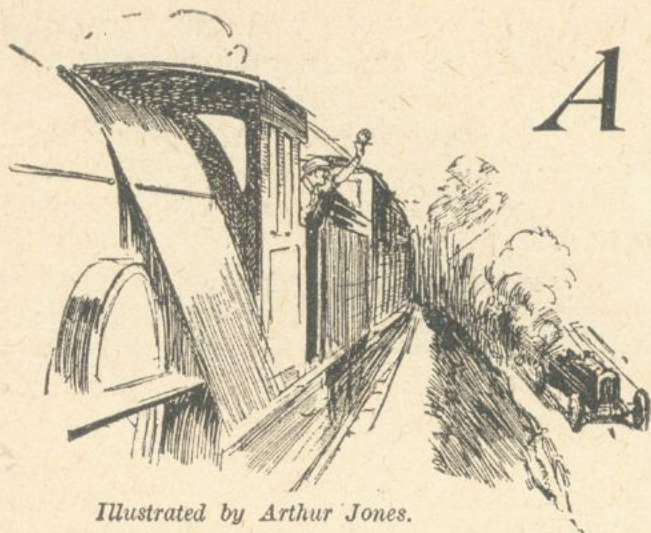
With one terrific, sickening thud  
 (The memory of it haunts me yet),  
 We crashed to earth ; what were you worth ?  
 ' Methinks I'm in your owner's debt !



# A RACE

AGAINST TIME!

By Captain Malcolm Arnold



Illustrated by Arthur Jones.

## The Graphic Story of a Once-Famous Racing-Car's Last and Most Thrilling Speed-Burst

### THE FIRST CHAPTER

#### The Old 'Bus

"DON'T let it happen again," Roy Maitland said. "I haven't got petrol and oil to waste on that old relict, you understand?"

Bill Stone shifted uneasily from one foot to the other, twiddling his cap between his capable hands.

"Yes, sir, I understand," he said. "But I—I didn't use a lot of petrol, sir, and—and it ain't fair to call 'Grey Goose' a relict. She just ticked over like a watch, sir."

"Ticked over be hanged!" said Roy. "I heard her from the bedroom."

He nodded his head towards the chauffeur.

"In any case, Bill, you've got quite enough to do here without wasting your energies on a has-been," he went on. "You're supposed to have finished work at six o'clock, but it must have been after ten o'clock when you were in the garage."

Bill drew a deep breath.

"I was only just playing about, Mr. Roy," he returned.

He moved towards the door, halting and glancing back at his master.

"What time do you want the car out this morning, sir? I suppose you're going up to the golf links, as usual?"

There was a certain suggestion of contempt in Bill's voice, which made Roy smile quietly to himself.

"Yes, I'll be going to the links, Bill," he returned. "I'll have the two-seater about eleven o'clock."

Bill went off, closing the study door behind him, and Roy Maitland, leaning back in the chair, smiled; then, crossing to the window, he was just in time to see Bill, with shoulders hunched up, go over towards the garage.

"Silly beggar!" Roy said to himself. "I suppose the temptation was too great. I shall have to get rid of the 'Grey Goose.'"

He took a turn up and down the study, his hands clasped behind his back, his pipe between his lips.

For four long years the garage behind that quiet little house, perched on the hills outside Aylesbury, had stabled that huge 100 h.p. Marden.

Under its waterproof covering it had stood in the corner of the big garage, a silent monument to the past—and a proof of a promise kept.



Roy Maitland had driven Grey Goose to victory in a great Tourist Trophy race, but it had been a victory dearly bought, for that particular race had seen a terrible accident, in which three famous drivers had met their death at a ghastly hair-pin bend, and the Grey Goose, eating the miles, had only just escaped sharing in the crash by the sheer skill of its cool, intrepid driver.

When the race was over, and the trophy was handed to Roy Maitland, he voiced his vow there and then. Never again would he enter into another competition in which brave men lost their lives for the sake of that demon King Speed.

Bill had been his mechanic then, just as he was now, and, when they returned to England, Grey Goose had been driven into the big garage, to find permanent quarters there.

It was pure sentiment that forbade Roy Maitland to sell the powerful monster, but from that day he had never even raised the sheet that concealed the long racing car.

Roy had taken over a large agricultural estate, and set his energies to work on farming, with the occasional relaxation of a round on the links.

To Bill Stone, a motorist first and always, the unexciting task of pursuing a perfectly harmless small white ball from green to green was the acme of contemptible waste of time and energy. Roy knew Bill's prejudices concerning golf, and had smiled at them often enough.

The little scene which had taken place this morning in the study was the outcome of certain observations which Roy had made. Within the past three or four months, he had noted that Bill had been spending long hours

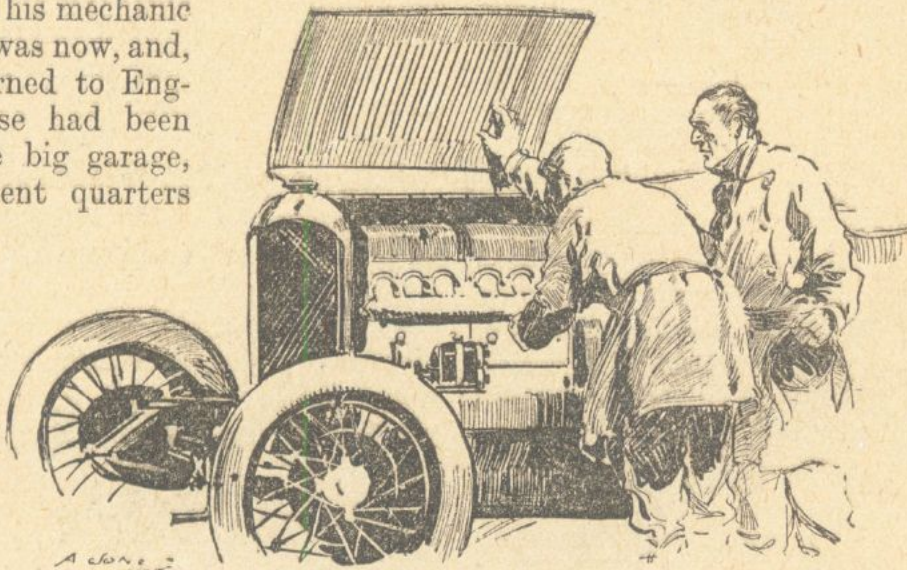
in the garage, with the doors closed and the electric light ablaze, but it was not until there had come to Roy's ears that deep-throated, familiar roar, that he realised what Bill was up to.

There was no other motor engine in the world that gave that curious vibrating note, the sound of mighty pistons, the deep, strong beat of power subdued.

The tall, athletic man had thrilled to it, as he had heard it through his bedroom window, and there had come into his heart a great longing—a longing that had to be checked and stifled if possible.

Grey Goose had called him, challenged him, and awakened an answering thrill.

"A promise is a promise, and a vow a vow," Roy Maitland told himself. "I'll race no more. But I'm not going to have Bill tempting me. Best thing I can do is to sell the old 'bus, and put an end to it."



Roy made a hasty examination of the engine. Neither rust nor dust was there. Grey Goose might have just come out of the machine shop! (See page 200.)

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### The Only Chance

At eleven o'clock promptly Bill came round to the front of the house with the smart two-seater, and Roy appeared a moment later with his golf bag.

The run to the links was covered in about half an hour, and, as Roy made his way into the club-house, one of the servants came towards him.

"Someone's been ringing for you, Mr. Maitland," he said. "They got on to your house first, and telephoned here afterwards. They want you to ring them up at once."

The telephone number was in Mayfair, and



Roy recognised it; it was that of his uncle, Sir Stephen Vane.

Roy entered the telephone-box, called the number, and, after a wait of five or six minutes, he heard his uncle's voice.

"That you, Roy?"

"Yes, Uncle Stephen."

"Thank goodness I've got you. Listen to me, Roy. I'm in a terrible hole, and I want you to try and help me."

"What's the matter, Uncle Stephen?"

"It's—it's Cynthia."

Roy caught his breath sharply at the name. Cynthia Vane, Sir Stephen's only daughter, was to Roy Maitland the acme of womanly perfection. Two or three months before Roy had spent a few weeks with his uncle in London, and had made that most important discovery.

Cynthia had just returned from the Continent, and Roy had danced attendance on her, every day finding him deeper and deeper in the toils. He had never been able to discover what Cynthia's opinions of him were, and she had gone off with a friend to a seaside resort before Roy could test the matter.

He had made up his mind, however, that on his next visit to London he would take the plunge.

"Yes, what has happened to Cynthia?"

He heard his uncle groan.

"I've just seen her friend, May Harris," the old gentleman declared. "Cynthia is going off to America to-day, and here I am laid up with a rotten attack of gout, and can't move hand or foot."

"Off to America? But why?"

"I got it all out of May Harris," his uncle explained. "It appears that while they were on the Riviera they met a certain Captain Spartzi—some confounded Continental adventurer, I suppose; but he managed to turn that foolish girl's head, and you know how stubborn she is. The worst of it is that she's her own mistress now, and can do what she likes."

"In any case she's going to Liverpool, and has booked a passage on board the Cardenia for New York. I haven't a soul that I can send who would have any influence on Cynthia, Roy, but I know that she thinks a great deal of you."

Sir Stephen cleared his throat.

"I want to stop her, Roy," he said. "This fellow, Ivor Spartzi——"

"Ivor Spartzi?"

A sudden memory flashed into Roy's mind.

"I've heard that name before," he went on, "and I think I've met the rascal. If it's the same man, then, by Jove, he's an absolute rotter; a mere scheming adventurer living by his wits."

"That's just the sort of brute he would be," his uncle returned shortly. "The truth is that Cynthia and I haven't been getting on too well lately, Roy. I dare say I'm as much to blame as she is, but in any case I can't allow her to ruin her life, and I want you to help me."

"What can I do, sir?" Roy asked helplessly. "It's too late for me to come to town now."

"Of course it is. The train leaves in under an hour, and it's the boat express. It'll go straight through to Liverpool. I've thought of wiring and getting her stopped—arrested—anything—but you know what that means, where Cynthia is concerned! She would never forgive me, and would probably take the first opportunity to marry that fellow out of spite!"

The old fellow's voice took on a thinner note.

"And here I am, helpless—helpless! That's why I've rung you up, Roy. By hook or by crook you must get to Liverpool and reason it out with that foolish girl. How you are going to manage it, I don't know. If you were in London, you might get to Croydon and hire a 'plane, but you're stuck away there in Aylesbury——"

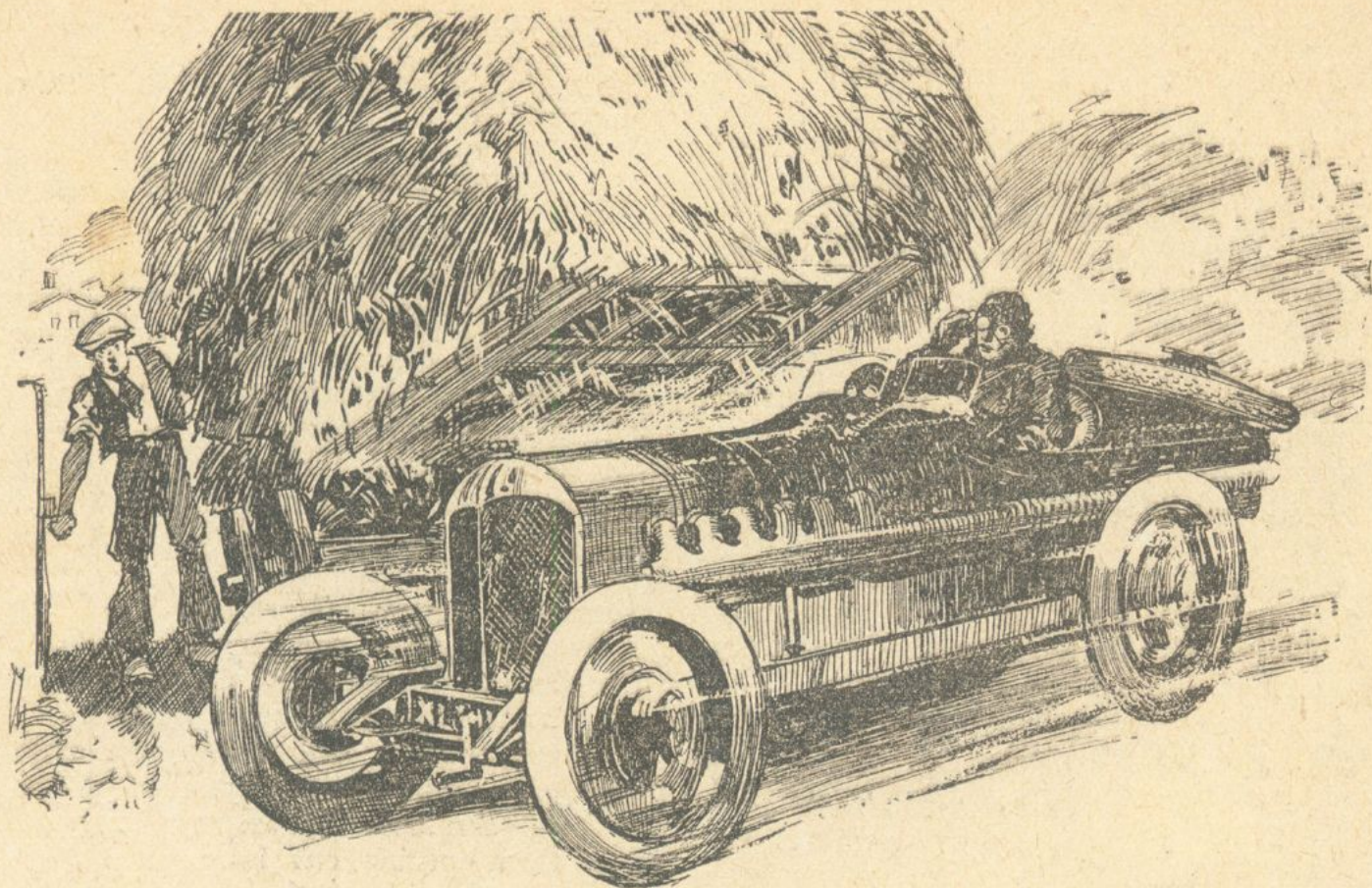
"Look here, Uncle Stephen, have I your consent to marry Cynthia if I get there in time?"

He heard the old fellow gasp; then a chuckle came over the wire.

"Marry her? Why, hang it, that's what I've been hoping you would do for this last three months, you young fool. And I think Cynthia was of the same mind. But you hung about, hemming and hawing. You never won your races that way, Roy, and you can't expect a girl to wait all her life!"

Roy slammed the receiver on the 'phone





A deft swing to the right and left, a wisp of hay brushing Bill's face as he ducked—and Grey Goose swung into the centre of the road again. (See page 201.)

and turned away, a grim smile on his tanned face.

So that was the position, was it?

His Uncle Stephen and—and Cynthia regarded him as a laggard in love.

He strode across the lounge and passed out of the club-house. Bill was backing the two-seater into line with the other cars when his master's voice hailed him.

"Here, Bill, quick! We're going home!"

Never were gears changed quicker, and there was a grin of anticipation on Bill's face as he swung the car to a halt in front of his master.

"No golf, Mr. Roy?"

"No, Bill," Roy returned, as he climbed into the seat. "Push along as quick as you can, Bill. We—we've got a job on!"

That run to the quiet little farm was carried out in quick time, and, instead of halting in front of the house, Roy directed Bill to run the two-seater into the garage; then, leaping from the vehicle, Roy pointed to the dark corner where the tarpaulin cover lay in limp folds over the Grey Goose.

"We're going to Liverpool, Bill," he said, "and Grey Goose is going to take us there! How long will you be getting her ready?"

Bill started up with a shout of delight.

"Taking out—Grey Goose, sir?" the mechanic broke out. "How long will I be—not ten minutes, Mister Roy! Why, I've had her greased and oiled and tuned up this last month, sir. I couldn't let the old beauty lie there and rust, blow me if I could! Give me—give me ten minutes!"

"Right!"

Roy turned and hurried across to the farm, going up to his bedroom, where he opened a long-locked trunk, and out of it he drew his old racing kit—overalls, close-fitting helmet-cap, goggles.

They had lain in that trunk from the moment he had discarded them after the great, tragic race, and something stirred in his heart as he began to make a swift change.

Mrs. Penbury, Roy's housekeeper, flung up her arms in sheer dismay when she saw the over-all-clad figure come running down the stairs.



"Oh, Mr. Roy, sir, what are you going to do? What are you going to do?" she demanded.

"I want some sandwiches, and a couple of thermos flasks, quick, Mrs. Penbury!" he said. "Bill and I are going out—for a spin."

Mrs. Penbury was about to speak again, when the loud roar of the 200 h.p. engine sounded, echoing round the farm, and the woman's kindly face blanched.

"You're not taking out that great, murderous brute, sir," she said.

Roy passed her, hurrying down the hall and out into the gravel space in front of the house.

Round the corner came the Grey Goose, sleek, powerful, grim, and Roy's heart fairly leaped as he saw the long, familiar bonnet, the huge tyres, and the low, racing frame.

Bill was at the steering-wheel, Bill in his greasy overalls, his racing cap drawn well down over his eyes, and a grin on his face that nothing could move.

"I've filled her up with petrol, Mr. Roy," he declared. "Listen to her. Ain't she a beauty?"

He brought the car to a halt and allowed the engine to race for a moment, the deep, reverberating roar increasing until it became a perfect tornado of sound.

The feather of blue smoke pulsing away from the exhaust indicated that Bill had spoken the truth when he said that Grey Goose needed nothing in the way of lubrication, and the body, clean and speckless, hinted of many quiet hours of toil on the part of the mechanic, toil that he need not have accomplished.

Roy made a hasty examination of the powerful racing engine. Neither rust nor dust was there. Grey Goose might have come out of the machine-shop, and Roy drew a deep breath of contentment.

Mrs. Penbury came hurrying to the car, with a small wicker basket crammed with sandwiches and a couple of thermos flasks.

"Where are you going, sir? Where are you going?" the old dame demanded, as Roy swung into position behind the huge steering-wheel.

He leaned forward and laughed.

"We're going to Liverpool," he returned, "and I—I may bring someone back with me, Mrs. Penbury."

## THE THIRD CHAPTER

### A Duel of Speed!

A GLANCE at his wrist-watch told Roy that he had a quarter of an hour's start on the boat express. There were also the miles that divided Aylesbury from London as an additional advantage, but he had to cross half England through some of the most congested parts, and he knew that the slightest hitch, the least mishap, would be fatal.

From Aylesbury the Grey Goose was heading for Buckingham, covering the seventeen miles through Winslow just under the half-hour, then to Rugby, and on to Stafford.

Through villages and towns the great Grey Goose drummed its way, checked here and there when it reached the more congested parts, then opening out later when long, empty stretches of undulating roadway ribboned away beneath its flying wheels.

Roy had deliberately chosen roads that would keep him in touch with the railway, and here and there he struck bad patches of surface that made Bill groan for the safety of the tyres.

One long hill between Rugby and Stafford was being negotiated when, half-way down, there came lumbering out through the gateway of a field a huge hay-cart.

It was being backed out, the driver standing at the head of his horse. Slowly the heavy waggon emerged, and Bill gave one warning shout to the intent, silent figure at the wheel.

"Look out, Mr. Roy!" he called.

The Grey Goose was skimming downhill like a thing of life, and Bill caught at the side of the car to steady himself.

He watched his master out of the corner of his eye, for here was one of those grim tests that tried the nerve of the skilled.

To brake and endeavour to check speed would have been the act of the unseasoned. By a miracle a spill might have been avoided, but it would mean many minutes delay. Bill





ARTHUR JONES 23

To face page 201]

A DUEL OF SPEED  
Racing Car Versus Express Train I



saw that well-shaped foot thrust down on the throttle, and Grey Goose leaped forward in response!

A deft swing to the right and left, a wisp of hay brushing Bill's face as he ducked, a momentary vision of that huge wagon looming like a cliff above them, and Grey Goose swung into the centre of the road again, and from the field there came the startled bawl of the horrified carter.

At the foot of the hill Roy glanced sideways at Bill. The mechanic was lying back in his seat breathing heavily, but the broad, ugly face widened into a grin and Bill nodded.

He was quite satisfied now. His master had not lost that old, quick, assured touch, that swift-ness of decision which rises almost to genius.

A long, toilsome climb followed, a grinding piece of collar work that steadied the flying monster and sent breaths of hot, petrol-tainted air into the driver's lungs.

One hundred h.p. chained under a bonnet, straining to its task, generates immense heat. Little puffs of steam wafted away from the radiator as they reached the top. The Grey Goose was boiling, and no wonder. It was eating up the miles like the monster it was, and Bill busied himself with the oil-pump for a few seconds.

Another long sweep down-hill served to cool the engine a trifle, for Roy shut down the throttle and opened the air-inlet wide, allowing the Grey Goose to run down on its own momentum.

On the level below they gathered up speed again, then, on rounding a bend there came another test.

Ahead of them, barely two hundred yards off, was a steam-roller drawn up close to the hedge, and in front of it across the road was a huge boom suspended on two heavy trestles.

A knot of workmen were seated under the hedge, eating their lunch. They had not started to break up the road, but had erected that barrier as a proof of their intention.

Bill heard the shout that went up from the road-makers, and one thickset man leapt forward, waving a useless red flag.

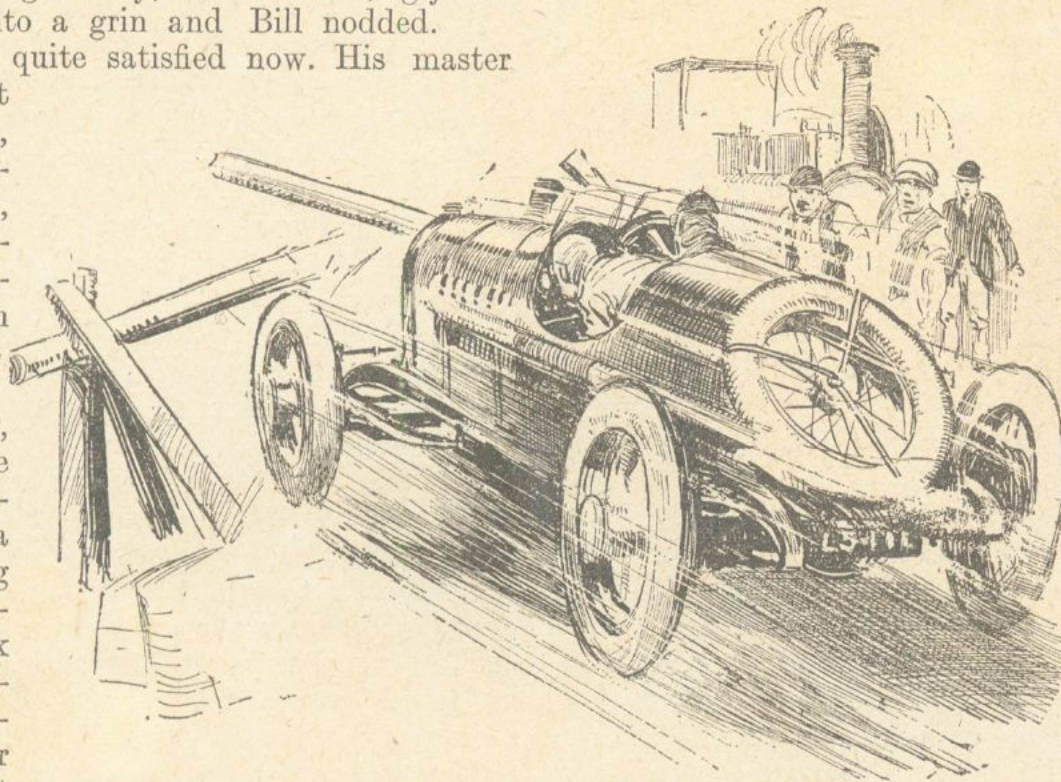
A car moving at sixty miles an hour doesn't take long to cover a hundred yards! Before the foreman of the gang had stum-

bled out of the ditch, Grey Goose was charging headlong for the barrier, and here again Roy gave proofs of his keen driver instinct.

He smashed into that thin trunk amidships, the stout radiator taking the shock full on its bull nose.

There was a rending crash as the boom shot away from its supports. It leaped into the air, quivering at the impact, and the great car tore on like a flash, passing the steam roller and the group of affrighted workmen.

The boom crashed to earth again, grazing



There was a rending crash as the boom shot away from its supports and leaped into the air, while the great car tore on like a flash! (See this page.)



the rear wheels, and, in a smother of dust, Grey Goose continued on its way.

"Hope that crash won't start our radiator leaking!" muttered Bill, when he had recovered his breath. "I wonder what we're going to come against next?"

Driver and mechanic and pulsing monster were covered now with a coating of grey dust. Bill's lips were grimed and cracked, and the lean, handsome face of the man at the wheel was drawn and tense as he peered through his goggles along the road.

They swung into a stretch that ran beside the railway, and presently Bill heard the rumble of distant wheels on the embankment. Glancing back over his shoulder, the mechanic caught sight of a pillar of white smoke in the distance.

It came nearer and nearer, and at last Bill could see the huge engine, with its lines of passenger coaches. Closer and closer the great express drew, and Bill recognised it finally.

Leaning forward, he touched Roy on the arm.

"It—it's the express, sir. She's overhauling us at last!"

The long, grim race against time had been well fought, but that mighty engine, hurtling over the smooth, glimmering rails, had overhauled its challenger.

Nearer and nearer the great passenger train drew, until at last it was running level with the speeding monster on the road. Foot by foot, yard by yard, the powerful railway engine drew ahead, and Bill saw the faces of the passengers peering out from the compartments at the racing car below.

Grey Goose had been climbing a slight rise, and now it reached a level, and Roy saw a long stretch of roadway ahead. Grey Goose began to put on speed then, and Bill saw the speed indicator mount step by step steadily.

Fifty — fifty-two — fifty-five — fifty-eight — sixty — sixty-two!

The great express train began to drop to the rear. Coach after coach was caught up and passed, the trail of dust rising behind Grey Goose growing into a column, a thick, dense cloud.

On and on, with the wind shrieking in

their ears, and the roar of the exhaust deafening them to all other sounds. On and on, down the lonely road, flashed the racer, revelling in another lease of life.

It drew level with the engine, and, leaning out of the cab, the fireman waved a grimy paw to the grey car below. Bill answered that gesture, then the engine slipped out of his vision, and the Grey Goose went on—alone!

On the left of the road the ground rose sharply, forming a high bank. Ahead, there suddenly appeared a bend, carrying the road away from the railway line—a swift, treacherous turn.

"Look out, sir! Look out!"

Bill, with his eyes on the speedometer, saw that the needle had not dropped, and he glanced at the set, grim face of the driver.

Would Roy dare to take that bend at the terrific pace he was moving at?

Bill lay back, swaying out to the left, then round came the front wheels in a lock, and the car skidded from one side of the road to the other as it took the bend.

The shock and surge almost lifted Bill out of his seat.

For a moment Grey Goose seemed to stand still, as its wheels tore up the soft road surface. That awful skid had carried it almost on to the ditch on the right, and one wheel hung dangerously over the soft ground, then the cool, powerful wrists of Roy swung the steering-wheel round again, and Grey Goose recovered itself, leaping away from danger.

The passengers on the express train had seen that amazing display of nerve, and from compartment after compartment there arose a cheer, involuntary acknowledgment of skill and courage that a Britisher will always give vent to.

Three minutes later the railway track and the express had vanished, and Grey Goose was swarming down another stretch of lonely road that ran through tall masses of trees.

"Sandwich, Bill?"

The cool voice brought Bill out of his dreams and he reached for the little wicker basket, opening it. They had been on the road for hours, and neither had broken their fast since the early morning.

Bill fed his master, for those strong, sure



hands could not move from the steering-wheel, and the pile of sandwiches vanished swiftly, as did the contents of the thermos flasks.

They slammed through Crewe, avoiding the main streets, and came out again near to the railway line. And so the last stage of the grim race began.

There were many sections of that road when the Grey Goose touched seventy, and Bill prayed for the safety of the overtaxed tyres.

All that man could do he had done for the Grey Goose, but this punishing, tearing conflict, this ceaseless thrust across England, without halt or breathing space, was more than any car could be expected to stand up to.

In addition, his fears as to the damage the radiator might have sustained in the barrier crash some miles back were only too well founded. The shock had strained the radiator badly, and started a serious leak, so that for many miles now the precious cooling-water had been leaking away, causing the long-suffering engine to become seriously overheated.

At last ominous rattlings and complaining notes from the engine told the trained ear of Bill that Grey Goose was reaching the end of her tether.

"She'll fiop—blinkin' well flop like a house of cards," the mechanic told himself. "It ain't fair—not by a long chalk it ain't fair! He'll drive her to death."

And that is what Roy Maitland did do.

Through the traffic-filled streets of the great seaport thundered Grey Goose, dust-covered, smoking. As they reached the broad roadway that led to the docks, Bill felt that ominous pulling, that sensation of inertia, which can never be mistaken.

Through the gates to the dock, on towards the railway platform, Grey Goose headed, its powerful engine running now with a halting, irregular note.

Outside the station, Roy switched off the quivering, pulsing monster, and leaped from his seat, his face twisted into a look of grim content.

"She's done, old chap!" he said to Bill. "Bearings all gone to blazes! But, by James! we've won. Look!"

A throaty beat sounded, and, clattering over the points, came the long boat express, gliding for the platform.

But Bill had no eyes for express or platform or carriages; he had climbed out of the car, and was staring with dimmed eyes at the wonderful machine that had been his pride.

He knew that irretrievable damage had been done to that wonderful, carefully-tended engine.

Old Grey Goose would fly no more.

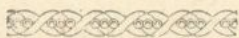
Ten minutes later, a grimed, greasy figure in overalls had side-tracked a white-faced, tremulous girl in one corner of the platform, and was talking to her earnestly, entreatingly.

What Roy said to Cynthia Maitland need not be recorded, but the result was that, presently Bill, moaning over his ruined monster, heard a soft voice by his side, and looked round into Cynthia's tear-filled eyes.

"And you—you are sure that it—it will never run again?" Cynthia asked.

Bill looked first at her, then at his master, and the burly mechanic squared his shoulders.

"That don't matter, Miss Cynthia," he said. "After all, it—it was only—only an old 'bus, and its job was done!"



THE END.





# A CRICKET BALLAD

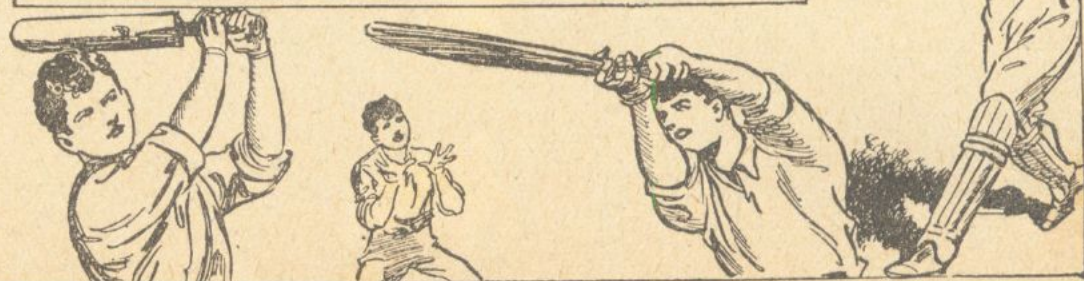
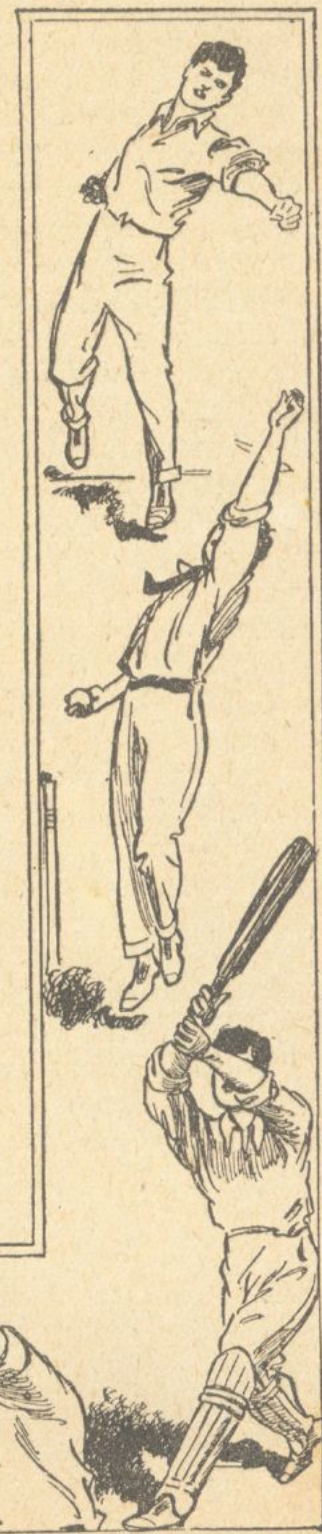
When the summer sun is streaming  
Over all the pleasant fields ;  
When the cricketer is dreaming  
Of the joy a "century" yields.  
When the bowler hops and hurries,  
And the fieldsmen sprint like hares,  
It's good-bye to woes and worries,  
And a fond farewell to cares !

When the runs come fast and faster,  
And the batsman's fairly set ;  
When no shadow of disaster  
Even threatens him as yet.  
When his schoolmates cheer and holler  
As they see him strive and thrive,  
You can bet your bottom dollar  
He's the happiest boy alive !

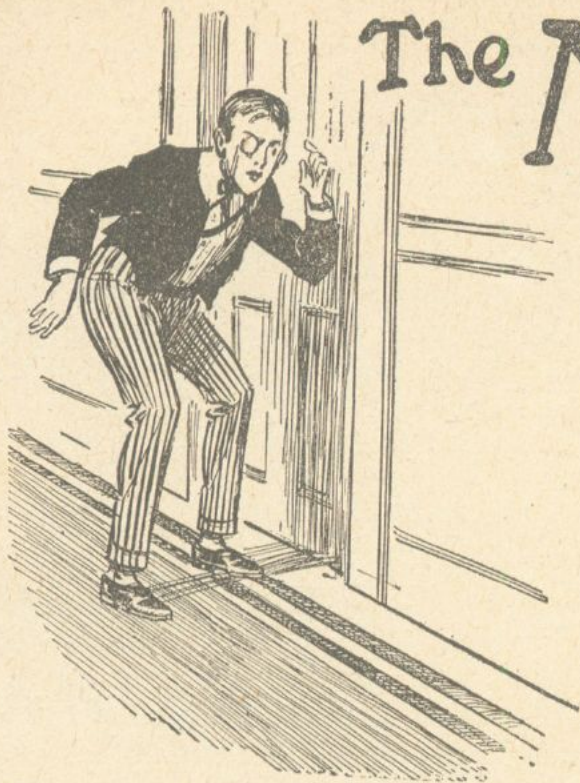
When the bowler's arm is tiring,  
And he cannot hit the sticks ;  
When the fieldman is perspiring  
As he sprints to save a "six" ;  
When the fellow at the wicket  
Makes him chase the ball a mile,  
Will he grumble ? No, he'll stick it,  
And he'll smile a cheery smile !

When the winning hit is made, sir,  
Or perchance the winning catch,  
When a chorus of "Well played, sir !"   
Greet the boy who won the match.  
When within the cool pavilion  
Tea is laid for twenty-two,  
It's a moment in a million,  
And the skies seem bright and blue.

When your head is on the pillow,  
And you're in the Land of Nod,  
Once again you wield the willow,  
With Bob Cherry, Bull, and Todd.  
Yes, the thrilling, breathless tussle  
Is replayed in blissful dreams ;  
And you exercise each muscle,  
And behold the sun's bright beams !







# The MERRY PRISONER.



*A short complete story of St. Jim's School, in which Arthur Augustus D'Arcy proves he has a kind heart!*



By MARTIN CLIFFORD

Illustrated by R. J. MACDONALD

TRIMBLE was in trouble. He always is. But on this occasion the matter was more serious than most.

Let me plunge into the sordid details.

A rabbit-pie had disappeared from the school kitchen. The cook explained to the Head that it had "walked." But the Head knew that a rabbit-pie is no pedestrian, and that it could not have disappeared without some human agency.

Dr. Holmes summoned a general assembly in Big Hall, and he probed very deeply into the matter.

Baggy Trimble was found to have left his dormitory at dead of night. At first, Baggy strenuously denied all knowledge of the affair, but under the Head's searching cross-examination he broke down. At last he had to admit that he had taken the pie.

"But there is every excuse for me, sir," he said to the Head.

Dr. Holmes frowned.

"Theft is inexcusable, Trimble," he said.

"Oh, really, sir—! The fact is, I was nearly starving. I didn't have a meal all day yesterday. I came down late for breakfast, and there wasn't a crumb left. After morning school I had to go on an errand for my Form-master, and so I missed my dinner. When

tea-time came, I was carrying Mr. Selby's golf-clubs for him on the links. So I missed tea. And in the evening I had an imposition to get finished for Mr. Railton. He said if it wasn't handed in by bed-time he'd cane me. So I hadn't time to think about supper. Consequently, sir, I was wasting away to a shadow, and I was so ravenous during the night that I even felt like eating my—my bootlaces, sir!"

At this, there was a titter from the assembly in Big Hall.

"Silence!" thundered the Head. "I cannot accept your statements, Trimble. You are a proven fabricator. Your word cannot be relied upon in any particular. For this outrageous theft from the school kitchen, you will be severely flogged!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

The Head beckoned to the school porter.

"Taggles!" he said. "I will trouble you to take this boy on your shoulders."

"Werry good, sir."

It looked as if Baggy Trimble was in for a terrible flogging. But he was saved on the scaffold, so to speak.

"Pardon me, sir," interposed Mr. Railton, "but Trimble's statement that he had an imposition to write for me last night is



perfectly true. I was not aware that he missed his supper in consequence."

"Did he complete the imposition, Mr. Railton?" asked the Head.

"No, sir. He brought me less than half of it. And as I had been having a great deal of trouble with him of late, I gave him a very severe caning. In view of this, might I suggest that his punishment takes some other form?"

The Head, who had been about to wield the birch-rod, laid aside that instrument of torture.

"Very well, Mr. Railton," he said. "I will inflict a different, though not less drastic punishment. Trimble must learn to keep his hands from picking and stealing. He will be confined to the punishment-room for twenty-four hours. During that period, his diet will consist of bread and water."

Trimble's face fell. He would almost have preferred a birching.

Food was the be-all and the end-all of Baggy's existence, and to be placed on a diet of bread and water would be gall and worm-wood to him.

The fat junior threw out his arms appealingly.

"Have pity, sir!" he pleaded. "Don't let me go to the punishment-room! Don't put me on bread-and-water, sir! I'll be as good as gold in future — honour bright, sir!"

But the Head was adamant. He signalled to Kildare of the Sixth.

"Take this wretched boy to the punishment-room, and see that he is securely locked in," he said.

Kildare marched Baggy out of the crowded hall, and the school was then dismissed.

Only one fellow felt sorry for the delinquent. This was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Gussy has a heart of gold, and he is for ever thinking and planning for those who are less fortunate than himself.

"I feel dreadfully sorrowful for poor Twimble," remarked the swell of St. Jim's.

Jack Blake gave a snort.

"I haven't any patience with the fat burglar!" he growled. "A fellow who raids the school kitchen deserves all he gets."

"Hear, hear!" said Digby and Herries, in chorus.

"Don't be hard on Twimble, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "He has a sort of kink. When he grows up, I expect he'll be a kleptomaniac. He simply can't keep his hands from pickin' an' stealin'."

"Then the sooner he learns, the better," was Blake's comment. "This term of imprisonment in the punishment-room will give

him a chance of brooding over his shady past, and making good resolutions for the future."

"But think of his tewwible punishment!" said Arthur Augustus. "A whole day an' night in the punishment-woom, without a soul to speak to, without a book to wead, an' without anythin' to eat except bwead an' water. It will be a heart-bweakin' expewience."

"Let Trimble get on with it!" growled Blake. "I've got no sympathy for him."

Neither had Herries and Digby. But Arthur Augustus had plenty of sympathy. He was fairly bubbling over with it.

"I'm goin' up to the punishment-woom, deah boys," he announced.



A clutching hand appeared through the opening in the ceiling. "Heah we are, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "Theah's a cuwwant cake!" (See Page 207.)



What on earth for?" asked Digby.

"To talk to Twimble through the key-hole, an' cheer him up," was the reply.

Despite the protestations of his chums, Arthur Augustus proceeded to the old tower, and climbed the spiral staircase which led to the punishment-room.

On reaching the stout oak door, Gussy heard sounds of groaning from the interior of the dreaded apartment.

"Are you there, Twimble?" he called through the keyhole.

The groaning ceased as if by magic.

"That you, Gussy?"

"Yaas, deah boy."

"Have you come to torment me, or to help me?"

"To help you, of course!"

"Then I'll tell you what you can do," said Baggy Trimble. "I've just made a discovery. There's a loose plank in the floor of this room. It lifts right up. So if you'd like to help me, Gussy, you can take some tuck into the lumber-room that's underneath this and smuggle it up to me. I can't exist on a bread-and-water diet, you know."

Arthur Augustus jumped at the idea.

"I shall be vewy pleased to fetch you some gwub, Twimble," he said. "I am suah you must be dweadfully hungwy."

"Hungry? Why, I could eat a donkey's hind leg off!"

"All sewene, deah boy I'll buzz along to the tuckshop befoah the bell goes for mornin' lessons, an' bring you some supplies."

The generous Gussy, eager to help the prisoner, sped off to the tuckshop. He made numerous and varied purchases, and conveyed them to the school tower.

He had to exercise great caution, for if his intentions were divined by the authorities, he would find himself in serious trouble.

It was just like Gussy to run grave risks for the sake of another—even for such a worthless fellow as Baggy Trimble.

The supplies of tuck were conveyed to the lumber-room. By placing a number of packing-cases on top of each other, Gussy was able to reach the aperture in the floor of the punishment-room.

A clutching hand appeared through the opening.

"Heah we are, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "I'll pass the things up to you one at a time. This is a cuwwant cake——"

The clutching hand closed upon the cake, and it was promptly transferred to the regions above.

"This is an apple turnovah——"

The apple turnover promptly followed the cake. And so it went on, until Baggy Trimble found himself in possession of sufficient provisions to last him for the twenty-four hours of his captivity.

He didn't mind his solitary confinement a bit, especially when his benefactor brought him a number of thrilling adventure stories to read.

"This is top-hole!" murmured the fat junior. "I'm dodging lessons, and I've got plenty to eat and plenty to read. What could be nicer?"

Baggy had, of course, restored the floor-board to its proper place. He also smuggled the food and books under the bed whenever he heard footsteps.

Taggles brought him his bread-and-water at intervals. And the school porter could not understand why the prisoner looked so cheerful and contented.

Baggy seemed to be enjoying his captivity as much as the imprisoned Cavalier of old, who wrote the famous lines:—

"Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage."

Arthur Augustus paid him several surreptitious visits during the day, and ministered to his comfort in every possible way.

Baggy Trimble had such a good time that when the twenty-four hours had expired, and the Head gave the order for his release, he actually pleaded to be allowed to remain in the punishment-room!

Fortunately for Baggy, the fact that he had been supplied with food and reading matter never came to light. And perhaps it was equally fortunate for Gussy the Good Samaritan!

THE END





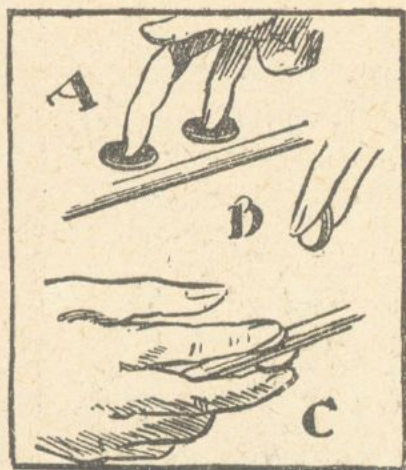


# SIX TRICKS AND PUZZLES

*When you have ten minutes to spare, just try these Tricks and Puzzles.  
(Contributed by "The Magician," of "Chuckles.")*

## No. 1.—THE TWO COINS TRICK

PLACE two coins on the table and put the tips of your first and second fingers on them as shown at A. Now the trick is to



No. 1

get the two coins together in the position shown at B without taking the fingers from the sides of them.

This is done by working the coins to the edge of the table and then moving one of them over the edge and bringing it under the

table. When you have done this, draw the two coins together as shown at C. For the purposes of this amusing trick, it is best to select a table with a rounded edge. But try the little feat for yourselves.

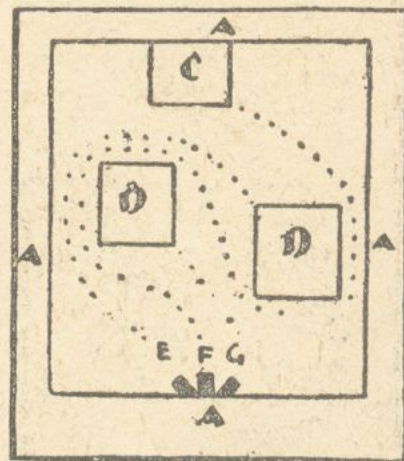
## No. 2.—THE PROBLEM OF THE WATER-MAINS

FROM time to time I have given some very interesting little problems in my corner, and these have proved so popular that I am going to set you one to solve. I am also giving the solution of it, but you can pencil a copy of the diagram in this column, leaving out the dotted lines, and then try the problem on your friends.

Now just look at the diagram for a moment. A represents a wall, while the squares B, C and D stand for three houses. E, F and G are three water-mains. It was required to run water-pipes from E to D, F to C, and G to B, without crossing the pipes or going outside the wall. How was it done? In the

diagram the dotted lines represent the water-pipes, and show how the problem was solved.

If you are asking your friends to a party, it is a good idea to prepare this diagram on several pieces of paper, so that everyone can try to solve the problem.



No. 2

## No. 3.—BALANCING A CIGARETTE PAPER

MOST magicians and conjurers vary their entertainments a little with a few balancing tricks, and these always "go down well" with an audience. Some of the balancing tricks are very difficult, and need a tremendous amount of practice, but here is one you can do for yourself right away if you are smart.

Borrow a cigarette-paper from your pa, or some other grown-up. You will find it is of the thinnest material, and shaped rather like the little illustration at A. Place the paper over the bridge of the nose in the manner depicted at B, and then try to balance it. Even if you cannot do it the first time, you may be able to do it after two or three attempts.



No. 3



#### No. 4.—THE MAGIC HA'PENNY

FOR this simple little trick you will require two halfpennies as much alike as possible, and an ordinary breakfast cup. Have one of the ha'pennies hidden between the second and third fingers of your left hand, as shown at A. By keeping the hand half closed you can prevent this coin from being seen. Show your audience the other ha'penny and then cover it over by the cup. (See B.)

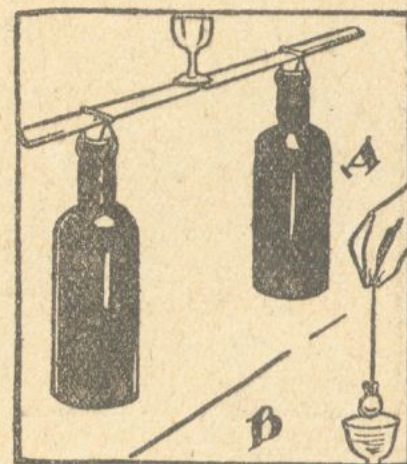
Now lift the cup with the left hand and take away the coin with the right hand. As you hold up the ha'penny to let your chums see it quickly replace the cup on the table with the left hand, at the same time slipping the



No. 4



No. 5



No. 6

coin, which is held between the third and fourth fingers of the left hand, under the cup as depicted at C. Now take a wand, or pencil, from your pocket and at the same time slip the coin you took from under the cup out of sight. Tap the cup with the wand and then lift the cup. To the astonishment of your friends they will see a coin on the table.

#### No. 5.—THE VANISHING SIXPENCE

THIS is a trick that anyone can perform, and yet, although it is so simple, it will puzzle most people. On the nail of your second finger place a little wax or soft candle grease. If you can tint the wax to a pinkish colour it would be so much the better. Show your hand open to your chums and ask one of them to place a sixpence—or a farthing would do—into your palm. Diagram A shows the coin in the palm of the hand, while the arrow

indicates the wax covering the second fingernail. When you have the coin in the palm of your hand, bend your fingers in the manner also shown at A, until the wax presses on to the coin. Open your hand quickly and show it to your chums empty. Of course, the coin will be stuck to the wax at the back of your second finger, as shown in the diagram B.

#### No. 6.—THE DANCING WINE-GLASS

GET two bottles of equal weight, together with corks of equal thickness. Take the corks and cut each of them to a wedge shape at the top. Replace the corks in the bottles, and then balance on them two table-knives

with heavy handles. The blades of the knives should just touch—see diagram A. Next obtain a thin wine-glass and place it on the blades of the knives in the manner also shown in diagram A. Slowly pour into the wine-glass as much water as you can. By the help of a chum and the slight adjustment of the knives, you will find you can get the glass almost full of water.

Tie a small metal ball or a metal button to a piece of string, and carefully let it down into the water as shown at B, taking care that the metal ball or button does not touch against the glass itself. This action of letting the button into the water will cause the wine-glass to dance.

Readers should not perform any of these tricks—and more particularly No. 6—until they have had some practice. Learn the tricks well, practise in private, and you will become a popular performer.









# Mornny's Master- Stroke!

By Owen Conquest.

A splendid long complete story of Jimmy Silver and Co., of Rookwood, especially written for "The Holiday Annual." Illustrated by G. W. Wakefield.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

### Unexpected

IT was frightful luck.

And it was not Jimmy Silver's fault.

Even Arthur Edward Lovell—sometimes a stern critic—admitted that it wasn't Jimmy's fault.

It was just awful luck, one of those things that do happen just when they are not wanted to happen.

Detention on a half-holiday never was pleasant. Detention on the half-holiday specially devoted to the Greyfriars football match was distinctly unpleasant; but detention for the junior football captain on such an occasion—that could not be adequately described by any adjective to be found within the covers of the dictionary.

And that was what had happened.

Jimmy Silver could not feel that it was his fault. The snowball had been intended for Tommy Dodd, of the Modern Fourth. It was by a curious concatenation of unexpected circumstances that Mr. Roger Manders had received it instead of Tommy Dodd.

A junior schoolboy, even a junior football captain, could not be expected to foresee, and guard against, a curious concatenation of unexpected circumstances.

On that Monday afternoon, lessons over,

Jimmy Silver had come out of the schoolhouse with a cheery smiling face, little dreaming of what was in store for him. His chums, Lovell and Raby and Newcome, were in cheery spirits also. Life looked good to the Fistical Four of Rookwood.

There had been a fall of snow. It lay thick among the old beeches. Jimmy Silver and Co. strolled across to the Modern side—Mr. Manders' House. They were not thinking of Mr. Manders, they were not, in fact, thinking of anything unpleasant at all.

They were only thinking of looking for some of the Modern fellows, and snowballing them; a harmless and necessary entertainment, even if it was not indeed the bounden duty of Classical chaps.

Tommy Dodd's study window was open.

Tommy Dodd's study being rather high up in Mr. Manders' house, the interior could not be seen from the quad. But the probability was that Tommy Todd and his study-mates were at tea in the study. Jimmy Silver could not help thinking what a happy surprise it would be for the Modern fellows if a snowball dropped into the study and landed on the tea-table, or on the features of Thomas Dodd. He was not particular as to whose features it landed upon; he would have preferred Tommy Dodd's. But Tommy Cook's or Tommy Doyle's would have served almost as well.



To Mr. Roger Manders' features he did not give a thought, not having any reason to suppose that those sharp, hawkish features were by any chance in a Fourth-form study.

All Rookwood was aware that Mr. Manders had a prying way of dropping into a fellow's study at unexpected moments. But Jimmy Silver was not bothering his head just then about Mr. Manders' disagreeable manners and customs.

He gathered a snowball with care, an extra large one, and kneaded it well. Lovell and Raby and Newcome looked on, grinning, as Jimmy Silver took aim at the open window.

The snowball flew with plenty of force and unerring aim.

It whizzed in at the open window.

And—horrible to relate—at that very moment an angular form, a sharp face, and a beak-like nose, showed up at the window; the form, face, and nose being the property of Roger Manders, senior Modern master of Rookwood School.

Jimmy Silver and Co. gazed at it with horror.

It was too late to recall the snowball, which whizzed on its way like a bullet from a rifle.

Crash!

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Lovell.

Jimmy Silver did not speak. He was frozen with horror. The big snowball smashed all over the face of Mr. Manders.

There was a muffled yell.

Mr. Manders staggered back from the window, and disappeared from the view of the Fistical Four.

Three Modern juniors in the study stared at him blankly. They did not laugh; they were too terrified even to smile. The sight of Roger Manders sprawling across the study was too alarming to excite risibility, though otherwise funny enough.

"Ow! Oh! Ooooooh!" spluttered Mr. Manders.

"Oh, crumbs!" breathed Tommy Dodd. "What awful ass has been chucking a snowball at Manders!"

"Groooooogh!"

Mr. Manders bumped on the tea-table, and set the crockery dancing. He slid to the floor, sitting down with a bump.

But he was on his feet again in a twinkling, jumping up almost as if he were made of india-rubber.

He made one furious leap to the window.

He wanted to know who had hurled that snowball, he was thirsting for information on that subject.

He dabbed and clawed snow from his face, and glared down into the quadrangle.

The Fistical Four had had no time to flee, even if horror had not rooted them to the ground.

Mr. Manders' baleful eyes fixed upon them.

"Who threw that snowball?" he thundered.

Jimmy Silver gasped.

"Sorry, sir!"

"Did you throw that snowball, Silver?"

"Yes, sir; but——"

"Wait!" thundered Mr. Manders. "I am coming down! Wait!"

He disappeared from the study window again. Jimmy Silver and Co. looked at one another.

"Better hook it!" said Lovell. "He's awfully wild——"

"He looked a bit wild!" murmured Raby.

"He can't touch us," said Newcome. "Modern master can't cane Classics."

"Not in theory," remarked Jimmy Silver. "He might in practice. I think we'd better cut."

And the Fistical Four cut—fading across the quadrangle at their best speed.

Ten seconds later Mr. Manders emerged from his house, raging. He looked a good deal like a lion seeking whom he might devour. But there was nobody for Mr. Manders to devour—the four Classical juniors had vanished from sight. Mr. Manders, breathing indignation, wrath, and fury, started for the school-house, to lay his case before Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth Form, and to demand condign punishment for Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth.

And to judge by Mr. Manders' looks, he was going to demand, at least, something lingering, with boiling oil in it.



## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### The Blow Falls!

“**W**HERE'S Silver?”

Bulkeley of the Sixth was asking that question up and down the Rookwood school-house.

“Anythin' up, Bulkeley?” inquired Mornington of the Fourth.

“Silver's wanted.”

“What's he done?”

“Snowballing a master, I think,” said Bulkeley. “Anyhow he's wanted, and at once. Where is he?”

“Echo answers where!” answered Mornington, affably, and he dodged out of reach of a cuff from the prefect.

Bulkeley of the Sixth tramped up the stairs to the Fourth-form passage, to look for Jimmy Silver in his study.

That was where Jimmy Silver was, at the present moment—in dismay, with his dismayed chums. That there was going to be trouble the Fistical Four realised only too well.

Mr. Manders was the last man in the world to forgive such an injury. The Classical juniors having dodged him in the quad, it was certain that he would come over to the schoolhouse. That meant being called up before the master of the Fourth.

“It's only a licking, old chap,” said Lovell, by way of comfort.

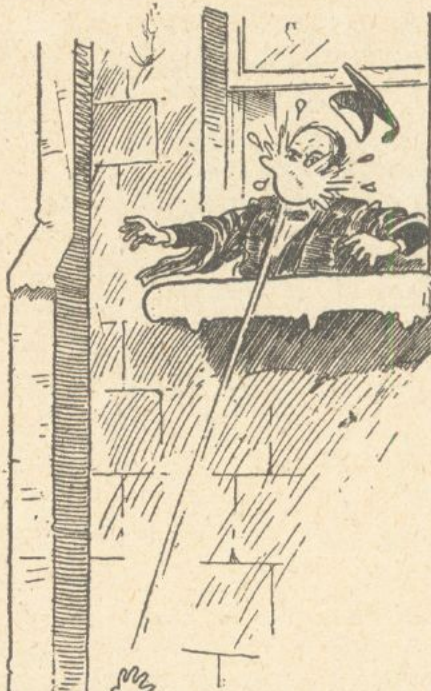
Jimmy glared.

“I don't want a licking!” he answered.

“Well, you'll get over it,” said Lovell.

“Might be only detention.”

“My hat!” said Raby. “If Jimmy got detained for Wednesday—”



Jimmy Silver almost turned pale at the thought. On Wednesday Harry Wharton and Co. were coming over from Greyfriars for the football match.

“Oh, crumbs!” murmured Jimmy.

“Dalton wouldn't be such a beast—”

“Not a bit of it,” said Lovell. “Manders would. Manders hates footer, and he likes to bilk a chap out of a fixture. You remember he detained Tommy Dodd the day we played Bagshot last time. He likes doing these things. But Dicky Dalton is a sportsman. And it's in Dalton's hands—Manders can only complain to him. Let's hope, though, that you'll only get a licking, old chap.”

Jimmy Silver rubbed his hands ruefully. He would have preferred a licking to detention on a half-holiday when there was a football fixture. But he did not exactly yearn for a licking.

“Oh, my hat!” gasped Lovell, as the snowball smashed all over the face of Mr. Manders. “Ow! Oooch!” spluttered the Modern Housemaster. (See page 213.)

That meant being called up before the master of the Fourth.

Form passage. The captain of the school looked into the end study.

“Oh! You're here, Silver!”

“Here I am, Bulkeley!” answered Jimmy, with great meekness.



Bulkeley gave a grim look.

"You young ass! What have you been up to? Haven't you sense enough not to play your japes on a master—especially a master like Mr. Manders?"

"It was an accident——"

"Better tell that to your form-master," said Bulkeley. "If you can make him believe that snowballs fly about by accident, all the better for you."

"I mean, it wasn't intended for Manders."

"Manders got it, it seems."

"It was meant for another rotter—I mean——"

"You'd better go and tell all that to Mr. Dalton," said Bulkeley. "He's waiting for you in his study, and Mr. Manders is with him."

And Bulkeley strode away. Jimmy Silver dismally slipped from his seat on the corner of the study table.

"Now for the jolly old circus!" he groaned.

"After all, I dare say it's only a licking," said Lovell, still in his role of Job's comforter. "Four on each hand, perhaps——"

"Ow!"

"Keep a stiff upper lip," said Lovell, encouragingly. "A licking's only a licking, you know."

Jimmy gave him an expressive look, and quitted the end study. Lovell could say, very much at his ease, that a licking was only a licking. It loomed up more unpleasantly to the fellow who was going to capture it.

"I say, Jimmy!" Tubby Muffin met Jimmy Silver at the foot of the staircase. "I say, old chap, you're for it!"

"Br-r-r-r!" grunted Jimmy.

"Manders is looking awfully wild, and Dalton has a face like a gargoyle," said Tubby impressively. "I fancy it will be a Head's flogging. Do you think so, Jimmy?"

Jimmy Silver did not reply in words—Tubby's happy anticipations afforded him no pleasure at all. He took Reginald Muffin by the collar and sat him down forcibly on the lowest stair. There was a howl from Tubby Muffin; and Jimmy proceeded on his way a little solaced.

He tapped at the door of his form-master's study and entered. Richard Dalton, the

master of the Fourth, gave him a severe look. Mr. Manders, who was standing by the form-master's table, gave him a black scowl.

"Silver! Mr. Manders informs me that you hurled a snowball at him, at a window in his House!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton.

"It was an accident, sir——"

"What?"

"I—I was chucking it in at Tommy Dodd, sir," gasped Jimmy. "I—I didn't know Mr. Manders was in the study at all."

Mr. Manders curled his thin lip bitterly.

Obviously he did not believe that statement. Roger Manders, indeed, never believed anything if he could help it. He was that unpleasant kind of man.

"Ah! that alters the case," said Mr. Dalton, his brow clearing a little. "Mr. Manders will take a more lenient view of the matter if you convince him that it was an accident——"

"Absurd!" said Mr. Manders sharply. "The snowball was hurled at me, at a study window in my House—an open window——"

"It was Dodd's study, sir!" said Jimmy.

"You did not know that Mr. Manders was in Dodd's study at the time, Silver?"

"Never had the least idea, sir!" answered the junior. "I was going to drop the snowball among them—I thought the Modern chaps would be at tea—only a lark on the Moderns, sir. Then all of a sudden I saw Mr. Manders at the open window after I'd just chucked—I mean, thrown—the snowball."

"After?" sneered Mr. Manders. "Or before?"

"After, sir!" said Jimmy.

Mr. Dalton gave the Modern master a rather sharp look.

"I have every reason to place confidence in Silver's word, Mr. Manders," he said. "He is an honourable lad; and since I have been master of the Fourth Form, I have never known him tell an untruth. I accept his statement that the affair was accidental."

"Thank you, sir!" said Jimmy Silver.

Mr. Manders set his lips.

"I have been struck down by a missile," he articulated. "Actually struck down, at a window of my own House! I——"



"One moment, sir!" said Mr. Dalton quietly. "I believe Silver's statement that the missile was not intended for you, and that he did not know that you were in the room at all. I am far, however, from excusing his conduct in hurling a snowball into a room in your House. Such a 'lark,' as he calls it, is very reprehensible. I shall leave Silver's punishment in your hands, as the offence was committed in your House."

Mr. Manders' angry brow cleared.

For a moment he had feared that the unhappy victim was going to escape. He was relieved upon that point now.

"Very good, sir!" he said. "I expected that of you, Mr. Dalton."

Jimmy stood in silent dismay.

He was well aware how little mercy he had to expect from Mr. Manders, who disliked him from of old.

"Nevertheless," continued Mr. Dalton, "the fact that the offence was unintentional should weigh with you, Mr. Manders. I think a light punishment should meet the case. However, I will, as I have said, leave the punishment to your sense of justice."

And Mr. Dalton walked to the study window, leaving the Modern master to deal with Jimmy Silver.

Mr. Manders looked at Jimmy, and his eye strayed to Mr. Dalton's cane, which lay on the table. Jimmy mentally prepared himself for a most tremendous caning.

But Mr. Manders did not touch the cane.

"In the circumstances, Silver," he said slowly, "I shall not cane you—I am bound to defer to your form-master's opinion."

"Oh!" gasped Jimmy in amazement. "Yes, sir! Thank you, sir! I—I'm really very sorry the snowball hit you, sir."

"Very good," said Mr. Manders. "I hope that the profession of repentance is sincere, Silver. I will take it as sincere and award only a light punishment. You will be sentenced to detention for the next half-holiday, and during your detention, in the form-room, you will write out three hundred lines from the *Æneid*." Mr. Manders turned to the Fourth form master. "I trust, Mr. Dalton, that you do not regard that punishment as excessive, considering the offence?"

"Certainly not," said Mr. Dalton, taking no notice of the sarcastic inflection in Mr. Manders' voice. "It is not more than adequate in my opinion. If you are satisfied——"

"Quite, sir!"

"Very good, then!" said Mr. Dalton.

And Mr. Manders whisked out of the study. Jimmy Silver stood rooted to the floor. He was so overwhelmed with dismay that he could not speak.

The punishment was no more severe than he might have expected—it was, in fact, less so. Apparently, Mr. Manders, contrary to custom had been merciful.

But the next half-holiday was Wednesday, and Wednesday was the date of the Greyfriars football match.

Perhaps Mr. Manders hadn't known that—or hadn't thought of it! But there it was!

"You may go, Silver," said Mr. Dalton. "I may say that Mr. Manders has punished you very lightly, and you should be thankful. I think you should have thanked Mr. Manders."

Jimmy found his voice.

"But, sir——" he gasped.

"You should feel obliged to Mr. Manders, Silver, for letting you off so lightly!" said the Fourth form master, frowning.

"But, sir——"

Mr. Dalton interrupted the junior without ceremony.

"I am sorry to see you ungrateful, Silver, for Mr. Manders' extreme leniency. You may go."

"But——" stuttered Jimmy.

"Leave my study!" said Mr. Dalton, raising his hand.

Jimmy Silver almost limped from the study.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER

### Nothing Doing

So that was that! Detention for the junior football captain—on the day of one of the most important fixtures on the junior list.

The Fourth heard it with dismay and wrath.

Even Tommy Dodd and Co. of the Modern



side, heard it with as much wrath and dismay as the Classics.

Classical and Modern were at one, for once, in their view of the situation. For on the occasion of a School match, when the eleven was selected from both sides of Rookwood, the fellows ceased to be Classics and Moderns, as it were, and became simply Rookwooders.

Jimmy Silver, captain and centre-half of the junior football team, could not be spared from the eleven.

That was impossible.

In almost any other match, it wouldn't have mattered so much. But the Greyfriars match was a match in which Rookwood Junior eleven had about equal chances. Harry Wharton and Co., of Greyfriars, were a tough proposition; extremely tough. For weeks Jimmy Silver had been knocking his men into shape for that match. And with the best junior footballer at Rookwood left out, what was to become of Rookwood's chances?

There were, indeed, fellows who considered that they could replace Jimmy Silver, with advantage to the team. Tubby Muffin was one of them—and he made the offer. Tubby's offer was not seriously considered. In fact, Arthur Edward Lovell took Tubby by the collar and shook him—which was the only answer Muffin received.

It was generally agreed that Jimmy Silver

had to play, or the match would be a goner.

It was true that, outside the junior football club of Rookwood, even that catastrophe would have been viewed with calmness. The solar system would have rolled on its accustomed way, regardless, even if the Greyfriars match had been a goner.

But to the Rookwood footballers, it was a catastrophe compared with which the

great earthquake at Lisbon, the Great Fire of London, and other historical episodes of that sort, were very small beer indeed.

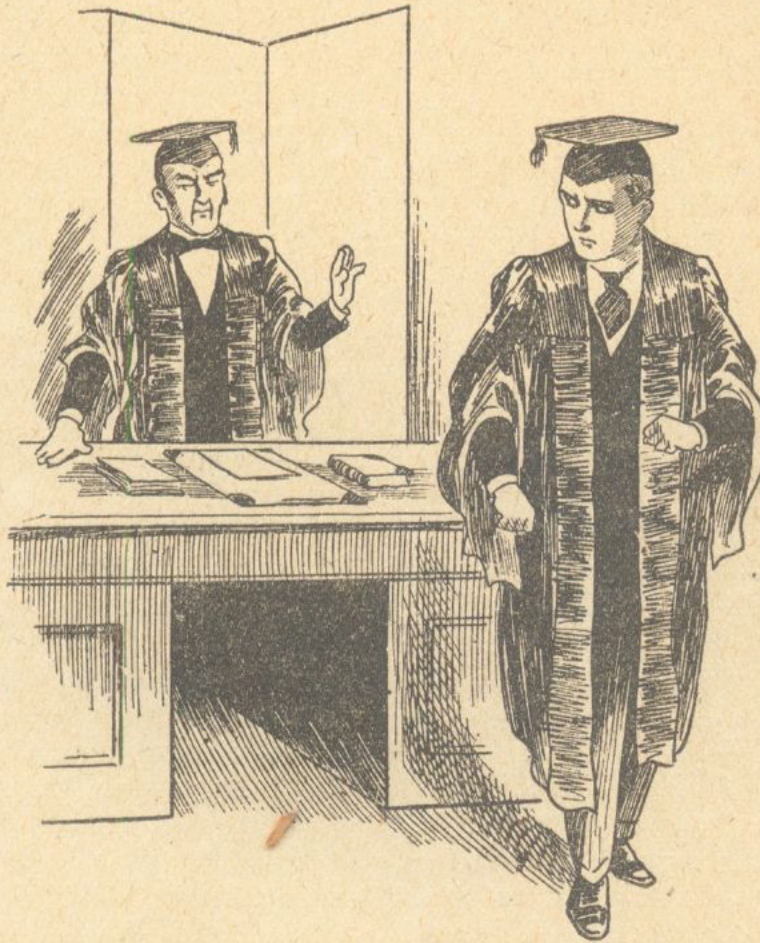
To be licked by the visiting team after a strenuous match would have been bad enough, but not so bad. Sportsmen could stand that. But to be walked over by the visitors because their football captain was detained, writing out silly Latin classics in the form-room—that was the limit!

"If only it wasn't Manders!" groaned Arthur Edward Lovell.

There was the rub!

Any other master at Rookwood, finding that he had sentenced a footballer to detention on the date of an important fixture, would have made concessions. Detention postponed from Wednesday to Saturday would have met the case; and any Rookwood master would have made a concession like that—any master but Mr. Manders.

But the juniors knew that it was hopeless to ask Mr. Roger Manders for anything of the kind.



"I see no reason to defer Silver's punishment because he is playing in a football match!" said Mr. Manders drily. "Then there is nothing more to be said!" said Mr. Dalton, and he left the study with a clouded brow. (See page 219.)



Mr. Manders took no interest in games—or in the school record. Indeed, any interest he took was of the reverse kind—he disliked games and considered them so much waste of time. His ideal schoolboy was a fellow with a bumpy forehead, a pair of big spectacles, an absent-minded manner, peering into pots in the school lab.: which was not the Rookwood ideal at all. If a fellow could have thought in geometry, and talked in algebra, Mr. Manders would have been almost kind to him.

“It’s a plant!” was Valentine Mornington’s comment.

“How’s that?” asked Jimmy Silver, who was debating with his chums the faint hope of making an appeal to Mr. Manders.

“He’s wangled this!” answered Morny.

“Wangled it?” said Lovell.

Mornington nodded emphatically.

“Yes! Manders knows Wednesday is Greyfriars day—knows that Jimmy is captaining the team—and he’s dished us on purpose! That’s his charmin’ way!”

Lovell whistled.

“My hat!” said Jimmy blankly.

“He wouldn’t be such a beast!” said Raby.

“Such an awful beast!” said Newcome.

Morny shrugged his shoulders.

“Isn’t he every kind of a beast?” he inquired.

“Well, yes! But——”

“Blessed if it doesn’t look like it,” said Jimmy Silver, slowly. “I was surprised at his letting me off a licking! I expected a record whaling, when Dalton left it to him. Of course, this hits a chap harder than any licking.”

“That’s his game!” said Morny.

Arthur Edward Lovell breathed hard.

“It seems almost too mean, even for Manders!” he said. “But he’s such a beast—and such an ass! He’s quite capable of thinking that three hundred lines from Virgil would do a fellow more good than a football match.”

“There are idiots like that!” remarked Conroy.

“There are—and Manders is one of them!” said Lovell. “I agree with Morny—Manders knew all about the Greyfriars’ match, and he’s dished Jimmy on purpose.”

“If Dicky Dalton knew that——” said Rawson.

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

“He wouldn’t believe it!” he said. “Blessed if I can quite—it seems too mean even for Manders. Anyhow, he wouldn’t listen to anything against another master.”

“That’s so!” agreed Mornington. “But it’s the case all the same. We’ve got to beat Manders somehow.”

“How?” said Oswald.

“I’m going to speak to Mr. Dalton about it,” said Jimmy Silver resolutely. “He ought to be able to manage it for us. I know he would if he could.”

“Try it on, anyhow!” said Lovell.

Jimmy Silver dropped into his form-master’s study that evening to try it on. Mr. Dalton listened to him quietly.

“You see, sir, if it were made Saturday instead of Wednesday, it would be all right,” Jimmy wound up. “In fact, detention for two half-holidays instead of one—I wouldn’t mind that—so long as I’m free on Wednesday to play Greyfriars.”

Mr. Dalton nodded.

“I quite see the point, Silver. Mr. Manders takes little interest in sports, and I’m sure had no intention of interfering with the school games. I will speak to him on the subject. The matter is entirely in his hands now; but I am sure he will concede such a point.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Jimmy gratefully.

“Wait here, Silver, and I will go to Mr. Manders’ house and speak to him at once,” said the master of the Fourth kindly.

Mr. Dalton crossed over at once to Mr. Manders’ house. He found that gentleman in his study: engaged in the pleasant occupation of caning Towle of the Modern Fourth. Towle limped away rubbing his hands, and Mr. Manders fixed his eyes inquiringly upon the form-master.

Mr. Dalton proceeded to explain.

He had no doubt that Mr. Manders—owing to his lack of interest in the school sports—had quite unintentionally interfered with the junior fixture, in his sentence on Jimmy Silver. So he was surprised to find Roger Manders in an utterly uncompromising mood.

Mr. Manders’ lip curled as he listened.



"I understood, sir, that you left the punishment of Silver in my hands, as his offence was committed against me, and in my House!" he remarked.

"That is quite correct, sir," said Mr. Dalton, "But——"

"I do not see there is any 'but' in the case," said Mr. Manders. "I gave Silver what you yourself considered a light punishment."

"That is true; but as it happens, the 'next' half-holiday is the date of a football match which the juniors regard as important!" the Fourth-form master explained laboriously.

"I am not closely acquainted with the important affairs of the Lower boys," said Mr. Manders, with a freezing smile.

"Silver is junior football captain, Mr. Manders. Surely you are aware of that?"

"Yes, I am aware of that."

"His presence is required in the match on Wednesday——"

"And all discipline and order may be thrown aside, in order that a junior game may not be interfered with?" inquired Mr. Manders.

"Nothing of the kind, of course. But the deferring of Silver's punishment from Wednesday to Saturday——"

"I see no reason to defer it. No doubt on Saturday some other important junior affair would arise, to defer it still later," said Mr. Manders, with a disagreeable smile. "Perhaps a meeting of the junior debating society, or a run of the cycle club——"

"I will answer for it that such will not be the case!" said Mr. Dalton, quietly. "Having left the decision in your hands, Mr. Manders, I cannot now rescind your sentence myself. But I should be very much obliged if you would make this concession——"

"I should be very glad to oblige you, Mr. Dalton," said the Modern master, genially, "but I feel it my duty not to allow Silver to throw aside all restraints in this way. If the junior boys are to dictate to the masters the precise time of their detention, there is an end to all law and order in the school."

"On this very exceptional occasion——" urged Mr. Dalton.

"The fact is, I see nothing whatever exceptional in this occasion," said Mr. Manders, still genial.

Mr. Dalton drew a deep breath.

"If that is really your view, Mr. Manders——"

"It is my fixed and most decided view, Mr. Dalton."

"Then there is nothing more to be said!"

And Mr. Dalton quitted Mr. Manders' house with a clouded brow—leaving Mr. Manders smiling as if he had quite enjoyed the interview.

Jimmy Silver was waiting hopefully in his form-master's study. His hope was faint—and it was quite dashed by Mr. Dalton's look when he returned.

"I am sorry to say that Mr. Manders declines to alter his decision, Silver," said Mr. Dalton.

"Oh, sir! But——"

"I am sorry; but there is nothing to be done," said the Fourth form-master. "I am afraid that you have only yourself to blame, Silver; you should be very careful how you play pranks on Mr. Manders' side of the quadrangle."

"Yes, sir. But——"

"There is no more to be said."

Jimmy Silver quitted the study, and returned to the junior common-room, where a crowd of eager fellows were waiting for news.

"Well?" exclaimed Lovell eagerly.

"Nothing doing."

"Oh, rotten!"

"Dicky Dalton put it to Manders, and Manders won't hear a word!" groaned Jimmy Silver. "The beast is pleased, of course."

"That was his game all along," said Mornington.

"Looks like it, now! But there's nothing doing!"

"Then the Greyfriars' match is a goner!" growled Lovell.

"You fellows will have to do your best without me," said Jimmy Silver dolorously. "Morny will captain the team—and Morny is a good skipper, anyhow."

"Thanks," said Mornington, with a grin.

"But that isn't the programme. We've got to have you, Jimmy! We've got to beat Manders somehow."

Jimmy Silver shook his head dismally. Beating Manders was a consummatio



devoutly to be wished; but to Jimmy Silver it did not seem to be within the range of practical politics.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER

##### Lovell Thinks It Out.

“BOLT!”

Arthur Edward Lovell uttered that remark suddenly; firing it off, as it were, like a bullet from a rifle. Lovell's face was bright—as if he had found himself in possession of a remarkably striking and original wheeze.

“Bolt!” repeated Jimmy Silver, suspending his prep. in the end study, and staring at Lovell across the table.

Arthur Edward nodded vigorously.

“That's it! Bolt!”

“What the thump—”

“I've got it, you see! Bolt,” said Lovell. “On Wednesday afternoon, I mean. I've thought it out.”

“Do you mean break detention?” asked Jimmy.

“That's it.”

“I've thought of it. But—”

“Bother the buts,” said Lovell, decisively. “Bolt's the word. Did you know the senior eleven is going over to Bagshot on Wednesday, to play Bagshot seniors?”

“Of course, ass.”

“That means that most of the prefects will be away!” remarked Raby.

“Better than that,” said Lovell, triumphantly. “I heard Bulkeley and Neville talking about it. Dicky Dalton is referee.”

“Sure of that?” asked Newcome.

“Quite! He's refereeing the match at Bagshot. That means that he'll be out of gates all Wednesday afternoon—all the time the match is on here with Greyfriars, and some time afterwards. They're not likely to be home till dusk at least. Long before that we shall have beaten Greyfriars, and Jimmy can be back in the form-room, ready for Dicky Dalton to look in on him and find him there.”

“Hold on, though,” said Raby, “Jimmy's got to turn out three hundred lines of Virgil while he's in detention.”

Lovell smiled.

“Can't Jimmy get them done in advance?” he asked sarcastically. “Can't he have the stuff in hand, and leave it in his locker in the form-room ready?”

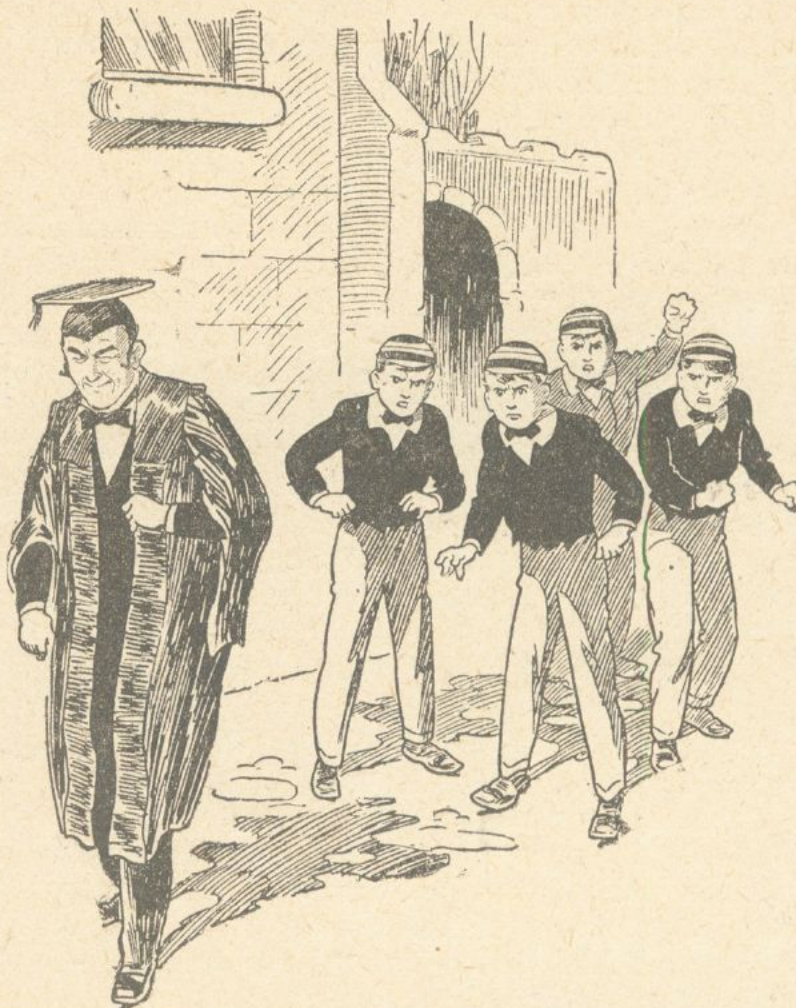
“Oh!” said Raby.

“That's possible!” said Jimmy Silver, thoughtfully, “if Mr. Dalton is away all Wednesday afternoon, he can't tell whether I'm in the form-room or not.

He can leave me there when he starts—”

“And you can walk out as soon as he's gone,” said Lovell.

Raby and Newcome looked interested. Lovell was not, as a rule, the fellow for brilliant wheezes. He believed that he was; but as a matter of actual fact, he wasn't. But this time it certainly looked as if Arthur Edward Lovell had hit upon the method of cutting the Gordian knot



“You will go into the Form-room at two and remain there until five, Silver!” said Mr. Manders; and stalked away, leaving the Fistical Four gazing furiously after him. (See page 223.)



"So long as Jimmy's lines are done, and he's sitting in the form-room when Mr. Dalton comes in, it's all serene," declared Lovell.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Something in that!" he said. "Only Mr. Dalton may ask a prefect to keep an eye on the form-room."

"That's the beauty of it!" grinned Lovell. "All the Classical prefects are in the senior eleven, excepting one—Carthew. They'll all be over at Bagshot, And you know Carthew. He'll be supposed to be on duty—but he'll clear off for the afternoon—catch Carthew hanging about a half-holiday to keep an eye on the form-room."

Really, it seemed as if Arthur Edward Lovell had thought of everything.

"It may come out afterwards that Jimmy played in the match!" observed Newcome.

"May or may not!" said Lovell, "but if it does it's only a licking. Jimmy can take a licking for the sake of beating Greyfriars at footer."

"Willingly!" said Jimmy Silver; "and it mayn't come out either. Unless—unless Manders happens to give the football a look-in—"

Lovell chuckled.

"Catch Manders giving the football a look-in!" he said. "Wild horses wouldn't drag Manders to see a football match."

"Well, that's true, too!" said Newcome. "Manders won't even walk down to Big Side to see the senior team play in a big match."

"He's never been known to look at a junior match," said Lovell. "Tommy Dodd is ashamed of having a master who won't take any interest in football. It's a sore point with those Modern cads."

"True, O King!" said Raby.

Jimmy Silver forgot all about prep. in thinking over this important development.

It might be possible to play in the Greyfriars match after all; and that was a glorious prospect. Breaking detention was a rather serious matter; but in the present circumstances, it had lost its seriousness for the chums of the Fourth. The Greyfriars match

was more important than detention, from the junior point of view; and the suspicion that Mr. Manders had intentionally "mucked up" the fixture weighed with the juniors.

With Mr. Dalton and the Classical prefects gone, it was hard to see what was to compel a detained junior to remain in the form-room. Carthew, the slacker of the Sixth, was sure to go out of gates on his own business; and certainly the Head would not interest his lofty self in so very trifling a matter. Mr. Dalton might ask one of the other masters to have an eye on the "detenu"; but it was highly improbable.

Jimmy Silver's face was much brighter now.

Lovell regarded him triumphantly. Arthur Edward was quite proud of having found the solution of the problem.

"Looks like business, what?" grinned Lovell.

"It do—it does!" said Jimmy Silver. "Lovell, old man, you're a trump. It looks all right."

"What about Manders?" asked Newcome.

"Nothing about Manders!" said Lovell.

"I mean—he might keep an eye open—"

"On the other side of the quad. Manders will be in his own House," said Lovell. "He can't see across a quadrangle and through several brick walls. Manders is sharp, but not so sharp as that."

"Blessed if Lovell hasn't thought out the whole bizney!" said Raby with accustomed admiration. "Blessed if I knew he had the brains."

"Look here——" began Lovell warmly.

"Chuck over Virgil!" said Jimmy Silver decidedly. "I'm dropping prep. for this evening—I'll chance it with Dicky Dalton in the morning. I'm getting my lines ready for Wednesday."

"Good egg!" said Lovell. "I wish we could help! But Dicky would know it wasn't your fist."

"That's all right; I can wangle three hundred lines before Wednesday, though it's a big order."

Jimmy Silver lost no time.

If the stunt was to be put to the test, it was necessary to have a stack of lines ready, to



be shown up "after detention" on Wednesday afternoon. The manufacture of those lines was a somewhat lengthy task; and Jimmy put his energy into it at once.

There was a supply of impot paper in the study. Jimmy opened P. Vergilius Maro, and propped him up against the inkstand.

Then he started at "Tu quoque litoribus nostris," and worked on industriously; and by the time his chums had finished prep, he had reached "sed populo magnum portendere bellum"; eighty lines, which was a very good start.

Jimmy Silver felt entitled to a rest after that; and the eighty lines were carefully stacked away in the table drawer, and he left the end study with his chums.

The cheery looks of the Fistical Four attracted notice in the common-room, and fellows wanted to know the why and the wherefore.

Fellows who could be relied upon not to chatter were taken into the secret; and there was a joyful grin on the faces of the footballers when they were told.

"Ripping!" said Conroy.

"Top-hole!" said Mornington.

"Jolly good wheeze!" declared Erroll. "Dalton can't grumble if he finds the lines done."

"Dear man! He can grumble if he likes, so long as Jimmy helps us to beat Greyfriars!" said Lovell.

"But——" said Mornington thoughtfully.

"It's not a case of 'but'!" said Arthur Edward Lovell loftily. "It's a top-hole stunt, and it will work like a charm."

"I hope so. But——"

"But what, then?" asked Lovell rather irritably.

"You know Manders!" said Morny, shaking his head. "If he knows that Dalton will be away——"

"I don't suppose he knows! He never takes any interest in football matters."

"But if he knows——"

"Oh, rats! Suppose he does know, what then?"

"Well, he may keep an eye on the form-room, to see that Jimmy doesn't bolt."

"He can't, from the other side of the quad."

"Might walk over to this side," said Mornington. "He would walk ten miles to make anybody miserable."

Lovell grunted. He was quite confident in the success of his wheeze; and he was very impatient of criticism.

"Rot!" he said tersely.

"But——"

"Rats!"

Valentine Mornington said no more. He hoped as heartily as anyone that all would go well; but he had his doubts. But most of the junior footballers agreed with Lovell's point of view; and the Classical Fourth went to their dormitory that night, in the full belief that Mr. Roger Manders was going to be outwitted—foiled, diddled, dished, and done, as Lovell put it emphatically.

But Mornington, as it happened, was right!

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### Sold!

JIMMY SILVER AND Co. trotted out into the quadrangle in a cold, clear, sunny morning in cheery spirits. The weather was cold but fine, and promised well for Wednesday. Before Lovell's great wheeze was promulgated, the fellows would not have been sorry to see bad weather, which would inevitably postpone the Greyfriars' match. Harry Wharton and Co. couldn't have come over to play in a heavy snowstorm, for instance. But the weather promised well, and now they were glad of it. But a change came o'er the spirit of their dream shortly.

Mr. Manders was walking in the quadrangle when the Fistical Four strolled out before breakfast.

The Co. would have given much to hand out snowballs to Mr. Manders. They would have enjoyed it; it would have been worth a term's pocket-money. But they restrained their yearning. Instead of snowballing the Modern master, they "capped" him most respectfully as they passed him. Mr. Manders was, at present, a gentleman to be treated with diplomacy.

But diplomatic capping had no effect on Mr. Manders. Possibly he guessed the secret thoughts in the minds of the Classical juniors. Possibly he took them for granted.



He frowned at the Fistical Four, and called out:

"Silver!"

The chums of the Fourth halted. They did not want to speak to Mr. Manders; but Mr. Manders wanted to speak to them, apparently. They stopped before the Modern master in a respectful row.

"Yes, sir!" said Jimmy Silver meekly.

"Mr. Dalton spoke to me last evening, on the subject of your detention, Silver."

"Yes, sir."

"I have declined to alter my decision in any way!"

"Mr. Dalton told me so, sir. I am sorry."

"You understand, Silver, that you are detained for the whole of Wednesday afternoon, and that you will occupy the time in writing out three hundred lines of Virgil."

"I understand, sir."

"Very good. I hear," continued Mr. Manders grimly, "that your form-master will be absent on Wednesday afternoon."

Jimmy's heart sank.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

"It appears, also, that some, if not all, of the Classical prefects will be away!" said Mr. Manders.

"Indeed, sir!" faltered Jimmy.

"In the circumstances," went on Mr. Manders in a grinding voice, "it may have occurred to you to break detention, Silver."

Jimmy Silver did not answer. He couldn't.

He wondered dismally whether the beast was a thought-reader.

Lovell's face was a study.

From Lovell's face, if not from Jimmy's, it was not difficult for Mr. Manders to divine that his surmise was well-founded. He smiled disagreeably.

"I trust, Silver, that you had no such intention," he said. "It would be disrespectful to me personally."

Jimmy made no answer to that. Probably disrespect to Mr. Manders personally would not have weighed very heavily upon his conscience.

"In order that you may not be tempted to be guilty of this disrespect and defiance of authority, Silver, I shall keep you under observation on Wednesday afternoon!" said Mr. Manders.

"You—You're very kind, sir!" gasped Jimmy.

Lovell suppressed a groan.

"You will go into the form-room at two o'clock tomorrow, Silver. You will remain there until five."

"Yes, sir!" groaned Jimmy.

"I shall look in several times in the course of the afternoon," added Mr. Manders. "On each occasion I shall expect you to have made reasonable progress with your lines."

"That's putting you to a lot of trouble, sir!" said Jimmy, with dismal sarcasm.

"I have no objection, Silver, to taking the necessary amount of trouble to preserve discipline among unruly junior boys."



Jimmy Silver & Co. stared at Morny. He was not speaking in his natural voice, but in a sharp, strident tone reminiscent of Mr. Manders! (See page 226.)



With that Mr. Manders turned and stalked away.

The Fistical Four gazed at one another in silence.

Words could not have expressed their feelings. No language could have described their fury. Even German would have been inadequate.

They tramped back dismally to the schoolhouse. Mr. Manders had succeeded in clouding the sunshine for them that bright morning.

"Sold!" was Jimmy's first remark.

"The awful rotter!" gasped Lovell.

"Spying beast!" said Raby.

"What's the row?" asked Mornington, joining them at the steps of the schoolhouse.

Jimmy Silver explained.

"Now say 'I told you so!'" said Lovell, with a ferocious glare at Morny. Lovell was suffering with an intense yearning to punch somebody's head. He could not punch Mr. Manders' head; so Morny would have served his turn.

But Morny did not say "I told you so." He smiled.

"Awful luck!" was what he said.

"Beastly!" said Newcome. "The rotter must be a giddy magician. Reads your thoughts like a book."

"Sold!" said Lovell. "Done! Diddled! Dished! Jimmy can't bolt with Nosey Parker poking into the form-room every half-hour or so. He would just enjoy coming down to Little Side and interrupting the game, and yanking Jimmy away."

"He just would!" groaned Jimmy Silver.

Mornington knitted his brows.

"Looks bad!" he said. "All the same, Jimmy's got to play in the football match to-morrow. If Manders could be kept off the grass somehow——"

"How could he?" growled Lovell. Lovell's own masterly strategem having been knocked into a cocked hat, so to speak, Arthur Edward seemed to have lost faith in stratagems

"Might be kept in his own house somehow!" said Mornington, in deep thought.

"Thinking of screwing him up in his study?" asked Lovell sarcastically. "Thinking of catching a weasel asleep?"

"That wouldn't work——"

"Go hon!"

"But there's more ways than one of killing a cat!" said Mornington. "I'm going to think this out."

"Don't burst your brain box, old scout," said Lovell, still sarcastic and pessimistic.

"If you could think of anything, Morny!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Of course he can't," grunted Lovell. "Why, I can't." Lovell seemed to regard that as a clincher.

Mornington smiled.

"He might be kept busy somehow," he said.

"How?" snorted Lovell.

"Well, his rich uncle from Australia might call on him on Wednesday afternoon, for instance——"

"Eh? What? Has he got a rich uncle in Australia?"

"Not that I know of."

"Then what the thump!"

"Only putting a case," said Mornington affably.

"Fathead!"

"Or his aunt from Peckham might drop in——"

"Has he got an aunt in Peckham?"

"Never heard of her, if he has," said Mornington. "What I mean is, lots of things might happen to keep Manders busy in his own house on Wednesday afternoon."

"Lots of things might!" snorted Lovell. "But nothing will!"

"Something may, if we help," said Mornington. "While there's life there's hope. I'm going to give it a big think."

"Fat lot of good that will do!" snorted Lovell. "I've thought it out already, if it comes to that."

"Yes—but I'm going to do it with a different sort of intellect, old chap."

Mornington strolled away with that remark, leaving Arthur Edward Lovell speechless, and his chums grinning.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER

### Mornington is Mysterious.

JIMMY SILVER's motto was "Keep smiling." Generally, Uncle James of Rookwood contrived to keep smiling, living up to his own cheery maxim, in spite of all the



troubles that came his way. But at breakfast on this particular morning there was no smile to be seen on the countenance of Uncle James. Mr. Manders had been unusually successful in his career as a killjoy. Instead of smiling, Jimmy Silver looked glum.

That unfortunate snowball, which had landed upon the august features of Mr. Manders instead of upon the unimportant countenance of Tommy Dodd, had the direst consequences. It was going to "muck up" the most important football fixture of the season.

Jimmy had brought the team up to perfection—or as near perfection as possible. They worked together like clockwork; they were to put it poetically, eleven souls with but a single thought, eleven hearts that beat as one.

Extracting Jimmy Silver from the team was like taking the keystone out of the arch. All the footballers thought so, and Jimmy Silver modestly agreed with them.

The fellows would put up a good match without Jimmy. Quite a good man could be found to take his place. But they wouldn't beat Greyfriars. To beat Greyfriars, Rookwood had to be at the top notch of their strength. Without Jimmy Silver, they were nowhere near that point.

And the case looked hopeless. Even the desperate resource of breaking detention seemed to be barred. There was no hope, unless Mr. Manders caught a sudden cold. He was given to catching cold—chiefly from lack of fresh air and exercise, which he disliked. He might catch a cold—and his cold might even, as Lovell remarked with blissful eagerness, turn to pneumonia.

But really it was not probable. Certainly Mr. Manders was not likely to catch a cold just to oblige the junior footballers. He was not an obliging man at the best of times.

Mornington was not looking glum at breakfast. He was looking very thoughtful. He was seen to smile—and his smile became a chuckle. Mr. Dalton glanced down the table at him; and Morny became serious again at once. But a glimmer was in his eyes—and Jimmy Silver glanced at him with a faint hope. Morny was a keen fellow, and it was possible—

barely possible—that he had thought of some way out.

After breakfast, Morny joined the Fistical Four as they came out. He was smiling now. "No end funny, isn't it?" growled Lovell morosely.

"Who knows?" said Mornington. "The fact is, I've been doin' some thinkin'——"

"Any result?" grunted Lovell.

"Lots! You know what Shakespeare says——"

"Blow Shakespeare!"

"Blow him as hard as you like. But you know what he says, 'Sweet are the uses of advertisement!'"

"What rot! Shakespeare says, 'Sweet are the uses of adversity!'" said Lovell.

"Then Shakespeare missed a chance of statin' a great truth," said Mornington coolly. "I've never noticed any sweet uses in adversity—but in advertisement there are no end."

"What on earth are you driving at?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Manders!"

"What has Manders to do with advertisements, fathead?"

"More than he knows."

"Look here, Morny——"

Mornington glanced at his watch.

"At this hour the Head will be lingerin' on the matutinal toast and rasher," he remarked. "It follows, my young friends, that there will be nobody in his study."

"What about it?" hooted Lovell.

"Lots! We can use his telephone."

"What the thump do you want to use his telephone for?"

"Manders!"

"You shrieking ass!" gasped Lovell.

"What has Manders to do with the Head's telephone?"

"Tons!"

Mornington walked away towards the Head's corridor, and the Fistical Four, in sheer amazement, followed him.

Morny tapped at the Head's door—in case that study should not be, after all, unoccupied. Then he looked in. The room was vacant. Dr. Chisholm had not left his house yet.

"All clear!" said Mornington cheerfully.

"But what——" exclaimed Jimmy.



"No time to talk now, my infant. I don't want the Head to meander in while I'm telephonin' for Manders."

"Has Manders asked you to telephone for him?" demanded Raby blankly.

"Not at all. I wouldn't if he did."

"Then what——"

"Keep an eye on the corridor."

Mornington glanced rapidly through the telephone directory, and then picked the receiver off the hook.

"Rookham two-0-four!"

"What's that number?" asked Newcome.

"The Coombe Times."

"The giddy local paper?" said Jimmy Silver.

"That's it!"

"Look here," growled Lovell, "we shall get into a row if we're caught in the Head's study. What's the good of sticking here while that ass Morny pulls our leg?"

"I'm not pullin' your leg, old bean. I'm pullin' the leg of the jolly old Manders bird."

"How?" hooted Lovell.

Mornington did not reply to that question.

A voice was coming through on the telephone, and Morny had to attend to business.

"Yes! Speaking from Rookwood School. That the 'Coombe Times'? Good!"

Jimmy Silver and Co. stared at Morny. He was not speaking in his natural voice, but in a sharp, strident tone that was reminiscent of Mr. Manders. Certainly the gentleman at the office of the "Coombe Times" could not have supposed that it was a schoolboy speaking.

"I understand that your paper appears to-morrow morning?"

"That is correct, sir. Advertisements may be handed in at any time up to twelve o'clock to-day."

"Very good. I will send a boy down to your office with my advertisement immediately. That will be in ample time?"

"Ample, sir!"

"I specially desire it to appear in this week's paper."

"It will appear without fail, sir."

"Very good. Perhaps you had better take down the name—Manders!"

"Mr. Manders? Very good, sir."

"You assure me that the advertisement will appear in this week's paper without fail?"

"You may rely upon that, Mr. Manders."

"I shall not be able to give any further attention to the matter, as I shall be otherwise occupied to-day, and cannot attend to the telephone. But if you assure me that there is no doubt——"

"None at all, sir," came the reply, in slightly surprised tones.

"Advertisements handed in up to twelve o'clock——"

"Very good."

Mornington rang off. He turned to the Fistical Four with a smiling face.

"So far, so good!" he remarked.

"Well, where's the jape?" asked Lovell. "I believe that man at the 'Coombe Times' took you for Manders."

"Think so really?"

"Well, you didn't say so, but he must have thought so, from the way you spoke."

"Dear me!" said Mornington.

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"That's what Morny wanted him to think, fathead!" he said.

"Oh!" said Lovell.

"I haven't told him so," grinned Mornington. "If he chooses to think so, from my remarks, that's his own bizney."

"But what's the game?" asked Lovell impatiently. "I suppose you're not going to put an advertisement in the local paper in Manders' name?"

"Why not?"

"Great pip!"

"Why not, if it will keep him busy to-morrow afternoon while we're playing football?" yawned Mornington.



Instead of punting a ball about the quadrangle, Jimmy Silver sat down and patiently scribbled lines of Virgil. (See page 228.)



A Sporting Chance !

"But it won't!" howled Lovell. "How could it?"

"That, my dear old fathead, is still on the knees of the gods. I think we'd better clear now. The Head would be quite surprised to find us holding a pow-wow in his study."

"I think so too!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

The Fourth-formers lost no time in clearing, Morny's telephoning being, apparently, at an end. Lovell was perplexed and exasperated; Raby and Newcome were puzzled; and Jimmy Silver simply did not know what to think. But in spite of his doubts and misgivings, he was feeling hopeful.

"Now, look here, Morny——" said Lovell, as the juniors turned out of the Head's corridor.

"No time, old top—busy!"

With that, Morny hurried away to his study and locked himself in. He was busy there for ten minutes. When he came down he walked to the School gates.

"You'll be late for class, Morny!" called out Townsend.

"Really?" called back Mornington.

"You'll get wiggled!"

"What a life!" said Mornington resignedly. And he walked out of the gates, and disappeared from the sight of the surprised Towny.

Valentine Mornington was a quarter of an hour late for classes that morning, for which he duly received a hundred lines from Mr. Dalton. But the hundred lines did not seem to worry Morny; he only smiled politely, in fact, and Mr. Dalton gave him a sharp look. For some reason or other Morny appeared to be in the very best of spirits that day.

JIMMY SILVER did not share Mornington's high spirits. He could not help feeling glum.

When he was called upon to construe, it became evident that he had not devoted his attention to "prep." the previous evening. He couldn't explain to Mr. Dalton that he had left prep. over, in order to get some of his

lines ready for Wednesday afternoon, as a necessary step towards bolting from detention. Such an explanation as that would not have improved matters.

But the Fourth-form master, fortunately, was lenient. Perhaps he realised the perplexity of a junior football captain, barred out of his team by detention on a match day.

So Mr. Dalton let Jimmy off lightly. But the captain of the Fourth remained very serious, not to say solemn, during the morning class.

Morny had raised his hopes, to some extent; but he had

little faith that Morny's wheeze, whatever it was, would prove of much use. It seemed assured that he had to make up his mind to cut the Greyfriars' match, and in that case, his chief problem was to decide upon a new centre-half. Jimmy was thinking more that morning about the new centre-half than about the valued instruction he was receiving from Mr. Dalton.

And yet, all the time, there was a faint hope, a slim chance, that he might be able to play after all, and that the new centre-half would not be needed. It was quite worrying and



Mr. Manders stared at Tubby Muffin in angry surprise. "What do you want?" he asked. "M-my money, sir!" stammered Tubby. "You—you've got it, sir!" "I!" yelled Mr. Manders. (See page 232.)



perplexing; and not at all surprising that Uncle James of Rookwood could not, for once, "keep smiling."

Mornington joined the captain of the Fourth when they left the form-room. Morny was looking merry and bright.

"How many lines have you got in stock?" he asked.

"Eighty!" grunted Jimmy.

"Then hook it to your study and put in some more."

"What's the good? I shall have lots of time for lines during the football match tomorrow!" groaned Jimmy.

"Fathead! If you get clear, you'll be playin' footer, not writin' lines; but the lines will have to be shown up."

"How am I to get clear, with Manders watching me like a cat watching a dashed mouse?"

"Nothing doing!" snapped Lovell. "You're talking out of your hat, Morny. Chuck it."

Morny shrugged his slim shoulders.

"Keep smiling!" he said.

Jimmy smiled faintly.

"I'm afraid the game's up, old chap," he said. "I don't know what your dodge is, but I don't see, anyhow, how you can bottle up Manders for a whole afternoon."

"I don't either!" grunted Lovell.

"Lots of things you don't see, Lovell, that other fellows see!" remarked Mornington.

"Oh, are there?" said Lovell warmly.

"And what are they?"

"Well, you don't see that you're an ass——"

"What!"

"But other fellows see it plain enough."

"Look here!" roared Lovell.

"Shush!" said Mornington soothingly.

"Keep smiling, old scouts. I tell you there's a sportin' chance at least. It mayn't work! But I'm fairly certain that it will. Get your lines done, Jimmy, in case they're wanted. It won't do any harm, at all events."

"Well, that's so!" admitted Jimmy.

"Go ahead, then!"

Jimmy Silver decided to follow Morny's advice. Instead of punting about a ball before dinner, he repaired to the end study, where he sat patiently and scribbled Virgil.

Before he came down to dinner, he had progressed from "sed populo magnum portendere bellum" as far as "Aeneas primique duces et pulcher Iulus," and had a total of one hundred and seven lines in hand.

The lines were carefully disposed in the table drawer, under a stack of other papers. Not even Mr. Manders was likely to suspect their existence.

A fellow who got his lines done at the last possible moment was unheard of at Rookwood.

Perplexing as the position was, Jimmy Silver was conscious of rising hopes. Morny, evidently, was confident; and Morny was not a fellow to be confident without some reason. In his elusive and rather exasperating way, the dandy of the Fourth declined all explanation. That seemed to imply a doubt of success. But it was possible that Mornington was only exercising extreme caution: for undoubtedly his wheeze, whatever it was, required secrecy. He declined to be "drawn" upon the subject, even by Jimmy Silver, the fellow most concerned.

But Jimmy had made up his mind to have the three hundred lines finished and ready, at all events, on the sporting chance of being able to cut detention undetected on the morrow.

After dinner he added twenty. After tea, he primed himself for the ordeal by a brisk sprint round the quadrangle, and then sat down determinedly in the end study to grind out lines.

"Prep." had to go again. That couldn't be helped. Once more he had to risk "chancing it" with Mr. Dalton in the morning.

Lines, and lines, and more lines, were the order of the day. Three hundred from Virgil were no joke.

Jimmy was feeling as if life was barely worth living, by the time he had scratched down "toto me opponere ponto," and had completed his three-hundredth line.

He finished at a colon. One more line would have brought him to a full stop. But Jimmy saw no reason why he should write three hundred and one lines instead of a bare three hundred. The beauties of the great Mantuan were absolutely lost upon Jimmy



Silver at this time. Indeed, Jimmy would have given a week's pocket-money for the privilege of punching the Roman nose of the great poet.

"There!" gasped Jimmy. "Done! Oh, my hat! Three hundred—done! And if it's all for nothing——"

"Well, it's done, anyhow," remarked Raby. "Even if you have to keep in the form-room to-morrow, you won't have to do the lines now."

"Might as well, if I'm stuck in doors. I'd just as soon do lines as loaf about the form-room doing nothing," grunted Jimmy.

"Well, do them all the same, and keep this lot in stock, if you have to stick detention after all!" suggested Lovell. "A stock of lines always comes in handy."

"Something in that!" remarked Newcome. "May save time on another occasion. Or if any of us get lines from the Head, we could use them—the Head wouldn't notice the fist."

"Good!" said Lovell, heartily.

Jimmy Silver grunted.

Perhaps it was a happy thought on the part of Arthur Newcome. But, really, Jimmy had not laboured through three hundred lines, to supply a stock in case any of his study-mates got an impot from the Head.

"Well, it's done!" he said. "I'll put them ready in the form-room—Morny may turn up trumps after all, though I'm dashed if I can guess what his silly wheeze is."

And Jimmy Silver conveyed the stack of Virgil to the Fourth-form room, where it was carefully concealed in a locker, to be produced

if required. After that there was nothing to do but to wait, and hope for the best.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

### The Amazing Conduct of Reginald Muffin.

THE next day was Wednesday—the day of the great match. It dawned bright and clear and cold; an ideal day for a football match, had other matters been as propitious as the weather. That afternoon, Harry Wharton and Co. were to arrive, and it was still a question whether they would find Jimmy Silver in the ranks of the Rookwood footballers.

In class that morning Jimmy Silver did not distinguish himself as a model pupil. But Mr. Dalton was very kind. Indeed, the master of the Fourth had gone to the length of speaking to Mr. Manders once more, in the hope of softening that gentleman's heart. He failed to produce any effect upon Mr. Manders. That lean gentleman had apparently understudied Pharaoh of old, and hardened his heart. So all Mr. Dalton could do was to be forbearing to the perplexed junior football captain; and

he even kept patient when Jimmy Silver informed him, absent-mindedly, that Christopher Columbus was a famous centre-half.

It was at dinner that day that Tubby Muffin—generally the most unimportant member of the Fourth Form at Rookwood—came into prominence. That Tubby's mysterious conduct had anything to do with Morny's wheeze, or the prospects of the Greyfriars'



Jimmy Silver, clad for football, dropped from a window of the Form-room, and scudded away for the junior football ground. (See page 239.)



match, never even occurred to Jimmy Silver and Co. They were to learn that later. Meanwhile, they couldn't help sitting up and taking notice, so to speak, at the curious conduct of Reginald Muffin.

Muffin was several minutes late for dinner—which, in itself, constituted a record. Muffin was generally late for everything else—never for meals.

Punctuality is said to be the politeness of princes. At meal-times, Tubby Muffin was more than princely in that respect.

On this special occasion Tubby rolled in several minutes late. And instead of asking for a third helping, he devoted his attention to something which appeared to be a newspaper, concealed under his jacket.

Reading at meal-times is a bad habit. Tubby had heaps of bad habits, but he had never cultivated that one. There was no masterpiece of literature that could have drawn Tubby's attention from his provender. Yet here he was, squinting down at a folded newspaper, instead of devoting his whole and sole attention to the refreshment of the inner Tubby. It really was amazing.

"Muffin!" said Mr. Dalton.

Tubby jumped.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"You must not read at dinner, Muffin, as you know very well!"

"Oh! I wasn't, sir."

"Muffin!"

"I haven't got a paper under my jacket, sir——"

"What?"

"And it isn't the 'Coombe Times'!" gasped Muffin.

There was a chuckle along the Fourth-form table. How Tubby expected Mr. Dalton to believe those amazing statements was a mystery.

"Muffin, you will take fifty lines for prevarication!" said the master of the Fourth sternly, "and if you look at that paper again during dinner, you will be caned."

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Tubby did not look at the paper again. He devoted himself to a third helping, and then to a fourth.

The juniors could not help being surprised.

Mornington, indeed, gave the fat junior a rather black look, which Tubby did not even notice. What unusual interest there could possibly be, in the local paper, was a question without an answer for the juniors. Rookwood fellows sometimes bought a copy of the "Coombe Times," as it reported school matches in its columns, and sometimes other items interesting to Rookwooders. Tubby had a special interest in the local paper this week, as he was advertising for sale a hutch for white rabbits. But nobody had ever found the columns of the "Coombe Times" interesting or thrilling; and it was simply amazing that Tubby should be so intensely enthralled by the local newspaper. The juniors even wondered whether a particularly atrocious murder might have been committed locally, and reported in the "Coombe Times." But it was not at all probable. Coombe was a quiet, old-world spot, and never produced a crime—it was, in fact, very much behind the times.

After dinner, five or six fellows surrounded Muffin in the corridor to inquire.

But Tubby was non-communicative.

"It's nothing!" he gasped. "Nothing at all. That's all."

"But what's in the paper?" asked Lovell.

"What paper?"

"The 'Coombe Times,' fathead."

"I—I haven't seen it."

"What?" roared Lovell.

"It only comes out to-day," gasped Tubby.

"Naturally, I haven't seen it yet. I didn't ask old Mack to take in a copy for me, and he didn't hand it to me just before dinner, and——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You awful Ananias!" exclaimed Raby indignantly. "What's that sticking under your jacket?"

"Eh! that—that's nothing! I mean, it—it's my Horace!" gasped Tubby.

"Your Horace!" yelled two or three juniors.

"Yes. I—I read him for pleasure, you know—I—I always carry old Horace about with me——"

Reginald Muffin was interrupted by a howl of laughter. The idea of Tubby reading



Q. Horatius Flaccus for entertainment was too much for the juniors.

Conroy jerked at the "Horace" under Tubby's jacket, and jerked it out into view. It proved to be the "Coombe Times."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Conroy. "I wasn't aware that Horace wrote for our local paper."

"I—I say—gimme that paper——"

"What's in it?" demanded Rawson.

"Nothing."

"Then we'll have a look at nothing!" said Townsend with a chuckle.

"Gimme my paper!" howled Tubby.

"There isn't any advertisement in it——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides, I'm going to claim it."

"Eh! Claim what?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"The money."

"What money?" demanded Jimmy blankly.

"It's mine."

"You fat duffer, what the thump——"

"I'm going to Manders about it at once."

"Manders?"

"Yes; he's got it."

Jimmy Silver took the fat junior by the shoulder and shook him. It really looked as if the fourth helping at dinner had got into Reginald Muffin's head. Certainly he was acting very strangely.

"Look here, you fat chump——"

"Yaroooh!"

"What are you going to Manders for?"

"Ten pounds."

"Wha-a-a-at?"

Tubby Muffin jerked himself away, and rushed out of the schoolhouse. Jimmy Silver gazed after him in blank astonishment.

"Mad as a hatter!" he ejaculated.

"Fairly off his rocker!" remarked Putty Grace. "I've seen this coming on for some time. Now it's come."

The juniors crowded into the doorway staring after Muffin. That fat youth was speeding across the quadrangle to Mr. Manders' house as fast as his extensive circumference would allow. Breathless, Reginald Muffin vanished into Mr. Manders' house, and was lost to sight; and there was only one conclusion to which the Classical

fellows could come, and that was, that the hapless Tubby was indeed as mad as a hatter!

## THE NINTH CHAPTER

### Most Extraordinary!

MR. ROGER MANDERS had finished his lunch, and was crossing the hall to his study, on the Modern side. Dodd and Cook and Doyle, the three Tommies of the Modern Fourth, were looking out of the doorway in the quadrangle, and thinking of the approaching match, in which they were going to distinguish themselves. A fat form came rushing up the steps, and rushed into the house so suddenly and forcibly that Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle and Tommy Dodd were hurled right and left. Evidently, Reginald Muffin was in a hurry!

"My hat! What——"

"You fat duffer——"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Heedless, Tubby rushed on. He was breathless, and his fat face was red with excitement. He caught sight of the angular form of Mr. Manders, and almost shouted:

"Mr. Manders!"

The Modern master looked round.

He was quite surprised to hear his name howled in that manner, in the hall of his own House, by a breathless Classical junior.

He frowned portentously.

"Muffin——!"

"It's mine!" gasped Tubby.

"What?"

"I've come for it, please."

Mr. Manders blinked at him. He was so astonished that he almost forgot to be angry—though not quite.

"Is the boy mad?" he ejaculated.

"Mine, sir——"

"What is yours, you absurd and stupid boy?" snapped Mr. Manders.

"The ten sovereigns, sir."

"Wha-a-at?"

"I—I lost them——"

"You have lost ten sovereigns!" exclaimed Mr. Manders, in blank amazement.

The three Tommies, and a dozen other fellows, stared at Tubby, as amazed as their master. Tubby's statement was astonishing enough; indeed, it was dumbfounding.





Jimmy Silver passed the ball to Morny, and Morny drove it fairly into the goal. "Goal!" roared the crowd. Rookwood had equalised! (See page 242.)

Certainly Tubby Muffin had never been known to be in possession of such a sum as ten pounds! And sovereigns!

It was exceedingly doubtful whether there were, at any time, ten golden sovereigns within the walls of Rookwood School. Plenty of pound notes, doubtless; but sovereigns were quite another matter. There were fags at Rookwood who had never seen a sovereign.

"The boy is mad!" said Mr. Manders, addressing space.

"I—I've come for them, sir!" gasped Muffin.

"You have come here for ten sovereigns, which you allege you have lost?" exclaimed Mr. Manders.

"That's it, sir."

"Do you dare to state, Muffin, that you have lost ten sovereigns in this House?"

"Oh! No, sir!"

"Then what do you mean?"

"On the river bank, sir—the bank of the Roke—I lost the bag with the ten sovereigns in it—"

"I do not believe your statement for one

moment, Muffin. But if you have indeed lost a sum of money, the proper person to acquaint with the fact is your form-master, Mr. Dalton. It is no business of mine."

And Mr. Manders walked on angrily to his study, and snapped the door shut after entering it.

Muffin blinked after him.

"Potty!" murmured Tommy Dodd. "Balmy in the crumplet, you know. I say, Muffin, go back to your dorm. and dream again."

Tubby Muffin did not heed. He rolled away to Mr. Manders' study door, and knocked at it. Without waiting to be told to come in, he opened the door and entered the study.

Mr. Manders stared at him in angry surprise.

"What do you want, Muffin?"

"My—my money, sir."

"Money!"

"Yes, sir."

"What have I to do with your money?" roared Mr. Manders, quite exasperated by this time.



"You—you've got it, sir!" stuttered Muffin.

Mr. Manders fairly jumped.

"I!" he yelled.

"Yes, sir! I've come for it."

Mr. Manders frequently became angry without adequate cause. On this occasion, it must be acknowledged that he had cause. Certainly he became very angry.

He strode towards Tubby Muffin, and grasped him by the collar. With his free hand he reached for a cane.

Outside the study, a dozen fellows stared into the open doorway, in amazement. Tubby's amazing conduct fairly dumbfounded them. Bearding a lion in his den, a Douglas in his hall, was child's play, compared with cheeking Manders in his own study, like this. Reginald Muffin was never supposed to be cast in heroic mould; yet what he was doing, the cheekiest and most plucky junior at Rookwood might have shrunk from. But he had to pay for his temerity.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

Mr. Manders, as a Modern master, was not supposed to cane a Classical fellow. Occasionally he transgressed that rule. He transgressed it now with emphasis.

Whack! whack!

"Yarooosh!" roared Muffin, wriggling frantically in an iron grip. "Oh! Ow! Whoooooop!"

Whack! whack!

"Help! Hooooop—woooooop! Oh, crumbs! Leggo! Gimme my money!" shrieked Tubby desperately. "You're not going to keep my money! Yaroooop!"

Whack! whack! whack! whack!

"Yoooooooop!"

"There!" gasped Mr. Manders. "You—dare to come here—to insinuate—indeed to state—that I have in my possession money belonging to you. You wicked, untruthful, unscrupulous, stupid boy——"

"You—ow—ow—ow!"

"Take that——"

"Yoooooop!"

"And that——"

"Wooooorrooop!"

"I trust, Muffin, that that is a sufficient lesson!" panted Mr. Manders; "you have,

I suppose, been set on by some more cunning person than yourself to play this disreputable trick—you are too stupid to understand its enormity. Who told you to come here?"

"Yarooooh!"

"Was it Silver?" thundered Mr. Manders.

"Wow-wow! No! Nobody! Ow! I came for my money!"

"Bless my soul!"

Whack! whack! whack! whack!

Tubby Muffin's terrific roars rang through Mr. Manders' House. The Modern fellows stared on blankly. It was a terrific whacking; but the amazing thing was, that Muffin kept on asking for it, as it were.

"Now go!" said Mr. Manders, breathlessly.

"Grooogh! Ow! Oh, dear My—my money——"

"The boy is out of his senses," said Mr. Manders, in sheer wonder; "Muffin, leave this study at once. Another word, and I will cane you again."

"Look here——"

Whack!

"I say——"

Whack!

Tubby Muffin bolted. Flesh and blood couldn't stand it. Still, apparently, under the firm impression that Mr. Manders was in possession of cash that rightfully belonged to him, Muffin, the fat Classical, fled—yelling. Mr. Manders slammed his study door. And Tommy Dodd and Co. fairly buzzed with excited discussion—forgetting even the Greyfriars' match, in their amazement at the mysterious and extraordinary carryings-on, of Reginald Muffin of the Classical Fourth.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER

### Morny's Master-Stroke!

JIMMY SILVER AND Co., in the meantime, had elucidated the mystery. The clue was contained in that copy of the Coombe Times, which had been jerked away from Tubby Muffin. It was open at the advertisement columns; and a fat thumb-mark drew attention to a paragraph—evidently the paragraph which had so keenly interested Muffin.



The column was headed "LOST AND FOUND!" It contained two or three announcements of the usual kind found in such a newspaper column. But one announcement was of great interest. It ran:

"The person who lost a small bag containing ten sovereigns on the towing-path by the Roke, can have same by applying personally, between the hours of 2 and 5, on Wednesday afternoon, to Mr. Roger Manders, in Mr. Manders' House, at Rookwood School, near Coombe."

"My hat!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "Is that what Muffin was after? He never lost ten quid."

"Tenpence would be nearer the mark, for Muffin!" said Raby. "The fat duffer's going to claim it."

"The awful rascal!" said Newcome.

"Just like Muffin!" chuckled Putty Grace. "I say, this is the first I've heard of Mr. Manders finding ten quids on the towing-path."

"What an ass to put in an ad. about it," said Rawson. "He could have taken it to the police-station."

"He ought to have taken it to the police, I think," said Jimmy Silver. "Why, an advertisement like this might bring a crowd of dishonest bounders after the money."

Lovell whistled.

"I—I suppose there are people who would claim it, without having lost it!" he remarked.

"Not nice people!" grinned Conroy. "But I believe there are a few people in existence who are not nice."

"Just a few!" chuckled Jones minor.

"Muffin for one!" roared Lovell. "Ha, ha, ha! Tubby's put in for the ten quids already."

"The awful fat rotter!" said Jimmy Silver, laughing in spite of himself. "He ought to be kicked! But Manders wouldn't be ass enough to hand over the money to Muffin."

"No fear!"

"Hallo, here he comes!" roared Conroy. "He doesn't look as if he's bagged ten quids."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tubby Muffin certainly did not look like a

fellow returning from a successful expedition. He was gasping and groaning as he rolled dismally towards the schoolhouse. The crowd of juniors intercepted him.

"Got it?" howled Flynn.

"Ow! No! He won't hand it over."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did you expect him to, you fat duffer?" chuckled Jimmy Silver.

"I say, it's mine, you know."

"Tell that to the Marines!" chortled Higgs.

"Manders isn't likely to believe it."

"And where did you get ten sovereigns from, Muffin?" demanded Jimmy Silver sternly.

"I—I—I—I had it in a registered letter," gasped Muffin. "My—my pater, you know—"

"And you lost the registered letter with the ten quid in it?"

"Yes, Exactly."

"The advertisement says it was in a small bag."

"Oh! I—I mean——"

"Tell us what you mean," grinned Lovell.

"It's quite interesting."

"You—you see, I—I had put it in a small bag, for—for safety——" Muffin stammered.

"Go it!" said Lovell.

"I say, Manders whacked me instead of handing over my money——"

"Serve you jolly well right."

"Think I'd better go to the Head, Jimmy?" asked Muffin anxiously.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Certainly. What you want is a flogging, you dishonest young rascal; and if you go to the Head with a yarn like that, you'll get one. Go at once."

"Oh! I say—do—do you think the Head wouldn't believe me?"

"Ha, ha, ha."

"How's he to know the money wasn't mine?" demanded Muffin. "Sovereigns ain't numbered like currency notes."

"So that's why you've laid claim——"

"Yes. I—I mean, no. Of course, I wouldn't! But—but anybody might claim the money, the way Manders puts it. I dare-say a dozen people will be here this afternoon for that money," said Muffin. "Dishonest



people, you know, who haven't any claim to it——”

“Have you any claim to it?” bawled Lovell.

“Well, I saw the advertisement first——”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“How is Manders going to tell whom it belongs to, if a dozen people come?” demanded Muffin.

“Why, that advertisement will be the talk of Coombe by this time. All the loafers at the Bird-in-Hand will be coming along to claim those quids. As the chap who spotted the advertisement first, I'm entitled to put in the first claim——”

“You fat rascal!”

“Look here, Jimmy Silver, you're not going to claim it——”

“What?” yelled Jimmy.

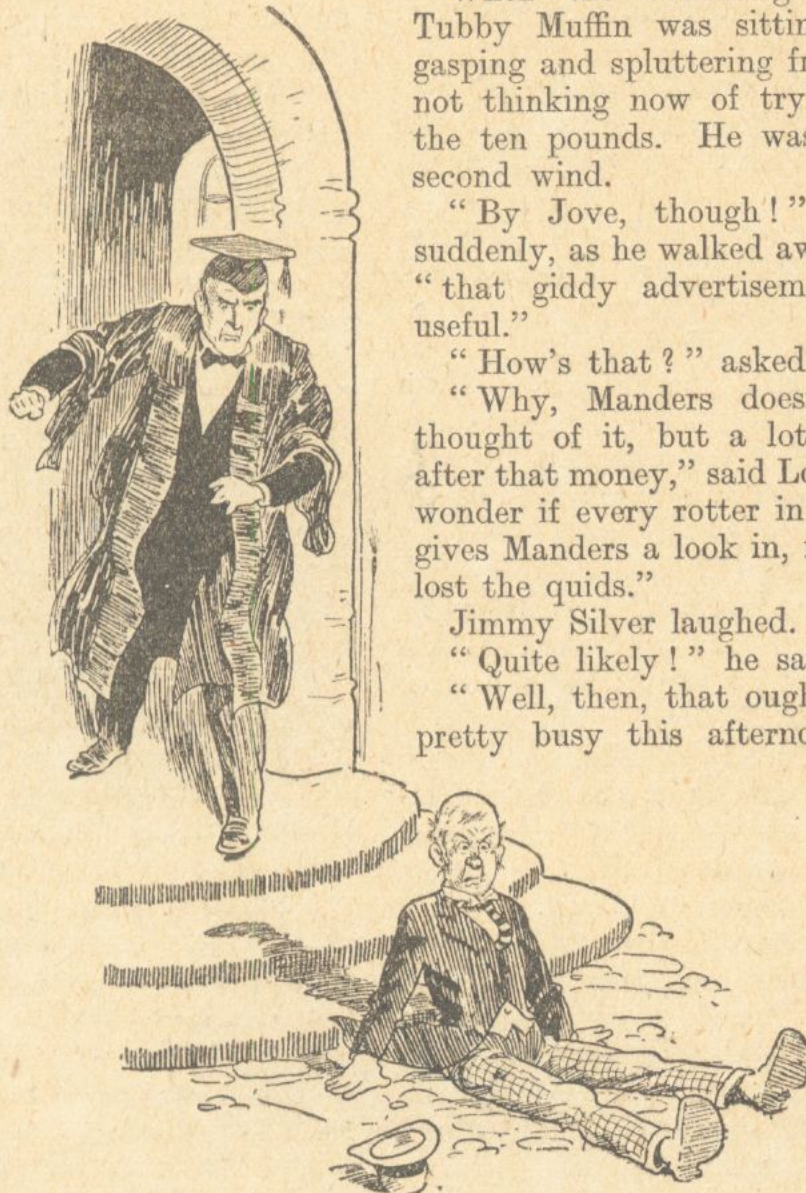
“Taint fair—it's my paper—you wouldn't have seen it if I hadn't had the paper. Don't you butt in——”

“Do you think I would claim money that doesn't belong to me, you fat worm?” shrieked Jimmy Silver.

“Well, of—of course not. I wouldn't either, you know,” gasped Muffin. “But—but to prevent some dishonest person getting hold of it, you know——”

“It's no good talking to Muffin,” said Lovell. “Bump the fat bounder! May bump some honesty into him.”

“Here, I say—yarooooh——”



“Go!” roared Mr. Manders; and he swung the purple gentleman round and rolled him down the steps. “Yow-ow!” roared the visitor. “I'm going!”  
(See page 243.)

Tubby Muffin had suffered at the hands of Mr. Manders. But his sufferings were not ended yet. The Classical juniors collared the enterprising claimant, and proceeded to bump him in the quad, methodically and scientifically. And the last state of Tubby Muffin was worse than the first.

When the chuckling juniors left him, Tubby Muffin was sitting on the ground, gasping and spluttering frantically. He was not thinking now of trying to get hold of the ten pounds. He was trying to get his second wind.

“By Jove, though!” Lovell exclaimed suddenly, as he walked away with his chums, “that giddy advertisement may come in useful.”

“How's that?” asked Raby.

“Why, Manders doesn't seem to have thought of it, but a lot of rogues will be after that money,” said Lovell; “I shouldn't wonder if every rotter in the neighbourhood gives Manders a look in, making out that he lost the quids.”

Jimmy Silver laughed.

“Quite likely!” he said.

“Well, then, that ought to keep Manders pretty busy this afternoon—and give you a chance to bolt out of detention!” said Lovell excitedly; “if he has a lot of callers, all through the afternoon——”

“My hat! Might keep him too busy to squint into the form-room at all, what?” exclaimed Newcome.

Jimmy Silver

started.

“Great Scott!” he ejaculated. “Morny!”

“What about Morny?”

Jimmy fairly gasped. He understood at last. Valentine Mornington was strolling under the beeches with his chum Erroll, and Jimmy Silver rushed across to him:



followed by his puzzled chums. Jimmy caught the dandy of the Fourth by the shoulder.

"Morny! You awful ass——"

"Hallo, what's the row?" asked Mornington coolly.

"That advertisement——"

"What advertisement?"

"Did you do it?" gasped Jimmy.

"Holy smoke!" yelled Raby; "Morny! It was you——"

"Morny!" said Lovell dazedly, "how could Morny——" Arthur Edward broke off, as he remembered the telephoning in the Head's study.

"Don't shout, dear boys," said Mornington cheerfully, "I'd rather Manders and the Head didn't know."

"You did it?" gasped Jimmy.

"Little me!" said Mornington, with a cool nod.

"Then—then—then ten sovereigns haven't been lost on the towing-path at all?" stuttered Lovell.

"Not that I know of."

"Then—then Manders hasn't found them?"

"Couldn't have if they haven't been lost. I should say that that was as big a cert as anythin' in jolly old Euclid."

"Oh, crumbs!" said Lovell.

"And Manders never put that advertisement into the local paper at all?" murmured Newcome, in quite an awed voice.

"I fancy not!" assented Morny.

"Morny! You ass!" breathed Jimmy Silver; "there'll be an awful row about this. Manders will have a regular procession of rogues and vagabonds coming here, between two and five, after those quids."

"Just that!" assented Mornington; "keep him busy, what?"

"But—when it's found out that you put the advertisement in——" exclaimed Jimmy.

"But will it be found out?" asked Morny argumentatively. "'The Coombe Times' man thought it was Manders telephoning from here. He expected a boy to call with the advertisement, and a boy called——"

"You'll be recognised——"

"I don't see it. You see, I tipped a country kid a bob to take the advertisement into the office."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Fistical Four together.

"No end of a giddy jape, what?" smiled Mornington. "I don't say it's goin' to be a jolly old success. But there's a sportin' chance, what? Manders is certain to be fairly busy, at least. You'll hook it from the form-room as soon as Dalton's gone, and chance it, Jimmy."

Jimmy chuckled.

"You bet!" he answered.

"And Manders ought to have a busy time and a fairly entertainin' time. I hope so, at least. Of course, it was my kind regard for Manders that made me think of this stunt——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, what a gorgeous jape!" gasped Lovell. "Jimmy, old man, you're playing Greyfriars this afternoon! It's right as rain! Hurray!"

And the Fistical Four almost hugged Morny.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

### Chancing It!

OUTSIDE the select circle of Jimmy Silver and his immediate pals, nothing was said concerning Morny's master-stroke. Obviously, the less said about it the better. "The jape on Manders" was justifiable from the point of view of the junior footballers. Mr. Manders himself would not have looked at it from that point of view—neither would the Head—neither would Mr. Dalton. It was a case of the least said, the soonest mended; of speech being silver and silence golden; of a still tongue showing a wise head; in fact, any amount of proverbial wisdom could have been cited on the subject. So the juniors, like Brer Fox in the fable, lay low and "said nuffin."

But inwardly they rejoiced. Even if Morny's "wheeze" did not succeed in distracting Mr. Manders' attention from the captain of the Fourth that eventful afternoon, at least it was certain to give Mr. Manders an exciting time. That was something. But the Rookwood chums hoped for complete success.



At the appointed hour, Jimmy Silver went into the form-room for detention. Mr. Dalton dropped in to speak to him there.

"As you know, Silver, I shall be at Bag-shot with the senior team this afternoon," said the Fourth-form master. "I shall expect to find your three hundred lines written out when I return."

"Very well, sir," said Jimmy; happy in the knowledge that three hundred lines from the seventh book of the Aeneid lay already written in his locker.

"I am sorry, Silver, that I cannot excuse you from detention," added Mr. Dalton. "You see for yourself that it is impossible."

"Yes, sir; thank you all the same," said Jimmy.

He composed his face to a serious, in fact dismal, expression, as Mr. Dalton left him. In the circumstances it was not judicious to look too bright.

Mr. Dalton quitted the form-room, leaving Jimmy Silver to ink and paper and P. Vergilius Maro. Jimmy mounted to a form-room window, and a little later had the pleasure of seeing the senior eleven start in their brake—Bulkeley and Neville and the rest, with Mr. Dalton.

The brake rolled away and disappeared. Jimmy Silver descended from the window, and took his seat at a desk as there was a foot-step in the corridor.

He was sitting down to Virgil, with a long dismal face, when Mr. Roger Manders looked in.

"Oh!" said Mr. Manders. "You are here, Silver."

Jimmy looked up.

"Yes, sir! I'm detained," he said innocently.

"You do not seem in a hurry to commence your lines, Silver," said Mr. Manders sarcastically.

"I've got the whole afternoon before me, sir."

"Quite so: but you must understand that unless the total of three hundred lines are written, you will be kept in the form-room until they are finished, even after five o'clock," snapped Mr. Manders.

"Very well, sir."

"It is now two o'clock," said Mr. Manders. "I shall give you a look in shortly, Silver."

"Thank you, sir."

Mr. Manders sniffed, and left the form-room. Jimmy was at a window a minute later, and he saw the Modern master's angular form striding away across the quad.

As soon as he was gone, Lovell looked in. He brought a bundle with him, containing Jimmy's football rig.

"You can change here, old bean, as soon as you feel safe," remarked Lovell. "Nobody will happen in here, if Manders doesn't. Stick it out to the last minute, for safety—don't come down to the ground till the Greyfriars' chaps are there."

"What-ho!" assented Jimmy Silver.

"Carthew's gone out," said Lovell. "He went off with Hansom and Talboys of the Fifth. Coast's quite clear."

"Good."

Lovell strolled away smiling, and Jimmy lounged to the window again. The kick-off was timed for two-thirty, so Harry Wharton and Co. were expected along soon. Raby and Newcome had gone in a brake to meet the Greyfriars' fellows at the station. On Little Side, some of the Rookwood footballers had already gathered, and were punting an old ball about to keep themselves warm.

Tommy Dodd and Co., of the Modern Fourth, were standing in the doorway of their house, with overcoats and mufflers on over their football rig, when Mr. Manders came back there. They were discussing the strange fact that Jimmy Silver, although detained for the afternoon in the schoolhouse, had not filled the vacant place of centre-half in the team. They drew from it the conclusion that Jimmy intended to cut detention: and their opinion was that Jimmy was an ass. For what chance had any fellow of escaping the hawk eye of Mr. Manders?

"The telephone's ringing in your study, sir," said Tommy Dodd, as the Modern master came in.

Mr. Manders nodded shortly, and passed on to his study. The bell was ringing loud and fast.

The Modern master took the receiver off the hook.



"Well?" he snapped.

"That there Rookwood?"

Mr. Manders gave a start. It was a hoarse voice, most decidedly uncultivated, that addressed him over the wires.

"Yes!" he snapped.

"Cove of the name of Manders there?"

"What?"

"Manders!"

"I am Mr. Manders! What do you want?"

"Good! I've been put off once—glad I've got you this ere time. I'm Bob Logger."

"I've no acquaintance with you, sir, and desire none!" snapped Mr. Manders, and he jammed the receiver back.

He sat down in his arm-chair. He had some papers to draw up that afternoon: papers with little catches in them, on which it was to be hoped that unwary pupils would come to grief. That congenial task was interrupted by a loud and incessant buzzing of the telephone bell.

Mr. Manders jumped up angrily, and grabbed the receiver.

"What? Who is it?" he exclaimed.

"Me, guv'nor." It was the same voice again. "We seem to 'ave got cut orf some'ow."

"Sir, I——"

"Corst me another thrippence," said Mr. Logger. "But that ain't much when ten blink-

ing quids is concerned. The money's mine."

"What?"

"Them ten sovereigns——"

"What ten sovereigns?" roared Mr. Manders.

"Them what was lost. They're mine. I'm calling for 'em this aiternoon. Jest rang up to let you know. I s'pose I'm the first?"

Mr. Manders was about to jam the receiver back savagely, but he realised that this Mr.

Robert Logger was a sticker. It was no use cutting off, to be rung up again. So he suppressed his angry impatience as well as he could. Obviously, to Mr. Manders' mind there was some mistake going on.

"I don't know what you are talking about!" he snapped.

"Eh? Them ten quids."

"You have the wrong number. Kindly ring off."

"'Old on! Ain't you Mr. Manders?"

"Yes."

"Roger Manders. Mr. Mander's 'Ouse, Rookwood?"

"Yes—yes."

"Then you're the bloke what's got the dibs. It's all right—I'm a-coming along for them. You ain't parted with 'em yet?"

"I fail to understand you! What on earth are you referring to?" Mr. Manders almost shrieked.

"Them ten quids——"

"Pah!"



Mr. Manders groaned and gasped and gurgled and shrieked for help, but Bob Logger, with a final hefty shake, hurled the House-master into the fender. "Come on!" roared Bob Logger, putting up his fists. (See page 246.)



Mr. Manders rang off, savagely. Three minutes later there was another ring at the telephone bell. Whether it was Mr. Logger again, or another gentleman, Mr. Manders did not know or care. He let the buzzing pass unheeded, and it ceased at last.

This incident—inexplicable and annoying—did not improve Mr. Manders' temper. When he heard the sound of merry voices in the quadrangle, he looked out of his study window with a frowning brow. The Greyfriars' party had arrived in the brake from the station—he saw the cheery faces of Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and the rest of the Greyfriars' crowd. The sight did not please him—happy smiling faces never pleased Mr. Manders. He looked more sour than ever.

Tommy Dodd and Co rushed away to greet the Greyfriars' visitors, with Lovell, and Mornington, and a crowd of fellows. Mr. Manders compressed his lips and left the house, walking over to the schoolhouse. These were the footballers who were to play Jimmy Silver's team: and Silver was quite capable—quite!—of breaking detention, and hurling defiance and disregard in the teeth of all authority. To save Silver from that iniquity, Mr. Roger Manders walked across the quad to the school house.

He found Silver in the Fourth form-room, just composing his features to an expression of the deepest woe. Jimmy had seen the lean gentleman approaching from the window, and was ready for him. He had the first sheet of his "lines" on the desk before him, too, so this time Mr. Manders could not accuse him of neglecting his task.

He looked up meekly as the lean face poked in at the doorway. Mr. Manders stood and regarded him sourly.

There was simply nothing for him to find fault with—nothing at all. It was hard—but there it was!

"I am glad to see you are working, Silver," said Mr. Manders, at last.

"Thank you, sir!" said Jimmy meekly. "It's very kind of you to take such an interest in me, sir,"

Mr. Manders set his lips.

"If that is intended for impertinence, Silver——"

"Mr. Manders, please, sir," came a voice from the corridor. Pilkins, the page in Mr. Manders' house came hurrying up.

"What is it Pilkins?" snapped Mr. Manders.

"Gentleman to see you, sir."

"Oh! Very well!"

Mr. Manders rustled away.

A minute later Mornington looked into the form-room, grinning.

"It's the first!" he said. "The jolly old first of the bunch! Let's hope there'll be a mob to follow. Raby says the brake passed five or six gaudy characters heading for Rookwood."

"Good egg!" said Jimmy.

"You've got to chance it now. Get into your things, and drop out of the window—and hook it! We're all ready on the ground."

"Right-oh!"

Mornington walked away whistling. Five minutes later, Jimmy Silver, clad for football, dropped from a window of the form-room, and scudded away for the junior football ground.

The die was cast now—or as Jimmy, being a Classical fellow, might have put it, *jacta alea est*. He had taken the chance: and he could only hope that his luck would hold good. Three minutes more, and the ball was kicked off; and the Rookwood footballers, and their old rivals and friends of Greyfriars, closed in strife.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

### The First Half.

JIMMY Silver was chancing it. He hoped that Mr. Manders would be too busy that afternoon to give him any attention. But, as a matter of fact, he very quickly forgot even the existence of Mr. Manders.

The game claimed all his attention.

Harry Wharton and Co. had come over from Greyfriars to win—as they fondly believed. Certainly they put plenty of "beef" into the game from the start.

The pick of the Greyfriars' Remove were in the visiting team. There was Squiff in goal; Johnny Bull and Mark Linley at back; Bob Cherry, Peter Todd, and Tom Brown, halves; Harry Wharton, Hurree Singh, Vernon-Smith, Frank Nugent, and Ogilvy, forwards. That



was a team that required "some" beating, and Jimmy Silver was well aware of it.

With a team like that in front of him, a junior football captain was not likely to have any time to worry about Roger Manders.

Even if Mr. Manders had been sighted in the offing, Jimmy would hardly have given him a glance, once the game was fairly going.

Certainly, if that lean form had marched on the field and claimed Jimmy as a truant, Jimmy would have had to sit up and take notice. But that dread possibility was banished from his mind in the excitement and stress of the game.

Jimmy was in his favourite position—centre-half. His forwards were Raby, Mornington, Erroll, Tommy Dodd, and Tommy Cook. In the half-way line with Jimmy were Conroy and Arthur Edward Lovell. The backs were Tommy Doyle and Towle. In goal was Rawson.

Mornington, in the front line, was brilliant; Erroll was rapid and reliable; the others quite good. But doubtless the Greyfriars' forwards had some advantage. In the half-way line of Rookwood, however, was a tower of strength—or more correctly, three towers of strength. On the whole the teams seemed fairly well matched, and it was, as many of the spectators remarked, anybody's game.

But there was no doubt that, minus Jimmy Silver, the Rookwooders would have been at a terrible disadvantage. Forces so equally balanced would have been rendered terribly unequal by the loss of the best man on the Rookwood side.

Of the Fistical Four, only Newcome had no place in the team. Football came before friendship, Jimmy Silver considered, and Newcome manfully did his best to agree. Newcome was a good forward; but with better stuff in hand, his chum had to leave him on the reserve list. Arthur Newcome did not wholly recognise the superiority of the better stuff; but that was a matter for the football captain to decide, and Newcome took his sentence with cheerful fortitude. Newcome joined the crowd of Rookwood fellows who watched the kick-off; but being merely a spectator, he did not think solely of the game, but gave some thought to Mr. Manders.

The danger of the match being interrupted by Mr. Manders was manifest to Newcome, who had not forgotten the existence of that lean gentleman as the footballers had.

Indeed, Newcome had some desperate thought at the back of his mind, of watching for Mr. Manders, and "butting" him if he appeared on the football ground—truly a desperate expedient.

The game was hard and fast from the start; but the score was a long time coming. It was Harry Wharton who put the ball in at last for Greyfriars, after twenty-five minutes' play. There was a shout from the Greyfriars' fellows who had come over with the team.

"Goal!"

"Good old Wharton!"

"Bravo!"

Greyfriars had broken their duck. Rookwood lined up again in a determined mood; but in spite of all their efforts it was not easy to equalise. Valentine Mornington, with a brilliant effort, almost succeeded, but Squiff knocked out the ball, and the game swayed away to midfield. There was almost a groan of disappointment from the Rookwood junior crowd. It had been a near thing, but a miss was as good—or as bad—as a mile, and Greyfriars were still one up with the interval approaching.

"I say! Jimmy's playing!"

Newcome glanced round as Tubby Muffin made that remark at his elbow.

"Go hon!" he said, sarcastically.

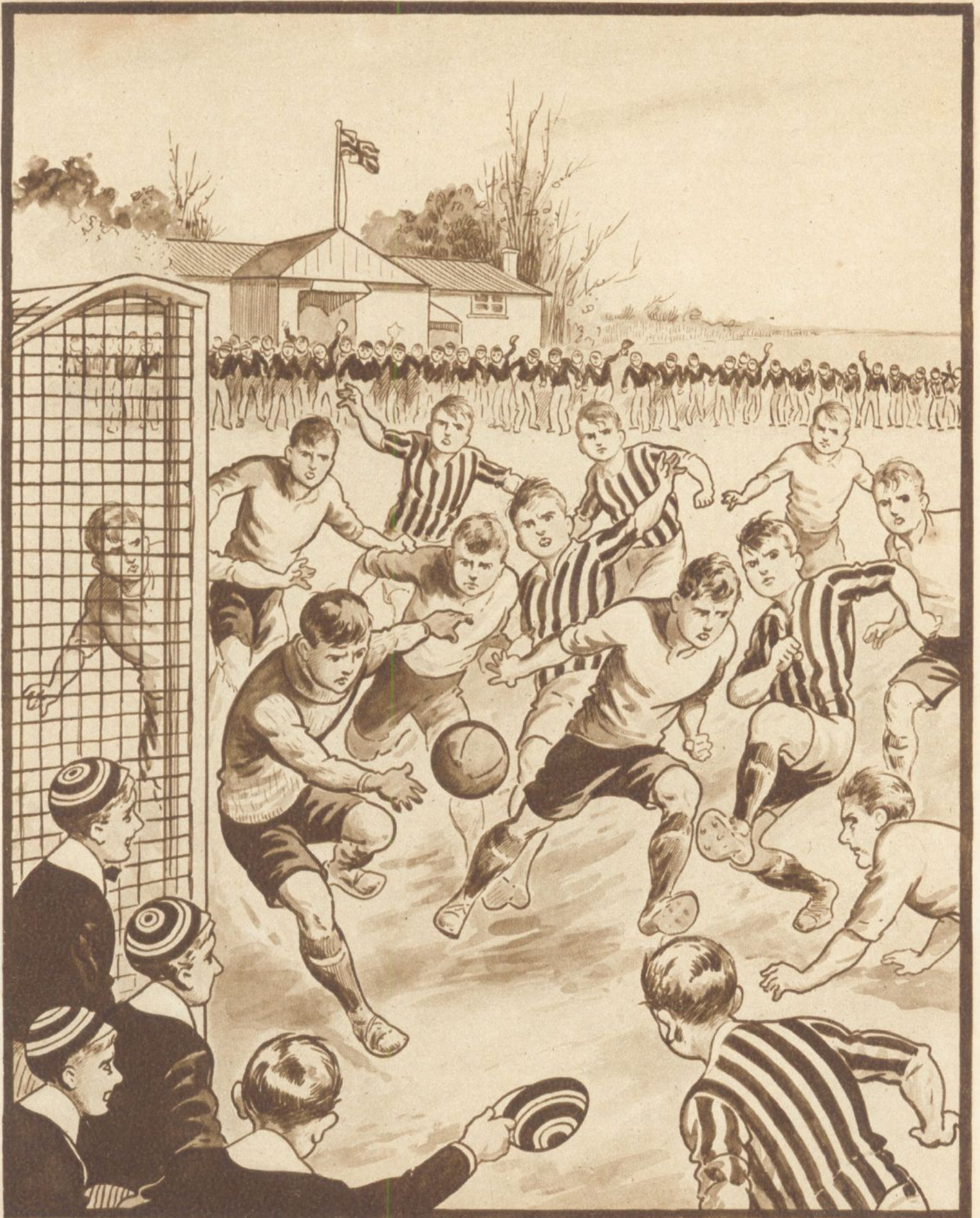
"I say, Jimmy's detained, you know," said Muffin, with a blink of great astonishment. "He ought to be in the form-room. Suppose Manders sees him here, what?"

"Br-r-r-r-r!" said Newcome.

Newcome looked round towards the school buildings. There was no sign of Mr. Roger Manders to be seen. Something or other must have kept the attention of the Modern master occupied, or certainly he would have missed the detained junior from the form-room by this time. Was Mornington's amazing scheme going to be a success? Really, it looked like it. Only stress of other affairs could possibly have kept Mr. Manders from discovering the absence of the truant.



THE GREYFRIARS V. ROOKWOOD MATCH



To face page 240.

"LOOK OUT IN GOAL!"





Newcome saw a man dodge in before the porter could shut the gates—then another got over the gates and another climbed over the wall. “Ha, ha, ha!” roared Newcome. “They’re all heading for Manders’ house. (See page 247.)”

Newcome observed, too, that the crowd round the football ground was not so numerous as before. Fellows seemed to be straying off, as if there was some other centre of attraction.

“Anything going on in Mr. Manders’ house, Tubby?” asked Newcome.

Reginald Muffin gave a fat chuckle.

“Yes, rather! Visitors, you know——”

Newcome grinned.

“After your ten quids?” he asked.

“Yes—dishonest rotters, you know. They can’t all have lost ten quids in a bag on the towing-path, can they?” asked Tubby argumentatively. “Old Manders might as well have handed it over to me. I say, there’s a crowd there—I’m going back.”



And Tubby Muffin rolled away, evidently regarding the proceedings at Mr. Manders' house as being more entertaining than the Greyfriars' match.

Newcome was not of that opinion; but he decided to give Mr. Manders a look-in, and he followed Tubby from the football ground.

A few minutes later there was a roar from the football field.

"Goal!"

"Bravo!"

Jimmy Silver had sent the ball to Mornington, and Morny—not failing this time—had driven it fairly in. Almost on half-time, Rookwood had equalised.

A minute or two later, Brown major of the Fifth, the referee, blew the whistle.

"One to one," said Arthur Edward Lovell, with much satisfaction. "All right so far. That was a good goal, Morny."

"Jimmy's as much as mine," said Mornington. "But have you fellows thought of Manders?"

Jimmy started.

"Blessed if I hadn't forgotten there was such an object in the wide world!" he ejaculated.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Looks as if the jolly old stunt is a howling success!" said Raby.

"It do—it does," said Jimmy Silver. "Good old Morny! If only Manders keeps off the grass for the second half——"

Jimmy Silver looked round, but the horizon, so far, was not blotted by the apparition of Mr. Roger Manders.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

### Inexplicable!

MR. MANDERS was amazed.

He was dumbfounded.

Thunderstruck, in fact, would not be too strong a word to describe the state of Mr. Manders.

The Modern master had expected to be busy that afternoon. He had exam. papers to prepare, with pleasant little catches in them for unwary victims—not an uncongenial task. Likewise, he had several little walks across the quadrangle in view. Every half-

hour or so, it was his amiable intention to glance into the Form-room, over in the School-house, and ascertain by the evidence of his own eyes that the detained Classical junior was still there, exploring the beauties of Virgil.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Manders was busy that afternoon, as he had expected to be. But he was not busy in the manner that he had expected. Far from that.

It seemed to Mr. Manders that that part of the county of Sussex in which Rookwood School was situated had been seized by a sudden spasm of insanity.

Only on such a theory could the amazing happenings of that afternoon be explained.

It began quite early. Mr. Manders, called from the School-house by the page's message that a gentleman had called to see him, returned to his own house. He wondered who the gentleman was, and what he wanted. As he came into his house, he wondered still more, for the gentleman who had called to see him was a rather remarkable gentleman.

He was a little, thin gentleman, clad in the shabbiest possible attire, and with a purple complexion. His looks indicated that he was a determined opponent of the Pussy-foot campaign. It was obvious that he spent a great deal of money in support of the drink traffic, which left him without resources to expend upon soap. Mr. Manders gazed at him in surprise and indignation. Such a gentleman had no right whatever to call at Rookwood to see Mr. Manders.

"Sir!" said Mr. Manders, most ungenially.

The purple gentleman nodded and smiled to him.

"Mr. Manders?" he asked.

"That is my name. Kindly explain what you want here!" snapped Mr. Manders.

"Name of 'Ookey, sir."

"What?"

"'Ookey—that's me. I've called for the money."

"Money?"

"That's it! Ten sovereigns in a bag what I lost on the towing-path, sir."

Mr. Manders blinked at him. Ten sovereigns in a bag seemed to be haunting Mr. Manders that day. First of all, there had been the



amazing conduct of Tubby Muffin. Then there had been the mystifying talk on the telephone. Now there was a gentleman with a purple complexion, in person, actually calling on Mr. Manders on the same mysterious subject. Mr. Manders' footsteps seemed to be dogged, as it were, by a phantom of ten sovereigns in a bag.

"Lucky you found it, sir," said Mr. Hookey affably. "Looking in the paper for a job, sir; that's 'ow it was, otherwise I'd never 'ave knowed that you'd found it."

"Sir, I—I——"

"Got it about you, sir?"

"What? What?"

"Them ten quids, sir!"

Mr. Manders raised a bony hand and pointed to the open doorway.

"Go!" he said.

"Hay?"

"Go!"

"But I've called——"

"You are intoxicated, sir!" said Mr. Manders. "You have no right to be here! I shall speak severely to the porter for letting you enter. How dare you come here, sir?"

Mr. Hookey blinked.

"I've called for the money!" he said.

"Go!"

"But the money——"

"Do you dare to ask me for money?" exclaimed Mr. Manders. "How dare you come here to beg?"

"Who's begging?" demanded Mr. Hookey, getting angry himself. "Ain't I asking for my own money?"

"You are intoxicated!" thundered Mr. Manders. "Leave this house!"

"P'raps I 'ad a drop at the Bird-in-'And," said Mr. Hookey. "It's a cold day. As for being toxicated, it's a lie! No more toxicated than you are, Mr. Manders. Bless your 'eart, it ain't so easy to get toxicated these days. What with the price of drink——"

"Go!"

"Not without my money!" said Mr. Hookey hotly. "I s'pose you ain't trying to keep a man's money from him, sir?"

"Are you insane?" hooted Mr. Manders.

"I have no money belonging to you!"

"Them quids——"

"Go!" shrieked Mr. Manders.

"Look 'ere, 'ave you got them ten quids or 'avent you got them ten quids?" demanded Mr. Hookey. "Did you pick up a bag of sovereigns or did you not?"

"What, what? Certainly not!"

"Then what for did you say that you did?"

"The man is mad!" gasped Mr. Manders. "Sir, if you do not leave these premises immediately, you will be ejected by force!"

"Look 'ere——"

"Go!" thundered Mr. Manders.

"'And over the spondulics, and I'll go fast enough!" howled Mr. Hookey. "Why, keeping a man's money—you're no better'n a thief!"

That was too much for Mr. Manders. Generally, Mr. Manders was not prone to be belligerent; generally, in fact, he would have walked ten miles to avoid anything in the nature of a personal encounter. But the purple gentleman was very small, and Mr. Manders towered over him. Sideways, there was not much of Mr. Manders; but length-wise there was a great deal of him. It was safe to deal drastically with this obnoxious purple gentleman, so Mr. Manders, giving a free rein to his wrath, dealt with him drastically. He grasped the purple gentleman by his dirty collar, and jerked him round to the doorway.

The purple gentleman gave a wild howl.

"Ow! Let a man alone! I'm going! Yow-ow!"

"Go!" roared Mr. Manders.

The purple gentleman rolled down the steps.

He picked himself up, stared at Mr. Manders, and bolted for the open gateway. Mr. Manders, somewhat solaced by the drastic handling of the purple gentleman, retired to his study.

He was perplexed and annoyed. But he forgot his annoyance as he settled down to his work. Shortly afterwards his work was interrupted by a buzz on the telephone bell.

Mr. Manders picked up the receiver.

"That Mr. Manders?"

"Yes. Mr. Manders speaking."

"Keep it till I come!"

"What?"

"Don't you 'and it over to anybody else, sir! It's mine!"



"What? What is yours?"

"Them quids!"

"Bless my soul!"

"Jest seen it, sir—only jest, so I thought I'd ring up. I'm coming along directly."

There was quite a crash as Mr. Manders slammed the receiver back into its place.

"What can this mean?" he gasped.

"Have a number of people gone suddenly insane? There seems to be an impression that I have a sum of money to give away—it is amazing!"

Undoubtedly it was amazing. Nobody who knew Mr. Manders would have supposed for a moment that he would give anything away. Still, these mysterious claimants were strangers to him, and did not know his disposition; and evidently they had an impression that he was giving away sovereigns. Mr. Manders sat down to his study table again, but it was difficult to concentrate his attention upon his work. As for Jimmy Silver, Mr. Manders had forgotten him.

Possibly he would have remembered—in fact, certainly he would have remembered—had he been left in peace. But it was fated that Roger Manders should not be left in peace that surprising afternoon. There came a tap at the door of his study, and Pilkins looked in.

"A gentleman, sir—name of Logger——"

"Logger!" Mr. Manders remembered the first talk on the telephone. "I cannot see him, Pilkins. Tell him to go away at once."

"All right, guv'nor!" said a hoarse voice in the corridor. "I'm 'ere! Won't keep you a minute! Jest 'and over the quids, and I'm off!"

And Bob Logger twirled the page aside and walked into the study.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

### Shell Out!

**M**R. Logger nodded affably to the Rookwood master.

He was a powerfully built man, with a rugged, bulldog face, and knuckly fists of large size. He was, at first glance, a gentleman whom no prudent person would have cared to meet in a lonely place on a dark night. The study floor almost shook under his heavy tramp as he came in.

Mr. Manders stared at him savagely. But he had to rein his wrath to some extent. It was palpable that Mr. Logger could not be dealt with drastically like Mr. Hookey.

The burly man was quite good-tempered so far. Doubtless he was pleased and cheered by the prospect of handling ten sovereigns that did not belong to him.

"Arternoon, sir!" he said.

"G-g-good afternoon!" gasped Mr. Manders.

"I give you the tip on the 'phone, sir! You ain't 'anded out ten quids to any other bloke yet?"

"Eh! Certainly not!"

"Good!" said Mr. Logger, with much satisfaction. "Thought you might 'ave."



It was in vain that Pilkins denied the man admittance, and, inside, Mr. Manders fairly raved. "Go away! Go away at once!" he spluttered. (See page 249)



"I should not be likely to hand money to strangers for no reason, I suppose!" snapped Mr. Manders.

"Very sensible of you, sir," approved Mr. Logger. "There's dishonest people about, sir—low coves what would claim money what wasn't their'n. Very right and proper, sir, for you to keep it in 'and for the right bloke. I'm the bloke!"

"You are what?"

"The right bloke!"

"Bless my soul!"

"Course, you want a cove to put it straight," said Mr. Logger. "I'll tell you 'ow it was. Them ten sovereigns, sir, was the savings of years of 'ard work. I kept them in a bag; I don't trust them banks." Mr. Logger shook his head. "Kep' it about me, sir. Being as 'ow I'd 'ad a drop too much that night, I goes and loses it. That's 'ow it was."

"I—I—I fail to understand——"

"Ain't I putting it plain?" asked Mr. Logger. "I'm the bloke what them quids belongs to. I've called for them—ten sovereigns in a bag."

"I—I think I must be dreaming!" gasped the unfortunate Mr. Manders. "Do you mean to say that you suppose I have ten sovereigns for you?"

"Not much s'posing about it that I can see!" answered Mr. Logger. "You ain't 'anded them to nobody else?"

"Certainly not! I have not——"

"Then 'and them to me!"

"Bless my soul! But—but why—what—how——"

"We're wasting time," said Mr. Logger. "I ain't got any time to waste, sir. I'm thirsty—I mean, I'm busy. 'And over the money and I'll go."

"I have no money to hand you!"

"What?"

"I cannot imagine why you should suppose that I have ten sovereigns to give you. I have nothing of the kind."

"Dror it mild!" said Mr. Logger, losing his affability quite suddenly. "Findings ain't keepings, I s'pose? You ain't sticking to them quids?"

"I have not the faintest idea——"

"Changed your mind since you put it in, what?" sneered Mr. Logger. "Well, sir, it's too late. If you wanted to steal them sovereigns, you should 'ave thought of that sooner. Now I've called for 'em."

"There are no sovereigns!" shrieked Mr. Manders, in bewilderment. "I have not a single sovereign in my possession! Are you so ignorant that you are not aware that there is now a paper currency in this country?"

Mr. Logger blinked.

"I don't foller," he said. "Currency be blowed! I lost them ten quids in a bag on the towing-path."

"If you have lost money, you must apply to the police. A schoolmaster is not the proper person to apply to."

"Come off!" said Mr. Logger roughly. "You found them quids——"

"Found them? Certainly I did not!"

"You didn't?" howled Mr. Logger.

"No! Most decidedly, no!"

"Then what for did you say you did?" roared Mr. Logger.

"I did not! I deny—I never——" spluttered Mr. Manders.

"You did!" roared Bob Logger. "Ain't I seed it in black and white? Didn't old Stiggins, at the Bird-in-'And, show it to me in the paper, and didn't he say to me, 'Bob,' says he, 'this looks like a chance for somebody,' says he. 'I'm on!' says I. And 'ere I am."

This was so much Greek—or, rather, Sanskrit—to Mr. Manders. He could only blink at the indignant Bob.

"If any other cove has told you that them quids is his'n," said Mr. Logger, "it ain't true! Savings of years of 'ard work, they was. I'm waiting for them quids, Mr. Manders."

"I repeat," gasped Mr. Manders, "that I have no money to give you! I have no sovereigns—I have not seen a sovereign for years. If you do not immediately leave this place, I shall telephone for the police!"

Mr. Logger breathed hard.

"Meaning to say, you don't believe that they belong to me?" he asked. "You can't take a man's word?"



"No—yes—no! There are no sovereigns! I assure you that I have never found any sovereigns on the towing-path or elsewhere."

"That won't wash, sir! If you didn't take my word they was mine, I'm willing to put up my 'ands, if you can't take a gentleman's word. But tellin' me there ain't any sovereigns—that's too thick! You goes and advertises in 'Lost and Found' in the paper that you'd found them——"

"I did not! I have not! I never——"

"Ain't I seed it?" roared Mr. Logger. "Didn't the landlord at the Bird-in-'And show it to me?"

"Impossible! You—you are acting under some—some misapprehension! I certainly never did advertise anything of the kind!"

"You're Mr. Manders?"

"Yes, yes."

"This 'ere is Mr. Manders's 'ouse, Rook-wood?"

"Yes—oh, yes!"

"Then there ain't no mistake. You've changed your mind, and you want to freeze on to them quids; that's 'ow it is!" said Mr. Logger darkly. "Dishonest, I call it! In a schoolmaster, too, what has boys to bring up honest! I'd never 'ave believed such a thing. But if you think, sir, that you're going to 'ang on to my money, that's where the mistake comes in!"

"I—I tell you——"

Mr. Logger clenched his enormous fists and came round the table towards Mr. Manders.

"'And it over!" he said laconically.

Mr. Manders dodged wildly.

"I—I tell you, upon my word—my word of honour—— Keep off! I do most solemnly say—— Yaroooooop!"

Bob Logger had Mr. Manders by the neck now. He shook the lean gentleman a great deal like a terrier shaking a rat, only Mr. Logger bore a closer resemblance to a bulldog than to a terrier.

"Ow! Oh! Help! Police! Yoooooop!"

"Are you 'anding over my money?"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Shake! shake! shake!

"Whooooop! Help!"

Bob Logger shook and shook. It was

growing clear to him now that there were no "quids" to be had from Mr. Manders. Possibly Mr. Logger had not wholly expected his claim to be credited; he was prepared for doubts. But Mr. Manders' declaration that there was no bag of sovereigns at all was too much for him. His only possible conclusion—after reading the advertisement in the "Coombe Times"—was that Mr. Manders, on reflection, had determined to keep the money.

Naturally that made Mr. Logger indignant. A rascal very seldom has any fellow-feeling for another rascal. So Bob Logger proceeded to punish Mr. Manders for his supposed rascality.

Shake, shake, shake!

Mr. Manders howled, and groaned and gasped and gurgled, and shrieked for help. Pilkins' scared face looked in at the study doorway; a dozen other faces were soon looking in. Two or three of the Modern Sixth came to the rescue at last—in a rather gingerly way, for Mr. Logger was a formidable gentleman to tackle.

Bob Logger gave Mr. Manders a final hefty shake, and hurled him into the fender. Mr. Manders rolled on the hearthrug and spluttered.

"Come on!" roared Bob Logger, putting up his hands.

The Sixth-formers backed.

"Clear out, you hooligan!" said Framp-ton.

"I'm going," said Mr. Logger. "That man—your blinking schoolmaster—he's a swindler! He's keeping money what don't belong to him. I'd fight him for it if he was man enough to put his 'ands up."

Groan from Mr. Manders.

Bob Logger stamped out of the study, the Sixth-formers gladly letting him pass in peace. Astonished stares greeted Mr. Logger on all sides as he strode away. In the quadrangle a crowd was gathering before Mr. Manders' house. Bob Logger halted there, and brandished a big fist at the façade of the house.

"Come out!" he roared.

Newcome had just arrived on the scene. He fairly blinked at Bob Logger. Evidently Morny's stunt was working—emphatically so.



"Come out!" bawled Mr. Logger. "If you're a man, old Manders, come out and put up your 'ands, man to man."

Mr. Manders would as willingly have accepted an invitation into the den of a hungry lion. He did not appear.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Newcome. "I say, my man, you'd better cut. They'll ring up the police-station."

"Who you torkin, to?" inquired Mr. Logger.

And with a backhander, he sent Newcome sprawling.

"Ow!" howled the hapless junior. "Oh, crumbs!"

"You coming out, old Manders?" roared Mr. Logger.

There was no reply, and Bob Logger stalked away towards the gates, old Mack retiring into his lodge as he saw him coming. And so Bob Logger at last shook the dust of Rookwood from his feet.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

### The Second Half

"JIMMY——"

Newcome came up breathless. The Rookwood footballers were chatting with Harry Wharton and Co. in the interval. Brown major of the Fifth was looking at his watch.

Jimmy Silver looked anxious.

"Not——" he began.

"No. He's not coming!" gasped Newcome. "Oh, my hat! Such larks."

"Visitors for Manders?" asked Mornington.

"Ha, ha! Yes." Newcome's face beamed.

"Man pitched into him, lot of fellows saw it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's three more after him."

"Three! Oh, crumbs!"

"Old Mack tried to keep them out at the gates," gasped Newcome. "They wouldn't keep."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"One dodged in before he could get the gate shut — Manders has sent him an order to lock up — another got over the gates, and I saw another climbing over the wall."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

"All heading for Manders' house!" gurgled Newcome. "And I saw five or six more shaking the bars at the gate, howling to Mack to let them in."

Jimmy Silver and Co. yelled. They had hoped that Mr. Manders would be kept busy that afternoon. Undoubtedly he was being kept

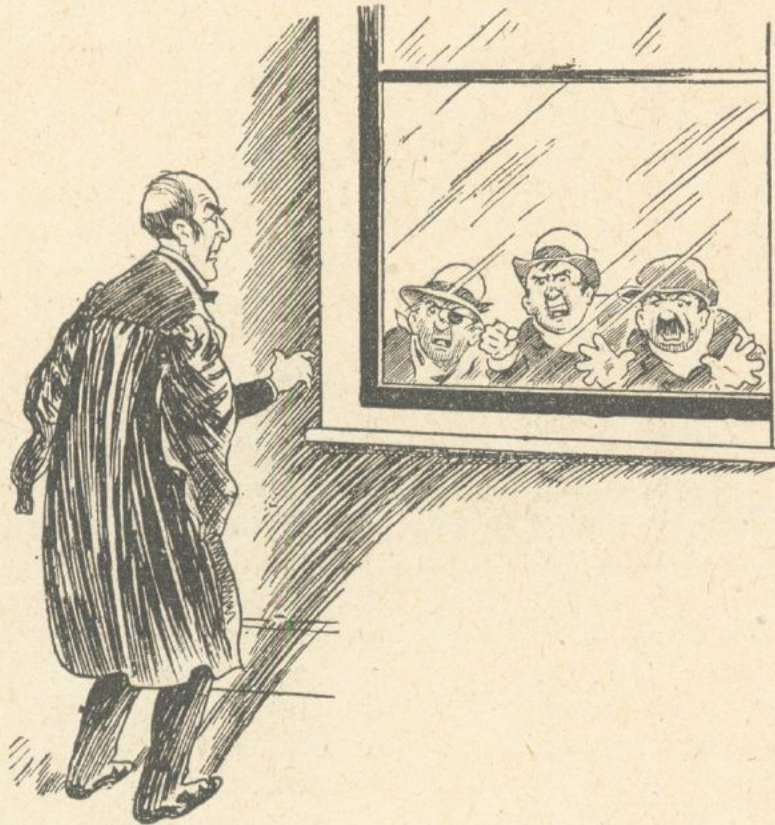
busy. Of that, as Mr. Gilbert has said, there wasn't a shadow of doubt, not a possible probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever.

"Big joke on, you fellows?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Joke of the season," answered Jimmy, beaming. "The last thing in japes, the real record. Somebody's shoved a bogus advertisement in the local paper, and a lot of rogues are coming along to claim a bag of quids that never was lost."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Manders is having the time of his life," explained Mornington. "It's keeping him so busy that he can't worry about a chap



Eager faces, rather in need of soap and water, were pressed against the window panes. "I lost them quids!" It was quite a chorus. (See page 251.)



who's playing footer instead of writing lines."

"Oh!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "I see."

"Some scheme, and no mistake," chuckled Bob Cherry.

"The schemefulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the dusky junior of Greyfriars. "It takes the honourable and respected cake."

"Ha, ha! It does."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Time!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

The footballers went into the field again for the second half of the great match.

Jimmy Silver and Co. were merry and bright. It was fairly certain now that there would be "no more Manders," so to speak. Roger Manders had his hands full with unnumbered claimants for a non-existent bag of sovereigns.

The second half started in great style, but the crowd of spectators had greatly thinned. It was a great match, an important match, and there was first-class play to be seen on both sides. But the counter-attraction was too strong.

All the Rookwood Fourth—Classical and Modern—were keenly interested in the Greyfriars' match; but still more keenly were they interested in the amazing adventures of Mr. Manders.

Even Newcome felt himself torn away, and, after watching the game for ten minutes or so, he drifted back to the quad to see how Roger Manders was getting on. Fellows who remained to watch glanced over their shoulders every now and then in the direction of the school buildings.

Only the footballers, in fact, quite forgot Roger Manders. But they had more important things to occupy their attention.

It was a gruelling game. Both teams were in great form, and in a mood of determination.

The score was level at half-time, and it remained level, with narrow escapes on both sides, as the minutes ticked away. But a terrific attack by Greyfriars got through at last. The Greyfriars' forwards came up the field in splendid style, passing like clockwork; and Rawson, in goal, was beaten to

the wide. The ball went in from the foot of Vernon-Smith.

"Goal!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Two to one!" murmured Jimmy Silver, as the footballers walked back to the centre of the field. "Pull up your socks, you fellows."

The Rookwooders pulled up their socks, and luck came their way. Five minutes later Erroll put the ball into the Greyfriars' goal.

Once more the score was level, with ten minutes to go. It was still "anybody's game."

Every minute that followed was crammed with incident. Another goal to either side would decide that hard-fought game; it was pretty clear that not more than one would be taken. Both sides were determined that it should not be a draw.

Jimmy Silver, all thoughts of Mr. Manders and of his detention forgotten, urged his men on to their utmost efforts.

"Stick it on, you fellows! Now's the time! Only one more goal!"

And the Rookwooders "stuck it on" manfully.

Hard and fast went the game, swaying up and down the field. A struggle in front of the Rookwood goal failed to materialise; the backs cleared, and Lovell sent the ball along. A rush into the Greyfriars' territory followed.

Squiff was on the watch in his citadel, all eyes and hands and feet; and Harry Wharton and Co. fell back to defend. But they could not succeed in clearing. The ball went to midfield, only to meet the foot of Jimmy Silver, and to come back like a pip from an orange. Mornington drove it in, and Squiff fisted it out. Brown of the Fifth looked at his watch.

Hard and fast; harder and faster! But there was, by this time, not a shout of encouragement for the football heroes, for not a single spectator remained on Little Side. The counter-attraction had won the day, and every fellow not chained to the spot had streamed off towards Mr. Manders' house. It was the first time on record that Roger Manders had succeeded in interesting a Rookwood crowd; but, quite unintentionally, he had succeeded this time. In fact, Mr. Roger Manders had brought down the house!



## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

Awful !

“Go away !”  
“Hay ?”

“Go away !” shrieked Mr. Manders passionately.

Mr. Manders was excited ; indeed, he looked almost hysterical. The strange, mysterious, inexplicable affair of the bag of sovereigns was getting on his nerves.

It was in vain that Mr. Manders had sent orders to old Mack, the porter, to lock the gates, and to refuse admittance to any person asking for Mr. Manders. Old Mack locked the gates, but the seekers after fortune were not to be baffled so easily as all that. Obviously, Mr. Manders' advertisement in the “Coombe Times” had spread all over Coombe. Every loafer at the Bird-in-Hand or the Red Cow had heard of it, and jumped at it. Ten pounds were not to be picked up every day ; the temptation was great to gentlemen of loose principles. Had the advertisement stated that banknotes had been found, it would have been a different matter ; a claimant would have been expected to give the numbers of the notes. But a bag of sovereigns could be claimed with impunity, and there was a sporting chance of getting hold of the goods, at least. So the honourable company of the Bird-in-Hand considered, at least.

Three rough-looking individuals, with mutually hostile looks, converged on Mr. Manders' house. It was in vain that Pilkins denied them admittance ; they shoved in. Mr. Manders fairly raved when they found their way into his study.

“Go away ! Go away at once ! Goodness gracious, go away !”

They stared at him.

“What's the trouble, guv'nor ?”

“I've looked in for that there bag of quids——”

“I've called for my money——”

“Cheese it, Bill Hikes ! It's my money !”

“You shut up, Sam Trotter ! I lost that there money on the towing-path——”

“You 'ad ten quids to lose ? I don't think !”

“Look here, you two, it's mine——”

“Chuck it, Ted Harker ! Chuck it !”

“Go away !” roared Mr. Manders. “I have no money ; no sovereigns have been found, I assure you !”

Messrs. Harker, Hikes, and Trotter ceased their recriminations, and gave their undivided attention to Mr. Manders as he made that statement—or, rather, as he roared it.

“No money——”

“No sovereigns——”

“Dror it mild ! Where's the dibs then ?”

“Go away !” gasped Mr. Manders. “I will telephone for the police——”

“Where's the dibs ?” roared Mr. Harker indignantly. “You advertises that you've found a bag of spondulics. Where are they ?”

“I—I have not——”

“You advertises !” howled Mr. Hikes.

“I did not—I——”

“Why, 'ere it is in black and white !” shouted Mr. Trotter, producing a soiled copy of the “Coombe Times” from his pocket. “Look at this 'ere, old codger !” A dirty thumb indicated the advertisement, to the amazed eyes of Roger Manders. “Now wot you got to say ?”

Mr. Manders had nothing to say for some moments. He wondered whether he was dreaming. There it was—in black and white, as the indignant Mr. Trotter declared. Mr. Manders gazed at it, thunderstruck.

“Deny it if you can !” said Mr. Trotter, scornfully. “Don't you believe I'm the howner ? I'll prove it. I dropped that there bag of sovereigns on the towing-path out of my trousis pocket. There was a hole in the pocket, which I can show.”

And Mr. Trotter dragged out the lining of his ragged trousers, and showed the hole in it. There were about fifty or sixty other holes in Mr. Trotter's garments, if further proof had been required.

“Gammon !” howled Mr. Hikes. “Gammon ! I dropped that there bag of quids on the towing-path accidental like, jest as I was taking it to the bank—dropped it out of my 'and——”

“Stick to the truth, Bill Hikes !” interrupted Mr. Harker. “Well you know that I lost that bag of quids on the towing-path !”



"There was no bag of sovereigns at all!" shrieked Mr. Manders.

"What?"

"This advertisement is false—it is unauthorised—it has been inserted in my name by some person or persons unknown——"

"You don't expect a cove to swaller that?" inquired Mr. Harker, with lofty scorn. "Say you mean to pocket the money, and we'll believe yer."

"I assure you—I swear——"

"Come off, old gentleman! We're arter the quids. We ain't come 'ere to listen to fairy tales."

"No blinking fear! Look 'ere, 'and out the dibs, and we'll settle atween us who they belong to!"

"That's fair!"

"There is no money!" raved Mr. Manders. "Go away! Go away at once! Bless my soul! Go!"

Mr. Manders careered to the telephone. He grabbed up the receiver, and panted out the number of the police-station.

The three claimants stared at him, and stared at one another. Whether the bag of sovereigns had a real existence or not, it was plain that Messrs. Harker, Hikes, and Trotter were not going to handle them.

"Send a constable!" gasped Mr. Manders into the transmitter. "Send a constable at once—Mr. Manders' house, Rookwood. Hurry! Hurry!"

"Strike me pink!" said Mr. Harker.

There was a general move on the part of the three claimants. They did not seem to want any personal dealings with a constable. Probably their relations with the police were rather strained already.

Mr. Trotter only lingered a moment to bestow the end of his ragged boot on Mr. Manders as he bent over the telephone. There was a fearful howl from Mr. Manders as he rolled over, dragging the instrument down with him. Then the visitors retired.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Manders. "Ow! Goodness gracious! I—I—Oh! Thank goodness they are gone! Ow! Oh! Wow!"

They were gone. But alas for Mr. Manders! As they went another gentleman passed them in the doorway—coming in!

"This 'ere Mr. Manders' 'ouse, what?" asked the gentleman.

"Haw, haw!" roared Mr. Harker. "You arter the quids? Yes, this is the 'ouse. Go in and try your luck!"

The gentleman went in. Pilkins made an attempt to close the door, but the gentleman planted a large foot in the way.

"Mr. Manders at 'ome?" he asked.

"Yes—no—can't come in!" gasped Pilkins.

"Tell 'im Mr. Scuppers has called about the bag of sovereigns——"

"Oh, my eye!" said Pilkins,

Mr. Scuppers shoved the door further open, and shoved in. Another gentleman came racing up the steps.

"Don't you come in here, Charley Hunks!" exclaimed Mr. Scuppers. "I was first, and I know what you're arter!"

"Halves!" breathed Mr. Hunks.

Mr. Scuppers reflected a moment, and nodded.

"Halves it is," he answered. "Where's Mr. Manders, me lad?"

"You can't see him—you—Yow-ow!" wailed Pilkins, as

Mr. Scuppers took his ear in a hefty finger and thumb.

"Can't I?" said Mr. Scuppers, pleasantly.

"Ow! This way!"

Slam!

Mr. Manders heard them coming. He slammed his study door and turned the key in the lock, just in time.

Mr. Scuppers and Mr. Hunks hammered at the door.

"Go away!" shrieked Mr. Manders.

"We've called for the money, sir."

"Them quids, sir."



With a heavy, stately tread, Mr. Boggs crossed towards Mr. Manders' house. (See page 251.)



"Belongs to both of us, sir. Lost it together on the towing-path, we did!"

"Kept it in the same bag, sir, being such pals. It's ours, sir."

Thump. Thump! Thump!

"Go away! I have sent for the police. Bless my soul! I will have you taken into custody—prosecuted, arrested! Oh, dear!"

"Here comes the bobby!" shouted Pilkins.

"Oh, my 'at!" gasped Mr. Scuppers. "I don't want to see no bobby. I 'ate bobbies. I'm off!"

"I'm arter you!" gasped Mr. Hunks.

The hammering at Mr. Manders' door ceased. A crowd of Rookwooders in the quad roared with laughter as the two latest claimants dodged out of the house and fled. Pilkins—who had not been brought up at the feet of George Washington—had given the alarm rather early; there was no sign of a policeman yet. But as soon as Messrs. Hunks and Scuppers were out of the house, Pilkins shut the door and put the chain up.

Bang, bang, bang! came at the door. Hunks and Scuppers were gone, but three or four other untruthful gentlemen had arrived. The door did not open, but a kind junior—Newcome of the Fourth—pointed out Mr. Manders' study window to the visitors. Eager faces, rather in need of soap and water, were pressed to the window-panes.

"Mr. Manders, sir——"

"Let a bloke in——"

"I lost them quids!"

It was quite a chorus. Mr. Manders pressed his hands to his distracted ears, and longed for the sight of a policeman's helmet. There was tapping at the window, and a rather vigorous tap broke a pane. Fragments of glass rattled on the floor.

"Let a cove in, sir! You don't want to keep my money, I s'pose?"

"What's this 'ere game, Mr. Manders? Can't you answer a bloke who's called for money he's lost?"

"Look 'ere, do you want me to come in at the winder?"

Mr. Manders groaned.

"Look out!" shouted Tubby Muffin in the quad. "Peelers!"

It was Police-constable Boggs at last. Old

Mack thankfully let him in at the gates. With a heavy, stately tread, Mr. Boggs crossed towards Mr. Manders' house. And at the sight of the official uniform, the claimants of the bag of sovereigns melted away like snow in the sunshine. Peace at long last descended upon the harassed soul of Roger Manders.

## THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

### The Winning Goal!

"GOAL!"  
"Good old Jimmy!" gasped Lovell.

"Hurray!"

It was a splendid goal. Right up to time, the hot attack on the Greyfriars' citadel lasted, but Johnny Bull drove back the ball at last. It was then that Jimmy Silver, centre-half, put in a long shot almost from midfield, and sent the leather home. He knew it was on time—he expected to hear the blast of the whistle as he kicked—there was not a second to spare; no time for anything but taking that long chance, and Jimmy Silver took it and "got there."

"Goal!"

Pheep! went the whistle.

"Hurray!"

It was Rookwood's game right on the stroke of time. Arthur Newcome came racing up breathlessly. He heard the shrilling of the whistle as he came.

"Rookwood wins!" Lovell shouted to him. "How's Manders getting on?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a regular riot!" gasped Newcome. "Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha! They've been besieging him——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now the bobby's come——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cut off, Jimmy," breathed Lovell. "We'll look after these chaps. Cut off."

Jimmy Silver nodded.

All had gone well. Mornington's amazing scheme had been an amazing success. Jimmy Silver had played in the great match—in spite of Roger Manders and all his works. And—as it turned out—he had won the match for Rookwood. Jimmy would not have cared very much now if his absence from the



Form-room had come to Mr. Manders' knowledge. Nevertheless, he was not anxious for a licking to wind up that happy and eventful day, so he cut off from the football field without delay.

The attention of nearly everybody within the walls of Rookwood was centred on Mr. Manders' house just then. It was easy enough for Jimmy to dodge in at the open window of the Form-room unnoticed.

He was breathless, but he lost no time. In the dusky Form-room he changed hurriedly, and his football clothes were rolled out of sight in a locker.

In Etons once more, Jimmy Silver sat at his desk, with a stack of impot paper before him on which were inscribed three hundred lines from P. Vergilius Maro—so fortunately prepared in advance.

Harry Wharton and Co. were staying to tea before they went for their train. Lovell and his comrades looked after them, Jimmy being under detention.

Newcome looked in at the Form-room door, grinning.

"They're gone," he announced. "Boggs cleared them off, and turned back some more that were coming up the road."

Jimmy chuckled.

"Manders might look in here now."

"Let him," said Jimmy Silver cheerily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Newcome strolled away to join the footballers at tea. But Mr. Manders did not look in. Mr. Manders was utterly oblivious of Jimmy Silver now, he had completely forgotten the existence of that cheery youth. In a state of excitement, almost hysteria, and of raging wrath and indignation, Mr. Manders was thinking about anything but Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy smiled as he heard the sound of a brake in the quadrangle, and understood that the senior footballers had returned from Bagshot with Mr. Dalton. It was close on five now, and at five o'clock his detention was to expire—if his lines were done! Undoubtedly his lines were done!

There was a step outside as five o'clock rang out from the clock-tower. Mr. Dalton looked in.

Jimmy rose respectfully to his feet.

"Your lines are done, Silver?" asked Mr. Dalton, with a kindly glance at the detained junior.

"They are here, sir," said Jimmy demurely.

"Then—ah, here is Mr. Manders!"

The lean gentleman had remembered Jimmy's existence as five o'clock rang out. He came whisking into the Form-room. Possibly he hoped that Jimmy was not there—a victim would not have been unwelcome to Mr. Manders just then.

"Oh, you have returned, Mr. Dalton?"

"Yes, Mr. Manders."

"Has Silver——"

"Silver is here."

Mr. Manders set his lips hard.

"I see that he is here," he said sourly.

"I think it as well, however, to ascertain whether he has written his lines."

"He tells me——"

"I should prefer to see for myself; Mr. Dalton."

"Pray do so, then, Mr. Manders."

Mr. Manders did so. Then, having absolutely nothing more to say, he whisked out of the Form-room, and stalked across the quadrangle to his own house.

"You may go, Silver," said Mr. Dalton, with a smile.

"Thank you, sir."

And Jimmy Silver went.

Mr. Manders made exhaustive inquiries into the affair of the inexplicable advertisement. He spent a great deal of time on that matter; but the result was nil. Somebody, it was clear, had played a jape on Mr. Manders, but the identity of that somebody was a deep mystery.

Mr. Dalton came to learn, later, that Jimmy Silver had figured in the Greyfriars' match. When that circumstance came to his knowledge, Mr. Dalton may have put two and two together with more or less success. But he did not speak on the subject, and Jimmy Silver and Co. never knew how much their Form-master knew or guessed concerning the mystification of Mr. Manders.

THE END.





# SOMETHING LIKE A RACE!

By **PERCY LONGHURST**

*Illustrated by Harry Lane*

A Story of the  
Great Gold Rush  
in the Klondyke

WHEN gold is discovered in a new country a "rush" to stake out claims follows immediately; those first on the ground usually get the pick of the rich claims. How these claims become the property of the staker is well enough known. The man drives in a wooden peg at the four corners of the area of ground of a size as mining law requires, and there, most people think, is an end of it. What is forgotten—fiction writers almost always forget it—is that the ground so staked out does not become the property of the person putting in the pegs until he has recorded his claim at the office of the nearest government recording official. At least, that is the law in Canada. A certain time is allowed after driving the pegs in which to make the record; if that period elapses, then others are at liberty to re-stake and claim the ground.

I remember one case of this kind up in the Klondyke. It gave rise to a race that every man and woman in Dawson City turned out to see.

Bonanza Creek was one of the richest of the many Klondyke locations, and I'd be afraid to say how many millions of dollars' worth of dust were taken from it. One of the last claims staked when the rush took place was never recorded for some reason or other and the pegger disappeared—left the country, perhaps. In due time the government officials gave notice this claim would be available for re-staking, as soon after midnight on a certain date as anyone chose to go there. To avoid any trouble

a N.W.M. policeman was sent up to the spot to give the signal when midnight arrived.

More than a dozen miners turned up, but for some reason all dropped out but two—a long-limbed, cast-iron Canadian miner and a Swede—a tremendously big fellow, strong as a giant and active as a wolf. Each had his pegs ready and both were waiting some time before midnight for the policeman to give the word "Go!"

The signal was given, and off shot the two men like bullets from a gun, as soon as each had put a peg at the corner of the claim just outside which each was standing. Then they reached to the farther side of the claim, five hundred feet, to put in further pegs.

It was winter-time, of course, cold as charity, and so close were the two men that the policeman and the other miners who had turned out to watch the contest declared a dead heat. The claim would go to which of the two was first to reach the Recorder's office. That was Fortymile—only seventy-five miles and a bit away!

Off the pair started, on foot, almost shoulder to shoulder, over ice and broken ground covered with frozen, slippery snow, *not* at top speed, for the first stopping-place, Dawson, from whence the rest of the long race would be continued with the aid of dog sleds, was eighteen miles away. Both were seasoned runners, all brawn and muscle, hardened and toughened by their work, and each determined to go on until he dropped.

Early morning saw them in Dawson,



where they arrived within a few minutes of each other, the Swede ahead. Both had friends in the city; these got to work, fixed up a hasty breakfast, prepared a dog team, and loaded the sled with grub, etc.—and the “etc.” was mighty little and the grub not much more, as in a long and hard race every pound of weight was going to tell.

The two teams started on their race together, amid a scene of excitement and to the accompaniment of such cheering as only Dawson City in 1896 could have produced.

It was a record race—in record time. First one and then the other drew ahead, due to clever jockeying upon the none-too-wide trail; and neither man spared himself, his whip nor his dogs, though the huskies seemed to enter into the spirit of the race and tore along the frozen snow at a pace threatening disaster if anything should be hit.

At 4 p.m. the record office at Fortymile was closed, and to reach it before this hap-

pened was the intention of both men, as the door would not be opened again until nine o'clock next morning. So through the long day they drove, cheering their galloping teams.

Within three miles of the goal the team of the Canadian, who was leading, suddenly gave out. They were used up. Deaf to the voice of their driver, careless of the stinging cuts from his long whip, they stopped, curled themselves on the snow just as they fell, and stayed there.

Looking back along the trail, the Canadian could see the team of his rival, and his hopes rose. His sight was good enough to tell him the Swede's dogs were in but very little better condition than his own. He could hear the driver's stentorian shouts, could see the constant rise and fall of the flogging whip, but the dogs were not to be shifted from a mere painful crawl.

Right; he would finish the journey afoot. And off he started. And hard in pursuit



Within three miles of the goal, the team of the Canadian, who was leading, suddenly gave out, and, back along the trail the team of his rival could be seen.



came the herculean Swede, he, too, abandoning his exhausted team.

Within half a mile the Canadian had been overhauled, but try as he might, the Swede could not get a yard ahead. With gritted teeth and labouring lungs the two determined men pounded along side by side.

Each was not far from his last gasp, but neither meant giving in.

At last the barrack yard, within which was situated the recording office, came in sight, and the runners' wearied limbs found an increase of strength. Both spurted, and it was neck-and-neck that they blundered through the wide open gate. Here it was the big Swede made a mistake. He had never been within the barrack square, and he made straight for the biggest block of buildings. The Canadian knew better. He was familiar with the place, and aware that the recorder's office was on the right hand side of the square. It was the officers' quarters for which the Swede was making. He allowed the Swede to dash past him, then turned away to his right.

In five seconds he had gained the door



The Canadian was so weary he flopped across the threshold, crying as he fell: "Sixty above on Bonanza!"

of the office, and just found strength sufficient to push it open. But he was too weak to lift his foot over the six-inch threshold. Down he flopped across it crying as he fell:

"Sixty above on Bonanza"—the designation of the claim.

And before the startled official had well realised

the meaning of the words they were repeated, by the Swede, as he tripped and fell over the body of his rival.

"Well, boys," said the Recorder, when the men had recovered sufficiently to be able to talk; "it looks as if it's been much of a dead-heat from start to finish. Say, why not divide the claim between you?"

And that is what they did. Joint-owners, they worked the claim together.

I wish I could tell you, as a pleasant finish to the story, that the plucky owners were suitably rewarded for their tremendous struggle. One feels that they *ought* to have become rich men as a result. But they didn't. They had all their trouble for nothing. There wasn't an ounce of gold on the entire claim!

THE END



# BILLY BUNTER'S ANNUAL

St. Jim's  
Friars Wood

Edited by WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER, the fat and famous Editor of the WEEKLY which bears his name

BASSETT



## THE EDITOR AND HIS STAFF

*Sammy Bunter*

*Fatty Wynn*

*Tubby Muffin*

*Baggy Trimble*

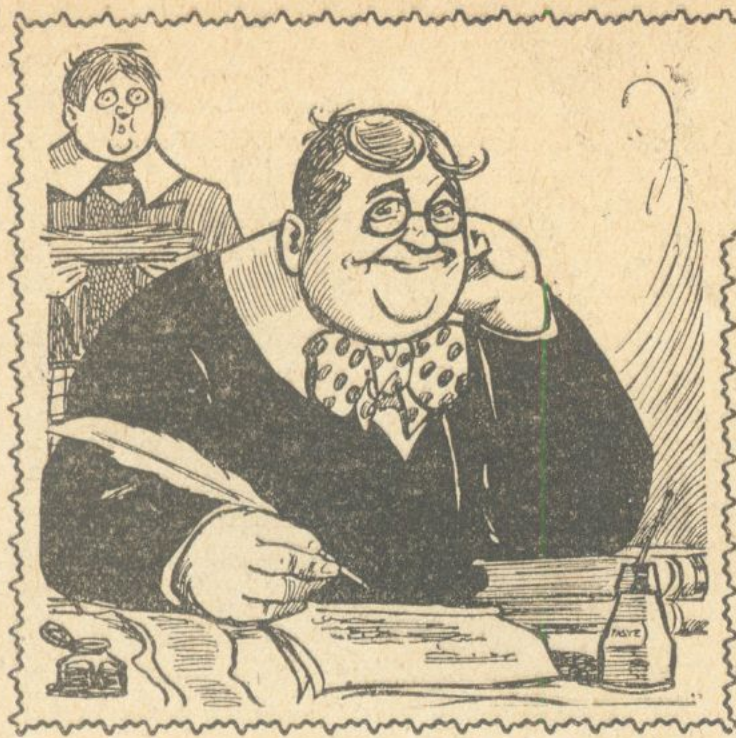
*Billy Bunter*

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## In Your Editor's Den

By BILLY BUNTER

really can't find room for everything, as the cannibal said when he was offered an extra missionary.

Even in eight pages, however, I have managed to pack some perfectly priceless features, as you will all agree. The four fat sub-editors on the staff of my WEEKLY have each provided a kontribution; and in addition there is an artikle by Dicky Nugent, the frivverlus fag, and a poem and an artikle by Dick Penfold.

In case there are any readers of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL who have never heard of my wonderful WEEKLY, let me explain that it is published every Tuesday in THE POPULAR. My little paper has an amazing histery. It started with a circulation of only one reader—myself—and in a mater of weeks it was selling like hot cakes. BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY is now blest and beloved by billions of boys in the British Empire.

Harry Wharton, of the Remove, tries to run a rival rag, called the "Greyfriars' Herald," which is published in the "Magnet Library" every week, but it is a feeble imitation of my famous jernal, of course! You wouldn't catch the Editor of the "Holiday Annual" letting Harry Wharton put in an eight-page number of his blessed "Weakly" like I am being allowed to do! Not likely! Of course, I don't want to boste, but it's no use hiding your light under a bushell, is it? Over-modesty has always been my greatest fault—everyone at Greyfriars will tell you so—perhaps!

By the way, should you find any spelling mistaiks in this issue, kindly attribute them to the carelessness of the printers!

Your plump pal,  
BILLY BUNTER.

My Dear Readers,

THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL for 1923 had only one serious fault. There wasn't enough Bunter in it! So in order to remedy this defect, I wrote to the Editor, and asked him if he would permit me to publish an eight-page paper, to be entitled BILLY BUNTER'S ANNUAL, in the 1924 ANNUAL.

After a rather stormy diskussion on the question of how much payment I should reseeve for my services, the Editor konsented to my proposal. In the first place, he was only going to pay me half-a-crown for my YEARLY. I was so indignant about this that he has extended his jennerossity to the extent of two-and-ninepence. This sum will secure me a modest snack at the Greyfriars tuck-shop.

With only a few pages at my disposal, I can't make much of a stir. I wanted to find room for "The Advenchers of a Pit-boy," by my miner Sammy. I also wanted to publish a story of power and punch, from the pen of Percy Bolsover, the popular prize-fighter. Then there was a 200-verse "Ode to a Chirping Cricket," by Alonzo Todd. All these things I have had to leave out, with many heart-burnings; and the writers are already claiming kompensation. But there! You



## OUR EDITOR

By DICK PENFOLD.



Who walks as if he owns the earth !

Who is the plumpest boy we know,  
The biggest duffer here below,  
Who thinks he's full of push and go ?  
Our Editor !

Who gobbles pastries by the score,  
Then, like the workhouse boy of yore,  
Picks up his plate and howls for more ?  
Our Editor !

Who always seems to smile and smirk ?  
Who simply loves to slack and shirk  
While Sammy does the donkey work ?  
Our Editor !

Who loves to tease, torment, and try us  
By spouting fibs like Ananias ?  
(Lucky we've got a cushion by us !)  
Our Editor !

Who walks as if he owns the earth,  
Yet fourpence-halfpenny's all he's worth ?  
Who makes his schoolmates sob with mirth ?  
Our Editor !

Who acts so quaintly and so queerly ?  
And who imagines, most sincerely,  
Nothing can equal BUNTER'S YEARLY ?  
Our Editor !

## GUY FOX DAY!

By DICKY NUGENT.

**G**UY FOX DAY falls on November 5th, but it duzzent squash it by falling on it !

The day is named after Guy Fox, who was a Span-yard living in England in the rain of Alfred the Grate.

It appears that Guy Fox had a grudge against the King and the Parlyment, so he desided to give them a good blowing-up. I don't mean verbally, but a real blowing-up with gunpowder.

There were several other people in the plot, and they smuggelled some gunpowder—barrels and barrels of it—in the Parlymentary vaults.

But the best-laid skeems of mice and men—and Foxes—often come unstuck, and this was a case in point.

Sumboddy discovered the pressence of the gunpowder, and the dasterdly plot was nipt in the bud.

I forget what happened to Guy Fox. If he wasn't put in the pillory, he was hanged at Tyburn. And if he wasn't put in the pillory or hanged at Tyburn, he was put in



Guy Fox gets busy !



the stox. And if he wasn't put in the pillery, or hanged at Tyburn, or put in the stox, he was put to the torcher. Anyway, his precious skeem eggsploled, but the gunpowder didn't!

It was on November 5th that this diabollical, devillish, dasterdly plot was discovered; and every year, on that date, the event has been commemerated by the publick. Bon-fires and beekons are lighted all over the country, and firework displays are given.

At Greyfriars we have grate fun. It isn't often that the fags get a chance of staying up till midnite, and we always make the most of it.

This year I have made a ripping guy. It is a giant, standing ten feat in its socks. It takes four of us to lift it. On bonfire night we shall cast it to the flames, and dance a war-dance round its ashes.

The only drorback to Guy Fox Day is that it isn't kept up often enuff. I konsider we ought to have a Guy Fox Day every week, or once a munth at least. It's simply awful having to wait three hundred and sixty-four days till the next Guy Fox Day comes round.

I've got a lovely lot of fireworks this year. Squibbs, and starlights, and jumping crackers, and golden reigns, and other kinds of sky-rockitts. I shall fairly set the place alight—metaphorically, of corse!

Although old Guy Fox was a dasterdly crimminal, he was a pretty decent chap, on the quiet, bekwase if it hadn't been for him we shouldn't have a Guy Fox Day.

Hear is a list of the guys that the fags have invented this year:

Guy.	Inventor.
A hefty giant.	Dicky Nugent.
Kaiser Bill.	George Tubb.
Fallstaff.	Sammy Bunter.
Dick Terpin.	Bolsover miner.
Scrooge.	Wingate miner.
Berglar Bill.	G. A. Gatty.

Personally, I am afrayed Gatty is in for trubble. His guy is so like Billy Bunter he's bound to get into the wars. I think I can see Gatty doing another guy when Billy spots Berglar Bill!

## FIGURES OF SPEECH!

By JIMMY SILVER



"The Fat in the fire."

**T**UBBY MUFFIN is not only plump, but dense. We have tried to bump him out of it, but in vain.

Everything you say to Tubby he takes literally.

Let me give you a few illustrations of what I mean.

We were having a high tea in our study the other afternoon, and we found that we had forgotten to buy the plum-cake. It was then too late to get one, as the tuck-shop was closed.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish!" said Lovell.

Tubby Muffin, who had been standing in the offing in hopes of a feed, looked round eagerly.

"Where?" he asked. "I could just do with a nice cutlet of cod. But fancy frying fish in a kettle!"

"You silly duffer!" shouted Lovell. "That was merely a figure of speech."

"Oh!"

We proceeded with our preparations for tea. Raby started frying some rashers of bacon, and Newcome was about to fill the teapot—the silver teapot we had borrowed



from Smythe of the Shell—when Smythe himself walked in.

“You’ve raided my teapot, you cheeky young sweeps!” roared Smythe.

“Oh, crumbs!” gasped Raby. “The fat’s in the fire now with a vengeance!”

Instantly Tubby Muffin rushed towards Raby and snatched the frying-pan out of his hand.

“Hi! What are you up to?” yelled the astonished Raby.

“I’m going to fry these rashers myself,” said Tubby. “You’re too careless. Fancy spilling the fat in the fire!”

“I didn’t!”

“Then what did you mean by saying ‘the fat’s in the fire’?”

“Oh, dear!” gasped Raby. “You’ll be the death of me, Tubby!”

Eventually, having restored Smythe’s tea-

pot to its wrathful owner and borrowed another, we settled down to tea. In the course of the meal Tubby Muffin remarked that Adolphus Smythe was a silly ass.

“It’s a case of the pot calling the kettle black!” chuckled Lovell.

Tubby Muffin stared.

“How can a pot possibly call a kettle anything?” he said. “It hasn’t a tongue! You fellows do say such queer things. I believe you are all potty!”

“Density, thy name is Muffin!” said Newcome. “Let’s show him the door, you fellows!”

“But I don’t want to see the door!” protested Tubby.

That was the last straw! There was a bump and a yell, and the study door slammed, with Tubby Muffin on the other side of it!

## Fine Feeds Make Fine Fellows!

By TUBBY MUFFIN.



**W**HAT is the difference between an optimist and a pessimist?

At first, there would not seem to be any difference, becausè both are “fed up.” But whereas the pessimist is fed up with life in general, the optimist is fed up with good, nourishing food. That’s why he’s an optimist.

If you see a fellow going about with a hang-dog look, as if he is carrying the weight

of the whole world on his shoulders, you can safely wager that he hasn’t had a good, square meal for days. If, on the other hand, you see a fellow who is bubbling over with the joy of life, you may conclud that he has just attended a study banquet.

A good feed makes all the difference in the world to a fellow. When he is hungry, he is a mizzerable, moping, moony, missanthropic mugwump (you’d better memmerise this phrase!). When he is well-fed, he is a bright, bonny, beaming, bouncing boy.

A good feed will cure all the ailments under the sun, except Indiagestion, and schoolboys don’t suffer from that.

The other day I was reading the life of Shelley, and I came across a remarkable fact.

Shelley’s first novel, “Zastrozzi,” was published while he was still a boy at Eton. He reseved eighty pounds for it. And what do you think he did with this windfall? Stood all his schoolfellows a hansom feed, of course! And it was the most sensible method of getting rid of the munney—much better than hoarding it. Shelley knew a thing or two about the value of a good feed, though I was sorry to read that later in life he became a vegetetarian.

Some fellows are ashamed to admit that they enjoy their food. They are afraid they will be dubbed gluttons.



But what is there to be ashamed of in having a harty appetite? It is a thing to be grateful for and proud of. I am the biggest eater at Rookwood, and I do not hezzitate to own it. Why should I? Others can denounce me as a glutton if they like, but I don't care. Far better than being a secret eater—a fellow who stints himself in the

dining-hall and then locks himself in his study and gorges until he falls asleep!

All the greatest men in history owe their greatness to the fact that they were well-fed.

The Duke of Wellington declared that an army marched on its stummack, and Wellington, like Shelley, knew a thing or two about the value of a good feed!

## EXTRACTS FROM MY EXERCISE BOOK!

By BAGGY TRIMBLE.

### From an Essay on "THE BOER WAR":—

"The Bore War was fought in South America a few years before I was born. Lots of our Tommies were sent out to the releef of Lady Smith, whoever she might have been. I expect she was the wife of some big shipping magnet; anyway, she is supposed to have been very attractive. The British got the best of it in the end, but the Bores fought with true Dutch courage."

### From an Essay on "NATIONAL PASTIMES":—

"In olden times our greatest national pastimes were cock-fighting, bull-baiting, and boles. It will be remembered that Sir Oliver Cromwell was playing boles on Plymouth Hoe when the Spannish Armada came in site. He went on calmly with his game, and remarked to his friend, Shakespeare: 'I do not fear these huge Spannish galleons. I am a man of war myself!'"

"Cock-fighting has now been banned as a crool sport, and in its place we have another sport which causes a flutter—football. A



Cup—without a saucer—is presented every year to the best team.

"In our list of national pastimes we must inlood golf, cricket, baseball, tennis, hockey, kiss-in-the-ring, boxing, Jew-jitsoo, swimming, and other indoor pursoots."

### From an Essay on "LONDON.":—

"London is a mity city standing on the River Tems. It is not altogether a nice place, though many people speak of it as Capital. In the olden days London used to konsist of St. Paul's Cathedral, Ludgate Hill, and Fleet Street.

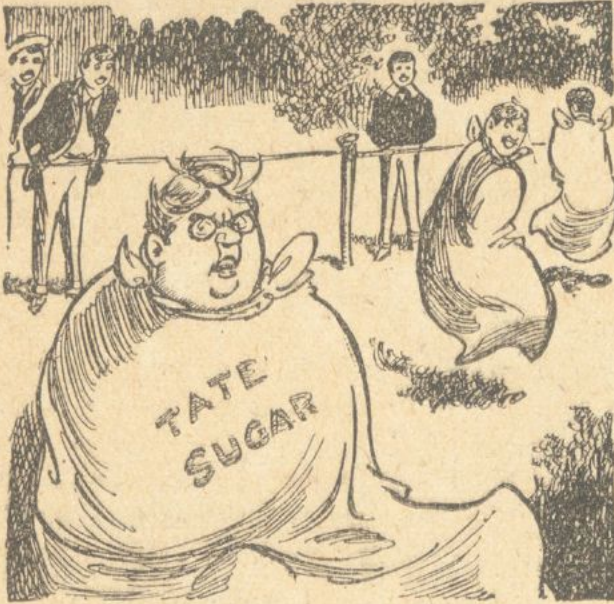
"But it has spread rapidly of recent years, and eaten into the counties of Kent, Surrey, Middlesex, and Hearts. We shall soon find the following towns linked up with London: Guildford, S.W. 99; St. Albans, N. 150; Margate, E. 77; Windsor, W. 93. The letters and numbers after each name refer to the postle districts.

"London contains many places of publick interest, the cheef of which are the British Abbey, the Tower of Parlyment, and the Monument Museum."



# Great Days at Greyfriars

## Sports' Day



See all the runners toe the line!  
And note their crouching attitudes;  
While keen spectators think it fine  
To give advice or platitudes.  
"Don't take it easy at the start!"  
"Spurt like the dooce when finishing!"  
The runners take these tips to heart,  
Excitement's undiminishing!

The pistol cracks, and off they go!  
The tape is held in readiness.  
Some gallop fast, some seem so slow—  
We slate them for their steadiness.  
And then the tape comes fluttering down,  
A thrilling race—yea, verily!  
Who wins? The verdict goes to Brown,  
And all applaud him merrily.

The sack-race starts; and in their sacks  
Competitors come blundering;  
Some topple over on their backs,  
Then sit up dazed and wondering.  
There's Billy Bunter in the rear,  
His antics are peculiar;  
At others, too, we scoff and jeer,  
Their movements so unruly are!

The flags are fluttering in the breeze,  
The fun is fast and furious;  
The kindly, wise old Head agrees,  
That sport is not injurious.  
He loves to watch each thrilling race,  
So breathless and so glorious;  
And loves to see each smiling face  
Of those who prove victorious!

# WHAT I WOULD DO WITH ONE HUNDRED POUNDS

By SAMMY BUNTER

First of all I should buy up Billy's WEEKLY, lock, stock, and barrel, and run it myself. I should alter the title to "THE TUCKSHOP TIMES."

I don't know how much the printing plant would cost; but young Tubb, who is a bit of an amateur gardener, bought a hothouse plant for eighteenpence, so I don't suppose the printing plant would cost me more than two shillings.

Of course, I should have to employ a printer. Printers are a mercenary race. I never yet met one who would be prepared to work for less than ten shillings a week. So I should have to set aside the sum of twenty-five pounds for the printer's yearly salary.

I should buy a larder of my own, and stock it with tuck. Come to think of it, I should do this first, before I bought the WEEKLY and the printing plant.

I have often dreamed of possessing my own private larder, with good things stacked upon the shelves. But alas! A lack! These dreams have a habit of never coming true.

Been very keen on musick, I should natcherally buy a grammarphone. This would make the fags' common-room a cheerier place on winter evenings.

I should also buy a bicycle, with an auto-wheel attached, so that I shouldn't have to peddle. Peddling takes all the joy out of cycling.

I should also take out a sort of seezon ticket, entitling me to go and feed at the village bunshop whenever I felt in the humour. (I fancy I should feel in the humour about a duzzen times a day!)

If there was anything left out of the hundred pounds, by this time, I should buy—

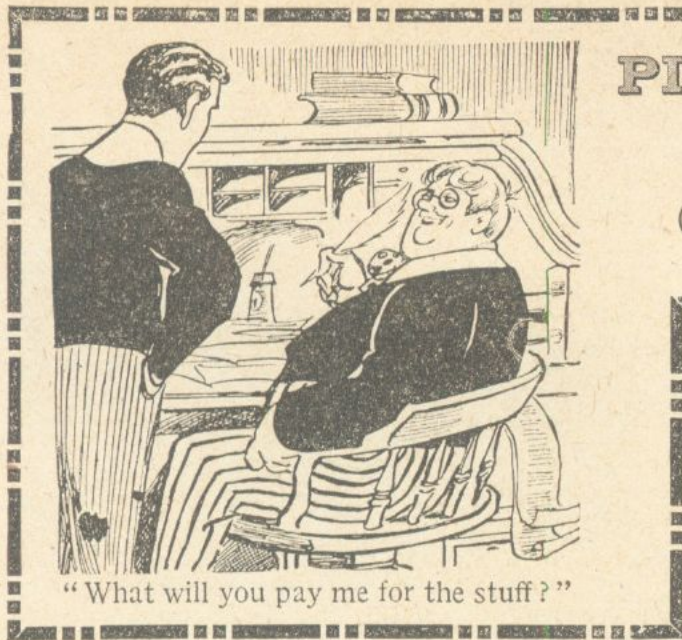
But what's the use of dreeming dreams? I've never had a hundred pounds in my life, and I'm never likely to boast such a sum—unless the Age of Miracles returns!



## PITY THE POOR POET!

By DICK PENFOLD

(whose clever verses will be found in other pages of this Annual)



“What will you pay me for the stuff?”

**B**EING a bard is not all honey. You scribble verses that are funny, send them to journals of renown, and hope to earn an honest crown.

The editor looks stern and solemn, and says, “These verses fill a column. To pay a crown, I’d have a fit. Here, sonny, take this threepenny-bit!”

And so you have to slave and strive, and somehow keep yourself alive, on threepence here and threepence there, until you’re well-nigh in despair.

Those who prefer to scribble prose are lucky beggars, goodness knows! They write an article or story, and reap no end of fame and glory.

I know a chap who wrote a novel, of a poor slum waif in a hovel, who lived with scoundrels sly and sinister, but later rose to be Prime Minister.

The lucky author, I declare, is now a multi-millionaire. He runs a car—a Mercedes—and lives in luxury and ease.

But the poor wretch who lives by verse, he simply goes from bad to worse. He has to pawn the “Baby Grand,” and problems rise on every hand.

I’ve been a rhymers now for ages; I must have filled a million pages! But am I rich, like other kids? Do I possess a pile of ‘quids’? No, gentle reader, I do not; a pile of pence is all I’ve got.

From early morn till late at night I’m called upon to sit and write. “Ode to a Dainty Buttercup,” “Sonnet to an Expiring Pup,” “Ode to a Little Warbling Linnet”—(I write a dozen lines a minute!)

My hair is crisp and black and long—just like the blacksmith’s in the song. My eyes are wild, my brow is lined; at times I wander in my mind.

Then Harry Wharton comes along with “Hallo, Penfold! Going strong? I want a poem for my paper—‘Ode to a Joker and a Japer.’ Write twenty verses, if you please; and dot your i’s and cross your t’s. See that the poem’s full of fun, and let me have it when it’s done.”

“What will you pay me?” I inquire. “Seventeen-and-sixpence I desire.” Says Wharton, in his lofty manner, “Leave out the bobs, and take a tanner.”

Then Billy Bunter says to me, “I’m publishing my WEEKLY, see? I want a poem right away, about a match in which I play, and score about a dozen goals. That will delight my readers’ souls.”

I take my pen up drearily, and say to Bunter wearily, “What will you pay me for the stuff?” “Oh, tuppence—if it’s up to snuff!”

And so I set to work again, until it drives me half insane.

But if I plod and persevere, I’ll make a fortune, never fear. In ninety years or so (hip, hip!) I’ll go and bag the Laureateship. And when I’m in that proud position, I’ll win such fame and recognition, that all the fellows will declare, “I knew Dick Penfold had it *there!*” They’ll tap their foreheads as they speak—a tribute to my brains unique.

And now I must turn out my lamp and go to bed; I’ve writers’ cramp.



# Random Jottings From St. Jim's



St. Jim's is the oldest public school in fiction, and has had a longer run than any other of its kind. Stories about St. Jim's have been published continuously for the last seventeen years. It is now doing as well as it ever was, and shows great possibilities for the future.

\* \* \*

The stories in the "Gem" began when a merger was made of two big schools—St. Jim's and Clavering—the former retaining the name. The present Shell of St. Jim's was originally the largest Form at Clavering, and the School House-master, Mr. Victor Railton, was the Headmaster.

\* \* \*

St. Jim's is a very old establishment, abounding with secret passages in the school, and subterranean tunnels which form a perplexing maze over a large distance between the school and Rylcombe. Many of these tunnels are unexplored, and many more have been closed up.

\* \* \*

The most important tunnels can be ascertained from an old book in the library. The first is the single tunnel which runs from beneath the Old Tower in the Cloisters direct

to the Monks' Cell in the heart of Rylcombe Wood.

\* \* \*

The Monk's Cell is an old ruin in white stone, while beneath the surface it is a kind of junction for a number of vaults and tunnels. Two of these tunnels, other than that one which comes from St. Jim's, have been explored.

\* \* \*

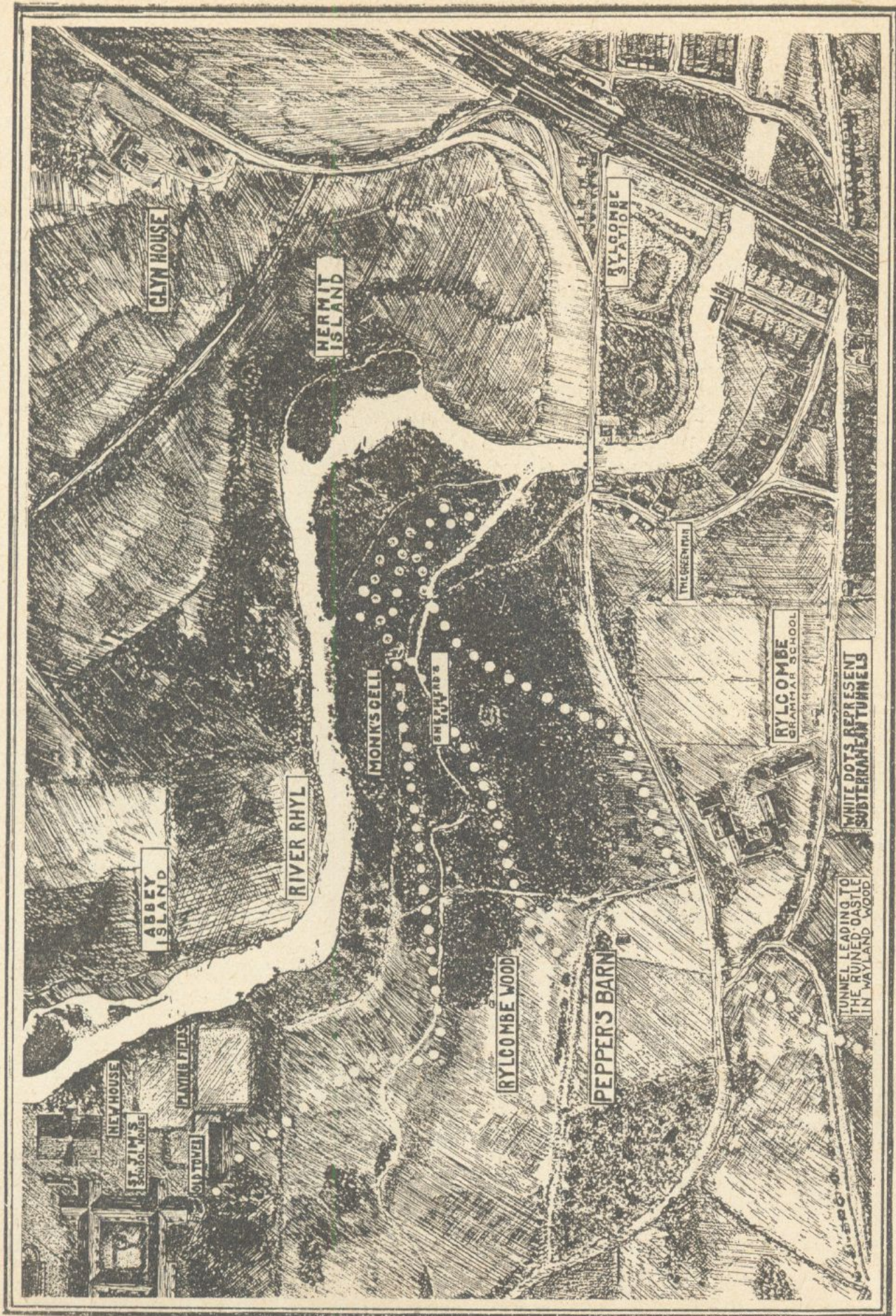
One of the two tunnels from Monks' Cell runs direct to the mysterious old barn in a field midway between St. Jim's and Rylcombe. This barn is the property of Mr. Pepper, a miser. The tunnel is artfully contrived, and has been used on occasion by the boys of St. Jim's.

\* \* \*

The second tunnel leads direct into an appalling maze. Cardew and Doris Levison once had an experience in this which they are not likely to forget in a hurry. From the maze, a long tunnel extends far underground to the old castle in Wayland Wood, which adjoins Rylcombe in one particular part. The castle is situated very near the spinney in which the Abbey of St. James' sheltered its ruined walls. Many short cuts to these old places are known



# Plan of the Country Round St. Jim's



This drawing, prepared from an aeroplane photograph by Manners of the Shell, gives a wealth of detail about part of the County of Sussex lying adjacent to the famous College. Followers of Mr. Martin Clifford's school stories will recognise many familiar landmarks.



to the boys of St. Jim's, and many a pleasant half-holiday is spent there.

\* \* \*

The two houses at St. Jim's are found quite sufficient to board the three hundred odd scholars which the place contains. Mr. Leslie M. Linton takes the Shell of both Houses at classes. He is an unemotional man with a well-balanced mind. If his boys work well at classes he gives them ample time to devote to sport, but if they try scamping things to get out earlier he comes down very hard.

Mr. Philip G. Lathom, on the other hand, has also to be rubbed the right way for best results. Unlike Mr. Linton, he is always very mild and generous with his boys, and seldom doses them with heavy punishments. It is possible to pull his leg to a certain extent, and wags like Blake and Figgins frequently attempt it. Mr. Lathom is more interested in geology and antiques than in driving wisdom and knowledge into his pupils, and the Fourth are considered very fortunate in this respect.

Mr. Selby needs little introduction. He is a kindred spirit to Mr. Ratcliff. He is a kill-joy and a spoil-sport. He teaches the gospel of gloom daily to his youthful-hearted charges, and suffers from chronic indigestion. He does not like boys, and regards teaching them anything as a waste of good time. The Third are never likely to learn a great deal from him, and at times their little lives become a burden to them. Mr. Selby's dear relatives have landed him into some unpleasant scrapes before now.

\* \* \*

Eric Kildare is the captain of the school and leader of the School House. James Monteith is the leader of the New House. Rivalry has existed between the two from the time of their first appearance. Kildare is very much after the pattern of Mr. Railton, while Monteith is of similar principles to Mr. Ratcliff. James Monteith has altered lately, preferring obscurity to the limelight.

Kildare comes from Ireland, together with Mulvaney of the Sixth. Mulvaney minor of the Fourth and Patrick Reilly also come from the Emerald Isle.

Gerald Knox is the black sheep of the St. Jim's School House. He has an ally in Gerald Cutts of the Fifth. Both these fellows do their utmost to cause trouble with the juniors who are unable to defend themselves against older and more powerful fellows. Tom Merry & Co. frequently interfere with his worst schemes, and match their strength against him in a battle of wits. As he invariably retires defeated, Knox harbours a bitter hatred against the Terrible Three and the chums of Study No. 6.

\* \* \*

The St. Jim's First Eleven is a powerful team, comprising Eric Kildare, Nigel Macgregor, George Richard Bruce Darrel, Philip Rushden, Philip Lefevre, Stanley Baker, Albert Gray, Gerald Cutts, Herbert Langton, and James Monteith.

The three best bowlers at St. Jim's are Herbert Langton of the Sixth, Fatty Wynn of the New House Fourth and Ernest Levison of the School House Fourth.

Gerald Cutts of the Fifth is a very wealthy fellow, and the nephew of Major Cutts, who is an uncle of Robert Arthur Digby of the Fourth. Digby's father is a baronet.

Cutts's pals are Philip Gilmore and Arthur St. Leger. All three are undesirables. Cutts spends his spare week-ends in town, and his evenings and half holidays in Wayland hotels. He condescends to tolerate the company of Aubrey Racke of the Shell. It is because Racke is the son of a multi-millionaire and free with his money. Racke, of course, can't see this, and believes Cutts enjoys his society.

\* \* \*

One of the biggest fights in the history of St. Jim's took place between two Fifth Formers. One was a fellow called William Lee; the other, Tuck Purkiss, was a regular bruiser, who frightened fags out of their wits. Lee was an ignorant individual, with a burly appearance and a large pair of fists. The fight arose, so the tale goes, over an accusation by Lee against Purkiss of stealing a new pocket-knife. Purkiss decided to fight his accuser. The fight took place in the heart of Rylcombe Wood, and with the exception of a few prefects and the masters, the entire school mustered to see it. After Lee had



## THE NIGHT RAIDERS!



When Tom Merry and Co. of the Shell visit the Fourth Form Dormitory at the head of a raiding-party, Jack Blake & Co. are not slow to take up the challenge, and a lusty pillow-fight ensues.

broken his opponent's front teeth, Purkiss smashed his man about very badly. Even though he proved to be the victor of the affair, Purkiss did not enjoy the fruits of his victory, for somebody played "nark," and brought the masters on the scene at the close of the fight. Purkiss was expelled a week

later, and Lee had to go abroad for a whole term to recover.

\* \* \*

### TOM MERRY.

It is doubtful whether any boy has travelled more widely for his age than Tom Merry. Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, have





Popular Sports and Pastimes at St. Jim's

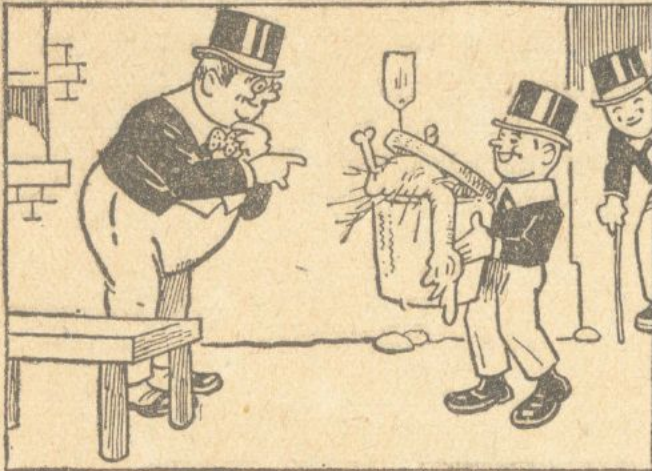




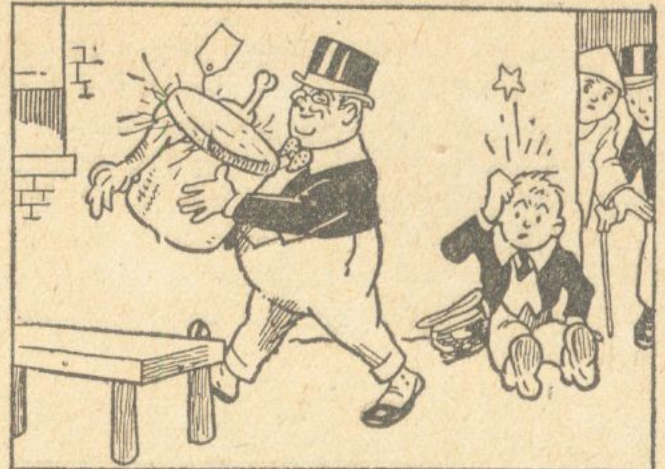


# Billy Bunter Tries to Get Out of Doing His Lines!

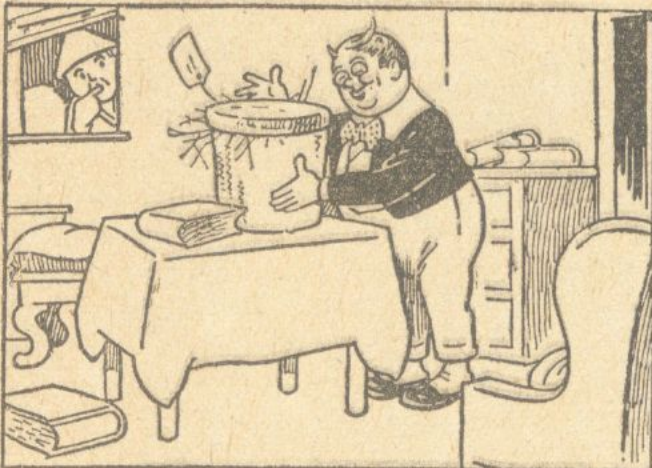
Another funny adventure of Loo Lummee, the Merry Magician from "Chuckles."



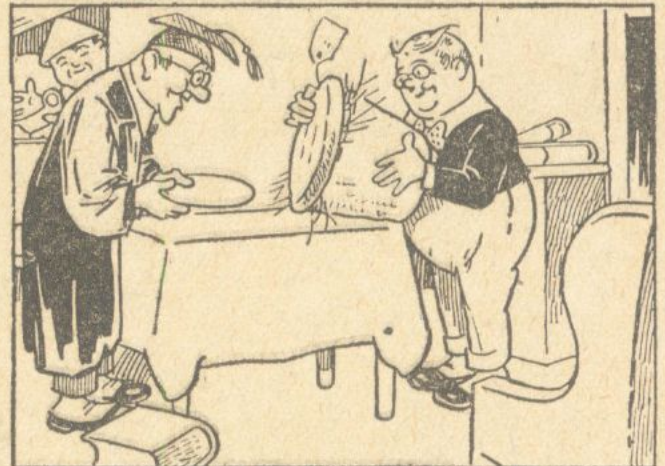
1. "Good-morning, my cherub," murmured Billy Bunter, as he saw the little fag taking the turkey up to the school: "that's a fine bird you have there. But oh, it's much too heavy for a little lad to carry!"



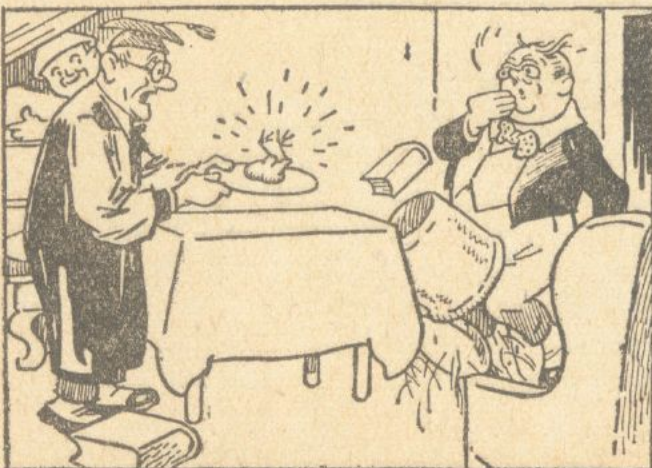
2. But when Billy tried to take the hamper the little fag raised an awful hullabaloo about it. So the ponderous Porpoise gave him a tap on the noddle to keep him quiet. But Loo Lummee was round the corner.



3. And when Billy Bunter took that hamper into the study of the genial master, the cheery little Chinese was not far away. "There!" puffed Billy. "It was a frightful weight, even for an athletic chap like me!"



4. Soon in toddled the master. "I've brought a great plump turkey for you, sir," murmured Billy Bunter, and he thought: "He'll be so pleased, he'll wash out those lines he gave me yesterday. Tee-hee!"



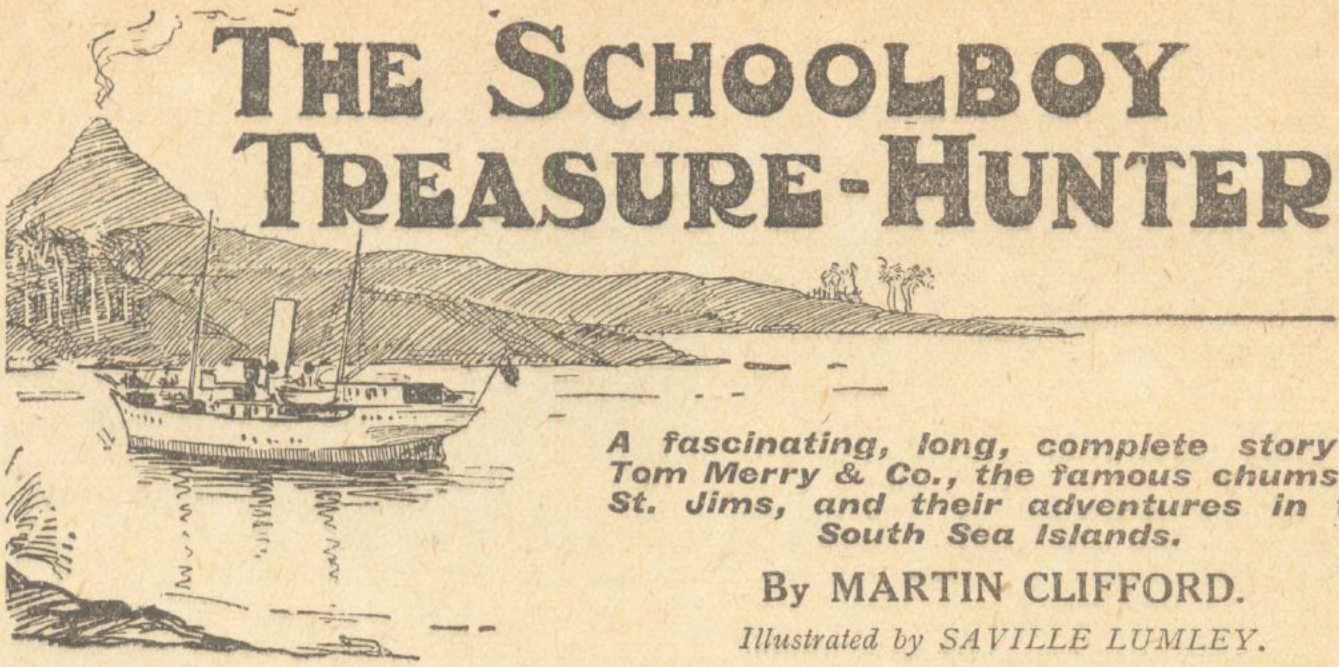
5. But little Loo Lummee at the window gave his lucky lamp a gentle rub-a-dub. Hey, presto! What a sight when Billy opened the hamper! "A turkey!" gasped the master. "A plucked sparrow, you mean, you—you great dumpling!"



6. "You deserve something for bringing it here," went on the master, as he reached for his cane. But Billy didn't wait! "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Lummee. "Me tinkee I teach that dumpling a heap useful lesson!"



# THE SCHOOLBOY TREASURE-HUNTERS!



*A fascinating, long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co., the famous chums of St. Jim's, and their adventures in the South Sea Islands.*

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

*Illustrated by SAVILLE LUMLEY.*

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

### A Strange Meeting

“ SENORITO! Senorito!”

Tom Merry stopped in sheer amazement.

He was sauntering along Rylcombe Lane towards St. Jim's, when the voice called from the wood. With his hands in his trousers' pockets, and his straw hat on the back of his curly head, Tom Merry looked a picture of happy and careless boyhood. It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and there were plenty of the fellows up the river bank, and in the glades of Rylcombe Wood, and Tom Merry had expected to be hailed from the wood as he strolled towards the school. But to be hailed in a foreign tongue was a surprise to him.

“ Senorito!”

Tom Merry looked round into the big, overhanging trees that bordered the lane. The voice came from the wood, but he could not see who called.

“ Senorito!”

“ Hallo!” said Tom Merry. “ Who is it?”

He looked with puzzled eyes into the deep shadows of the wood. In contrast with the burning sunshine in the lane, the wood seemed very dark and sombre. The trees grew thickly, with great ferns intermingled. From the shadow a little swarthy face with twinkling black eyes looked out, and Tom Merry started as he discerned it. For the face was the face of a man, yet from its height

above the ground it appeared it must be that of a boy.

“ Senorito!”

The swarthy face came nearer to the edge of the wood, and the man it belonged to emerged from the cover of the thicket. Then Tom Merry understood. The man was a dwarf—with a large, dark face and massive shoulders, and powerful arms; but his body seemed to shrivel away lower down, and his total height was not more than four feet six.

He nodded to Tom Merry, with a peculiar grin—a grin in which there was expressed much more of malice than of humour.

“ Senorito! Stop a minute!”

The man was a Spaniard evidently, but he spoke English very well. Tom Merry stood in the sunny lane, and looked at him.

“ Yes,” he said. “ What do you want?”

“ I am looking for someone, *senorito*,” said the little man; “ a friend of mine—a dear comrade whom I have missed upon the road—a sailorman. Have you seen him?”

Tom Merry shook his head.

“ No,” he replied.

“ Ah, you are sure you have not seen him?”

“ Quite sure,” said Tom Merry. “ There are not many sailormen about here. I am sure I should have noticed him if I had seen him on the road.”

The little man contracted his heavy brows, and his black eyes looked piercingly at the St. Jim's junior.



"You are quite sure, *senorito*?"

"Yes, I tell you."

"But—you are not lying to me?"

Tom Merry flushed.

The Spaniard had stepped out of the wood now, and he stood in the sunny lane, in Tom Merry's path. Tom, as he looked at him, could not help wondering what had brought the swarthy foreigner to that quiet Sussex countryside. There was a seafaring look about the stranger, in his manner and his clothes; but St. Jim's was a good distance from the coast, and seafaring men seldom came so far.

"No," said Tom Merry quietly, "I am not lying, and in this country, my man, we don't say things like that to strangers. If you don't learn better manners, you may have them taught to you free of charge."

"Listen to me," said the Spaniard, still barring Tom Merry's path. "I know that the man took this path, and I have been watching for him from the wood. He has not passed me. You must have seen him on the road, from the way you came."

"I have told you I did not."

"But you must have seen him, *senorito*. He may have gone into the wood before coming so far as this, and you have seen him."

Tom Merry made an impatient gesture.

"Once for all, I tell you I have seen no sailorman upon the road," he said. "Now let me pass, or there will be trouble."

The Spaniard grinned mockingly.

"There will be trouble, as you call it, if you do not tell me the truth, little *senor*," he said. "What path did the sailorman take?"

Tom Merry did not reply to the question. He had had enough of bandying words with the swarthy stranger, and his anger was at boiling point now. He made a stride towards the Spaniard, and grasped him by the shoulders to swing him aside.

Then he had a surprise.

The Spaniard, dwarf as he was, stood like a rock, and Tom Merry's powerful swing did not move him an inch from where he stood.

He laughed in the boy's amazed face. Tom Merry was the finest athlete in the Lower Forms at St. Jim's, but he realised that his strength was as nothing to that of the little Spaniard.

"It is not so easy, *senorito*!" grinned the dwarf.

"Get aside!" panted Tom Merry.

"Not yet!"

Tom Merry made a movement to pass the man. Then the long arms grasped at him, and he was whirled round. He struck out now in deadly earnest, and the Spaniard gasped as the boy's fist crashed into his dark face.

He relaxed his grasp for a moment and Tom Merry made an effort to get away.

But it was in vain.

The strong, hairy, sinewy hands closed upon him again, and he was swung off his feet, and the Spaniard carried him as easily as if he had been a baby into the wood, and hurled him there upon the grass under the heavy branches.

The next moment he was kneeling beside Tom Merry, and his hand was upon the junior's throat. His fierce black eyes blazed down at the boy.

"Now, *senorito*!" he hissed. "Now will you answer?"

Tom Merry panted.

"You scoundrel! Let me go!"

"Bah! I will throttle you unless——"

His grasp tightened. He looked savagely angry enough to carry out his threat. Tom Merry made an effort, and sent a shout for help ringing through the wood.

"Help! Rescue, St. Jim's!"

The Spaniard gritted his teeth.

"Ah, will you?" he said.

And his grasp fastened tighter; the evil face above, and the branches of the trees swam before the dizzy eyes of the St. Jim's junior.

But Tom Merry's cry had been heard.

There was a ringing shout from the wood.

"This way, deah boys! Wescue, St. Jim's!"

And a junior ran out of the trees, and the crashing in the thickets showed that others were following behind.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### The Wrong Man

**A**RTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, paused one second to jam his eyeglass into his eye. He took in the scene at glance; and then,



allowing his famous monocle to drop to the end of its cord, he rushed at the Spaniard.

The dwarf looked up, his evil eyes glittering, and his grasp relaxing upon Tom Merry. Before he could rise to his feet, D'Arcy was upon him.

"You uttah wascal!"

The Spaniard went over in the deep grass, with Arthur Augustus rolling over him.

"Carambo!"

"Bai Jove! Help, deah boys—the beast is awfully stwong!"

Jack Blake and Digby and Herries, of the Fourth, ran out of the thickets. They had been strolling through the wood with D'Arcy, and all four of them had heard Tom Merry's desperate cry for help as the ruffian's grip closed on his throat. Herries paused for a moment and looked back into the wood.

"Towser! Towsy!"

Gr-r-r!

"Come on, Towsy! Seize him!"

The Spaniard had leapt to his feet, throwing off D'Arcy as if he had been a child, much to the astonishment of the swell of St. Jim's.

He stood back, a strange wild figure against the green of the thickets, his dusky face aglow, his breath coming thick and fast through the thick, bearded lips.

"Carambo!"

"Collar him!" shouted Blake.

"Bai Jove——"

"Hold on!" said Herries. "Towser's got him!"

The bulldog leaped forward.

The Spaniard had not quailed from the crowd of boys, but at the sight of the bulldog's open jaws he turned and ran.

Crash!

Headlong through a thicket he went; and Towser, with a short, sharp growl, went after him, loudly encouraged by his master.

"Go it, Towser! Seize him, Towsy! Go it!"

"Bai Jove! Towsah is useful for once!" gasped D'Arcy. "Bai Jove! The beast has no respect whatever for a fellow's twousahs, but——"

"Go it, Towser! Seize him!"

Meanwhile, Digby helped Tom Merry to his feet. The captain of the Shell was white and dazed, and his hands were shaking.

"Thanks!" he gasped.

"Who was it?" said Digby. "What's the row?"

"The—the hound! I—after him!"

"Good!" said Blake. "I suppose he was going to rob you, the cad. Let's run him down."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry was not vindictive; but his blood was boiling now. He wanted to get to close quarters with the Spaniard again. He dashed off through the wood on the track of Towser, who clung to the track of the Spaniard. Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy followed him.

"It's all right," Herries gasped. "No need to worry, you know. Towser won't lose that track; Towser's simply ripping at following a trail——"

"Wats, deah boy——"

"Look here, D'Arcy——"

"Buck up!" shouted Blake. "Don't jaw!"

"Look here——"

"Bai Jove! Towsah's got something!" D'Arcy exclaimed.

There was a sound of loud, fierce growling, and a voice raised in angry alarm. The juniors of St. Jim's burst out of the trees into a glade, where a man was backing against a tree, trying to keep the bulldog off with thrusts of a heavy cudgel.

"Got him!" roared Herries, rushing on to the attack.

"Stop!" gasped Tom Merry.

"What!"

"That's not the man!"

"My hat!"

Herries stopped just as he was about to hurl himself upon the stranger. So certain was he about Towser's unerring instinct, that he had not thought of looking at the man to see that there was no mistake.

"Bai Jove! Towsah's twacked down the w'ong man——"

"As usual!" grinned Blake.

The man was a short, thick-set fellow in seafaring garb. His face was tanned by



tropical suns, and his eyes were deep-set and gleaming. There was a bundle tied in a red handkerchief on the grass, and remnants on the ground seemed to show that the seaman had been making his lunch there of sandwiches.

The man bore no resemblance whatever to the Spanish dwarf, but Towser was evidently not the kind of dog to be troubled by distinctions of that kind. So long as he ran somebody down he seemed to be satisfied.

And it would probably have gone very hard with the brown-faced sailorman or with Towser if Tom Merry & Co. had not arrived upon the scene.

Either Towser would have been brained by the cudgel, or the sailorman would have felt the bulldog's teeth in his leg, but for their arrival.

"Call him off!" shrieked the sailorman. "If that there dog belongs to you, call 'im off! I'll brain him!"

Gr-r-r! Yow!  
"Call him off!"

"You let that dog alone!" said Herries. "That's my bull dog—"

"Call him off, you ass!" said Blake. "Towser! Towsy! Come off, old boy! Towsy!"

Gr-r-r!  
Towser did not seem inclined to come off. He made another spring at the sailorman, and popped back just in time to escape a fierce slash of the oaken cudgel. Herries gave a shout of wrath.

"Stop that, you ruffian!"

"Bai Jove! That's wathah cool, you know, Hewwies."

"Oh, rats! Towser! Towsy!"

"Collar the beast!"

"If you're calling Towser a beast, Blake —"

"Collar him, you ass!"

Herries snorted, and ran at Towser. He grasped the bulldog's collar, and said soothing words, but Towser wanted a great deal of quieting. Towser had had some knocks with the cudgel, and Towser's blood was up.

He tried again and again to rush at the sailorman, and Herries was dragged to and fro by the dog, shouting to him to "lie down!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Blake. "This is jolly near as good as a circus! Go it Herries! Go it, Towser!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Towser, old boy! You beast, be quiet! Lie down! Good dog! Good doggy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Towser's efforts relaxed at last. Perhaps he recognised his master's voice, or perhaps he was getting tired. The sailorman lowered the cudgel, which he had been holding in readiness in case the dog should get loose.

"Better take that brute away!" he panted. "Rot!" said Herries. "He's very quiet—you could trust him with a baby! I expect you're not much class, or Towser wouldn't go for you."

"Oh, cheese it!" said Blake. "Take the beast away. My hat! If I had a dog like that I'd borrow a gun for him."



A little swarthy face with twinkling black eyes looked over the ferns, and Tom Merry started as he discerned it. "Senorito! Stop a minute!" said the man. (See page 271).



"Bosh!"

"Yaas, wathah! And I would lend you one with pleasuah, deah boy."

"Oh, rot!" said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"Come on, Towser—come on, old doggy!"

And Herries marched off with Towser with a great deal of dignity.

"We're awfully sorry," said Tom Merry, to the panting sailorman—"very sorry indeed. We were looking for somebody else."

"Yaas, wathah! We beg to apologise most pwofoundly, sir," said D'Arcy, taking off his hat with a bow.

The sailorman grinned.

"No offence," he said. "I ain't used to dorgs. I guess there's no 'arm done, young gentleman. It's all right."

"We were looking for a friend of yours, I think," said Tom Merry. "At all events, he had been inquiring for a sailorman on the road."

The seaman started, and a shade of pallor came into his mahogany face.

"A friend of mine," he said. "I ain't got no friends in these parts, I reckon. Wot was he like, young gentleman?"

"Oh, a foreign chap, who was inquiring for a sailorman," said Tom Merry.

"A foreign chap?"

"Yes."

"Not a Spaniard, by any chance?" asked the sailorman; and there was an inflection of strange eagerness in his voice.

"Yes; I took him for a Spaniard," said Tom Merry, wondering at the agitation in the tanned face of the seaman.

"Not a little ugly figure of a man," said the seaman, in a shaking voice—"a little black-jowled demon as strong as a horse and the height of a boy—'bout so high?"

And he stretched out a tanned hand.

"A dwarf?" said Tom Merry.

"Yes."

"Yes, that was what he was."

"With rings on his fingers, maybe?"

"Yes, I noticed that," said Tom Merry, his hand going to his throat. "I felt it."

"Ah! It was Pablo, then."

"Pablo?"

"Pablo Lopez," said the sailorman. "So he is here, is he? And all the way from South-

ampton I ain't seen him, and I reckoned he was right off my course by this time. And he's here, looking for a sailorman!"

He muttered the last words in low, fearful tones, looking round him into the sombre depths of the wood, as if in terror of seeing the evil face of the Spaniard looking at him from the shadows there.

There was something in his terrified manner that had a strange effect upon the juniors. They felt that there was something in this that they could not understand—something that hinted of tragedy and mystery. What were these two men doing in the quiet Sussex country-side?

Tom Merry understood now that the Spaniard had been speaking falsely when he had said that he was looking for a friend.

It was evidently not as a friend that the sailorman regarded the man he called Pablo Lopez.

"Where is Lopez now, young gentlemen?" the sailorman asked, his glance returning to the astonished juniors.

"He's in the wood."

"In this wood—near here?"

"We were after him," Tom Merry explained. "We've had a row; he's a ruffianly cad. We've lost him now, though."

"But he hasn't lost me," said the sailor.

"Is he an enemy of yours?" asked Blake.

"Ay, ay!"

"And he is after you?"

"Ay, ay!"

"I should think you could handle a little boulder like that!"

The sailor looked at him queerly.

"It's more than my life's worth to meet Pablo Lopez, young gentleman," he said. "I've got something that he wants. You see that? He means to have it, too, but not while I'm alive—not much!"

He cast a quick look round into the wood.

"I reckon I'll be getting on," he said.

"If Lopez is here, this ain't a place for me to drop my anchor."

And he tramped away into the wood, with his head sunk and his eyes gleaming on either side of him at the slightest sound in the trees.

The juniors stood silent, lost in amazement.



## THE THIRD CHAPTER

### The Treasure Chart

“**B**AI Jove!”  
Arthur Augustus D’Arcy was the first to break the silence with that ejaculation.

“My hat!” said Digby.

“It’s a giddy mystery of some sort!” said Blake slowly. “That sailor chap looked as if he thought his life was in danger. Judging from the looks of the foreign bounder, I think it may be.”

“Yaas, wathah!”

“I’ve got an idea,” said Tom Merry quietly. “The Spanish fellow is still in the wood, and he’s looking for the sailor. If he finds him——”

“There’ll be mischief!”

“Exactly! Let us follow the sailor.”

“Follow him?”

“Yes; we’ve nothing to do, and we might as well see the man clear of the wood. We may drop on the Spanish chap again that way, too, and give him something to remember us by.”

“Good egg!” said Blake.

“Bai Jove! We’ll have Towsah, then!”

“Herries! Towser!”

But Herries and Towser were gone. Tom Merry and Blake and D’Arcy and Digby cut sticks in the thicket, in case they should have need of weapons, and followed on the track of the seaman. They could hear him tramping doggedly on some distance ahead through the thick wood.

“He’ll come out on the Wayland road if he follows this path,” Digby remarked.

“Yaas, wathah!”

“Listen!”

The juniors paused.

They had reached the edge of a broad, sunny glade which the sailorman had crossed. He was about to plunge into the trees on the opposite side, when a figure bounded into view from the fern.

It was the dwarf.

The sailorman saw him as the juniors did, and he sprang back against a tree, his right hand swinging up with the cudgel grasped in it; but the cudgel was shaking like a leaf

from the trembling of his hand. It was evident that he was in deadly fear of the dwarf.

“Stand back, Pablo Lopez!” he exclaimed. “Stand back!”

The dwarf laughed—a low, ugly laugh.

“I have found you, Peter Raff!” he said.

“Stand back!”

“Where is the chart?”

“I ain’t got it.”

The dwarf laughed again.

“You are lying, friend Peter!” he said.

“You are lying! You have the chart in your pocket, and you know you have! Give it me!”

Peter Raff set his white lips desperately.

“I won’t!” he said. “You shall kill me first!”

“It will not take me long to do that, Peter!”

“Look you ’ere, Pablo,” said the sailorman, his eyes watching wildly every sinuous motion of the dwarf, who seemed about to spring upon him every moment. “Look you ’ere, you belay! You ain’t in the South Seas now! You’re in England, my man, and there’s a law ’ere to hang up men who use their knives. You see?”

“I am not afraid of your law, Peter.”

“Stand off!”

“Besides, I shall not use my knife,” grinned the dwarf. “My hands will choke the life out of you, Peter, if you do not give up the chart!”

“I won’t!”

“Hand it over!”

“No!”

“Carambo!”

The Spaniard leaped forward like a tiger.

Peter Raff brought the cudgel down with a swing, but his hand was shaking so that the Spaniard had no difficulty in avoiding the blow.

The cudgel missed its mark, and the next instant the dwarf’s terrible grip was upon the sailorman.

Peter Raff, powerful fellow as he was, was borne back against the tree, and the next moment was rolling in the grass with the dwarf upon him.

“Now!” panted the dwarf. “Now, hombre! The chart!”



"Never!"

"The chart, or your life first!"

"Help!"

The juniors were dashing across the grassy glade, and the sailor's rolling, despairing eyes had caught a glimpse of them. The dwarf's back was to them, and he saw nothing.

He laughed mockingly.

"There is no help here, Peter," he said.

"We are alone—the wood is lonely. Bah! The chart or your life! Will you trouble me to take it from your dead body? You are a fool! The chart, I say!"

"You hound!"

Tom Merry sprang upon the Spaniard. Pablo Lopez started up with a fierce cry.

"You! You, nino; you again!"

He whirled round upon the juniors, but they were ready for him. Four sticks were lashing out; they did not feel disposed to stand upon ceremony with the murderous ruffian.

The dwarf reeled back from the crashing sticks with a yell of pain.

Crash!

He made a savage spring forward, with murder in his snapping black eyes; but the juniors of St. Jim's stood their ground, hitting out fiercely.

"Bai Jove! Down with the wottah!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Give him socks!"

The Spaniard retreated, hissing like a spiteful cat.

"Carambo, I will—I will——"

"Get out!" said Tom Merry. "Buzz off, or you'll get worse than that, you scoundrel!"

"Senorito——"

"Buzz off, I tell you!"

Tom Merry made a motion with his stick, and the Spaniard retreated again. Strong

A man was backing against a tree trying to keep the bulldog off with thrusts of a cudgel. (See page 273)





as he was, he was no match for the four juniors.

He turned a savage look upon the sailor-man, who had risen to his feet, and was leaning against a tree, gasping.

"I shall see you again, Peter Raff! You will not escape me!"

Then he disappeared into the wood, muttering Spanish imprecations.

"Gweat Scott!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wegard that fellow as a wank wottah! I twust you are not hurt, Mr. Waff?"

The sailorman was breathing hard, and the colour was ebbing in his tanned face.

"No," he said. "I've been near it, though. P'r'aps you young gentlemen would——"

He paused.

"We'll do anything we can for you," said Tom Merry. "If you're afraid of that fellow, why not apply to the police for protection?"

The sailorman gave a hollow laugh.

"The police wouldn't be much use agin Pablo Lopez," he said. "You don't know him. I was with him in the South Seas. I've seen him——" He broke off abruptly. "Young sir, you saved my life just now! If Pablo Lopez had fastened his grip on my throat, I should have been a gone coon!"

"I did no more than the others," said Tom Merry.

"You was the first," said the sailorman; "but I'm obleeged to you all. I want you to do something more for me, and p'r'aps for yourself. What is your name, sir?"

"Tom Merry."

The sailorman was fumbling in his breast.

His hand came out with something in it—something that looked like a crumpled paper. But as the juniors looked at it, they saw that it was a kind of leather—a pale-coloured, delicate kind of leather they had never seen before. There were marks upon it in Indian ink, tattooed into the leather.

"Look at that," said the sailorman.

He handed the fragment of leather, which was about four inches by six, to Tom Merry. Then, a sudden thought seeming to strike him, he closed his rough hand over it.

"No, don't look at it! Young gentleman"—he came closer to Tom Merry, and looked sharply and searchingly into his face—"young gentleman, I can trust you?"

"I hope so," said Tom Merry.

"You wouldn't go back on a poor sailor-man?"

"Certainly not."

"Wathah not," said D'Arcy. "I assuah you that you can wely entirely upon Tom Mewwy, my deah fellow. He's all wight."

"You take that chart," said the sailorman, placing it in Tom Merry's hand. "Wrap it up and don't look at it."

"Do you want me to mind it for you?"

"Ay, ay."

"Very well."

Tom Merry took out his handkerchief and wrapped it round the oblong leather. The sailor watched him with anxious eyes.

"Now make a knot," he said.

Tom Merry smiled and knotted the corners of the handkerchief.

"You won't look at that?" said the sailor. "You won't open that and look at it while it's in your 'ands?"

"Certainly not."

"Right you are," said the sailorman. "I can trust you; I know it in your face. Look you 'ere, then. I'm goin', but, if I live, I'll come back agin and ask you for that paper, or else let you know where to send it by post. You see?"

"Yes."

"If the Spaniard finds me agin—and I reckon he will—he can't get that chart now," said the sailor. "He won't suspect me of giving it away—not he. But he won't find it on me now. You savvy?"

"I understand."

"If I write to you within three days, you send me that chart in the post," said the sailorman. "You savvy that?"

"Yes."

"If you don't 'ear from me on the third morning," said the sailor, in low tones, "it will be because I can't write to you, because—well, because the chart won't be no use to me in Davy Jones' locker."

"My dear chap——"



"Ay, ay, I know what to expect," said the sailorman. "But Pablo Lopez will never have it; that's my comfort. Where can I write to you?"

"Tom Merry, School House, St. Jim's."

"I reckon I shall remember that."

"Why not write it down?"

The sailorman shook his head.

"No; Pablo Lopez would find it and guess! No; I'll bear it in mind. Mind, if I don't write you by the third morning, I shan't never claim that chart, and it is yours."

"Mine?"

"I reckon so," said the sailorman. "Mind, I came by it honest; I swear that on the Good Book! It's mine, and if I don't claim it in three days, I give it to you; and these young gents are witnesses."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Maybe, you'll have friends who can stand by you and 'elp you to find what's written on that chart," said the sailorman. "P'r'aps you won't see Pablo Lopez agin. He won't know you've got the chart. He may never even know that the treasure's been lifted at all."

"The treasure?" said Tom Merry with a gasp.

Peter Raff nodded.

"Yes, the treasure," he said. "There's treasure enough on Skeleton Island to make a dozen rich—rollin' in money, I reckon. But it's got to be found, and Pablo Lopez means to find it. You steer clear of Pablo Lopez, and you're all right. Keep that chart out of sight."

"I will take care of it."

The sailorman looked round into the wood.

"I reckon I'll go now——"

"Shall we see you clear of the wood?" asked Blake.

"If you'll be so kind, young gents."

The juniors walked with the sailorman as far as the Wayland road. They walked in silence. The circumstances were so peculiar that they did not know what to think. Was the man a dreamer, and did he imagine that the leather chart he had given to Tom Merry had the value he assigned to it? That he was speaking in good faith, and believed every word he said, was evident.

But it was clear, too, that the Spaniard believed in the chart—else why his desperate effort to obtain possession of it.

And the dwarf did not look like a dreamer.

The whole thing was amazing.

The sailorman walked with dogged steps, like a man who felt himself in the grip of a fate from which there was no escape, but would not yield to fear. He marched on grimly, his eyes well about him, and he seemed to breathe more freely when they came out of the wood, on the sunny Wayland road.

He held out a big, rough hand to Tom Merry.

"Good-bye, young gent!" he said. "And thank you kindly—thank you all kindly. I don't suppose I shall write for that there chart; but if I do, you'll send it to me."

"Immediately."

"And, remember, if you don't 'ear from me in three days, the chart's yours, to do what you like with—all yours," said the sailor man.

And he pressed Tom Merry's hand, and ducked his head to the other fellows, and went tramping away down the road towards Wayland.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### Glorious Prospects!

"WELL, this is a rum go!"

That was how Jack Blake summed up the amazing events of the afternoon—and the rest of the juniors agreed with him. On the way back to St. Jim's, the party discussed the matter in all its bearings, but, naturally, came no nearer to a solution of the mystery.

Immediately on arriving at the school, Tom Merry slipped his notted handkerchief, which of course still contained the mysterious strip of leather, into a big envelope, sealed it, and gave it into the safe keeping of Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, who locked it up in his big safe.

The juniors then began to count the hours. If no word came from Peter Raff during three days, the piece of leather, with its mysterious secret, passed into the absolute possession of Tom Merry.

And no word came.

On the third day Tom Merry met the postman at the gates at both morning and after-



noon deliveries, but there was nothing for him.

From the sailorman there came no word.

After the last post Tom Merry asked the Head for the envelope, and Dr. Holmes handed it to him. Tom Merry carried it off to his study, his hand trembling with excitement.

Quite a crowd of fellows were waiting for him there.

Monty Lowther, and Manners, and Blake, and D'Arcy, and Herries, and Dig were there, of course, with Figgins & Co., from the New House. Kangaroo, of the Shell, had come in, and a dozen more would have come if there had been room. But Monty Lowther had gently but firmly declined to have the study packed like the inside of a sardine-tin, a limit was placed on the number.

There was a general exclamation as Tom Merry came in.

"Got it?"

"Yes."

"Good!"

Lowther closed the door. The fellows all gathered eagerly round the table as Tom Merry laid down the knotted handkerchief.

"I've given the man every chance to write," said Tom Merry slowly. "He said I was to open it if I didn't get a letter this morning. There have been two posts since then, and I

haven't had a line. It means that he isn't going to write. Either he wants me to have the chart, or he isn't able to write." The junior's voice faltered a little. "That Spanish villain has killed him. I don't want to think so—I hope it isn't so—but if he is living, it's clear that he wants me to have the chart, or he would have written. I suppose all you fellows think the same?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Quite right, Tommy!"

"You all agree that I ought to open it now?"

"Yes!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good!"

Tom Merry untied the handkerchief. Every eye was bent eagerly upon the leather chart as it rolled out.

Tom Merry spread it flat upon the table.

There was a deep-drawn breath from the crowded juniors.

They gazed eagerly at the chart.

It was marked on the leather in tattoo, and the black marks showed up clearly against the pale colour



The next instant the dwarf's terrible grip was upon the sailorman, and Peter Raff was rolling in the grass. "Now!" panted the dwarf. "The chart!" (See page 276.)

of the leather.

There was the outline of an island, and, outlined round it, were coral reefs. The points and indentations of the coast were named, and in the interior were further indications. The juniors, gazing at it with breathless curiosity, read out the names marked on the chart:

"Danger Point!"

"Shark Bay!"

"Dingo Creek!"

"Pirate's Mount!"





To face page 281.

THE GREAT FIRE OF ST. JIM'S



## THE GREAT FIRE AT ST. JIM'S

*A Thrilling and Terrible  
Scene from the Past*

IT was in the reign of George the Third—that monarch whose reign was such a curious compound of good and bad—that the Great Fire of St. Jim's occurred.

At that time, the New House had not come into being. It was in the historic School House that the fire broke out; and it occurred, as do most fires, in the watches of the night.

The masters and seniors did everything in their power to prevent a panic. And the boys of St. Jim's hurriedly rose and dressed, and were paraded in the quadrangle, which was now illuminated by a lurid glare.

Unfortunately, the only apparatus for coping with fires in those days consisted of ladders and pails of water. An amateur fire-brigade was hurriedly formed, and a long chain of boys, armed with pails, worked hard to check the conflagration.

Then the dread message passed from mouth to mouth that a couple of fags were imprisoned in that fiery furnace. These two boys were in the punishment-room, the door of which was securely bolted, and they had been temporarily forgotten.

It was at this stage that Carfax of the Fifth performed a deed of valour which will ever be remembered in the school's annals. Paying no heed to the warning shouts of his school-fellows, he caused a ladder to be reared up to the window of the punishment-room, and hastily ascended to the rescue of the two fags. At grave personal peril, he extricated them from their prison. Both were overcome by the fumes, and Carfax had great difficulty in bearing his unconscious burdens safely to terra firma. Needless to state, the gallant fellow received a tremendous ovation.

The fire was at last extinguished, though not before considerable damage had been done. One wing of the building was practically gutted; but the majestic school tower was preserved inviolate, and still stands proudly erect—one of the landmarks of the countryside.

(Continued from page 280.)

"Look! 'Gold buried here.' By Jove!" A black spot was marked "Pirate's Mount," and at the foot of it was a cross, with the words "Gold Buried Here."

The words seemed to fascinate the juniors. "Gold buried here," repeated Blake, with a deep breath.

"Bai Jove!"

"My hat! And it only wants picking up!" said Herries. "If we were there, I'll bet that Towser would find that place in next to no time, and——"

"Wats!"

"Oh, it's ripping!" said Blake. "What a find! Is the latitude given?"

"Yes; look at this in the corner."

"Good egg!"

In the corner was scratched, "Latitude of Sydney."

"My hat!" said Kangaroo. "That's the latitude of Sydney, in Australia, of course. But the longitude isn't given."

"Easy enough to find it from the latitude, though," said Kerr shrewdly. "You only have to take the latitude of Sydney for a guide, and sail on that parallel till you come to the island."

"Might have to go right round the world," grinned Figgins.

"What's this?" said Tom Merry.

He pointed to two dotted letters in the right-hand bottom corner of the chart. The letters were "W. L."

The juniors wrinkled their brows over them.

"'W. L.,' " repeated Blake. "They can't be the initials of the owner. They would be 'P. R.,' for Peter Raff."

"May have been some previous owner; this is a jolly old document," said Digby. "I should think it's been in existence more than a century."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Perhaps it's a warning of some sort," Herries said thoughtfully. "It might mean 'Wild Lions' or 'Wild Leopards.'"

"Or 'Woolly Lambs,'" suggested Monty Lowther sarcastically.

"Look here, Lowther——"

"Or 'Wallop Lowthah,'" said D'Arcy. "And, undah the cires., I considah——"



"Order!"

"I weally considah——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kerr, bursting into a sudden laugh. "What asses you fellows are! It means 'West Longitude,' of course."

"By Jove! Yes, of course. The longitude isn't given."

"W. L.—West Longitude," said Blake. "Of course! They don't give the degrees."

"No; that's unfortunate, but probably the chap who drew up the chart doesn't—or didn't—know the exact longitude himself," said Kerr. "It's pretty certain that this island isn't marked on any map."

"Wathah not!"

"He's given us the West Longitude—that's longitude west of Greenwich—and the latitude of Sydney," said Kerr. "That ought to be quite enough to find the island by."

Tom Merry nodded.

"Then——"

"Then we lift the giddy treasure!"

"Bai Jove!"

"My hat!" said Kangaroo. "The long vacation's just on us, you know. Could we fix it to search for the treasure?"

"We might get leave——"

"Bai Jove! I weally think we ought to get leave," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "I wathah think I can awwange the mattah."

"Rats!"

"Weally, deah boys——"

"Might get up a round robin to the Head, or something to that effect," said Herries; "and he could be assured that we should be all right, you know. I should explain to him that we were taking Towser with us."

"Bai Jove! What?"

"Towser, of course, would have to come. He——"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Manners. "We haven't got leave to go at all yet, and we can settle about Towser when we do get leave."

"Something in that," grinned Blake. "But how are we to get leave? That's the question."

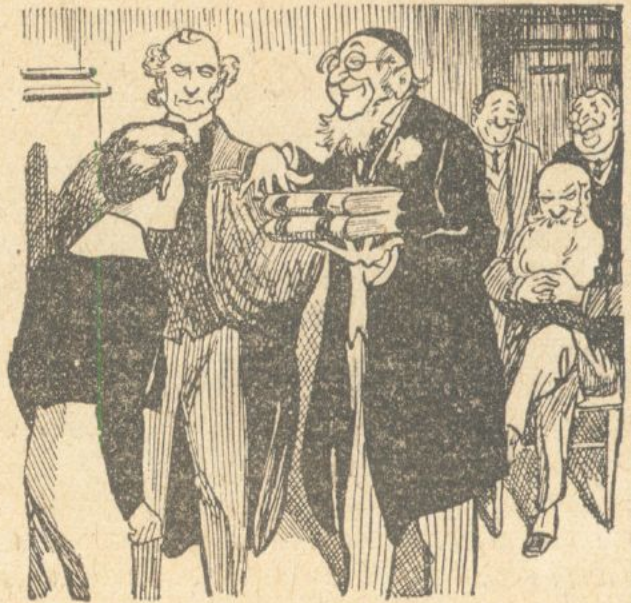
"I think I could awwange——"

"Bosh!"

"I could awwange——"

## Great Days at Greyfriars

### Speech Day



This day is styled the "Gasbags' Day,"

It's one long round of chattering;  
When bearded veterans, old and grey,  
Prizes galore are scattering.  
So many trophies have I won  
For prowess intellectual,  
I look at them, and say (in fun)  
"Oh, help! I can't collect you all!"

I've taken first in "Maths.," though why  
I got it is a mystery;  
A dull and dreamy duffer I,  
Except at rhymes—and history.  
I'm fond of Stevenson and Scott,  
I worship G. A. Henty, too;  
Yet it's for Latin that I've got  
Ten prizes out of twenty-two!

The Governors called me "Clever boy!"  
I'd shake the hand of each if I  
Thought it would give them any joy,  
Or help the gents to speechify.  
But people like Sir Highbrow Tubbs,  
Might think me too familiar,  
And say, "Of all the silly cubs,  
I've never met a sillier!"

Speech follows speech; the listening throng  
Grows wearier and wearier;  
And all the Greyfriars fellows long  
For functions that are cheerier.  
Speech Days, you are a nuisance, quite,  
And in this merry ANNUAL  
We set it down, in black and white,  
That we should love to ban you all!



"Order!"

"Hold on!" said Tom Merry. "It's just barely possible that Gussy may have a sensible suggestion to make."

"Nonsense!" said Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I could awwange it, I tell you," said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "You chaps know my bwothah Conway; you wemembah he was elected an M.P.—"

"What the dickens——"

"He's goin' on a cwise in the South Seas. I've heard fwom him about it to-day, and he's comin' down here to-morrow to say good-bye to my brother Wally and me."

"My hat!"

"You see, he's been wathah seeday since he went into the House of Commons, owin' to bein' wowwied with Budgets and things. He's paired off with anothah chap, and he's goin' on a cwise. My ideah is to capture him when he comes down heah and make him pwomise to get the Head to let him take us."

"Good egg!"

"Let's wait till Lord Conway comes," said Tom Merry. "We'll make him agree. If he won't, we'll shut him up in the study and start Gussy singing tenor solos to him."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Conway, who had the honour of being D'Arcy's elder brother, arrived the next afternoon. The juniors met him at the gates in a crowd, and marched him in triumph into D'Arcy's study—No. 6 in the Fourth.

A cheerful-looking youth with a smear of ink on his collar and a blot on his nose was already there. It was D'Arcy minor of the Third, more familiarly called Wally.

"Hallo, cocky!" said Wally cheerily.

"Weally, Wally——"

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus!" implored Wally. "Sit down, Con, old chap, and make yourself at home. You chaps buck up and get tea."

Lord Conway laughed.

"You're all very kind," he said. "I'm going to dine with the Head, so——"

"Bai Jove! You're going to have tea with us, first, Conway?" said Arthur Augustus. "We shall weally take no wefusal."

"A very light one, then."

"Buck up, you fellows! Fill the kettle, Wally. Cut the cake, Dig, deah boy. Buck up with stirrin' the fiah, Lowthah."

Over tea the subject of the proposed excursion to the South Seas was delicately approached. The chart was shown to Lord Conway, and the story of how Tom Merry had obtained possession of it was related to him—most of the juniors speaking at once.

The young man was genuinely interested. He scanned the chart, and looked it over, and felt it in his hands.

"By Jove," he said, "this is—is——"

"It's a clue, ain't it?" said Blake.

"Yes. But I did not mean that. Do you know what this leather is made of?"

"Never seen anything like it before," said Tom Merry.

"They made leather like it, from the skins of aristocrats, in the French Revolution," said Lord Conway quietly. "I've seen leather like it in Africa."

The juniors caught their breath.

"Human skin?" said Tom Merry.

Lord Conway nodded.

"Good heavens!"

"Gruh!"

"How howwid!"

"Some grim old pirate drew up that chart," said Lord Conway. "It's genuine enough. I can see that it's a great deal more than a hundred years old. I shouldn't be surprised if there's something in it."

"Oh, we're convinced of that!" said all the juniors at once in a breath.

Lord Conway laughed.

"Naturally you would be," he agreed. "At your age I should have been convinced of it without any proof at all. But there may be something in it. I wish I could take you all to the South Seas with me to look for the island."

The juniors exchanged glances.

Lord Conway's careless remark had brought them to their subject. Several of them started at once.

"That's just what we want."

"You see, Conway, deah boy——"

"That's it!" said Wally. "We're coming!"



"Weally, Wally——"

Lord Conway stared.

"Well, I would take you," he said. "You would make the yacht lively enough, I've no doubt, and prevent the cruise from being monotonous. But you could never get leave from your headmaster to leave school for so long a time."

"That's just it," Tom Merry explained. "We want you to get leave for us."

"Me?"

"Yaas, wathah!

Our governah is a governah of the school, you know, Con, deah boy, and you are an old Saint. You've got heaps of influence with the Head."

"Yes, rather!"

"Do it—there's a good chap!"

"But I couldn't ask——" began Lord Conway, in dismay.

"Yes, you could, you know!"

"No 'buts,'" said Wally.

"You've got to do it, and you may as well make up your mind to it. If you refuse Gussy is going to sing to you till you give in!"

"Weally, Wally——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Conway set down his teacup and rose to his feet, smiling.

"I'll speak to the Head," he said. "Mind, I don't promise anything; but I'll do my best for you."

"Hurray!"

Lord Conway made his way to the Head's study, with a very dubious expression upon his face. The juniors waited for him in the passage with the keenest anxiety.

The viscount was quite a long time in the study, and the juniors could hear a faint murmur of voices. Their anxiety grew in keenness every moment, and several times

Arthur Augustus had to be restrained forcibly from going in to his brother's aid.

The study door opened at last, and Lord Conway came out, smiling.

The juniors gathered round him breathlessly.

"Bai Jove! What is the verdict, deah boy?"

"What does he say?"

"It's all right," said Lord Conway, laugh-

ing. "You can come with me, you young rascals, on condition that you promise to behave yourselves."

"Hurrah!"

"Thanks—thanks awf'ly, old chap!"

"Bravo!"

And Tom Merry & Co. rejoiced. And from that hour little was spoken of among them but preparations for joining Lord Conway's yacht and voyaging to the South

Seas in quest of the treasure island.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Luggage Limited.

"TAGGLES!"

"Yes, Master D'Arcy?"

"Pway be careful with the hat-box!"

"Yes, sir."

"And careful with the twunk."

"Yes, sir."

"And vevy careful with the suit-case."

"Suttingly, sir!"

"And with the——"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was interrupted. Tom Merry, of the Shell, came out of the doorway of the School House with a heavy bag in each hand. D'Arcy was standing on the top step as he gave instructions to Taggles, the school porter.



Tom Merry spread the chart flat upon the table, and the juniors gazed at it with breathless curiosity. (See page 280).



Tom Merry did not see him, or perhaps did see him.

Biff, biff!

"Oh!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Ow! Weally—— Ah! Help!"

The two heavy bangs biffed upon the slim, elegant form of the swell of St. Jim's, and D'Arcy was biffed off the top step.

He made a wild spring to save himself, and his eyeglass fluttered to the end of its cord, and his silk hat rolled off, and his cane went flying in one direction and his gloves in another.

"Ow!"

Crash!

D'Arcy whirled down the steps of the School House, made a vain effort to save his balance at the bottom, and sat down on his silk hat!

"Ow! Ah! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jack Blake, who was sitting in a brake outside the School House. "Let's see you do that again, Gussy."

"Ow! Bai Jove!"

"Dear me!" said Tom Merry, from the top of the steps. "What did you do that for, Gussy? You've ruined that topper."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy scrambled to his feet. He had certainly ruined the topper. It bore some distant resemblance to an opera-hat now, but was more like a concertina. There was dust on D'Arcy—on his beautifully-fitting Eton jacket, on his elegant grey trousers, on his gorgeous waistcoat.

He groped for his eyeglass, and jammed it into his eye, and glared up the steps at the hero of the Shell.

"Tom Mewwy! You ass!"

"Sorry!" said Tom Merry. "You see, you were in the way of these blessed bags, and something had to go."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard this mewwiment as beastly bad form," said D'Arcy. "I shall have to get out a new toppah now, and change my jacket. It's a howwid bore. You may lose the twain while you are waitin' for me, too."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Herries.

"We shan't wait long enough for that."

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"We start in exactly five minutes," said Blake, glancing up at the old clock tower of St. Jim's. "We can't lose the train; Lord Conway is waiting for us at Southampton."

"Weally——"

"Buck up with the changing, Gussy, or you'll get left behind."

"I should uttably wefuse to be left behind."

"Clear the way!" shouted Monty Lowther, coming down the steps with a heavy bag in one hand and rugs rolled round umbrellas and sticks under the other arm. "Blessed if I know what you want to get in the way for, Gussy!"

"Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as a clumsy ass, Lowthah. Blake, will you kindly see that Taggles puts all my pwops in the bwake, while I go and change my things?"

"All there's room for," said Blake cheerily. "We're taking a bag or a box each, and that's the full allowance."

"I have thwee boxes, a twunk, a hat-box, and a suit-case, with my dwessin'-bag and——"

"Out of the way!" shouted Manners, coming out with Kangaroo, the two carrying a trunk between them.

"Weally, Manners——"

"Only four minutes now, Gussy!" said Jack Blake. "Better buck up. We've got to get over to the New House for Figgins & Co., and start in five minutes."

D'Arcy gave him one indignant look, and then dashed into the School House. He knew that Blake wouldn't wait, and he was in danger of starting on his journey in a dusty jacket, dusty trousers, and without his hat.

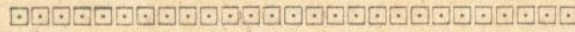
The brake was filling up. Tom Merry & Co. were starting on a journey, and even with only one box each there was plenty of luggage.

Lord Conway was to meet them at Southampton, to take them upon his yacht, in which they were to sail for the South Seas. The juniors were looking forward to the cruise with the keenest enjoyment, and in their dreams they were already among palm-trees, and coral reefs, and cannibals.

Arthur Augustus never started on a journey



# A GREAT EDITOR AND SPORTSMAN !



William George Bunter, as everyone knows, is the Editor of the famous " Billy Bunter's Weekly." He is also fond of asserting that there is not another sportsman like him at Greyfriars, a statement that few would contradict !



without supplying himself with all the things he might need, and a great many he certainly never would need. But it was quite useless to argue with him. The swell of St. Jim's had an unfailing politeness and an invincible determination. It was useless to point out that silk hats would not be wanted in tropic seas, and that a trousers-press would be nothing but an encumbrance on a coral island. D'Arcy packed his trunks regardless.

Blake was in the brake already, with Digby and Herries. Herries had been persuaded at a great cost of argument, to leave his bulldog behind. Herries regarded his bulldog, Towser, as a valuable addition to any party; in fact, according to Herries, merely to know Towser was a liberal education. But Herries had been overruled. He was not convinced that Towser would be superfluous. But he was somewhat influenced by a suggestion made by Kerr, of the New House, that the climate mightn't agree with Towser. And there were cannibals to be considered, and poisoned arrows.

Upon the whole, Herries had agreed to leave Towser in the kennels at St. Jim's. But Herries had made up his mind that if Towser didn't come, neither should D'Arcy's superfluous luggage; and most of the other fellows agreed with him.

Kangaroo, the Australian junior, climbed in, with Manners and Lowther. Tom Merry followed them in. The party from the School House was now complete, with the exception of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and his brother, Wally, of the Third Form. They had to call at the New House, across the quad, for Figgins & Co., and then drive to the station.

Taggles, the school porter, came out groaning under a heavy trunk. Taggles always groaned under any trunk; he had found out by long experience that a groan or two had a perceptible effect upon the tips.

But he had reason to groan this time. In that gigantic runk was the famous trousers-press, and several suits of clothes, additional trousers, and overcoats galore. Taggles bumped the trunk down on the ground, and gasped for breath.

"Which it's 'eavy!" he gasped.

Tom Merry grinned.

"Yes, it looks heavy," he remarked. "It would make a difference to the yacht, I should think, if it ever got aboard."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Luckily, it's never coming aboard," Kangaroo remarked. "Leave it there, Taggy; there's no room for it in the brake."

"Master D'Arcy said——"

"Never mind what Master D'Arcy said," said Blake cheerfully. "Leave it there."

"Wot about the other boxes?"

"Oh, fetch them out, if D'Arcy told you to. Nothing like obeying orders. You can pile them up on the steps."

Taggles grinned, and went into the House again. Blake stood up in the brake, and shouted:

"Gussy! Gussy! Gus!"

A fag with a bag under his arm came out of the School House, and jumped into the brake. It was Wally—D'Arcy minor, of the Third—with his cap on the back of his head, and a cheeky grin on his face.

"Ready, my sons!" said Wally. "Tell the driver to start."

"You cheeky young bounder——"

"Oh, cheese it! What are you waiting for?"

"Gussy."

"Oh, never mind Gussy!"

"Ow! Yow!"

"Hallo! Sorry, Digby! Did I drop my bag on your feet?"

"Yes, you ass! Ow!"

"Blessed if I know what a chap wants with such big feet! Can't you put them under the seat?"

"I'll—I'll——"

"Hallo, here's some more of Gussy's baggage!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Taggles came out of the house, carrying another huge box. Toby, the page, lending him a hand. A crowd of juniors had gathered round to see Tom Merry & Co. off, and they burst into a roar.

"Faith, and Gussy's taking enough!" Reilly exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, it's all right," said Tom Merry; "he's not taking it. Leave it there, Taggy."



## THE SIXTH CHAPTER

### D'Arcy Runs for It

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Werry well, sir."

Taggles tramped gasping into the house again. He had had a liberal tip from D'Arcy, and he meant to bring all the baggage out, whatever became of it. Blake looked over the heap.

"Gussy is entitled to take one bag," he said. "Pick out the smallest, will you, Gore, and hand it up to me."

Gore grinned, and picked up D'Arcy's hat-box. It was the smallest of all the boxes, but it was a good size, for it was constructed to hold two silk hats and a bowler. It was the lightest of the baggage, and Gore handed it up easily. Blake stowed it away.

"My word!" said Digby. "Is Gussy going to take nothing but toppers?"

"He's entitled to one bag," said Blake stolidly. "That's the one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gussy! Gussy! Gussy!"

The fellows all stood up in the brake and roared.

D'Arcy put his head out of a window above.

"It's all wight, deah boys!"

"We're starting."

"Weally, Blake——"

"Come down!"

"I sha'n't keep you waiting more than five minutes."

"That you jolly well won't!" agreed Blake.

"Drive on, Johnny!" The brake moved off.

"Stop for me!" shouted D'Arcy from the window.

"Rats!"

And the brake rolled away towards the New House, Blake kissing his hand affectionately to the excited junior at the window.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY came breathlessly out of the School House. For once, the swell of St. Jim's had lost the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. He stood on the lowest step and waved a glove and a cane and, shouted:

"Stop, you boundahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the crowd of juniors.

"I guess you'll have to sprint, Gussy," grinned Lumley-Lumley.

"Go it, Gussy!"

"After them!"

"Faith, and it's left behind ye'll be intirely."

"Stop, you uttah wottahs!" shrieked D'Arcy.

"You've left all my baggage behind. I insist upon your weturnin' for my twaps."

"Ha, ha!" The brake rolled serenely on.

It halted outside the New House. Figgins and Co. were waiting

there, with their boxes all ready—neat little cabin trunks in a row, with Figgins and Co. sitting on them. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn were smiling beaming smiles. Fatty Wynn had a lunch-basket in his hand; Fatty did not mean to risk getting hungry in the train.

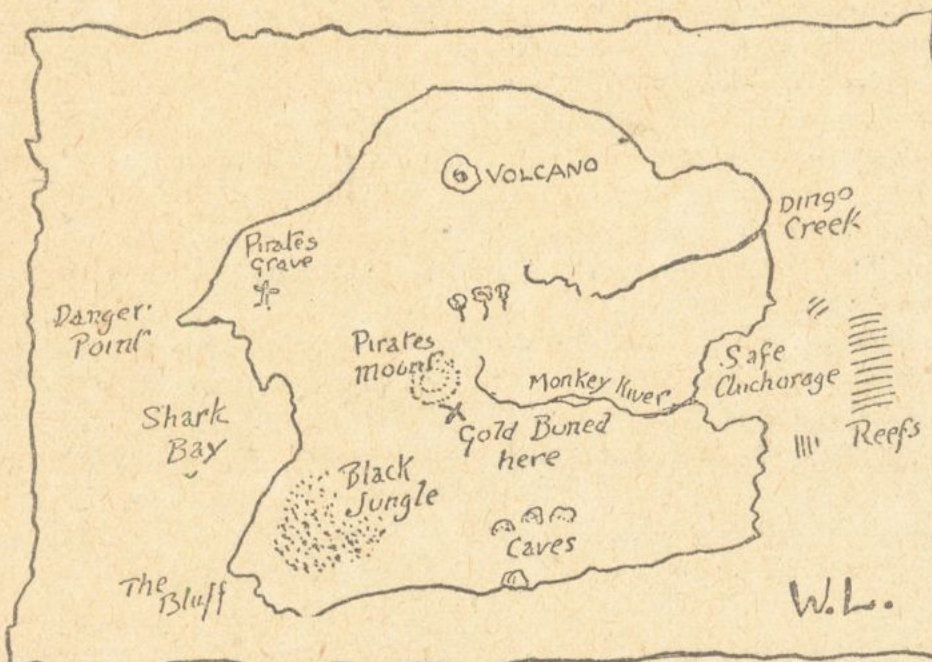
"We're ready."

"Here you are, Figgy!" sang out Blake.

"Tumble in, or we shall have Gussy piling boxes on us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn lifted their trunks in, aided by the School House fellows, and came in after them. Blake looked back across the quad.



The plan which Peter Raff gave to Tom Merry.



Arthur Augustus, holding cane and gloves in one hand, a light coat over his arm, and keeping his hat on with a firm grasp, was sprinting across the quad.

Loud shouts of encouragement from the crowd outside the School House followed him.

"Go it, Gussy!"

"Put her through."

"Hurrah!"

The swell of St. Jim's did not heed the shouting.

He dashed on at top speed; but the brake was in motion again now, and rolling down to the gates.

"Buck up!" called out Tom Merry to the driver.

And the man grinned and cracked his whip. The brake increased in speed. D'Arcy put on a spurt, and overtook the vehicle as it reached the gates.

"Stop, you wascally boundahs!" he gasped.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Can't stop, Gussy!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Jump in while we're going," said Monty Lowther. "I'll lend you a hand."

"So will I," said Kangaroo.

You—you uttah boundahs—what about my baggage?"

"We've got it here," said Digby cheerfully.

"Wats! It's left behind, piled outside the house——"

"We've got all you're going to take," Jack Blake explained. "One box each is the allowance, and we've got one of your boxes."

"The hat-box!" grinned Wally.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wefuse to twavel to the South Seas with nothin' but a hat box!" shouted D'Arcy keeping pace with the brake, which was now outside the school gates, and travelling down the dusty lane at a good speed.

"Jump in, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to jump in! It is imposs. for me to twavel without my clothes——"

"You won't need them in the South Seas," said Monty Lowther. "I believe it's a universal custom there to save the whole expense of tailor's bills."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Jump in!" said Manners.

"I decline to jump in, Mannahs."

"Fancy a chap preferring to run on a warm day like this!" Figgins remarked. "You must be feeling awfully fit, Gussy."

"Keep it up, old man."

"Hoof it!"

D'Arcy gasped with rage and breathlessness. He was keeping pace with the brake, and it was a good way on the road to Rylcombe.

"I uttably wefuse to leave my luggage behind," he said. "I insist upon your turnin' the bwake wound and goin' back for my twaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Buck up, driver!"

"Yessir!"

D'Arcy dropped a pace or two behind.

"Better jump in, Gussy," said Tom Merry. "You see, we can't stop, or we shall lose the train, and we can't lose the train and let Lord Conway wait for us in Southampton. Suppose he sailed without us—what about finding the giddy treasure, then?"

"I insist——"

"Think of the respect due to your elder brother," urged Kerr. "You can't possibly keep Lord Conway waiting."

"Weally, Kerr——"

D'Arcy was perspiring and dusty. The dust churned up by the wheels of the brake was settling over him in thicker and thicker clouds.

"Vewy well," he gasped at last. "Slacken down, and I will get in, you feahful wottahs. I wegard you as uttah outsidahs."

"Pax, you know," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Easy, driver."

The brake slackened down, and Arthur Augustus was assisted into it. He sank down into a seat, gasping for breath.

"Feel the better for your exercise?" asked Kerr sympathetically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy panted.

"You utter wottahs——"



“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I have nothing but a silk hat and a bowlah to take to the South Seas with me——”

“We’ll have a whip round for you,” said Blake. “Or you can raffle the silk hats against a set of pyjamas, or something of that sort.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Words failed the swell of St. Jim’s. He sat gasping for breath, and mopping his perspiring face with a cambric handkerchief, till the brake rolled up to the station. Then the porters carried the boxes in, and Arthur Augustus reluctantly followed the crowd of juniors upon the platform.

“Suppose we catch the next twain, Tom Mewwy?” he suggested. “We could send back to the coll. for my baggage, and——”

“Rats!”

“Weally, Tom Mewwy——”

“Here’s the train!”

The train rolled in. Boys and boxes were soon aboard. The swell of St. Jim’s stepped into the train with his nose very high in the air. He had given up hope of the baggage by this time.

“Cheer up, Gussy!” said Blake. “You won’t be able to change your clothes in the South Seas, but you can wear two silk hats and a bowler, piled on one another, you know, like an old clothes man——”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I wegard you as an ass, Blake.”

“Well, I’m only trying to make useful suggestions,” said Blake in an injured tone.

“Wats!”

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

### Lopez

**W**ALLY, leaning out of the window, was the first to recognise the tall form of Lord Conway, his eldest brother, standing on the platform at the terminus. Lord Conway was waiting for the train that was to bear the juniors of St. Jim’s.

He smiled and waved his hand, as he saw the cheeky face of Wally looking out of the window.

“Here’s old Conway!” said Wally, turning back into the carriage.

“Weally, Wally, that is hardly a wespectful

way of speaking of your eldest bwothah and a future membah of the House of Peers,” said Arthur Augustus.

“Oh, don’t you begin, Gussy!”

“Weally——”

“Train’s stopping,” said Blake. “Get a move on.”

“You’re intewwuptin’ me, Blake.”

“Exactly! Buck up.”

The train stopped, and the juniors crowded out.

Lord Conway shook hands with them in his genial way.

“Jolly glad to see all of you!” he said. “Dear me! Have you been having an accident, Gussy?”

“I’ve been tweated with gwoss diswespect, deah boy.”

“Too bad!” said Lord Conway cheerfully.

“You will come and dine with me and then we will go aboard.”

“I have some shoppin’ to do——”

“Shopping?” echoed the viscount.

“Yaas, wathah! Owin’ to a wotten twick, my baggage was left behind at St. Jim’s,” D’Arcy explained. “I shall have to do some shoppin’ in Southampton.”

Lord Conway smiled.

“Very well, you shall shop while the others dine.”

“As a mattah of fact, I am wathah hungry.”

“We have exactly an hour.”

“Pewwaps we could put off startin’ till to-morrow?” Arthur Augustus suggested.

The viscount laughed.

“I fear that would not do, even for the sake of providing you with a completely new outfit in the latest fashion,” he said. “Come on, boys—this way!”

In a few minutes more the juniors were seated round a well-spread board in a private dining-room in a palatial hotel. Fatty Wynn’s plump visage shone like a full moon over the table. The fat Fourth-Former was fairly in his element now. However cruel the sea might be afterwards, Fatty Wynn was sure of a good innings now, at all events.

Lord Conway presided at the meal with a cheery manner and an unflinching flow of pleasant talk. He was very popular with the boys. When the meal had progressed as far as dessert,



Tom Merry's chart was produced, to be conned over once more, and handed from one to another.

The chart was of never-ending interest to the juniors.

The chart was Tom Merry's, to do as he liked with, if the sailorman did not claim it—and he had never claimed it.

But Tom Merry had determined that if the treasure were discovered, a full share should be kept for the sailorman—for the hero of St. Jim's still hoped that Peter Raff was in the land of the living.

Heads were bent over the map now, and the strange names of the places indicated upon it were read out aloud.

The dining-room was on the ground floor of the hotel, and wide open French windows gave upon the garden—a long wide garden, planted with old trees and rhododendrons. It was a pleasant afternoon, and the sun shone in at the open window, and a trace of the sea breeze found its way into the dining-room.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus remarked, as he adjusted his monocle and surveyed the map. "Bai Jove, it looks the weal thing, you know! The Piwates' Gwave is good!"

In his interest in the chart, D'Arcy had for the time forgotten his intended shopping expedition in Southampton—and the others did not remind him. The luggage of the party had already been sent aboard the Silver Scud, and it only remained for the juniors to follow it.

"And Shark Bay!" Monty Lowther remarked, looking at the chart over Tom Merry's shoulder. "That sounds promising for bathing."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the caves, too!" said Wally, rubbing his hands. "It will be ripping, exploring the caves! I wish I'd brought my dog Pongo!"

"Wats!"

"Pongo would have been more useful than Gussy," said Wally. "It isn't too late to send Gussy back, and have Pongo instead, if we sail to-morrow instead of to-day."

"And here's the reefs," said Manners. "Jolly ticklish work, I expect, getting through the reefs into that safe anchorage, I should say."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Monkey River," went on Tom Merry. "We may be able to get along that in boats. Then there's the Mount, and 'Gold Buried Here!'"

"Bai Jove, it will be wippin'! I shouldn't wondah if there was a million pounds, you know!" Arthur Augustus remarked.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Not much!" he said. "Not likely. But there may be a big sum—unless——"

"Unless what, deah boy?"

"Unless the gold's already been lifted," said

Tom Merry gravely. "This chart is very old—certainly more than a hundred years, perhaps a hundred and fifty. In all that time lots of people may have landed on the island, and the gold may have been found."

Blake snorted.

"Hold on," said Kerr. "If the chart's a hundred and fifty years old, look at that!"

He pointed to the words, "Latitude of Sydney," scrawled in the left-hand corner of the fragment of leather, some distance from the chart.



Lord Conway rose to his feet. "I don't promise anything," he said. "But I'll ask the Head if you can come with me to the South Seas." (See page 284.)



"My hat, yes!" said the Kangaroo. "that must mean Sydney in Australia!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And Sydney wasn't in existence then."

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry smiled.

"Those words have been added later," he said. "If you look at them you'll see that they're written on the leather, and not tattooed like the rest. My opinion is that Peter Raff wrote them, or else somebody whose hands the chart had fallen into. Whoever it was, had found out that the island was in the same latitude as Sydney, and wrote it down instead of giving the degrees of latitude."

"True!"

"It's different with the 'W. L.' in the corner of the map," went on Tom Merry. "That's tattooed, and it certainly means west longitude."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I think——"

Tom Merry broke off suddenly. His startled glance was fixed upon the open window.

In the open stood a strange form—a man with a massive head and immensely powerful shoulders, and a dwindling form that dwarfed away towards the ground. The dark, Spanish face, and the singular form, told the juniors at once who it was, even those who had not seen him before.

"Lopez!" panted Tom Merry.

Lopez, the dwarf Spaniard, stood for a single second staring in at the window. Then he disappeared from view.

Tom Merry rushed to the window.

He caught a glimpse of the Spaniard disappearing among the rhododendrons, and that was all. The juniors rushed into the garden in a crowd, and searched it from end to end. But the dwarf Spaniard was gone, without leaving a trace behind.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

### The Mate of the "Silver Scud"

**T**OM MERRY & Co. returned to the dining-room, disappointed and angry. The Spaniard was gone. How long had he been there at the open window, before Tom Merry had seen him? It was an important question, for, from where he had been

standing, the Spaniard could have heard every word that was spoken in the room.

If he had heard the discussion of the chart, he had learned all that was to be learned of the position of the island—that it was in west longitude, and in the latitude of Sydney.

That knowledge was sufficient to enable him to reach the island, if he had the means of chartering a vessel. True, of the exact location of the treasure he had no knowledge—that could only be gained by looking at the map.

But if he followed the party to the Treasure Island, he would be an awkward enemy to encounter there.

"The villain must have learned our plans somehow, and watched us come to Southampton!" Tom Merry said, frowning. "I wonder if he heard!"

Kerr nodded.

"I'm jolly certain!" he said. "He was most likely there all the time we were having dinner. He knows where to look for the island, now."

"He doesn't know where to look for the treasure, though," said Figgins.

"No. We've got the advantage, there."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's a pity," said Lord Conway, "but it cannot be helped now. We will lose no time in getting to the island, at all events. And it is time, now, to go on board the Silver Scud."

"Bai Jove!"

"What's the matter with you, Gussy?"

"I haven't done my shoppin', yet!"

"Rats!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Come on, ass!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass!"

"Oh, come on!"

"Yes, come, Arthur!" said Lord Conway, laughing. "There is really no time. The others will share out some of their things with you, and you can have some of mine. And you are well provided with silk hats, at all events."

"Weally, Conway——"

"Come on!"

"As your guest, my dear fellow, I am bound to yield the point," said Arthur Augustus with a great deal of dignity.

"Exactly! Come on!"



So D'Arcy yielded the point, and ten minutes later they were on board the Silver Scud, which was already getting steam up. From that moment Lord Conway was busy. He was his own skipper, and his mate was an old college chum, whom the juniors had not yet seen.

Tom Merry caught a glimpse of him as they went below, and noted an athletic, broad-shouldered fellow, about whom there seemed something familiar. But he saw him only for a moment. The juniors went into the saloon.

Black smoke rolled from the funnels of the yacht as she glided out.

The motion was, as yet, barely perceptible, but Fatty Wynn sat upon a cushioned divan and changed colour several times.

The fat Fourth-Former had done more than justice to the dinner at the hotel, and he had already done more than justice to the lunch basket in the train. The slightest motion of the yacht was enough to make him wish he had been a little more cautious in laying in supplies.

Blake grinned at the fat Fourth-Former.

"Feeling qualmy, kid?" he asked.

"N-n-no," gasped Fatty. "It—it was the last meringue, that's all. I shall be all right in a minute."

"Bai Jove! I wathah think you will be worse before you are bettah, deah boy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!"

"Hallo! Anything the matter, Fatty?"

"N-no."

The juniors ascended the steps from the saloon. The yacht, with half-steam on, was heading for the Channel. The sunset was reddening away in the west. The bright steam-yacht glided on like a thing of life, the trim crew looking very sailor-like at their posts. The mate was standing talking to Lord Conway and his broad back was turned towards the companion.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "I've certainly seen him before somewhere!"

"Looks an athlete," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'll swear I've seen those shoulders before, somewhere! Behind a wicket, I believe!" said Monty Lowther, thoughtfully. "They're

associated, somehow, with your old place, Tom—Huckleberry Heath."

Tom Merry wrinkled his brows thoughtfully.

What he could see of the mate of the Silver Scud certainly reminded him, too, of Laurel Villa, and Huckleberry Heath, and the associations of his early home with Miss Priscilla Fawcett.

Who was the man?

"By George!" Tom Merry exclaimed suddenly.

"You know him?"

"I think so."

Tom Merry ran forward.

The broad-shouldered mate turned round.

"Mr. Dodds!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Mr. Dodds laughed and smiled.

"You are surprised to see me here!" he exclaimed, shaking hands with Tom Merry.

"By George, yes."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Mr. Dodds laughed again. He had a very pleasant laugh. Mr. Dodds, the curate of Huckleberry Heath, was an old friend of Tom Merry's. He had begun his acquaintance with the St. Jim's juniors by astonishing them with his powers as a cricketer—the juniors having been under the impression that a curate couldn't play. Mr. Dodds had amazingly undeceived them on that point, and since then the juniors had grown to like him very much.

"I was very glad when Lord Conway told me that my young friends were coming on this cruise," said Mr. Dodds. "It was a pleasant surprise to me."

"Bai Jove, and this is a pleasant surprise to us, sir!" said Arthur Augustus. "We're awf'ly glad to see you, sir, aren't we, you chaps?"

"Yes, rather!" said the juniors, heartily.

"Thank you," said Mr. Dodds.

"But ain't you curate at Huckleberry Heath any longer, sir?" asked Figgins.

Mr. Dodds nodded.

"Certainly! I had to have a change for my health, and Lord Conway heard of it. As I could not afford to go abroad on my own, he very kindly offered the post of mate on his yacht for the trip to the South Seas. I shall



take up my work again when I return to England. Lord Conway's kindness—"

"Oh, go easy on the kindness!" said the viscount. "You know I'm jolly glad to have you, Doddy. It's like old times to have you along— Dear me! Is anything the matter with you, Wynn?"

Fatty Wynn lurched a little.

"No-o-no, sir!" he gasped.

"Don't you think you had better sit down?"

"Groo!"

Lord Conway led the almost blind and helpless Fatty to a seat. Fatty Wynn sat with a face like chalk, gradually changing to quite an artistic shade in green.

"Poor old Fatty!" said Figgins. "It was the dinner, you know. I warned you to go easy."

"Groo!"

"Bai Jove! I feel a little—a little—gwoo—"

"You, too, Gussy!"

"Gwooh!"

And the subsequent proceedings interested D'Arcy no more. And Fatty Wynn sat the picture of mental anguish.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER

### Round the Horn

SUNNY seas and bright skies!

Day after day the steam yacht had ploughed her way to the southward. English skies and English waters had long been left behind.

After the first couple of days the juniors had got their "sea-legs," even Fatty Wynn; though the Bay of Biscay had tested them severely. Daily the juniors enjoyed their trip more and more.

Swiftly the yacht was drawing nearer to the "summer isles of Eden, glowing in dark purple spheres of sea."

Past the Azores, past the Canaries, past the Cape Verde Islands.

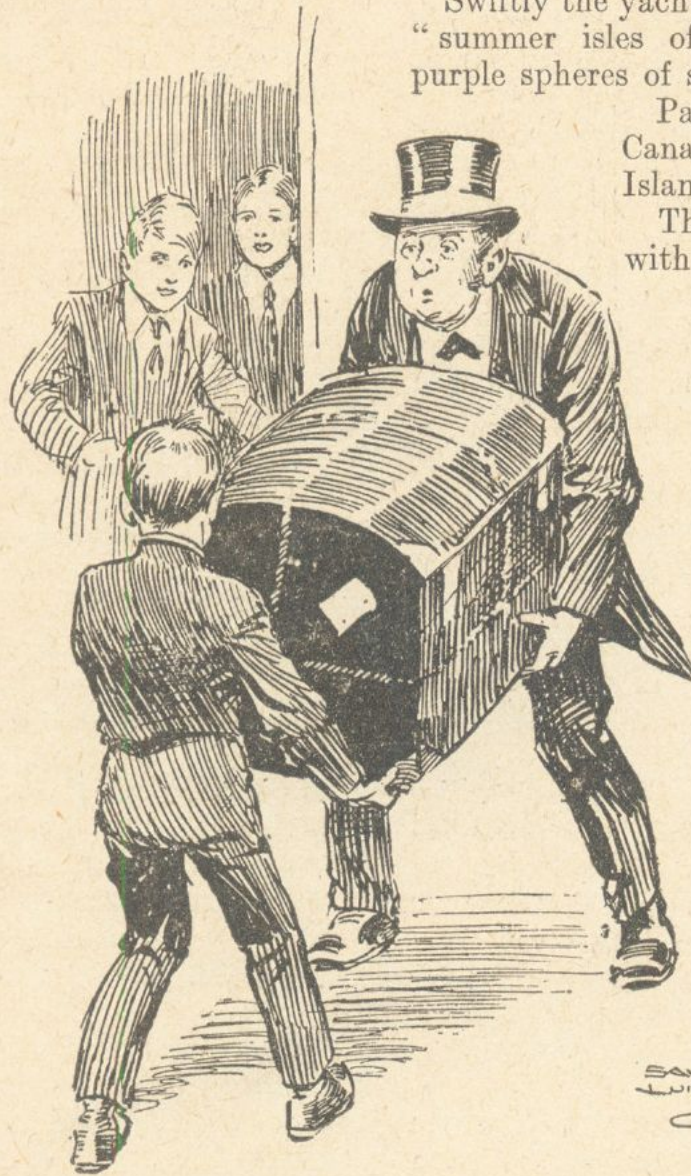
They were names that teemed with interest to the juniors of St. Jim's; names that had been only names to them; portions of geographical lessons—now realities.

There was music in the very words, a strange subtle attraction in the mere sound of the names.

"Land ahead!"

The cry from the deck made the juniors tumble up from below in hot haste. Since crossing the "line" they had seen little land. A glimpse of Ascension, and another glimpse of St. Helena—the lonely isle where the great Napoleon had been held a prisoner after the

last throw of the dice at Waterloo—had been all. At St. Helena the juniors would gladly have landed to explore. As Monty Lowther remarked, they had had Napoleon's imprisonment and death at St. Helena in their history books at St. Jim's, and after being bored with it in that way, it would have been only a just compensation to have a run over the place. But time did not permit, and, leaving the last prison of a great adventurer



The juniors burst into a roar as Taggles and Toby staggered out with the huge box. "Faith, Gussy's taking enough!" said Reilly. (See page 287.)

SAVILLE  
LUMLEY  
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behind them, the voyagers had plunged into the wider waters of the South Atlantic.

The next land they expected to see was the solitary island of Tristan d'Acunha, or Da Cunha, to give it the Portuguese spelling. And it was Tristan da Cunha that loomed into view now. The tropic of Capricorn was behind the yacht now, and this was the last land that lay between them and the Antarctic Ocean.

D'Arcy was first on deck, and he turned his eyeglass upon the island.

"Bai Jove! Land!" he said.

"Land-ho!" said Figgins gleefully. "But what land?"

"The treasure island, pewwaps. I say, Con, old boy, is that the treasure island?"

Lord Conway laughed.

"That is Tristan da Cunha," he said.

"Tristan dah Coonyer?" repeated Figgins. "Oh!"

"Our search begins here," said the skipper.

"Bai Jove!"

Lord Conway brought a large chart out of the chart-room, and spread it on a table on deck. The juniors gathered round. The map showed the whole of the southern ocean, from east to west.

Lord Conway followed a line with his finger.

The chart was drawn upon Mercator's projection, and each degree of latitude was marked. Through the latitude of Sydney in New South Wales a line was drawn, extending across the map from side to side.

"On your chart, Tom, the latitude of Sydney is given," Lord Conway remarked. "You see that the latitude of Sydney is, roughly speaking, thirty degrees south of the Equator. A line drawn across the map passes through Cape Colony in Africa, and the Argentine in South America. We have, therefore, two oceans to search for the island, as the exact longitude is not known—the Atlantic from the African coast to the South American, and if the island is not there—the Pacific from the other side of South America to Sydney in New South Wales."

Tom Merry whistled.

"That's a big order, sir."

"Quite so. If the man who tattooed your chart had known the exact longitude—or had cared to write it down—we could have

steamed directly to the spot. All the clue to the longitude, however, is contained in the words West Longitude—taking that W. L. to mean west longitude. That gives us exactly half the globe to choose from. The only way to make a thorough search is to follow the thirtieth degree of south latitude right round the globe—west of Greenwich—excepting where land intervenes."

"Bai Jove!"

"But I do not think we need try that heroic method," the viscount went on. "There are other clues. For instance, that chart of yours was tattooed, certainly, in the Pacific—and that indicates a location in the Pacific, not the Atlantic."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Quite so, in my opinion!" said Mr. Dodds.

"We shall, therefore, pass through the Atlantic here under full steam," said Lord Conway, "and search the Pacific first. It is the greater task of the two—but there is no reasonable doubt that the island is in the Pacific. An island here would be known and charted—but in the South Pacific there are many that have not been given attention by navigators. We head, therefore, for the Pacific."

"I agree, sir. I think you are quite right."

"Bai Jove! We shall have to wound the Horn, then, sir!" D'Arcy exclaimed.

Lord Conway laughed.

"Well, there is no alternative, unless we steam east and take a much longer route," he said. "We shall round Cape Horn, and take up the search on the western coast of South America. We shall stop at Valparaiso for fresh coal, and then begin."

"Good!"

The yacht steamed on.

Tristan da Cunha vanished astern, and the Silver Scud drew farther and farther into the illimitable spaces of the southern ocean.

The juniors were naturally excited at the prospect of rounding the Horn.

In a trim steam-yacht it was a very different task from that of the old sailormen who rounded the Horn in their sailing craft, at the mercy of wind and wave. But even for the Silver Scud it was not easy work.

Bad weather, for the first time in the voyage



came upon them, and the yacht glided on to the south through foaming waves and under black, threatening skies.

Warm weather and sunny skies were behind the voyagers now. They buttoned on thick coats, put on thick stockings over their socks, and tied on scarfs and mufflers, every time they came on deck.

But the Silver Scud made good time.

In the midst of lashing waves and racing billows, the juniors caught a glimpse of the Horn, black and threatening. But calmer weather waited for them in the Pacific.

That ocean justified its name when the yacht glided into its wide waters, leaving the Horn behind.

Northward-ho was the word now—and the Silver Scud steamed on to Valparaiso, with the soaring peaks of the Andes looming upon the starboard.

At Valparaiso the stop was short.

There was no time to waste, and, after taking in the necessary supplies, the Silver Scud put to sea again. The juniors had no time to explore the place; but as they steamed out of the harbour, they inwardly vowed to return some day and see more of the wild and romantic land at the foot of the Cordilleras.

It was upon a bright, crisp morning that the Silver Scud steamed out of harbour, in the midst of many craft putting out of the busy port.

Tom Merry & Co., watched with special interest a handsome felucca that ran out to sea with her great sails bellying out in the breeze.

“Bai Jove!” D’Arcy remarked. “That’s is a handsome cwaft, if you like.”

“How she sails, too!” said Kerr. “She’s keeping pace with us—just now.”

“We shall soon leave her behind,” said Tom Merry.

“Yaas, wathah!”

Tom Merry suddenly fixed a keen stare upon the felucca.

The handsome vessel had passed so close, that the figure on the deck could easily be distinguished.

“Your glasses, Gussy—quick!” Tom Merry exclaimed.

“What’s the ——”

“Hand them to me!”

“Certainly, deah boy.”

D’Arcy unslung his binoculars and handed them to Tom Merry. The hero of the Shell put the glasses to his eyes, and scanned the felucca.

His face was pale with excitement.

The others watched him in amazement. What could be the cause of the junior’s strange excitement, they had no idea.

“It’s he!” Tom Merry exclaimed.

“What!”

“He! Who?”

“Lopez!”

“Gweat Scott!”

“Lopez!” exclaimed Manners. “Are you sure?”

“Look, then!”

Manners snatched the binoculars. Several other pairs of glasses were turned eagerly upon the felucca.

Then the figure of the dwarfed Spaniard seemed to rush into view.

He was standing at the wheel, steering the felucca. His face was turned towards the steam-yacht, and Tom Merry & Co. could see the grin upon it. It was Pablo Lopez!

Had the Spaniard been following them, or had he heard in the garden at Southampton as much as they knew of the location of the island, and was he bound there?

The latter was doubtless the correct theory.

That he had recognised the yacht was certain from the look upon his face.

“My hat!” said Figgins. “It’s a race, then—the Spanish villain is going there, too.”

“Yaas, wathah!”

Lord Conway turned his glasses upon the felucca.

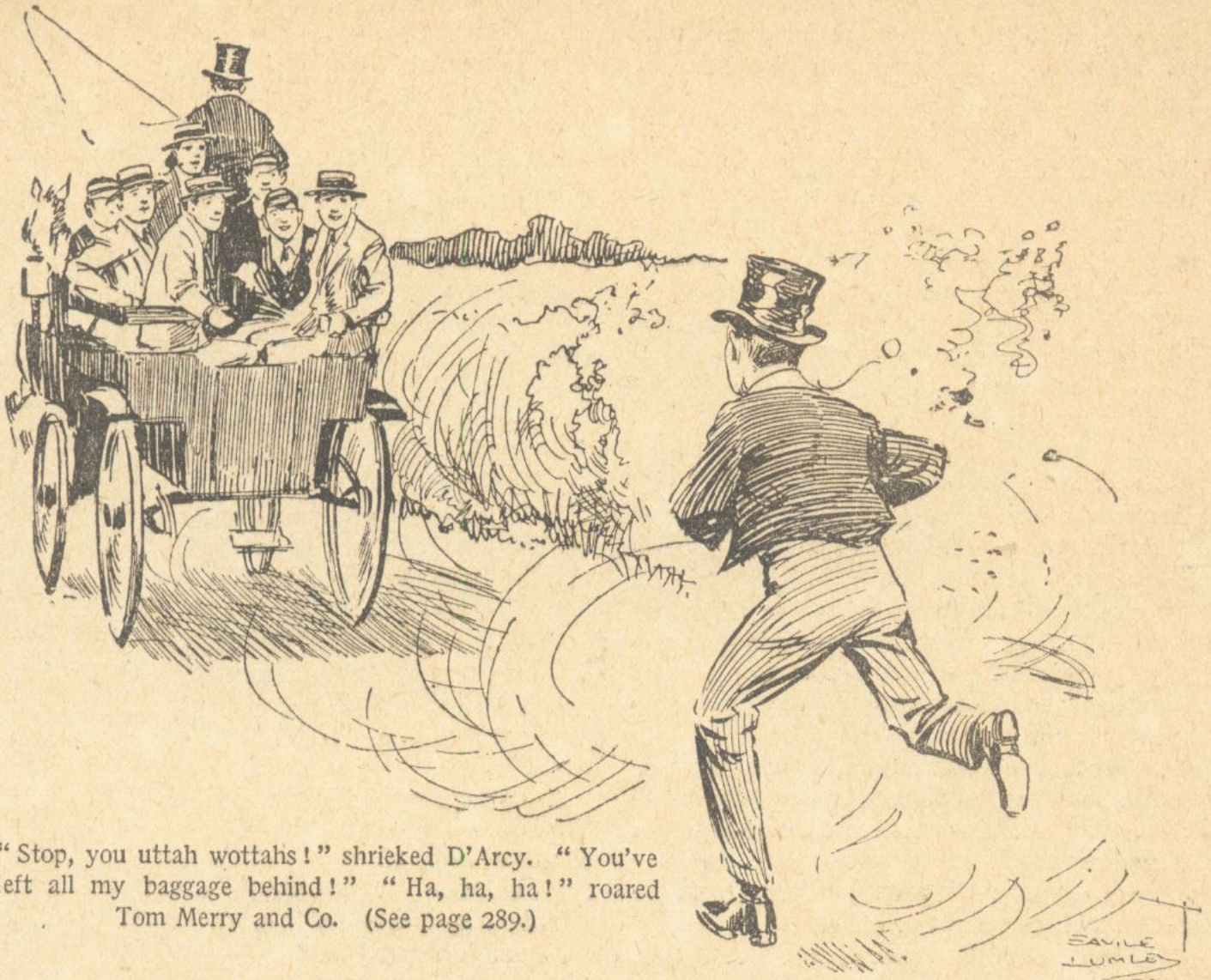
“You are right,” he said. “It is the Spaniard. But that felucca, well as she sails, would have no chance with the Silver Scud.”

And he signalled full steam ahead to the engine-room.

Swiftly as the felucca sailed, the yacht seemed to walk away from her, and ere a quarter of an hour had passed, the Spaniard’s vessel was out of sight astern.

But the sight of Pablo Lopez had given the juniors a thrill.





“Stop, you uttah wottahs!” shrieked D’Arcy. “You’ve left all my baggage behind!” “Ha, ha, ha!” roared Tom Merry and Co. (See page 289.)

They realised now that it would not only be a race to the treasure island, but in all probability a struggle for the treasure when they reached it. The dwarf Spaniard remained to be reckoned with.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER

### Treasure Island

FROM Valparaiso westward the steam-yacht swept on, over seas again sunny, under skies of deepest blue. Round the Silver Scud rolled the wide waters of the Pacific, gleaming under the tropical sun.

Every day now the juniors watched from the deck with eager eyes. At the sight of a flying fish or a dolphin, glasses were raised to scan the sea.

When would the island be sighted?

In hundreds of miles, or thousands, from the coast of South America? They did not

know. They knew that it was on or near the thirtieth degree of south latitude, but the longitude was a secret.

But if the yacht followed that parallel far enough, she must come upon the treasure island—unless the hand that had written those words upon the tattooed chart had written a mistake or a lie.

That was what the voyagers had to discover.

But all of them had faith that the chart was written truly—that they had the latitude, and had only to discover the longitude. Even Lord Conway was catching the infection of the boys’ enthusiasm. As for Mr. Dodds, he had been quite keen upon the subject ever since he had been shown Tom Merry’s chart.

Morning after morning the juniors scanned the sea.

Day after day nothing met their gaze but



the wide rolling waters, and sometimes a glancing sail, or the rolling smoke of a steamer. Whalers and sealers bound for the south passed them, and exchanged greetings, as the yacht ran on.

"We shall get to New Zealand if we keep on far enough," Kangaroo remarked. "We shall pass within sight of the North Cape of the North Island, unless we find our destination this side of Maoriland."

"I don't think we shall go so far as that," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head. "I'm expecting the giddy island every day."

"Yaas, wathah!"

There was a shout from the look-out.

"Land ho!"

And there was a rush of the juniors to see.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "It's weally land, you know."

"Land! Land!"

Lord Conway consulted his chart of the Pacific. No land was marked upon the spot where the yacht was now cutting the blue waters with her keen prow.

The land ahead was evidently one of those innumerable islets dotted upon the wide surface of the Pacific which no one has taken the trouble to chart.

Lord Conway's eyes were gleaming as he came out of the chart-room.

"It is undoubtedly land, sir," said Mr. Dodds.

"Indeed it is."

The yacht changed her course slightly in obedience to Lord Conway's signal, and headed directly for the land.

The juniors watched eagerly.

The land rose more clearly into view, emerging from the blue of the sea, and the feathery fronds of palm-trees could be seen waving in the breeze.

Closer and closer, till the palm-trees stood out clear against the sky, and the high mountain within the isle was black against the clouds.

Between the island and the yacht ran a line of white foam, showing the position of the barrier reef—the reef piled up by the untiring industry of tiny workers under the sea—a reef of coral that reached just to the surface of the waters.

"We shall have to be careful here," said Lord Conway. "Those reefs would go through our hull like a knife through cheese. Send a man forward to sound, Mr. Dodds."

"Ay, ay, sir."

The yacht seemed to crawl now.

Keen and impatient as the juniors were, they would not have had their skipper hurry. A false step now meant destruction to the ship and the crew. And there was no help for the shipwrecked in that lonely sea. The yacht was all that stood between them and the doom of Robinson Crusoe.

"Anyway, it's weal land," said Arthur Augustus. "We shall be able to stwetch our legs again, deah boys."

"And they're cocoanut-palms," said Fatty Wynn, with a smack of the lips. "We shall be able to gather cocoanuts—for nothing."

"Good old Fatty."

"Well, it will be jolly ripping," said Fatty Wynn warmly. "Cocoanuts are jolly good prog., and it's something to get 'em without paying for 'em. Hallo! We're past the reefs."

Lord Conway had followed the indications of Tom Merry's chart. Where the chart showed an opening in the reefs, the yacht tried carefully for way. She glided through the lines of foam, and stopped in a wide bay, marked on the chart "Safe anchorage."

The anchor glimmered down.

Then the juniors gave a shout.

"Hurrah!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The hill flung back the sound with a thousand echoes.

"Hurrah!"

It was the treasure island at last! There was no doubt of it. The hill, and the slim curl of smoke to the northward, marking the existence of a volcano—and the configuration of the coast as the yacht approached it—all proved that it was the island of which the outlines were tattooed on Peter Raff's chart. It was the island—the island of treasure!

No wonder the juniors cheered!

The sun was sinking behind the hill, and glimmering on the thick woods round the base of it. The island was silent and still; there was no trace of life upon it. How long was



it since that lonely isle had been trodden by human feet?

Years—centuries! It looked like it!

“Bai Jove!” D’Arcy’s eye blazed with excitement behind his monocle. “Gweat Scott! This is wippin’, you know! I feel perfectly convinced that the twarehouse is here all wight.”

“Oh, of course!”

“Not a doubt about that.”

“I suppose we’re going ashore now?”

Lord Conway shook his head.

“Not in too great a hurry,” he said.

“Why not, deah boy?”

“There may be danger.”

“But the giddy island is uninhabited, sir,” said Figgins.

“It looks like it; but it may be inhabited all the same, and if it is seldom or never visited by ships, the natives may be in a primitive state of barbarity,” said the viscount quietly. “We shall go ashore in parties, and well armed. It would not be pleasant to fall into the hands of cannibals.”

“Cannibals!”

“Bai Jove!”

“And you must not forget the Spaniard.”

“Lopez!” said Tom Merry. “But he has been left long behind. Could he have come all this distance in that felucca?”

“He could.”

“But he would be far behind us.”

“I am not sure of that. That craft of his sailed well, and he may have come on a direct line, you see, while we have been exploring north and south of the thirtieth parallel. We covered more ground—or, rather, more sea—than we need, strictly speaking, have taken in, in order not to let a chance slip. That has taken time. If Lopez chanced it, and came straight on, it is quite conceivable that he may have arrived here first.”

“Bai Jove! Then he may have woped in the twarehouse.”

Lord Conway shook his head with a smile.

“You forget—he knows the location of the treasure island, but not of the treasure,” he replied.

“Bai Jove, yaas! I nevah thought of that.”

“If he is here, he is waiting for our arrival,”

said Lord Conway, “hoping to get a clue to the treasure from us.”

“We’ll take jolly good care he doesn’t,” said Tom Merry.

“Yaas, wathah!”

And when the treasure-hunters landed, it was in a party of a dozen juniors, and five seamen, all of them armed. If the dwarf Spaniard was on the island he was likely to find them a formidable party to tackle.

The boat grated on the beach and the explorers jumped ashore. Soft sand, shelving down to the sea, crackled and crisped under their feet.

“Bai Jove!” D’Arcy exclaimed suddenly.

“Hallo! What is it?”

“Look there, deah boys!”

D’Arcy pointed to the sand.

In the clear, soft sand was a deep impression—the impression of a human foot! There needed no further proof that the island was not uninhabited.

The juniors gathered eagerly round the spot. Most of them had been Boy Scouts at home, and they had learned to study tracks and footprints. Tom Merry dropped on his knees to examine the track.

“It’s not a bare foot that made this,” he remarked. “It was a boot!”

“Then it was not a savage,” Figgins remarked.

“No fear!”

“And it’s a small size in boots,” said Tom Merry. “Lopez is a dwarf, and his feet are naturally very small.”

“Bai Jove, it’s Lopez!”

“I believe so.”

Tom Merry rose to his feet. The juniors scanned the shore with anxious eyes. But only the cries of wild birds came from the trees, and a solitary flamingo moved in the distance. If the Spaniard was there, there was no sign of him. But that single footprint in the sand was enough to put the voyagers upon their guard.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

### An Alarm in the Night

**W**ITH the suddenness of the tropics the sun descended behind the hill, and light was blotted out upon Skeleton Island. But at the same time the



full round moon was sailing up over the eastern sea.

The juniors stood in the dim half-light, still looking at the footprint.

"We shall camp on the shore to-night," Lord Conway said. "In the morning we will start for the treasure. According to the chart, we have to follow this river that empties into the bay, and the course should be clear."

With much zest, the juniors helped to camp. It reminded them of their old days of playing Redskins in Rylcombe Wood.

Supplies were brought ashore from the yacht, and only four men were left on board to watch.

The rest of the crew—which was numerous for the size of the vessel—came ashore with the treasure-hunters.

The juniors gathered fuel on the borders of the wood to build up a huge camp-fire.

They looked into the gloomy depths of the forest with strange feelings. In those black thickets, what foes might lurk?

They did not venture out of sight of the beach.

A huge fire was soon blazing and roaring away, casting ruddy light far along the beach, and the juniors and the sailors gathered round it, cooking their evening rations and making coffee.

Fatty Wynn was in his element now.

Given a frying-pan and a fire, and something to cook, Fatty Wynn was a fellow who was sure to make his mark, and he made it now.

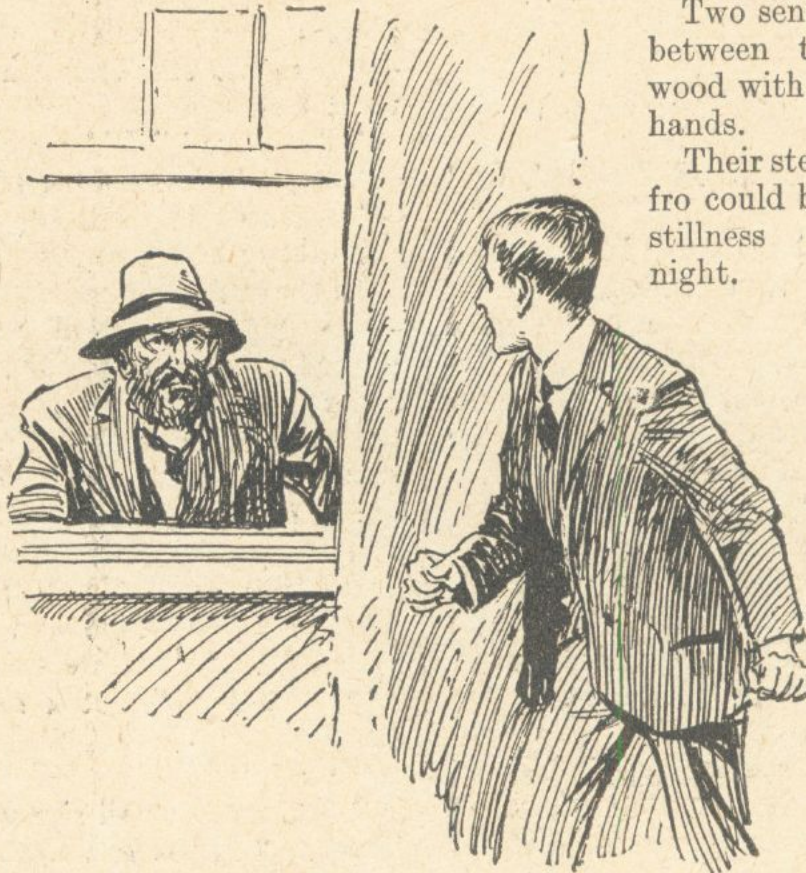
Couches of fresh leaves gathered under the trees, and camp stools brought from the yacht served for seats as the campers had their supper.

It was a merry supper, and the explorers were in the highest of spirits.

Yet, in the midst of the eager talk and chatter, and the keen discussion of the morrow's explorations, they cast sometimes a glance towards the dark, circling wood.

Two sentries had been posted between the camp and the wood with loaded rifles in their hands.

Their steady tramping to and fro could be heard through the stillness of the shadowed night.



Tom Merry rushed to the window. "Lopez!" he panted. "The Spaniard!" (See page 292.)

thoughts," said Wally, with a grin, "and pass the beef before you tell 'em!"

"You cheeky young wascal——"

"You're interrupting Kerr, Gussy. I'm surprised at you," said Wally. "And pass the beef, too."

"What were you thinking, Kerr, old chap?" asked Tom Merry. "You generally think something when you do think."

Kerr grinned.

"Well, I was thinking that if Lopez, or any chap of his kidney, was in the wood yonder with a rifle, we should make splendid targets sitting here by the fire."

"Bai Jove!"

"Bai Jove," D'Arcy said, as he finished his coffee, and lay back lazily on his couch of thick dry leaves; "this is wippin'! It beats picnickin' in Wylcombe Wood, deah boys!"

"Yes, rather."

"What are you looking wound like that for, Kerr?"

"I was just thinking," said the Scottish junior.

"Penny for your



"Great Scott! Kerr! You don't mean——"

"Lopez is an unscrupulous hound, and he's suspected of having murdered Peter Raff," said Kerr. "And if it's Lopez against us lot, I should think that the more he picked off of us, the easier he would find his job."

"There is something in what the lad says, Lord Conway," Mr. Dodds remarked very gravely. "It is hard to think that the man could be scoundrel enough to fire upon us here, but it is certainly quite possible."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Crack!

The campers sprang to their feet electrified. Crack-ack!

The echo of the shot died away in the deep woods.

The campers exchanged quick, anxious glances. No one was hit, and it occurred to them in a moment or two that the shot had not been fired at the camp.

It echoed from the depths of the wood, and the sound was flung back from the hill. But there was no whizz of a bullet.

Faces were pale, now, in the glare of the camp-fire.

"Who is it, I wonder?" Tom Merry muttered.

"It must be Lopez."

"But who is he firing at?"

"Us, I should think."

"I am sure the bullet did not come this way."

"Quite right, Tom; it did not," said Mr. Dodds.

"Somebody's firing at somebody else in the woods, or else a firearm has gone off by accident," said Lord Conway. "In any case, I think it will be safer to stamp the fire out. It is no use posing as targets in case a marksman should take a fancy to pot us."

"Wathah not, deah boy!"

The juniors willingly stamped the fire out. Darkness reigned where the red glare had been—darkness, save for the glimmer of the moon in the dark blue sky, and the glimmer of the wide ocean beyond the bay.

The campers waited and listened.

But the shot was not repeated.

They resumed their seats, and their talk; but there was a tone of anxiety in their voices

now, and they frequently glanced over their shoulders.

For the first time, they realised the danger of the quest they had undertaken; they realised to the full that, in penetrating the mysteries of the treasure island, they carried their lives in their hands.

The moon rose higher in the sky, and the explorers prepared to sleep. Lord Conway suggested that the juniors should return to the yacht to sleep, but so vigorous an objection was raised that he did not insist.

"Very well," he said, "remain here. After all, there is little danger if we keep a good look out."

"Yaas, wathah!" Arthur Augustus remarked. "Besides, you old chaps would be in a feahful wisk if we weren't here."

"Hear, hear!" said Wally.

And Lord Conway laughed and yielded the point.

The campers rolled themselves in their blankets on the soft sand, round the still warm embers of the fire, and slept.

The juniors had wished to take their turns on sentry-go; but Lord Conway would not agree to that. The watch was kept by the seamen of the Silver Scud, two at a time.

It was past midnight when Tom Merry awoke. He had been dreaming of treasure, and sharks, and Pablo Lopez, and he awoke with a strange feeling of uneasiness thrilling through him. He sat up. The moon had passed behind a bank of clouds, and all was dark. From the forest came strange whispers of the night wind.

Tom Merry sat and listened. The night was warm, and he allowed his blanket to fall. He listened for the steady tramping of the sentries, but it was inaudible.

Had they slept at their posts.

The mere thought, and the knowledge that the savage Spaniard might be lurking in the wood, sufficed to bring Tom Merry with a bound to his feet.

He stood with beating heart peering into the gloom.

Ah, there was the sound! Tramp, tramp, tramp, on the soft sand, to and fro. The sentries were awake and at their posts.



But what was that softer sound nearer at hand?

Tom Merry strained his ears to listen. It was a soft and swishing sound, and, for the moment, he could not make it out.

But suddenly it came home to him what it was. It was the sound of a man dragging himself softly along the sand towards the camp. Tom Merry shivered.

The creeping man, whoever he was, was within the distance of the sentries. He had succeeded in passing them, unseen in the darkness.

He was close upon the camp now. Who was it?

Lopez?

Tom Merry groped for his rifle, which lay beside him in the sand. Quietly, with beating heart, but steady nerves, he put it to his shoulder.

The moon was about to emerge from the clouds.

As the edge of silver glimmered in the sky, and a faint light fell upon the beach, Tom Merry scanned the shelving sand in the direction of the sound he had heard. He levelled the rifle at the creeping figure of a man.

"Halt!" he shouted.

The man leaped to his feet with an inarticulate cry. The rifle in Tom Merry's hands was levelled at his breast, steady as a rock.

The moonlight glimmered on his face.

Tom Merry saw it, and uttered a cry of astonishment. He lowered the barrel of the rifle.

"Peter Raff!"

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

### The Enemy

PETER RAFF stared at Tom Merry blankly, blinking in the moonlight.

He was shaking in every limb, and there was no colour in his sunburnt cheeks. He had a rifle in his hand, but it was of little danger to anyone but himself. It was evident that the man's nerve was gone.

"Master Merry!" he exclaimed.

Tom Merry allowed the butt of his rifle to fall into the sand.

"So it's you!" he exclaimed. "I'm glad

to see you alive, my man. Come on. There's nothing to be scared about."

"Who is that, Tom?"

Half the camp was awake. It was Mr. Dodds who asked the question.

"Peter Raff, sir," said Tom Merry. "The sailorman I told you about, sir, who gave me the chart of the island."

"Bai Jove," said D'Arcy, sitting up, "I'm jollay glad to see you alive and kickin', Petah, my boy! You fellows will wemembah that I said all along that Petah wasn't dead."

"I don't remember," said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"And I don't," said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"Well, he is alive and kicking, whether you said so all along or not, Gussy," Figgins remarked; "and I'm sure we're all jolly glad. Sit down, Peter, my son. Was it you shooting in the wood a while back?"

The sailorman shuddered.

"No, sir; it wasn't me. I was shot at."

"Who by?" asked Lord Conway quietly.

"Pablo Lopez, sir."

"Then he is here?"

"As large as life, sir; and armed to the teeth, and ready for any devilish work," said the sailorman, with a shiver.

"You'd better tell us all about it," said Tom Merry. "How did you get here? You never asked me to let you have the chart again."

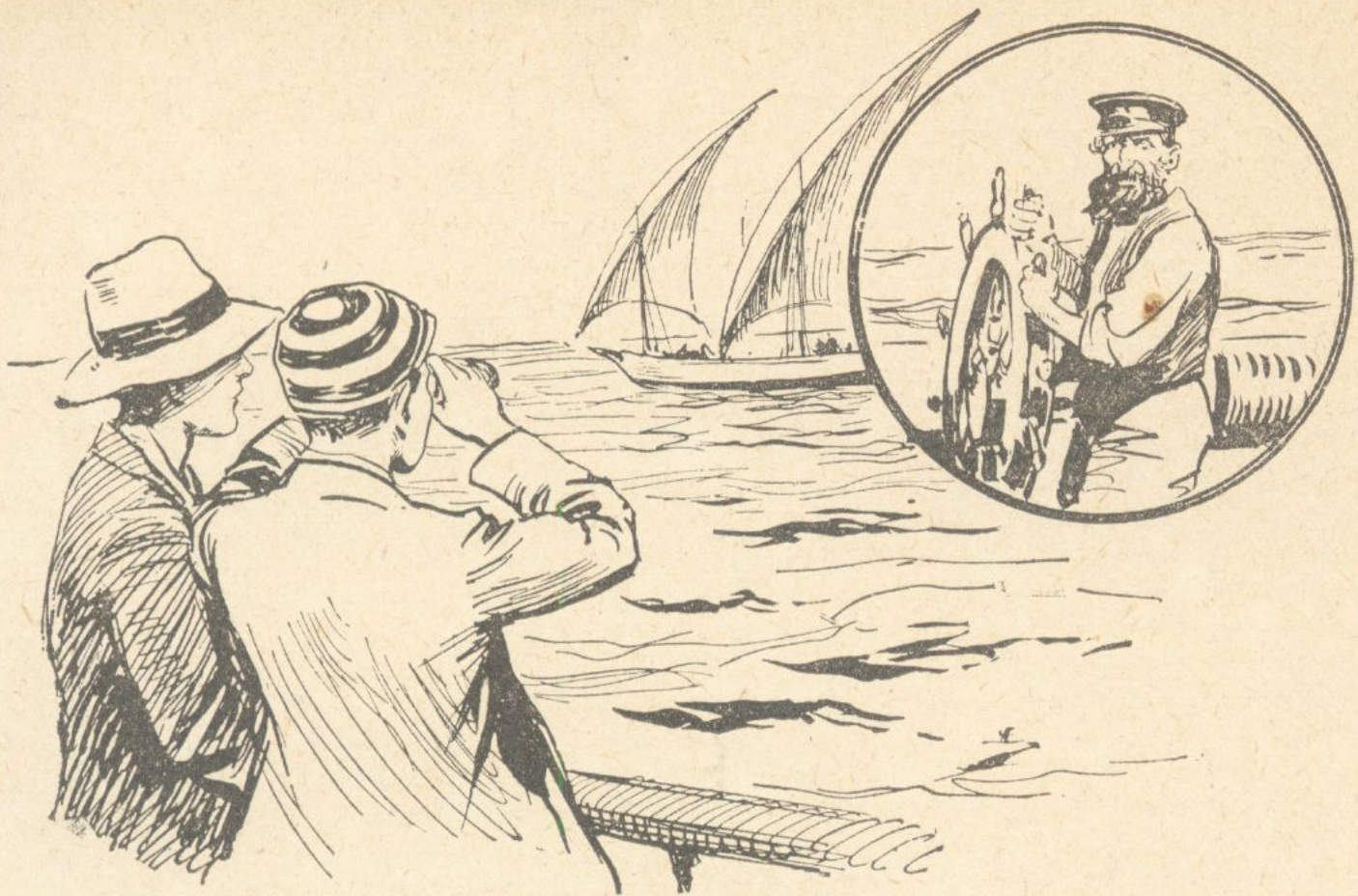
The sailorman shook his head.

"I meant you to have it, Master Merry, for your kindness to me," he said. "I never thought I should get away from the Spaniard. But a trick I played took him in, or else he found out that you had the chart, and not me. Anyway, I saw no more of him. And when I found that I was clear of him, I thought to myself that I would have a shot at the treasure. For I remember every line of that chart in my mind, sir, as if I had it under my eyes still."

"I suppose so."

"So I came out this way on the fastest boat I could," said Peter Raff. "And I got a passage to Kermadec on a fast whaler, and some Kanakas brought me over here on their schooner. I fitted them up with a





Tom Merry was pale with excitement as he peered through the glasses at the felucca. "It is he!" he said tensely. "Lopez, the Spaniard, is also going to the island!" (See page 296.)

yarn of having left some papers on the island, and I should have got the gold safe enough, I dessay, but——"

"But Lopez arrived?"

"Ay, ay, sir! The day after I was here I saw a ferocious face in Shark Bay, and then I guessed that he had come. The Kanakas fled in their schooner at the first shot from that demon of a Spaniard, and they left me marooned here, and ever since then I've been skulking to save my life from Pablo Lopez. He's been hunting me, to make me show him where the treasure is hidden, but I swore to myself that I'd jump off the Bluff into the sea before I'd do it. But I've kept off his course till now, knowing the island so well—for I've been here before, sirs—and—and you could have knocked me down, sir, with a captain's biscuit when I saw a steamer coming round the reefs this blessed day.

"I hoped it might be Master Merry and his friends, and yet I thought it couldn't be ;

and then I hoped it might be a stranger ; but all the time I had a fear that it was friends of the Spaniard, who had come to help him carry off the treasure. That's why I didn't show myself, sir, And that's why I came creeping up here like a thief in the night, to see if I could tell whether you were honest seamen, sir, by listening to something that might be said among you. Thank Heaven, sir, I've fallen among friends ! But Pablo Lopez is in the wood, watching the camp. Heaven deliver you from him !"

Lord Conway smiled.

"I think there are enough of us to give a good account of Lopez if he ventures to interfere with us," he remarked.

The sailorman shook his head.

"You don't know him, sir," he said.

"Is the man alone here?" Mr. Dodds asked.

"No, sir. He has four niggers in the felucca with him, but they ain't any account," said Peter Raff. "They stick in the felucca,



and there ain't any fight in them. It's the Spaniard himself, sir."

"Well, I think we shall be able to handle him amongst us," said Lord Conway, with a smile.

Peter Raff responded only with another shake of the head. It was evident that the dwarf had impressed him with a terror that would not easily be removed.

The treasure-hunters did not share it, however. They were not likely to allow themselves to be scared by a single man, however desperate.

The campers returned to their sleep; and Peter Raff, after eating a hearty supper, rolled himself in blankets, and slept, too.

The moon was sailing high over the island, and in the clear light it was easy to keep watch; but the Spaniard did not appear.

At early dawn Tom Merry & Co. were astir.

It was a fine, clear morning, the skies blue and sunny, and a soft breeze waving the feathery fronds of the palm-trees. Fatty Wynn cast a hungry eye upon the cocoanut palms.

"I'm jolly well going to have some of these cocoanuts!" he remarked.

"Keep out of the trees, Fatty," said Tom Merry. "You remember the orders. We're not to leave the camp, excepting in a party."

"Yes, but——"

"We're going up the river this morning, and there will be heaps of cocoanuts."

"Oh, all serene!"

But Fatty Wynn could not give up the idea. There were no cocoanut palms near at hand, but plenty in sight in the distance, further along the Monkey River. Fatty Wynn helped to gather fuel for building up the fire to cook the breakfast.

The thought of the cocoanuts overcame his prudence. There was no sign of an enemy encampment, and Fatty resolved to risk it. It meant only a run of a hundred yards to secure an armful of cocoanuts, and bring them back to the camp.

Leaving the fuel he had gathered in a heap, Fatty Wynn started through the thicket, Tom Merry saw him go, and called after him.

"Fatty—Fatty!"

The fat Fourth-Former of St. Jim's did not appear to hear.

"Fatty!" shouted Tom Merry. "Come back, you duffer!"

But Fatty Wynn ran on.

A belt of flowering bushes hid him for the moment from Tom Merry's sight, and the hero of the Shell started after him.

He dashed past the bushes, but Fatty Wynn had disappeared.

"Fatty—Fatty!"

Only the echo of his own voice answered Tom Merry.

He ran on a dozen yards or more, but the thickets were round him now, and prevented him from seeing any distance. He stopped, frowning.

"Fatty!" he shouted. "Fatty, you duffer, come back!"

There was a rustle in the bush.

Tom Merry turned quickly towards the sound.

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed.

"Fatty, you chump, come back to the camp! You can get the cocoanuts afterwards."

There was no reply, and Tom Merry plunged through the bush in search of the fat Fourth-Former.

As he did so a sudden grasp was laid upon him, and he was dragged backwards and borne to the ground.

"Fatty, let go, you ass! Oh!"

Tom Merry broke off as he saw who his assailant was.

A dark, evil face was bending over him. The arms that grasped him were stronger than those of Fatty Wynn.

"So we meet again, señorito!"

The voice was low and mocking.

Tom Merry struggled furiously, but he was as a child in the hands that grasped him. It was Pablo Lopez who was bending over him.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

### In the Hands of the Enemy

**L**OPEZ planted a heavy knee upon Tom Merry's chest, pinning him helplessly to the ground. The boy struggled and gasped for breath. He strove to shout for help, but even as his lips opened something



old and sharp touched his neck. It was a knife, in the swarthy hand of the Spaniard.

"Not a sound, señorito," said Pablo Lopez—"not a sound! At the first cry, my knife is in your throat!"

The unuttered cry died upon Tom Merry's lips.

The Spaniard meant what he said. The junior's life hung by a thread. The knife was ready for its murderous work.

Tom Merry gazed up speechlessly into the savage, cruel face above him.

"You understand, señorito? Ere your friends can reach you you are dead! Sabe?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"Ah! You are a sensible boy," said Lopez, with a grin. "If you speak, speak only in a whisper, nino!"

"You scoundrel!"

The Spaniard laughed.

"If it is any comfort to you, señorito, to call me pretty names, you may do so, so long as it is in a whisper," he said.

"Villain!"

The Spaniard made a gesture.

"Silence!"

There was a sound of trampling in the thickets and of voices calling. The edge of the knife pressed closer to Tom Merry's throat, till it almost cut the skin. The junior felt a cold shiver run through his body. Even then he wondered why Lopez did not drive the weapon home. The man was villain enough.

But Lopez did not.

Pinned to the earth by the heavy knee, with the blade at his throat, Tom Merry could not venture to make a sound. The thick, tangled bushes round them hid them from sight.

"Tom Merry!"

"Tom!"

"Where are you?"

Tom Merry caught a glimpse of a straw hat through the bushes, but it passed. It was as well that it passed, for if the Spaniard had been discovered, and had to run, he would not have left Tom Merry living behind him.

"If they find you——" murmured Lopez. But the footsteps and the voices passed on. A few minutes of terrible tension, then silence.

The Spaniard smiled grimly.

"They have not found you, señorito."

"They will search again," said Tom Merry.

"But they will not find you, then. You are coming with me, señorito."

"You will come with me, or remain here dead!" said Lopez. "Mind, a cry or a struggle, and I drive my poniard home!"

He meant every word. That was clear from the savage look upon his swarthy face. Tom Merry did not resist. Lopez crammed a handkerchief into his mouth to gag him, and then tied a cord

round his head to keep it there.

Then he dragged the junior to his feet.

"Vamos!" he said briefly.

With a tight grip upon the junior's arm with his left hand, and the knife still held in his right, he led the junior through the thickets.

It was impossible to resist. And Tom Merry, with his heart beating with anger and a set look upon his face, walked beside the Spaniard quietly.



"So we meet again, señorito!" Tom Merry struggled furiously as he heard the low, mocking voice, but he was as a child in the hands that grasped him. It was Pablo Lopez who was bending over him! (See page 304.)



Deeper and deeper into the wood they went, but there was one feeling of satisfaction in Tom Merry's breast. The chart was not upon him now; that had been left with Lord Conway, to guide the party that was to start after breakfast.

If the Spaniard had captured him, hoping to gain the chart, he would be disappointed.

Deeper into the wood.

At last, in a deep glade among the trees, half hidden from the sun by thick boughs and trailing vines, Lopez halted.

He gashed a length of wiry creeper with his knife, and tied Tom Merry's wrists with it.

Then he released the junior.

"You may talk now, if you choose," he said. "They will not hear you. We are safe from them now."

Tom Merry gasped as the gag was dragged from his mouth.

"Oh, you scoundrel!" he muttered.

"Where is the chart?"

"It is not upon me," said Tom Merry steadily.

"You lie! Give it to me, or——"

"I cannot give it to you, and I would not if I had it."

"Carambo! I shall soon see to that."

The Spaniard returned the knife to his belt, and began to search the junior. Tom Merry submitted quietly.

Lopez searched him again and again, leaving no nook of his clothing uninvestigated, till even the suspicious Spaniard was satisfied that the chart was not there.

He gritted his sharp, white teeth.

"Where is the chart, then?" he demanded.

"It is with my friends."

"Which of them?"

"Lord Conway."

"Who is that?"

"Our captain."

The Spaniard muttered a curse.

"Carambo! It will not be easy to get, then!"

Tom Merry smiled scornfully.

"It will be impossible," he said. "Lord Conway will not run the risk I ran—especially after I am missed. You will never get the chart."

"We shall see. Do you know why I did not

drive my knife to your heart as soon as I saw you?" asked Pablo Lopez, in a hissing tone.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"No. You are villain enough."

"It was because I suspected that you might not have the chart upon you," said the dwarf. "I suspected that they might not leave it in the hands of a boy. And without the chart you are more valuable to me alive than dead."

Tom Merry did not reply. The dwarf watched his prisoner with scintillating eyes.

"You have conned over the chart, and mastered it, I do not doubt?" he said.

"I have examined it, certainly."

"You remember it?"

"To some extent."

"Could you follow the clue to the place where the gold is buried, from memory?"

"I do not know."

"You shall try," said the Spaniard. "Listen! If you help me to find the gold, I will set you free, and give you some of the treasure. That I swear by all the saints!"

Tom Merry's lip curled.

"I do not believe you!" he said.

"Carambo! Be it so, then. But unless you guide me, you shall die by torture!" said the Spaniard, between his teeth. "Now, will you be my guide?"

"No!"

"Mind, I am a man of my word," said Lopez hoarsely. "Unless you guide me, I will bind you to the tree, here, and set fire to the dry bushes around you. You will burn slowly to death—slowly! You understand?"

Tom Merry shuddered, but he made no reply.

"Will you guide me, señorito?"

"No!"

The dwarf did not speak. He flung the junior against the sapling, and wound long, wiry creepers round him to secure him there. Tom Merry struggled furiously, careless of the knife now. But it was in vain. The terrible dwarf seemed possessed of superhuman strength. Tom Merry was like an infant in his powerful grasp. In a few minutes he was bound fast to the tree.

Then the dwarf gathered fuel and heaped it up round him waist high.



"Have you changed your mind, señorito?" he asked.

"No! Help! help!" shouted Tom Merry.

The dwarf grinned, and took a tinder-box from his coat. A spark flickered out, and he blew a flame in the tinder. Then his evil eyes turned upon Tom Merry again.

"For the last time, señorito?"

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

### The Track of the Treasure

**T**OM MERRY looked at the dwarf with dilated eyes.

There was no doubting the purpose in the scintillating eyes, in the savage swarthy face.

"Think again, señorito," said Lopez—"think again! Once I have fired this pile, I leave you, and no power on earth can save you. Think again!"

Small blame to Tom Merry if he surrendered then. What was the treasure in comparison with life itself?

"Shall I hold my hand, señorito?"

"Yes," gasped Tom Merry.

"You will guide me?"

"Yes."

Lopez gave an ugly laugh.

"I thought I should bring you to reason," he said. "Let us go."

He dragged the twining bonds away. Tom Merry's hands were still bound. His face was white and set.

His brain was in a whirl. What if he guided the ruffian to the very spot where the gold was buried—what then? A thrust of the Spanish knife would reward him. Lopez had no object in allowing him to live.

It was but deferring his doom.

But while there was life there was hope. The tendrils that bound his hands were not so secure as a cord would have been, and Tom Merry hoped to work his wrists loose. He might turn the tables upon the villain yet.

"Where is the cache?" said Lopez. "Where is it, to the best of your recollection, señorito?"

"By the mountain, near the river," said Tom Merry.

"Exactly where?"

"I cannot remember, but I may be able to

follow the direction from the river," said the junior.

"Good! You shall try."

With the Spaniard's iron grasp upon his arm, the boy was led through the wood. The trees thinned away, and there was the gleam of sunlit water ahead.

"That is the river," said the Spaniard. "You meant the river that empties into the bay where your yacht rides?"

"Yes."

"That is it. We keep on till we reach the mount?"

"Yes."

"Muy buenn."

They tramped on side by side—with how different feelings! The Spaniard's dark face showed exultation and anticipated triumph. Tom Merry's face was white and desperate. As they tramped through the trees he was working his hands cautiously, in the hope of working them loose. The wiry tendrils held them fast, but they were coming looser and looser.

Lopez did not notice it. Perhaps he did not care. It was proved very clearly that Tom Merry was no match for him in a struggle, and he was armed, and the junior was not.

The ground became more rocky and uneven, and the trees were sparser. Tom Merry had the bearings of the chart imprinted upon his mind.

Through the rocky slopes ran a natural path from the river, leading up the acclivity to the mount. They followed it. From the trees, black-faced monkeys grinned and chattered, and wild goats looked out from the underwoods and scampered away at their approach.

Suddenly the Spaniard halted, with a muttered imprecation.

Tom Merry followed his startled glance, and shuddered at what he saw.

In a deep cleft between two great rocks, gleaming white in the sun, now high in the heavens, lay a skeleton.

The bones were almost perfect, and the skeleton had evidently never been disturbed from the time the body had fallen there—perhaps in strife a century or more ago.

One arm was outstretched, pointing away towards a clump of heavy trees that grew thickly among the rocks of the slope.



"Carambo!" muttered the Spaniard.

It was clear that, in his wanderings upon the island, he had never come upon that grisly object before.

He stood, and regarded it in silence for some minutes. Tom Merry's face was very white. Would his bones lie and whiten in the sun amongst those silent rocks?

It seemed only too likely.

"Carambo!" said the Spaniard again. "Is that a sign?"

Tom Merry started.

The idea had not occurred to him, but it was only too probable. It was like one of the fearful deeds of the old buccaneers, to leave a dead man with outstretched hand pointing, as a guide, to the treasure.

"Come on!" said Lopez.

He started off again, following the indication of the dead hand, dragging the junior after him.

Tom Merry was breathing hard. The tendrils round his wrists were loose now, and he could tear his hands free at any moment he pleased. But what was the use?

He was a child against the dwarf, and he had no weapon. He glanced at the knife in Lopez's belt. But he would not be allowed a chance of snatching it. There was a rifle slung over the shoulder of the Spaniard, but that he could not seize.

His heart was beating wildly now.

He felt that they were drawing near to the hiding-place of the treasure, and when it was found, what was to be his fate?

Lopez halted again.

He stopped at the clump of thick trees. His eyes turned savagely upon Tom Merry.

"Is this the direction, nino?"

"So far as I remember."

"Good! Then we must be near!"

"I think so."

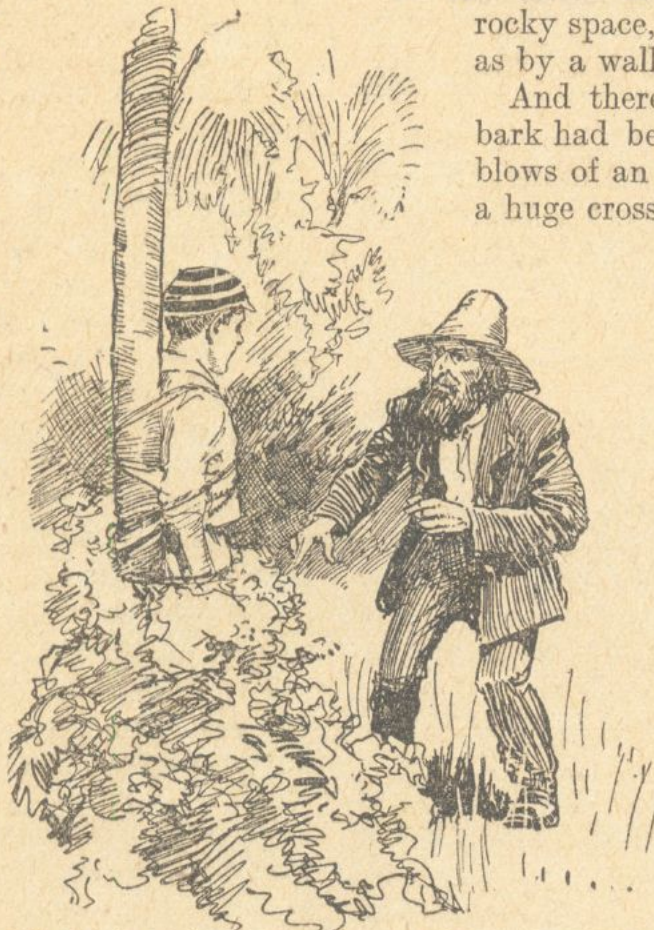
"Come!"

They plunged into the trees.

A sudden cry burst from the Spaniard—a cry of triumph.

In the midst of the trees was an open, rocky space, shut in darkly and closely, as by a wall of green.

And there, upon a huge trunk, the bark had been gashed away by heavy blows of an axe, and in the tree-trunk a huge cross was cut.



"Think again, seniorito," said Lopez. "Once I have fired this pile I leave you, and nothing on earth can save you! Think again." (See page 307.)



It was the fellow of the cross upon the chart.

"The treasure!" shouted the Spaniard.

And he turned upon Tom Merry, and there was a murderous glare in his eyes, and his hand flew to the knife in his belt.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

### A Fight for Life

**T**OM MERRY sprang away at the same moment,

and with a wrench freed his hands.

As the Spaniard came at him he struck, out fiercely, and the blow was so unexpected that Lopez received it without defence, and it sent him reeling backwards. He had not known that Tom Merry's hands were loose.

Tom Merry stood, panting for a second.

To dash into the bushes was his first thought, and then he remembered that the Spaniard had a rifle. To run was to be picked off like a rabbit.

It was only a fraction of a second that he had to think, but it was enough. He followed



up his blow by leaping upon the Spaniard.  
Crash! crash!

His right, and then his left, came home upon the swarthy face of the tottering Lopez, and the dwarf crashed heavily to earth, panting.

Tom Merry was upon him in a second.

The Spaniard's hands were sprawling helplessly out, and in the twinkling of an eye the junior snatched the knife from his nerveless fingers.

It flashed in the air in the grasp of Tom Merry.

To drive it to the hilt in the scoundrel's body would have been justifiable, and only cautious, but Tom Merry could not do it. He planted his knee upon the ruffian, and held the knife aloft.

"Keep still!" he said. "If you resist, I swear I will strike!"

And he meant that.

And Lopez knew that he meant it, and he lay still, panting convulsively, his lips drawn back from his teeth in a savage snarl.

"Carambo!" he hissed.

"Lie quiet, you hound!"

And the Spaniard obeyed.

His rifle had fallen beside him, in the grass, still held to him by the sling. Tom Merry brought down the knife, and severed the leather strap with a single cut. The rifle lay loose.

The Spaniard was watching him like a cat.

"Mind what I say," said Tom Merry, in a hard, concentrated voice. His heart was beating like a hammer, but his head was quite cool. "I will pin you like a beetle if you attempt to struggle."

"Carambo!"

Tom Merry picked up the rifle with his left hand, and rose. The Spaniard made a movement, and Tom Merry had him covered with the rifle in a flash.

"Lie there, you hound!"

"Carambo!"

"I will shoot if you move."

The Spaniard did not move. It was proof that the rifle was loaded. Tom Merry had not thought of that until it was levelled at the Spaniard. But it was not likely that Pablo Lopez would be carrying an unloaded weapon.

Lopez lay with glittering eyes, like a cornered rat.

His rage was too great for words; but he read the desperate determination in the boy's face, and he understood it. It was as much as his life was worth to move.

"You scoundrel!" said Tom Merry. "You deserve that I should shoot you down, like a mad dog. And I will do it, if you make the least movement to attack me."

"A thousand curses——"

"Hold your tongue, you villain! Get up!"

"Señorito!"

"Get up, and keep your distance, or I will fire!"

Lopez rose to his feet.

"Walk before me," said Tom Merry.

Lopez made a passionate gesture.

"Where? Carambo, where?"

"Towards the river."

The Spaniard gave him a terrible glance. But he dared not disobey.

"I do not intend to risk being attacked from behind, you treacherous villain," said Tom Merry scornfully. "Mind, I will pull the trigger if you make a single movement that is suspicious."

"Carambo!"

"March!"

The Spaniard marched.

He strode away, with Tom Merry half a dozen paces behind him. That he could march the Spaniard as far as the camp, and make him a prisoner, Tom Merry did not hope. But he meant to get out of the thickets with the ruffian at a safe distance. They came out upon the bank of the gleaming river.

There the Spaniard halted.

He turned a furious face upon Tom Merry.

"Are you satisfied, señorito?" he asked, in a choking voice.

"You will wade across the river," said Tom Merry. "I shall keep you under cover till you have reached the other side. Then you can go."

"It is too deep, señor!"

"Swim, then."

"I cannot swim, señor."

"You must take your chance."

The Spaniard faced round at him, his features working convulsively.



"Ah, señorito, I can swim, but I will not," he said. "Shoot if you choose, then."

Tom Merry's eye glanced along the levelled rifle.

"I give you two seconds!" he said.

"Carambo!"

The Spaniard made a sudden spring forward.

Tom Merry kept his word.

Crack!

There was a fearful yell from Pablo Lopez.

He staggered back, with the blood streaming down his face. He yelled wildly again, and clapped both his hands to his head.

"Oh, I am killed!"

Tom Merry's face was white. But he had fired only in self-defence, and he did not regret it. The dwarf's blood was upon himself.

And it might be a trick! Pablo Lopez reeled and crashed heavily to the earth, falling in the thick grass.

Tom Merry watched him.

He had no cartridges to reload the rifle; and he dropped it in his left hand and drew the knife from his belt. If Pablo Lopez was tricking him, it was necessary to be careful.

Lopez groaned heavily.

Tom Merry turned to go his way, and paused. Could he leave the man, brute as he was, so? Lopez was evidently wounded; there was blood upon his face and blood upon the grass.

Tom Merry approached.

"Lopez!"

The man groaned.

The junior bent over him.

And as he did so the strong arms of the dwarf flashed up, and the boy was caught in an iron grasp.

"Now, nino—oh, oh!"

Tom Merry, the instant the treacherous scoundrel's hands touched him, hacked out with the knife. It was a trick—Lopez was not seriously hurt! But the junior of St. Jim's was ready for his treachery.

He hacked fiercely with the long, keen knife, careless where his blows fell, for his life was in the balance.

Lopez shrieked with rage and pain, and released his hold, and sprang away. Blood

was streaming from three or four wounds where the knife had gashed him.

Tom Merry faced him, panting.

"You scoundrel! You hound!"

The Spaniard, mad with rage, sprang at him again. Tom Merry slashed with the knife, and the ruffian leaped back. Then the junior followed up the attack, slashing savagely, and Lopez, with a howl of rage, turned and ran.

Tom Merry did not pursue him.

He was panting and giddy from the struggle—sick with the sight of blood and with the knowledge that he had almost killed a man.

He picked up the rifle and hurried away down the river in the direction of the bay. Over the trees he could see a column of smoke from the camp-fire.

"Tom Merry!"

"Bai Jove! Here he is!"

"Merry! Thank Heaven, we have found you!"

A party of juniors and seamen from the Silver Scud, with Mr. Dodds at their head, burst from the trees and surrounded Tom Merry.

The hero of the Shell gasped with relief.

"Bai Jove! Are you hurt, deah boy?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy anxiously.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"But there is blood upon you—upon your hand—your coat!" exclaimed Mr. Dodds.

"It is not my blood!"

"Good Heavens! Whose, then?"

"Lopez!"

Tom Merry dropped the knife, from which red drops spattered on the grass as it fell. And then Mr. Dodds caught him just in time as he fainted.

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

### The Last of the Spaniard

TOM MERRY came to himself to find his head upon Mr. Dodds' knee and the curate of Huckleberry Heath bathing his face with cool water from the river. The junior's eyes opened wildly.

"It's all wight, old chap," murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You're all wight."

Tom Merry shivered.



"What an ass I am!" he muttered. "Did I—did I faint?"

"You need not be ashamed of fainting, Tom," said Mr. Dodds quietly. "You have been through a fearful experience. Are you better?"

"I'm all right now, sir."

Tom Merry rose with the curate's assistance.

"Tell us how it happened," said Lord Conway.

Tom Merry explained.

"All my fault," said Fatty Wynn remorsefully. "And I never got the cocoanuts after all; I went back instead."

"You ass," said Tom Merry. "That's how I couldn't find you, I suppose."

"You see——"

"I wegard Wynn as a feahful ass," said D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass upon the fat Fourth-Former. "I wegard you as a feahfully dweadful ass, Wynn."

"Oh, rats!"

"If you say wats to me——"

"Well, I do; and many of 'em."

"Then I shall have no wesource but to give you a feahful thwash-in'. I——"

"Order!" said Figgins. "You can look for Lopez, and give him a fearful thrashing, Gussy. Peace in the family."

"Weally, Figgins——"

"Yes, order," said Wally. "I'm surprised at you, Gussy."

"Weally, Wally——"

"It seems that the Spaniard knows where to look for the treasure, then," said Lord Conway anxiously.

"I'm afraid so, sir," said Tom Merry. "I hope you don't blame me for guiding him. He was determined to set fire to

the wood round me—he really meant it."

"Bai Jove! What a feahful beast!"

"I don't blame you, Tom," said the viscount. "You could hardly do anything else. But the Spaniard knows as much now as he could learn from the chart."

"Yes, sir—I suppose so."

"Then we have no time to lose."

"Bai Jove, wathah not!" said D'Arcy. "But didn't you say the boundah was hurt, Tom Mewwy!"

"Yes; I don't know how severely, though."

"If he is in a condition to look for the treasure, he will certainly do so," said Lord Conway. "Fortunately, he is unarmed. Of course, he would have no chance against us, but it would be terrible to have lives lost in dealing with such a scoundrel."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Let us keep on," said Lord Conway. "I have the chart here; but it is evident to me that we shall not need it now."

"Lead the way, Tom Mewwy, deah boy."

"Right-ho!"

"By gum, sir!" said Peter Raff, in great admiration, as he tramped beside Tom Merry through the underwoods. "By gum, sir, you're the only one I've ever heard of who came off best in a tussle with Pablo Lopez. But I wish you had put the bullet through his head, sir."

"I'm glad I didn't," said Tom Merry.

The sailorman shook his head.

"It would have been safer, sir; nothing's safe except that, with Pablo Lopez."



Tom Merry bent over the dwarf. As he did so the strong arms flashed up, and the boy was caught in an iron grasp. "Now, nino!" (See page 310.)



They tramped on over the rocky slopes. There was a general exclamation as they reached the spot where the skeleton lay.

"Bai Jove!" D'Arcy exclaimed, with a shudder. "Let's get on!"

And Fatty Wynn, who had been nibbling at a sandwich, put it away unfinished. The sight had taken even his appetite away.

As they drew near the clump of thick trees, Lord Conway held up his hand.

"Hark!"

There was a sound of scuffling and scratching, from the thick cover of the trees. There was no doubt what it meant. The Spaniard was there. He had had no time to obtain digging implements from the felucca, and he was making a desperate attempt to get at the buried treasure before the English party could arrive.

They broke into a run.

"Don't shoot unless he attacks," said Lord Conway. "Make him a prisoner if you can."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

They burst through the trees.

Pablo Lopez was there. He was on his knees under the tree marked with the blazed cross, tearing feverishly at the soil with a wooden stake.

The soil was soft, and it turned up rapidly under the primitive implement. The Spaniard had already excavated a foot deep, and he had dragged away the earth with his hands.

In the excavation a corner of an iron-bound chest showed through the earth.

"Seize him!" shouted Lord Conway.

The Spaniard sprang to his feet as the Britishers burst upon the scene.

He presented a terrible sight.

Tom Merry's bullet had gashed along his cheek and ear, and the scar was still raw and red, and his clothing was torn and stained with blood where the knife had struck him in the hand-to-hand struggle.

"Carambo!"

"Collar him!"

"Bai Jove! Go for the cad, deah boys!"

They rushed at the Spaniard in a body.

The ruffian whirled the stake aloft, but as he did so Mr. Dodds dodged under his arm, and closed with him.

The stake went flying from the Spaniard's hand, and he whirled back in the grasp of the athletic curate; but he returned grasp for grasp, and the two struggled fiercely.

"Look out, sir!" yelled Peter Raff. "He'll strangle you, sir!"

"Stand back!" said Mr. Dodds. The curate's voice was cool and steady. "I can handle him!"

They gathered round the combatants.

Strong as the Spaniard was, he had met his match in the Britisher.

To and fro they reeled, struggled fiercely, tearing up the soil with their feet in the desperate wrestle, till the Spaniard was forced backward and backward, and fell to the earth, gasping and overcome.

The curate stood over him.

He was panting, too, now with the terrible exertion, and his face and clothes were stained with the blood of Pablo Lopez.

"Now take him!" he said.

The Spaniard scrambled up. With a spring like a tiger, he escaped the outstretched hands, and plunged into the wood.

"After him!" shouted Lord Conway. "He must not escape!"

"Wathah not!"

"After him!"

They rushed in fierce pursuit. Through the crackling underwoods they swept, the Spaniard leaping desperately on, the pursuers shouting and whooping close behind.

"Wun like anythin'!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, chase me!" gasped Blake.

Round the base of the mount they ran, through the jungle paths, up slopes, and over arid ridges, the wounded Spaniard still keeping ahead.

"My hat!" Figgins gasped. "The beggar can run!"

"We'll have him now!" said Kangaroo, as the gleam of water showed ahead. "There's the sea!"

Tom Merry panted.

"And there's the felucca!"

"My hat!"

The Spaniard had reached the shore of Shark Bay. Out in the bay the felucca lay at anchor, with four negroes on deck. They



stared stupidly at the sight of the Spaniard and his pursuers bursting from the woods.

Lopez did not halt.

The crisping sands rung under his hurrying feet, and he dashed straight into the water and swam.

With desperate strokes he swam for the felucca.

"After him!" yelled Kerr.

But Lord Conway's voice rang out:

"Stop!"

Unwillingly the juniors halted, their boots crunching up the sand on the water's edge.

"We could overtake him before he reaches the felucca, sir!" Figgins exclaimed.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You remember what this bay is called?" said Lord Conway. "Probably it was not given a name without a reason."

"My hat!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" exclaimed Peter Raff. "There are sharks here—I've seen them—dozens of them! Great Davy Jones! Look there!"

A fin showed above the blue waters, close by the swimming Spaniard. The trail of blood in the water had drawn a shark to the spot.

"Oh, Heaven!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

He grasped a rifle in his hands. The Spaniard was a deadly foe—a murderous ruffian. But such a death as this!

Lopez had seen his danger. He redoubled his efforts to reach the felucca. A negro stood ready with a rope to throw to him.

But the shark was quicker. There was a gleam of white as the horrible monster of the sea turned over to seize his prey.

Crack!

It was the report of Tom Merry's rifle.

Unerringly the bullet sped to its mark. It struck the white belly of the shark as a hail-stone strikes glass.

There was a wild flounder in the water, and the shark sank under. The Spaniard reached the dangling rope, and the negro hauled him aboard. The next minute the shark was swimming close by the felucca. The bullet had not been fatal. But it had saved the Spaniard's life.

Dripping, exhausted, the Spaniard stood upon the deck.

He turned and shook a furious fist at the party on the shore. But the felucca was within easy rifle range. Lopez grasped a firearm for a moment, but a shot would have brought a volley upon him in return, and he knew it. He screamed to the negroes in Spanish, and the sails were shaken out, and the felucca glided out of the bay.

The glancing white sails flashed out to sea. Pablo Lopez was gone, leaving behind the treasure island and the treasure.

## THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

### The Treasure

"WELL done, Tom!" said Mr. Dodds, clapping the hero of the Shell upon the shoulder. "Well done, my lad! A splendid shot!"

"I couldn't let him be killed like that, sir," said Tom Merry. "I'm glad I hit the shark! It was lucky!"

"Quite wight, Tom Mewwy! The man's an awful wascal, but that would have been too howwid!" said Arthur Augustus. "Aftah all, he won't twouble us any more!"

"And now for the treasure," said Lord Conway.

"Hurray!"

The explorers turned back towards the mount.

It did not take them long to reach the spot where they had discovered Pablo Lopez.

They had come provided with digging implements, and the Spaniard had already exposed the buried chest.

The seamen were soon hard at work digging.

Round them the juniors gathered with keen and eager faces. There was no doubt that they had discovered the exact spot where the treasure was hidden. As the chest was exposed more and more to view, they could see that it was a strong, old-fashioned sea-chest of oak, clamped with iron, and evidently very heavy.

One man could never have carried it to that place and buried it there.

Was the skeleton whose grisly hand pointed to the spot one of the men who had carried it? Had he fallen, to keep more surely the secret of the pirate—the pirate who had amassed



the treasure, and hidden it there, and was himself dust long since?

What tale of tragedy could those shadowy old trees have told?

Deeper and deeper grew the excavation.

"I think we can lift the chest out now," said Lord Conway.

Four strong seamen stood in the excavation, and with their united efforts the chest was lifted from the depths and dragged out.

It was locked, and there was no sign of a key, and the oak and the iron clamps were still stout and strong, in spite of the time they had been in the earth.

"We will open it on the yacht!" said Lord Conway.

Keen as the juniors were to see the contents of the treasure-chest, they raised no objection.

The chest was not easy to carry. Four of the party shouldered it, and then the pace was slow, and the bearers were changed several times before they reached the beach by Safe Anchorage.

The chest was deposited in the boat at last, and the explorers rowed off to the yacht. The treasure had been discovered, and there was nothing to delay them at Skeleton Island.

On the deck of the Silver Scud the chest lay amid the eager crowd, while the steam was got up, and the yacht moved out to sea.

"Bring an axe here!" said Lord Conway.

Crash!

Crash!

The axe, wielded by Peter Raff, crashed upon the old chest. Crash, crash! The lock flew in pieces, and the lid was loose.

Tom Merry raised it.

There was a buzz of deep-drawn breath as the lid of the chest was thrown back and the interior exposed to view.

The juniors had expected to see masses of gold, piles of old coins, bags perhaps of diamonds and pearls. But nothing of the sort met their view. In the tray in the top of the chest was nothing but old moth-eaten sailor clothes, folded up.

"Oh!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove!"

"Blessed if we haven't raided a giddy rag-and-bone merchant, instead of a pirate!" murmured Jack Blake.

Mr. Dodds quietly lifted out the tray. Then a shout burst from the juniors:

"Gold!"

"Gweat Scott! Gold!"

"Hurray!"

"Hip, hip, hurray!"

Gold at last!

Gold it was, undoubtedly—dulled and dim, but gold, real gold!

Gold in bars, and gold in ingots—gold in old coins crammed carelessly together, gold in every shape and form.

The gatherings of many a wild cruise, the plunder of many a hapless ship in the wild old days—the price of many a life!

Gold!

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "My only hat! It's real!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Gold, and no mistake!" said Kerr. "And I wonder what that little lot is worth in cash?"

Lord Conway smiled.

"It's impossible to tell now," he said. "But certainly thousands of pounds—many thousands of pounds."

"Bai Jove!"



Pablo Lopez was on his knees under the tree marked with the blazed cross, tearing feverishly at the soil with a wooden stake. (See page 312.)



"And it's yours, sir," said Peter Raff, with a peculiar effort. "It's yours, Master Merry!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Nonsense!" he said. "It's not mine!"

"Ay, ay, sir! I gave you the chart!"

"Rats!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"And I should have been murdered by Pablo Lopez, gentlemen, if you hadn't come 'ere to find the treasure!" said Peter Raff.

"You've saved my life; and I gave you the chart, Master Merry, and a sailorman's gift is a gift!"

"You will take your share, at all events," said Tom Merry. "We've already settled that, my son! You will take a third of the treasure, and a third goes to myself because you gave me the chart, and a third to the others here. That was what Lord Conway considered a fair arrangement."

"I think so," said Lord Conway. "Peter Raff cannot be left out, certainly, and Tom Merry, as owner of the chart and originator of the enterprise, is bound to take a third, at least. The remaining third goes to the rest of the party; but my share I shall divide among the crew of the yacht as prize-money!"

And there was a cheer from the seamen of the Silver Scud.

"Ay, ay, sir!" said Peter Raff. "But I gave Master Merry the chart!"

"We'll leave it to the church to decide," said Lord Conway, with a smile, turning to Mr. Dodds. "What do you say, Mr. Dodds?"

Peter Raff touched his forelock. He had all an old sailorman's respect for a parson.

"Ay, ay, sir; I'm willing to leave it to the gentleman!" he said.

"Then I endorse Lord Conway's decision," said Mr. Dodds. "I think it is the fairest arrangement possible. And there is certainly sufficient gold here to make everyone concerned quite rich."

"Bai Jove! It's wippin'!"

"Hurrah!"

Fatty Wynn's eyes gleamed. He grasped Figgins by the arm.

"Figgy, old man! I say, Figgy!"

"Hallo?"

"What a feed we'll stand when we get back to St. Jim's!"

Figgins roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! Trust you to think of that, Fatty!"

"Yaas, wathah! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I suppose we ought to celebrate finding a treasure of this sort," said Fatty Wynn warmly. "When we get back to St. Jim's we'll stand regular glorious feed to all the fellows. That's what I think."

"Oh, good!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard Fatty Wynn's ideah as weally wippin', undah the cires."

"Only we haven't got the treasure to England yet, gentlemen," said Peter Raff.

"Nothing but foul weather can stop us now," said Lord Conway. "It's a straight run home, my man!"

"I was thinking of Pablo Lopez, sir."

"He cannot harm us now."

But a shadow of doubt remained upon the sailorman's sunburnt face. Wounded, defeated, put to flight, the Spaniard still filled him with dread and uneasiness.

"There goes the Treasure Island!" Kangaroo exclaimed.

The juniors turned to take their last look at the Treasure Island.

The lonely isle was sinking into the blue Pacific behind them. The shelving sands, the dark belt of trees, the curling waters on the barrier reefs sank from sight, and the wooded hill sank last into the shining waters.

Against the dark hill, ere it vanished, Tom Merry caught for a moment a glimpse of the white sail of a felucca. Felucca and island vanished astern, and the Silver Scud throbbed on over the vast Pacific, homeward bound!

## THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER

### Sunk at Sea

**C**RASH!

Crash!

Tom Merry started and awoke.

He was lying in his bunk aboard the Silver Scud. He had been dreaming of home—St. Jim's and the fellows there, and as he started into sudden wakefulness, it seemed to him for the moment that he was back at the school, and that he was in his bed in the Shell dormitory in the School House at St. Jim's. There was a



sound of creaking and straining, and of rushing water, of excited voices and hurrying feet.

Tom Merry sat up in bed.

What had happened ?

His brain cleared immediately from the mists of sleep ; he remembered where he was, on board Lord Conway's yacht, gliding through the moonlit waters of the South Pacific, homeward bound for England after a holiday cruise in the South Seas.

" Look out ! "

" She's struck ! "

The engines were throbbing still—the yacht was trembling and shivering like a frightened animal. Tom Merry put his legs over the side of the bunk, and there was a yell from below him. Jack Blake had just put his head out of the bunk beneath Tom Merry's, and Tom Merry's feet had come into violent contact with it.

" Ow ! " roared Blake. " What's the little game ? Ow ! "

" Sorry ! "

" You ass ! "

" Bai Jove ! " came the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy from the darkness. " Bai Jove, deah boys, there's something up, you know ! "

" She's struck ! "

The shout came again hoarsely from the deck. The juniors turned out in hot haste, scrambling into their clothes. It was pretty clear that an accident had happened to the yacht. Tom Merry, in trousers and shirt, bare-headed, dashed up on deck.

Wild confusion reigned there.

The full round moon sailed high in a cloudless sky. Round the yacht glimmered the wide rolling Pacific. There was no sight of land—the yacht was solitary in the midst of the great southern ocean.

The engines had stopped now. The yacht was heeling over drunkenly. Lord Conway, the skipper, was on deck with Mr. Dodds, the mate, and both were perfectly cool, but their faces were pale.

" What is it, sir ? " Tom Merry panted.

" An accident, " said Lord Conway quietly.

" We have struck upon a coral reef, I think—a reef not laid down in any chart. "

" Good heavens ! "

Lord Conway turned away. He had plenty to do at that moment. He was rapping out orders quickly, and the well-trained seamen were obeying them. Everyone was on deck now, some with clothes in their hands.

The yacht was filling.

There was no doubt about it—the Silver Scud, the handsome yacht that was Lord Conway's pride, was a hopeless wreck. She had dashed upon the treacherous reef fair and square ; her bows had ground upon the reef where it was concealed under the surface of the water, with hardly a line of foam to mark the place—and the stout hull of the yacht had been crushed in by the violent impact.

The Silver Scud was sinking !

The terrible reality rushed upon the minds of the juniors of St. Jim's with stunning force. Ten minutes ago they had been sleeping safe and sound in their bunks, homeward bound, rich with the treasure they had found upon Skeleton Island. Dreaming of home, of St. Jim's, and of the celebration they would have at the old school when they arrived there. And now—

Now the vessel that had been between them and death was filling and sinking.

It was well that, in that terrible moment, captain and crew kept their heads. Lord Conway's orders were given sharply and concisely, and obeyed instantly. The two boats were lowered, and water and provisions conveyed into them. Some of the juniors helped ; some of them were too dazed.

There were twelve fellows in the party from St. Jim's—Tom Merry and Manners, and Lowther, and Kangaroo, of the Shell ; Blake, and Herries, and Digby, and D'Arcy, and Figgins, and Kerr, and Fatty Wynn, of the Fourth ; and Wally D'Arcy, of the Third. They belonged to different Forms and different Houses at St. Jim's, and at school were generally on fighting terms ; but they had enjoyed the holiday together wonderfully well. All the same, they were looking forward to their return to the school, and relating their adventures in the South Seas to interested audiences in the studies and Form-rooms. They could scarcely realise that their homeward voyage was stopped ; perhaps for ever—that they were wrecked in the lonely wastes of the South Seas,



and might never look upon a white man's face again. It was so sudden, and so terrible.

They had come to the South Seas in search of treasure, and they had found it. The great oaken chest, crammed with gold in bars and ingots and coins, was on board, being conveyed home in triumph. Pablo Lopez, the Spaniard, their rival in the quest, had been defeated and put to flight. All had seemed plain sailing now—when the Silver Scud ran upon the sunken reef, and all was changed in the twinkling of an eye.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, groping wildly for his eyeglass, which was hanging on its cord down the back of his neck. "Bai Jove, you know, it's howwible! But keep your heads, deah boys—keep your heads!"

"Keep yours!" growled Blake. "I'm cool enough."

"Weally, Blake——"

"Yes, keep yours, ass, and don't be as excited as a giddy old hen!"

said Monty Lowther. "Keep your head! There's nothing in it, but keep it!"

"Weally, Lowther——"

"Get into the boats!"

"Bai Jove! I shall have to get up my luggage——"

"There is no room for luggage, Arthur," said Lord Conway. "Not even a hat-box. Tumble in."

"But weally——"

Jack Blake and Digby seized the swell of St. Jim's by the arm and hurried him to the side.

"Buck up, you ass!" said Blake.

"There's no time to lose!"

"Pway keep your heads——"

"Oh, rats!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was rushed into a boat, and Blake and Digby followed him. Monty Lowther and Manners jumped in, Manners not having forgotten to sling on his camera.

Manners was getting quite a collection of pictures of the South Seas, on rolls of films to be developed after his return to England. If Manners had been sentenced to execution he would probably have taken his camera with him.

"What about the chest, sir?" Tom Merry asked.

Lord Conway nodded.

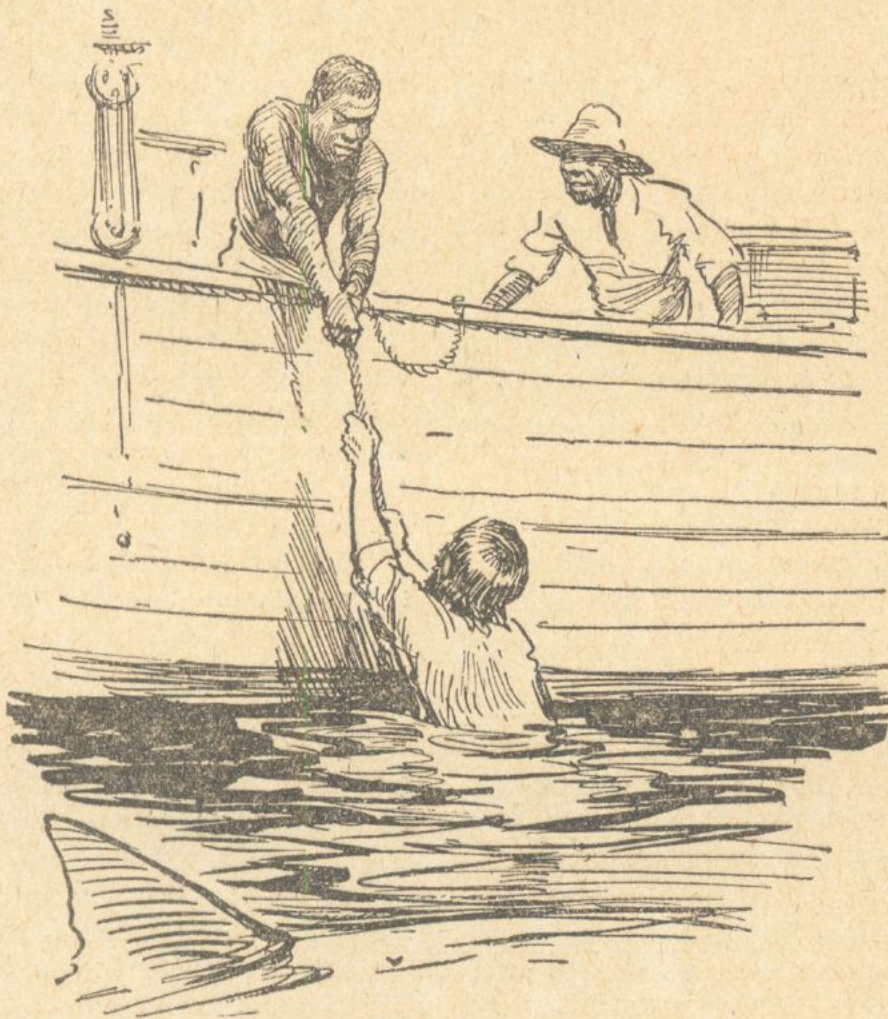
"It is going into the boat, Tom."

Sturdy seamen were already dragging the chest out upon the deck.

It was slung over the side with ropes, and bumped down into the boat. Even in that hour of terrible peril not one of the voyagers thought of abandoning the great treasure for which they had run so many risks.

"Bai Jove, that's all wight!" said D'Arcy. "I dare say we shall be picked up in the morning, and we shall save the twarehouse, you know. But don't lose your heads, deah boys!"

"Oh, shut up!"



There was a wild flounder in the water, and the shark sank under. At the same moment, Lopez grasped the rope and the negro hauled him aboard. (See page 313.)



“Weally, Tom Mewwy——”

The yacht gave a wild lurch. There was a shout from the few men remaining aboard.

“She’s sinking!”

“Look out!”

“Stand by there!”

Men tumbled into the boats. Lord Conway’s voice rang out.

“Pull—pull!”

Oars were put out, and the oarsmen pulled. The boats glided from the lurching, shaking yacht. They were in danger of being drawn down in to the vortex caused by the sinking vessel.

With a last plunge, the Silver Scud disappeared into the waters. Bubbles rose, and broke, and the seas rolled where the yacht had been—and nothing but a few fragments of floating wreckage remained to mark the place.

Upon the wide, wild waters, under the soaring moon, two boats crammed with men and boys floated—alone in the heart of the Pacific.

## THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

### In an Open Boat.

TOM MERRY drew a deep, deep breath.

It seemed like a dream—it was but twenty minutes since the crash of the yacht upon the hidden reef had awakened him in his bunk. He shivered; the night was not warm, and the junior was but half-dressed.

“Bai Jove!” said Arthur Augustus, in a low, awed voice. “Bai Jove! It’s tewwible, you know. But don’t lose your heads.”

Tom Merry looked round him.

The embarkation in the boats had been hasty, and he did not know who was with him, or who was in command. In Tom Merry’s boat, the smaller of the two, was the chest of gold, and most of the juniors of St. Jim’s were there. Tom Merry found Manners and Lowther sitting beside him, and Digby and D’Arcy and Jack Blake were in the boat. Wally, Kerr, and Wynn, the New House fellows, were there. Then there was Peter Raff, the sunburnt sailorman who had given the treasure-chart to Tom Merry in Rylcombe Wood, and first caused this strange adventure in the South Seas. Kangaroo, the sturdy Cornstalk, was there, too, quite cool and collected.

There were no men of the Silver Scud in the boat; the seamen had tumbled into the other, the junior’s boat being pretty full already. Herries was in the other boat, and so were Mr. Dodds and Lord Conway. The moon glided behind a mass of clouds, and a deep shadow fell over the ocean. Lord Conway’s voice hailed the junior.

“Tom Merry!”

“Ay, ay, sir!”

“Keep close to us!”

“Ay, ay, sir!” said Peter Raff, who had seated himself at the tiller. “We’ll keep company, sir, never fear!”

“Burn a light,” said Lord Conway. “I will do the same. We must not risk parting company. It will be daylight soon, and then we will make a new arrangement of the crews of the boats. We had better wait till then.”

“Yes, sir,” said Tom Merry.

The sea was rolling a little. It would not have been safe for the boats to approach too closely in the darkness, for the men to pass from one to another. There seemed little danger of their separating by accident.

“My hat!” said Blake, as the boat rocked on the deep. “My only hat! Who’d have thought this?”

“Bai Jove! I nevah thought of it, you know.”

“It’s risky bizney, sailing in unknown seas,” said Tom Merry. “But we’re lucky to have had time to get into the boats.”

“Yes, rather.”

“It will be an awful blow to Lord Conway, losing the yacht,” said Figgins.

“Yaas, wathah! Poor old Conway!”

“If we save the treasure,” said Tom Merry, “we shall have a new Silver Scud built out of it before it is divided. That’s the least we can do.”

“Good egg!”

“If we save it,” said Kerr, with a rueful grin. “Yes, and if we are saved ourselves. We’re hundreds of miles out of the track of ships—in open boats.”

“Hallo! It’s beginning to blow!” said Blake.

“Yaas, wathah!”

A cold, sharp wind swept over the boat, and the sea was beginning to curl round them.



## THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER

### Alone on the Deep

The juniors looked anxiously at the water. In the yacht they would have scarcely noticed the wind; but in the open boat they were terribly close to the water. The curling waves seemed as if they would leap the gunwale.

"It's all right, young gentlemen," said Peter Raff. "There ain't any danger—it won't be a blow."

"It seems to make the watah wuff, Waff," said Arthur Augustus.

"But the boat's safe enough, sir."

"I twust we shall not get our clothes wetted," said D'Arcy anxiously. "I have only the clothes I am wearin', and I feah that they would shwink, too."

"Go hon!"

"It is watah a sewious matter, deah boys. You see——"

"Ahoy there!"

It was a hail from Lord Conway's boat.

"Ay, ay, sir!" shouted back Peter Raff.

"Keep company if you can! If you should miss us, we are heading due north."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

It was the last word heard from Lord Conway's boat. With the wind came great banks of clouds that hid the moon, and for a time the light of the other boat twinkled above the black waters, but at last it disappeared.

Lord Conway's boat was swallowed up in the darkness.

Peter Raff kept upon the course to the north, but in his heart he knew—though he did not say so to the juniors—that it was not likely that the other boat would be in sight at dawn.

And he was right.

When dawn came up in silver light over the eastern sea, the juniors stood up in the boat and scanned the ocean in all directions. But Lord Conway's boat was not in sight.

East and west and south and north the juniors searched the sea. D'Arcy had slung on his binoculars before entering the boat, and the juniors used them in turn now, to scan the ocean for their friends.

But the other boat was not to be seen.

They were alone upon the ocean.

TOM MERRY & Co. looked at one another in dismay.

They had not expected this, though the old sailor-man could have told them.

Each of the boats was under sail, and, hidden from each other's sight as they had been in the darkness, it was pretty certain they would part company. If they had not had their canvas out, the result would have been the same—the rough wind and the rolling waters would have drifted them apart. The boats had parted company, and there was little hope of their rejoining each other.

With the morning came calmness of wind and wave. There was still breeze enough to fill out the sail, and the boat glided on to the northward. Northward lay the only chance of the shipwrecked. If the boat came into the regular track of steamers before their provisions gave out, or before rough weather overwhelmed them in the sea, they had a chance of rescue. But every hour was precious. Leagues upon leagues of desert ocean lay to be traversed before they had the remotest chance of being picked up. In that lonely sea, perhaps a sealer or a whaler might chance upon them; but it was a very remote chance.

"They're gone, bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, dropping his glasses.

"Gone!"

"They're as safe as we are, young gentlemen," said Peter Raff. "It wasn't likely that the boats would keep company when the wind got up."

"Watah not! But——"

"It may be all for the best," said Kerr. "If the boats are apart, one of them stands a better chance of being picked up; and if one is picked up, search can be made for the other."

"True enough."

"And the water and provisions were pretty equally divided, I believe," said Tom Merry. "We've got all the gold here, but that's less than a loaf of bread would be."

Peter Raff looked at the heavy chest lying in the bottom of the boat.



"It might be better to pitch it into the sea and done with it," he said.

"Bai Jove!"

"Why?" asked Tom Merry.

Peter Raff scanned the sea with his keen eyes before replying.

"Because if we're picked up it may mean death to all of us," he said. "Traders in these waters ain't over particular, and they'd cut our throats for that treasure as soon as look at us. Many of 'em would."

"Bai Jove!"

"There are enough of us to take care of ourselves, and we're not unarmed," said Tom Merry.

"We'll save the treasure as long as we can, at all events."

"Ay, ay, Master Tom!"

The sun was rising higher in the heavens. It gave promise of a blazing day—a day of tropical, shadeless heat.

The prospect was very different from what it would have been on the trim yacht. There the juniors had

spent lazy hours of tropical heat under wide awnings, with iced drinks to help them out. Here they were exposed to the blazing sun, unsheltered, and water was more precious than gold. With the strictest economy, it might not last them till they were picked up.

"We shall have to allowance ourselves with food and water," Tom Merry said.

"Oh, dear!" murmured Fatty Wynn.

The boat glided on under the sail, with a keen wind behind, while the sun climbed

higher and higher into the cloudless blue.

High overhead, at last, it blazed down pitilessly upon the defenceless boat.

The juniors crowded as well as they could in the shadow of the sail, but it afforded them little shelter.

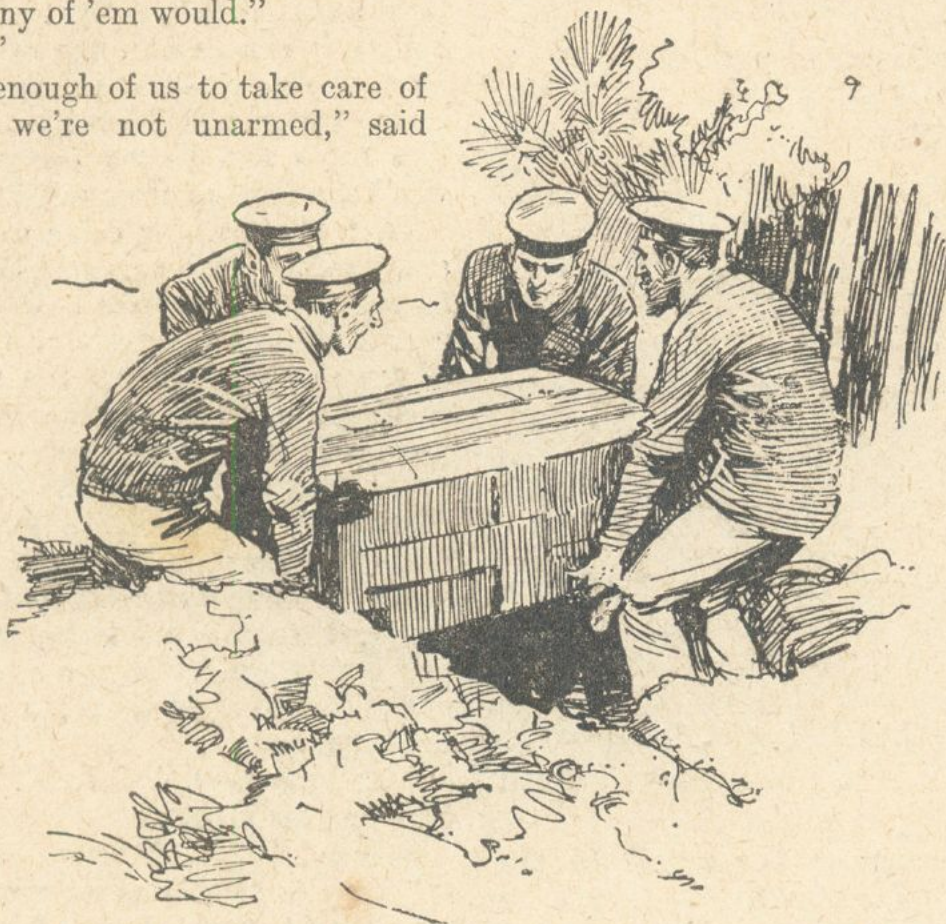
Of all the party in the boat, D'Arcy was the only one who had dressed himself fully before leaving the Silver Scud. The swell of St. Jim's had brought on deck the clothes he could not put on in the cabin, and had finished dressing there. He was complete, even to the diamond pin in his tie.

But the juniors, half dressed as they were, began to discard clothing as the rays of the sun grew more powerful.

D'Arcy was the last to yield. For a long time—till past

noon—the swell of St. Jim's sat tight, in a stiff collar and with his silk hat on. For D'Arcy had not forgotten his silk topper. It being impossible to bring any baggage into the boat, D'Arcy had put a tall hat on as the only possible means of saving one for possible need. He had a cap in his pocket in case of necessity, and his first surrender to the heat was the changing of the silk hat for the cap.

Then, after an interval, he removed his jacket. His waistcoat followed. After an



Four strong seamen stood in the excavation, and with their united efforts the chest was lifted from the depths and dragged out. (See page 314.)



hour or so longer, he took his collar and tie off. His boots followed. By that time he was in a state of *deshabille* pretty nearly as complete as the others.

The tropical heat seemed to sap away the strength of the juniors. They sat or lay about the boat in listless attitudes, longing for sundown.

But the pitiless blaze continued overhead.

The sea showed no sign of life. No sail—no smoke on the horizon. Occasionally a flying-fish, gleaming in the sun, glanced upon their view—or a wide-winged albatross sailed by on giant pinions.

That was all! Round them the ocean heaved—smiling, pitiless. Over them was the arch of the blue sky, blazing with heat.

“Bai Jove!” murmured Arthur Augustus D’Arcy, at last, as he drew his hand from the blistering woodwork of the boat. “Bai Jove, I’m thirsty.”

“So are we all,” said Tom Merry.

“Don’t you think you’re being a little too stwict with the watah, deah boy?”

“There’s only enough for four days at the present rate,” said Merry. “Goodness knows whether we shall see a sail in four days’ time.”

There was a sudden shout from Wally. He was sitting in the bows, watching the shining sea with glassy eyes. He sprang to his feet, waving his cap and yelling. The juniors turned round upon him in alarm, the fear in every mind that the heat and glare had turned his brain. But Wally was sane enough; only wildly excited.

“A sail—a sail!”

“Bai Jove!”

“A sail!” yelled Wally. “Look! A sail! We’re saved!”

And a shout burst from all the juniors—a shout of joy and relief! “Hurrah!”

“Hip, hip, hurrah!”

## THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

### The Felucca.

**W**HITE against the blue of sea and sky, the strange sail glanced and glimmered. It was standing westward, clear across the course of the gliding boat. Only the glimmer of a great sheet of canvas could be seen, and

the juniors could not yet make out the form of the vessel. But it was a sail—a sail—there were men there, sailormen—who would help sailors in distress. If they could attract the attention of the vessel. They were saved!

The thought was almost enough to turn them giddy.

The vessel was far, far away—a glancing patch of white on the blue. But she was drawing towards the course of the boat, and by changing their course a little to the west, the castaways might hope to intercept her; or at least get near enough to be seen and heard. Peter Raff trimmed the sail, and as the boat glided on, the strange vessel rose more and more clearly into view.

“What vessel can it be, I wonder?” Tom Merry said. “Not a sealer or a whaler, Peter?”

Peter Raff shook his head.

“No, Master Tom. It’s not the build. It’s some small trader, I should say—perhaps a blackbirder.”

“Bai Jove! A what?” asked D’Arcy.

“Blackbirder,” said Peter Raff. “A vessel employed to kidnap natives off the islands. That trade ain’t extinct yet, whatever they may say about it. I’ve seen——” The sailorman paused, and changed the subject. “If it’s a blackbirder, they’ll pick us up; I make no doubt; but they’ll murder us for that chest.”

Tom Merry glanced thoughtfully at the treasure-chest.

“If it’s a suspicious vessel, when we get nearer we’ll pitch the chest overboard,” he said. “It would be madness to take it with us among a crew of lawless ruffians.”

“Ay, ay, sir!”

“Whatever that vessel is, we can’t lose this chance of being picked up. If they’re white men, they must be humane enough to take us in, and we can pay them afterwards.”

“Ay, ay!”

The boat glided on. Larger and larger the strange vessel rose over the waters till the juniors could make out great lateen sails.

Peter Raff gave a groan.

“It’s all over.”

“What do you mean, Peter?”



"That's a felucca."

"Bai Jove!"

"It's Pablo Lopez's vessel."

"Oh!"

The juniors gazed with fixed, startled eyes at the sail.

Tom Merry wondered he had not thought of it before. Pablo Lopez, the dwarf Spaniard, whom they had defeated on the Treasure Island in the fight for the buried gold, had come there in a felucca from Valparaiso, and had fled in that vessel after his defeat. It was not likely that there was another vessel of the same rig in this lonely waste of waters.

If the felucca was the Spaniard's craft, anything was better than falling in with it. With or without the chest of gold in the boat, they had only savage ferocity to expect from the Spaniard.

Peter Raff stepped towards the sheet.

"Better change the course, Master Tom," he said.

"Hold on!"

"Lopez will murder every soul in the boat, if he discovers us," said Peter Raff.

"We'd have no chance agin him."

"He had only four blacks in the felucca, when he was at the island," said Tom Merry.

"We are enough to protect ourselves."

"The felucca will run the boat down."

"Bai Jove!"

"But it mayn't be Lopez's felucca," said Blake. "There may be another sail in these waters. Even if the felucca isn't a common rig in these seas, there may be more than one of them."

Peter Raff shook his head.

"I vote we make sure," said Figgins.

"Ay, ay, sir; have your way then!"

The boat kept on its course.

The felucca was now quite clearly in view, and she had not altered her course, though the boat must have been visible from her deck. If she had wished to pick up the castaways, a shift of the great lateen sails would have brought her swooping down towards the boat. But she did not alter her course, and unless she did so, it was plain that she would sweep on to the westward before the boat could reach her.

"My hat!" said Figgins. "They're not going to try to pick us up."

"Bai Jove! The wascals!"

Tom Merry put the binoculars to his eyes.

As he brought the glasses into line, the distant vessel rushed, as it were, into clear and close view, and it almost seemed as if he could tread upon her deck.

He could make out the deck, dirty and uncared for, the dull, rusting plant, and the black faces of her crew. On the deck, looking towards the boat, was a white man—a man with a massive head and a black beard—a man Tom Merry knew.

It was Pablo Lopez.

He was looking towards the boat, but he had no glasses. Perhaps he had none on the felucca; or perhaps he did not care to take the trouble of examining the castaway. His glance towards the boat was indifferent and careless, and he turned away carelessly, and rolled a cigarette.

Tom Merry lowered the glasses.

The felucca fell into the distance again, and the Spaniard became a blur against the sail.

"It's Lopez!" said Tom Merry.

"Sure?"

"Look yourself!"

"Bai Jove! It's Lopez wight enough."

"And he's not going to pick us up," said Figgins. "He can't make out who we are, without glasses—and he doesn't care. He knows there's an open boat here, with people in it; and he's going straight on his way."

"The villain!"

"The awful scoundrel!"

Villain the Spaniard undoubtedly was, but there was no doubt of his intention. The felucca did not alter her course an iota.

There were shipwrecked sailormen in the boat, and the Spaniard was passing on, callously leaving them to their doom.

And the irony of it was, that in the boat were the party he was seeking; in the boat was the chest of gold for which he had come to the South Seas.

Had he felt a single impulse of humanity, had he run down to the boat to rescue the shipwrecked, he would have found in it what he had long sought.



But no thought of humanity crossed his mind.

The felucca raced on.

And the juniors made no further effort to reach her. They had only the bitterest enmity to expect from the Spaniard; and if they reached the felucca, it would only be a case of passing from the frying-pan into the fire.

Peter Raff, at the sight of Tom Merry, changed the course of the boat. It was better to steer clear of the felucca now.

The grey lateen sails still loomed up white against the blue, but they faded more and more into the sea till they disappeared at last.

Once more the boat rocked alone upon the waste of the Pacific.

Hope had animated the juniors for a time; but hope destroyed left sickness and despair in their hearts.

They fought against the despondency, but it would not be shaken off, and the boys sat about in the boat in deep dejection.

The only sail they had seen through that endless day was a foe—and would they see another?

The sun sank down at last, sinking red and flaming into a sea of gold. Darkness came on with the suddenness of the tropics.

“The sun’s rim dips, the stars rush out; at one stride comes the dark,” as the poet sings. Darkness rolled over the face of the ocean—Welcome to the juniors.

For if it lessened the chance of the boat being seen and picked up, it saved them, at least, from the pitiless blaze of the sun.

With the night came shade and coolness.

But there was little sleep for the castaways. Their anxiety was too keen; and hunger and thirst were gnawing them.

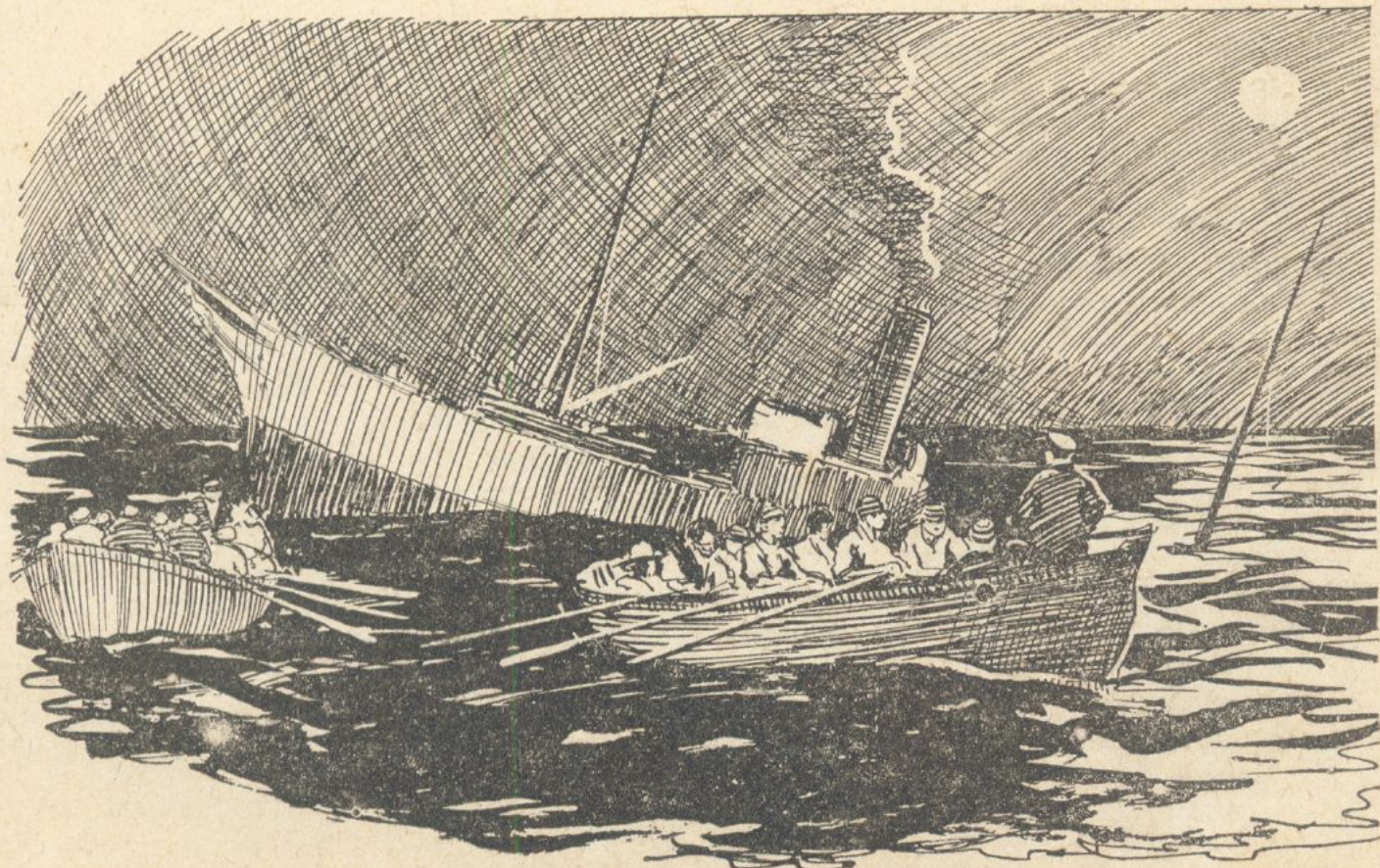
How was this to end?

## THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Last Hope.

THE next day passed like a nightmare, to be followed by another weary, sleepless night.

The sun rose again upon the boundless



“Look out! She’s sinking!” Lord Conway’s voice rang out. “Pull, men—pull!” As the boats glided away, the Silver Scud, with a last plunge, disappeared into the waters! (See page 318.)



Pacific, but with it came no gleam of hope to the castaways.

It was the third day on the waste of waters, and supplies were running very low indeed. Two or three of the boys lay in a state that was almost comatose, and Digby had begun to wander a little.

Tom Merry scanned the sea.

The boat was not moving; there was no cloud in the sky of burning blue—no cloud, no wind, no promise of rain.

Burning blue, and burning sun, that burnt into the very eyeballs and scorched them, and made the castaways dizzy and sick.

High soared the sun over the rolling sea, and over the floating boat with its suffering crew.

The treasure-chest lay unheeded, unnoticed. How gladly the boys would have given that mass of gold for a deep drink of pure water.

Gold!

What was the gold to them now? It was a mockery. Water—water—water was the crying need. And there was water, water all around, and not a drop to drink.

“Water, water, all around,  
And all the boards did shrink;  
Water, water, everywhere,  
Not any drop to drink!”

The words came strangely into Tom Merry's dizzy mind. He had read of such things—read with breathless interest. He had never dreamed of suffering them himself. Yet it is the daily risk of those that go down to the sea in ships. One frail keel is all that stands between them and doom.

Weary eyes scanned the water. Would the smoke of a steamer ever come into sight? It seemed not.

The burning day passed, and another night descended—a night of suffering and of unrefreshing slumber.

Then another day.

It was the fourth day, and the rations were near their end. At mid-day Tom Merry served out the last precious drops of water. Food there was, on short commons, for some time longer, but the water was at an end. It was useless to parch and save the last drops;

they drank them, and lay down in the boat, weary to death.

Burning sky and gleaming sea! Their dizzy eyes turned from the scene.

Digby started to his feet in the blazing afternoon. He made for the gunwhale, and Tom Merry caught him in time.

“Dig! Dig, old man,” said Tom huskily. “Sit down!”

Digby struggled in his grasp. The junior's face was white and strained, and there was a wild light in his eyes.

“Let me go!” he cried hoarsely.

“What are you going to do!”

Digby laughed wildly.

“Drink!” he said.

“Dig!”

“I must drink—I'm dying with thirst! Let me go!”

“Dig, old man, chuck it!” said Arthur Augustus feebly. “Chuck it, old fellow! You can't drink salt water!”

“I must drink.”

The boy was not himself. He struggled to plunge his head over the gunwhale, into the water that surged temptingly by.

Tom Merry dragged him back.

It was death to drink, he knew that, though Dig had forgotten it. He dragged the junior back to his seat.

“Hang you!” yelled Digby. “Let me go, I say!”

“You can't drink, Dig.”

“I will—I will!”

“It's salt water, old man—you've forgotten!”

“I don't care—let me go!”

He made an effort to tear himself away. Blake came to Tom Merry's aid, and the feverish junior was held down on the thwart.

Then the fit passed, and Dig sank into their arms, white and sick, and fainting. They laid him in the bottom of the boat.

Tom Merry and Blake exchanged hopeless glances.

“How long is this going to last?” muttered Blake.

“Heaven knows!”

Blake groaned.

“The sooner it's ended the better, I think.”

“I—I say, I'm sorry I brought you here,”



said Tom, in a strained voice. "It's all my fault; but for me, you might all be safe and sound at St. Jim's. It's all my fault."

And he groaned aloud.

"Rats!" said Blake. "We came of our own accord, didn't we? Rot!"

"Yaas, wathah, wot!" said D'Arcy faintly. "You are talkin' dweadful wubbish, Tom Mewwy."

Tom Merry sat on a thwart and covered his face with his hands.

His self-reproach was deep. He was not to blame; but it seemed to him at that moment that he had brought doom to his friends—his chums whom he would have given his life to save.

Was there no help?

Peter Raff was standing up in the boat, shading his eyes with his hand, straining his glance to the blazing west.

What was he looking at?

Many and many a time, to the dizzy eyes of the juniors, a white sail had seemed to glance into sight, only to fade into the blue.

Tom Merry looked up, and as he saw Peter Raff's attitude, he staggered towards the sailorman.

He grasped him by the shoulder, but Peter Raff did not turn his head. His eyes were fixed upon the west.

"What is it?" asked Tom Merry.

The sailorman did not reply. His glance was fixed and wild. Tom Merry looked into the west; but he could see nothing but the glowing sunset, red as a furnace.

"Peter! What is it?" he cried hoarsely. "Not a sail?"

The sailorman shook his head.

"What is it, then?"

"A cloud!" muttered Peter Raff.

"A cloud—does that mean wind?"

"Perhaps."

"What else?"

"Rain!"

"Oh, heaven!"

The word electrified the juniors.

Rain!

No greater boon could have befallen them save rescue. Rain! The words thrilled through their hearts like new-born hope.

They watched the west. Truly enough, a

dark cloud was rising from the horizon, and blotting out the coppery sun.

For the first time, as it seemed for ages, there was a stir on the face of the waters.

A ripple ran past the boat; the canvas moved and shook on the mast. The boat rocked and surged through the water.

The wind was upon them. But it was not a refreshing wind. It was a wind laden with burning heat, that fanned and scorched their faces like the breath of a furnace.

They gasped for breath. The cloud was larger and larger now, blacker and blacker, and a deep, dense shadow had overspread the burning sky. The hot wind dropped, and a cold blast succeeded it—a cold blast that was inexpressibly relieving to the scorched and blistered faces of the castaways.

And—what was that?

A cool, refreshing drop fell upon Tom Merry's upturned face, and he cried aloud in joy:

"Rain!"

## THE TWENTY-THIRD CHAPTER.

### Cast Ashore.

**R**AIN!  
Rain, at first in large drops and then in sheets.

Rain!

Rain drenching down upon the sea, drenching the juniors, drenching the boat, flooding them and soaking them, to their almost delirious delight.

They opened their mouths to it—they drank it from their caps, from their pannikins, they lay down in the boat and drank it as it swamped about them. It seemed as if their terrible thirst would never be satisfied.

But satisfied it was at last.

The rain was coming down in blinding sheets, and the wind was tearing at the boat. Round them the sea rolled and spun.

The storm was rising! In their delight at the rain, the juniors did not notice or care for the new danger. But as their thirst was slaked, they saw it only too clearly. The rain was flooding the boat, and the juniors set to work to bale it out.

They filled the kegs with the rain for future use. That was Tom Merry's first thought. Then they baled out the boat.



Harder and fiercer the rain drenched down. The juniors were soaked to the skin, wet and drenched, but they enjoyed it. After the long baking under the tropical sun, it was the greatest pleasure they could have had.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "This is wippin'! But if it goes on like this we shall be swamped, you know."

"Bale away!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

They baled away heroically.

It was several hours before the rain slackened, and the juniors were hard at work all the time.

But the down-pour slackened off at last. The boat was flooded, but as soon as it was safe, they ceased to bale. The wind was rising all the time, and the boat, without the sail, was plunging swiftly through the water.

"Stand clear!" Tom Merry shouted suddenly.

"Bai Jove! Look out!"

The mast was whipped out of the boat like a stick, and tossed away upon the waves. With the torn canvas dragging upon it, it raced on the waves for a few moments like a wounded bird, then vanished.

The boat rushed on.

Round the little craft now the waters were roaring. It seemed marvellous that the boat was not engulfed every moment. Yet it lived amid the roaring seas.

Peter Raff was steady at the tiller. The juniors began to bale out again as the water swamped over the gunwale. It was no longer rain, but salt water, that flooded the boat.

With weary and aching limbs they worked baling and ever baling.

Darkness as black as pitch was on the waters. It was night now—deep, dark night, unrelieved by a single star.

Where were they? Whither were they rushing? They did not know—and they had no time to think. They needed all their energies to escape instant destruction in the midst of the boiling seas.

Suddenly, from the black darkness, there came a glimpse of a sheet of curling white foam, and Tom Merry shouted:

"Rocks ahead!"

The boat rushed on.

It was land—land of some sort—perhaps a solitary isle of coral rock in the heart of the Pacific. They did not know—they had no time to think—they could make no effort to save themselves. They could only rush on blindly in the boat, and trust to Providence.

In the darkness, the foam of the breakers glimmered

to right and left. As if by a miracle the boat glided between the reefs.

A black mass glimmered for a moment in the darkness ahead—whether a rock, or a mass of trees, or a mountain, they did not know. The boat was rushing on, and they knew that it was rushing upon a shore.

"Look out!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good-bye, you fellows! Save yourselves!"

Crash!

Crash!



Tom Merry could see three or four fellows struggling in the water, and he rushed to their assistance. (See page 327.)



In a terrific shock, the juniors were thrown off their feet. But the boat had not struck upon hard rocks as they had feared. It was in deep, soft sand that the bows had crashed, and for a moment the little craft was held there, with the waters bubbling and boiling round it.

From the sea came a great wave, smashing upon the boat, and sweeping the juniors landward as it rolled on.

Tom Merry felt himself caught up and dashed from the boat; he felt shifting sand under his feet, and he clawed it wildly, and he was thrown down at last, and the wave, its force expended, receded to the sea, and sucked at him, but he dug his feet and hands in the sand, and held his own.

The water swept back, and Tom Merry staggered to his feet. He was breathless, dizzy, exhausted; but his thoughts were for his friends.

His eyes were used to the darkness now, and he could see. The boat was still jammed in the yielding sand, and the successive crashing billows seemed to drive her more firmly there.

He could see three or four fellows struggling in the water, and he dashed to their assistance. He dragged D'Arcy ashore, and then Digby, and then Blake. Kangaroo was already on the land, and he had Wally in his grasp.

"Come and help!"

Another and another of the juniors was dragged out. Manners was still clinging to the boat, and Peter Raff and Tom Merry plunged in together and brought him off. The thundering waves chased them up the beach, and they sank down exhausted.

"How many are here?" gasped Tom Merry, striving to rise, and sinking down again with the effort.

"All, I believe," said Kangaroo.

"Call over the names."

Kangaroo called the names over. To his name each junior answered "adsum," as if it were calling-over at St. Jim's.

All answered. Last of all came Peter Raff's deep: "Ay, ay!"

Tom Merry uttered an exclamation of relief.

"We're all here! Thank Heaven!"

"But where are we?" said Blake.

"Goodness knows."

"The boat's done for."

"Never mind the boat."

"And the gold?" said Blake. "The treasure chest?"

"Never mind the treasure."

And the juniors agreed with Tom Merry. They were alive, at all events, and on firm land; and the treasure was a light price to pay for their safety!

## THE TWENTY-FOURTH CHAPTER

### Cast Away

TOM MERRY & Co. lay on the wet sand, exhausted—too exhausted to move. The heavy waves were beating upon the boat, beating it to pieces, but they had no strength left to attempt to save it. They could only lie and gasp on the wet sand just out of reach of the breakers.

For long hours they lay, hardly speaking, till the light of dawn flushed in the sky, and with the dawn the wind fell. The sea was still rolling heavily, the waves bursting upon the beach with a sullen roaring, and churning up the sand.

Tom Merry sat up at last.

He was wet and cold, and the earliest ray of the sun was welcome.

"My hat," he ejaculated, "it's rising-bell, you fellows!"

And there was a feeble laugh. This was very different from a morning's awakening at St. Jim's, when Taggles rang the rising-bell. One after another the juniors staggered up.

"Bai Jove," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, groping among his wet clothes for his eye-glass—"bai Jove, I wegard that as a wotter expewience!"

"Better than floating on in the open boat," said Tom Merry. "We had about reached the end of our tether. This is dry land, at all events—and there must be water here, and some grub of some sort."

"Plenty of water, at all events," said Blake, shaking the heavy drops out of his clothes.

"I mean fresh water. And there will be cocoanuts, I suppose, so we shan't starve. Pictures of coral islands always have coconut-trees."



“And savages.”

“H'm!”

“Bai Jove, it wouldn't be very wippin' to wun into a gang of cannibals, deah boys!”

“We shall have to keep our eyes open, that's all,” said Figgins, “and the first thing we'd better do is to get hold of some sort of weapons. The cartridges are in a tin case in the boat's locker, and we may be able to save it.”

“Yaas, wathah!”

The sun rose higher, and the warm, bright beams were very welcome to the shivering juniors. As the light strengthened, they looked about them. They were standing upon the sandy shore of a wide bay open to the Pacific. At the mouth of the bay, long lines of foam showed where the sea was breaking on sunken reefs.

Behind the juniors was a gentle slope, crowned with thick, dark woods. A stream ran into the bay within a hundred yards of them.

Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened as he looked towards the trees.

“Cocoanuts,” he said.

“Yaas, wathah—heaps of them, too!”

“I'm awfully hungry.”

“Wait a bit, Fatty,” said Tom Merry.

“You remember the trouble you got into on the Treasure Island through going after cocoanuts. Wait a bit till we've got hold of the fire-arms, and we'll go in a party.”

“I'm fearfully hungry.”

“Pull in your belt, and grin and bear it,” said Kerr.

“I'm famished, you see.”

“Well, famish quietly,” said Blake.

Fatty Wynn grunted, but Figgins linked arms with him, and did not allow him to start for the woods. The cocoanuts in their graceful clusters looked tempting enough, but the juniors knew perfectly well that tattooed savages might be lurking in the groves, with war-clubs and bows and arrows ready for mischief.

They were evidently upon an island, and it was certainly of some extent; and, therefore, it was not likely to be uninhabited.

The boat had been smashed to fragments by the pounding of the waves, and most of the

pieces had been driven up high upon the beach, and lay half-embedded in the sand. The canister of cartridges was discovered unbroken, and the juniors seized upon it gladly.

There was only one rifle in the boat, and several revolvers, and all of them were saved. They required careful cleaning before they would be of any use, and to that task the juniors addressed themselves first.

Fatty Wynn was chafing with impatience. He was, as he said, fearfully hungry, and the cocoanuts were growing in sight. The danger of savages under the trees appeared to Fatty Wynn quite mythical, under the circumstances. But Figgins kept a tight hold upon the fat Fourth-Former's arm.

“Look here, I'll just cut across and get a couple of them, one for you and one for me, Figgy,” said Fatty Wynn persuasively.

Figgins chuckled.

“You just won't do anything of the sort,” he replied. “You'll just stick here with me till we're all ready, Fatty.”

“Look here, Figgy——”

“Oh, rats!”

“Yaas, wathah, wats!” said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, looking severely at the fat Fourth-Former. “Wats, deah boy! Pway keep your feahful appetite under contwol, or you will make me feel quite nervous. When you were in the boat, you looked at me once or twice in a way that thwew me into quite a fluttah.”

“You ass!” said Fatty Wynn wrathfully.

“I wefuse to be called an ass! Besides, I think we ought to make ourselves as wespectable as possible before leavin' this spot in case we meet any of the inhabitants. There may possibly be white people here, and, anyway, even niggahs are entitled to some wespect. I twust you fellows will put up as decent an appeawance as possible.”

The fellows laughed.

Their clothes, soaked with sea-water, and drying in the blaze of the sun, shrunken and stained and shapeless, did not look very respectable. They were ragged and unkempt and untidy all over; but that was really the least of their troubles.

But D'Arcy was always D'Arcy!

While the other fellows were rescuing the fragments of the wreck, and cleaning the fire-



arms, D'Arcy was rescuing what remained of his silk hat, and cleaning himself. The silk topper had come ashore with the other things, and was lying on the sand, woefully battered, soaked, apparently ruined.

But there is a great deal of life in a silk hat; they have been known to survive the roughest handling, and come up smiling, as it were, after care has been taken with them. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy dried his hat, and smoothed it, and pushed out the concavities in it, and generally tended it as if it were a favourite and very delicate infant, and it was amazing to see what an improvement he made in it.

It bore little resemblance, it is true, to the glossy topper that the swell of St. Jim's was in the habit of wearing in the old quad. But it was a silk topper, of not unrespectable appearance, and it afforded the elegant junior much satisfaction.

With the topper on his head, and his eyeglass in his eye, D'Arcy felt that he was prepared to face fortune. D'Arcy's clothes were in a most unhappy state. But wringing out, and drying and pinning up made them look much better, and the swell of St. Jim's was soon certainly the most respectable-looking of the party.

From a leather case which he carried upon his person, and which was waterproof, he produced a clean collar and tie, and donned them with lively satisfaction.

Monty Lowther looked at him with great admiration, shading his eyes with his hand, as if the sight were almost too glorious for him.

"I must say that's ripping, Gussy," he said. "I'm sure that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like that."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

"Weally, Lowther, you ass——"

"Only I really think it's a bit dangerous," said Lowther. "I don't think Gussy ought to add to our dangers in this way."

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the humorist of the Shell.

"I fail to see my dwessin' wespectably can add to our dangah, Lowthah," he said.

"I was thinking of the cannibal girls," Lowther explained blandly. "If they see

you, they certainly won't be willing to let you leave the island. We can't go without you, and so——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass!"

"I say, I'm fearfully hungry," said Fatty Wynn. "Ain't it time we made a start for the cocoanuts?"

"Yes, come on," said Kangaroo. "I must say I've got a healthy appetite, too. I could almost eat Gussy, he looks so nice."

"Weally, Kangawoo——"

Tom Merry loaded the rifle, and slung it on his arm with the muzzle up.

"Ready," he said. "Keep your eyes open for natives."

D'Arcy looked round through his eyeglass.

"Bai Jove, you surely don't expect to find any here, Tom Mewwy?"

"I think it's very likely."

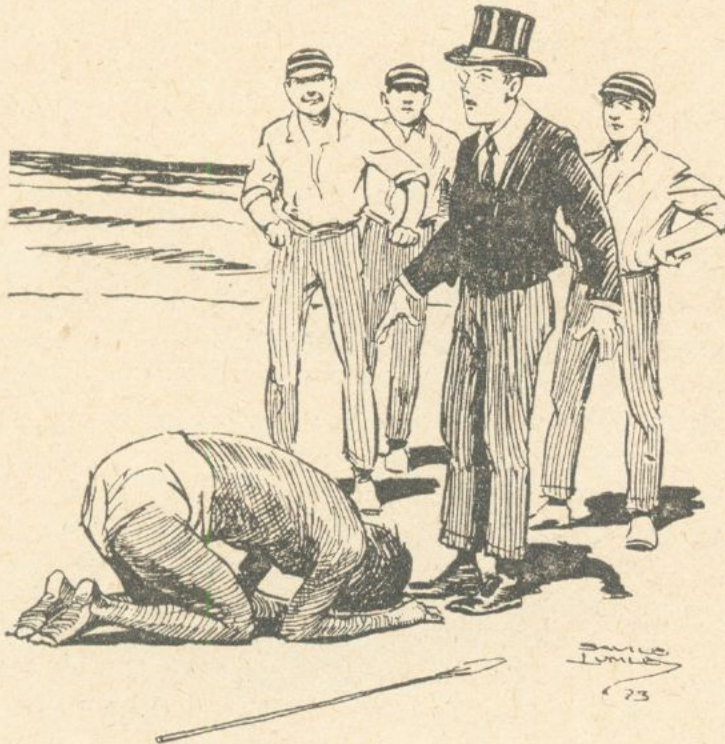
"Where, deah boy? If we could find any, they would be much niah to eat than cocoanuts."

The juniors stared at him.

"Well, you blessed cannibal!" exclaimed Manners.

"Weally, Manners——"

"You giddy anthropophagist!" said Wally.



D'Arcy started back in amazement as the black man crawled before him. "Bai Jove!" exclaimed Gussy. "Is he off his sillay wockah?" (See page 331.)



"You ass! I am weally vewy fond of natives, and I fail to see any harm whatever in eatin' oystahs, so long as you're sure they're all wight!"

"Oysters, you ass!" roared Tom Merry. "The natives I was referring to are niggers, not oysters, you champion chump—niggers with war clubs!"

"Oh, I see!"

"Come on," said Fatty Wynn. "We'r wasting time while Gussy's jawing. It's no good waiting for him to leave off."

"Weally, Wynn——"

But Fatty was starting, and the rest followed. Five minutes later they were among the cocoanuts.

## THE TWENTY-FIFTH CHAPTER

### Arthur Augustus' New Role

FATTY WYNN paused under a cocoanut-tree, and looked up. Fatty Wynn's girth had been reduced a little during the days in the open boat, and his belt was drawn tighter than of yore. But the palm-tree's trunk was difficult to negotiate, and Fatty Wynn felt that he was not the fellow for the task. He turned a persuasive smile upon the other fellows.

"I suppose you're going to climb up, Gussy," he said.

D'Arcy shook his head.

"I'm sowwy I can't oblige you, Wynn, deah boy. But my twousahs are alweady in a wuinous state, and I'm afwaid I can't wisk makin' them worse."

"Figgy, old man——"

"Oh, I'll look on!" said Figgins cheerfully.

"I'll watch anybody climb, with pleasure."

"Wally——"

"Rats!" said the hero of the Third.

Fatty Wynn snorted.

"Look here, I suppose we're going to have some of those blessed cocoanuts!" he exclaimed. "They've got to be got down."

"What price chucking up stones?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Good. Run down to the beach and fetch some stones."

"Rats! You fetch the stones, and I'll chuck them."

"H'm! Perhaps we could bring them

down with the rife?" Fatty Wynn suggested. Tom Merry laughed.

"As a matter of fact, there must be a good many blown down in the wind last night," he said. "Suppose we look for them."

"By George, yes!"

Fatty Wynn hunted for fallen nuts. There were dozens of them further on, and the fat Fourth Former picked up one and cracked it against a tree. The inside was beautifully white and creamy. Fatty Wynn started upon it.

There was a sound as of an army of rats gnawing at a beam. Fatty Wynn's jaws were going as if by machinery.

"Is it nice, Fatty?"

Gna-w-w-w-w-w!

"Do you like it?"

Gna-a-a-w-w-w!

Fatty Wynn was too busy to speak.

"Bai Jove! I think I'll twy one!"

D'Arcy picked up a fat cocoanut. He regarded it doubtfully, and jammed his monocle into his eye, and regarded it again.

"You have to crack it in your teeth, you know," said Monty Lowther.

D'Arcy took no notice of the suggestion. He cracked the nut by slamming it against a tree-trunk, and gave a little yelp as the juice spurted out up his sleeve.

"Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows, there's nothin' whatevah to gwin at. I can see that if I stay here long, I shall uttably wuin what is left of my clothes."

D'Arcy looked into the cracked nut. The interior was black as the ace of spades. He regarded it very dubiously.

"Is that nut quite wight, Lowthah?" he asked.

Lowther shook his head.

"No; it's black," he said.

"You uttah ass!"

"It's all right," Kangaroo cheerfully.

"Black cocoanuts are a special variety, with a flavour of their own. Try it."

"Oh, vewy well!"

D'Arcy took a bite at the cocoanut, and then he started sputtering and spluttering and gasping. The black cocoanut certainly had a



flavour of its own—and not a pleasant one.

“Ow! Oh! Gwoo! Ywooh!”

“Ha, ha, ha!” roared Kangaroo.

“Bai Jove! Ow! It’s wotten!”

“Well, you ass,” said Tom Merry, “did you expect it to be good, when it’s that colour? Ha, ha, ha!”

“Kangawoo said——”

“I said it had a flavour of its own,” said the Cornstalk. “Hasn’t it?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I wegard you as an ass!”

“Try this one!” said Kerr, passing the swell of St. Jim’s another nut.

And D’Arcy tried it, and found that it was good; and he was soon gnawing away as busily as Fatty Wynn.

The cocoanuts were good and plentiful. They made a very good meal; and the juniors were hungry enough to eat anything.

In their eager meal they had forgotten all about the possible danger of natives. They cracked nuts after nuts and devoured them.

Suddenly there was a rustle in the underwoods, and Tom Merry dropped his cocoanut and grasped the rifle. Peter Raff caught a revolver from his belt. A black face looked out of the bushes at the juniors, a startled but not hostile face.

Tom Merry levelled his rifle.

“Don’t shoot, sir!” said Peter Raff hurriedly. “Don’t begin it, sir!”

Tom Merry smiled.

“I don’t mean to begin it,” he said; “but one can’t be too careful!”

He made a sign to the black to come out.

A little man, with a blackish-brown skin, came out of the bushes. He was clad in a loin-cloth, and his skin was dark and shining, and tattooed over in strange devices.

He glanced at the juniors in wonder, and did not seem at all alarmed at the levelled rifle. It was pretty clear that he had never seen a firearm before.

The juniors left off eating cocoanuts, and looked at the savage. A savage he certainly was; but he did not look unfriendly. The sight of him quite banished their vague thoughts of raging, ferocious cannibals.

Tom Merry lowered the rifle.

“Bai Jove!” said Arthur Augustus, jam-

ming his monocle a little tighter, and surveying the stranger. “Who may you be, deah boy?”

The savage was looking steadily at D’Arcy. He seemed to take no notice of the other fellows. Suddenly he advanced towards the swell of St. Jim’s. He dropped his spear to the ground, and fell upon his knees before the elegant junior, touching the earth with his forehead.

D’Arcy started back in amazement.

“Gweat Scott! Is he off his silly wockah?”

“My hat!”

“What is he up to?”

The native remained in the same attitude of veneration, tapping the ground with his nose and forehead. The juniors looked on in amazement. Monty Lowther burst into a sudden roar:

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Shut up, Lowther!”

“Ha, ha, ha!” shrieked Lowther. “It’s the topper that’s done it, and the monocle. The chap takes Gussy for a king, at least—perhaps a god. Ha, ha, ha!”

The juniors yelled at the idea.

D’Arcy turned very red.

“You uttah ass, Lowthah! I suppose he wecognises my supewiowity, but that only shows that he’s an intelligent chap.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

The savage rose to his feet, trembling.

As a matter of fact, it occurred to D’Arcy that the spontaneous worship of the innocent savage was something of a compliment to him. The black fellow evidently recognised him as something superior to the common ruck, and D’Arcy was not at all inclined to attribute it solely to the eyeglass and the top hat. The swell of St. Jim’s bestowed a gracious smile upon his worshipper.

The smile encouraged the stranger. He came nearer to D’Arcy, and passed a large black hand over him.

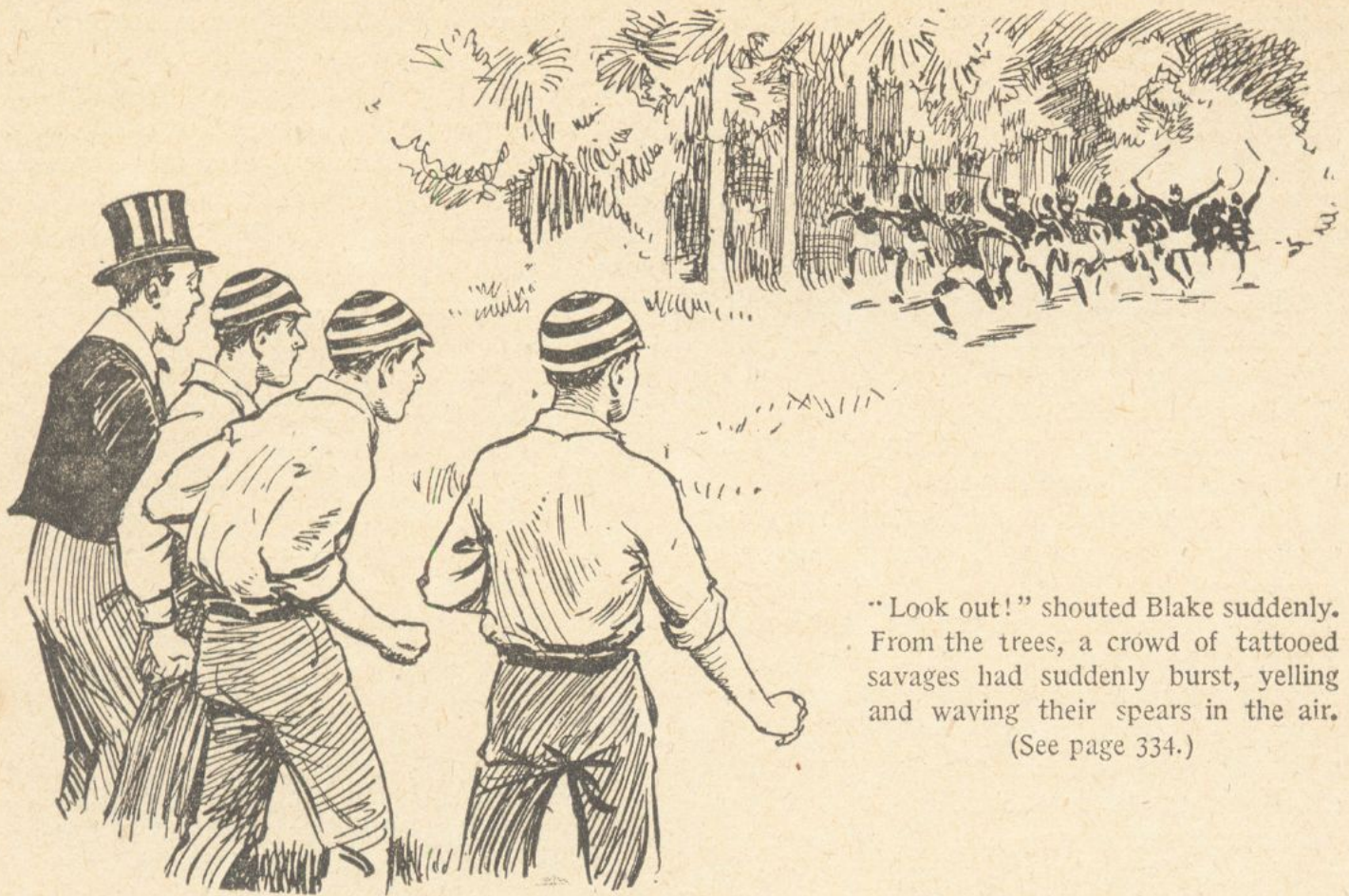
“Bai Jove!” murmured D’Arcy. “What on earth is he gettin’ at?”

“Mind he doesn’t pick your pockets,” said Wally.

“Weally, Wally——”

“He’s trying to make out if it’s real!” said Monty Lowther. “Gussy looks as if





“Look out!” shouted Blake suddenly. From the trees, a crowd of tattooed savages had suddenly burst, yelling and waving their spears in the air. (See page 334.)

he’s just got off a Christmas card, you know, and——”

“Weally, Lowthah—— Bai Jove! Mind my hat, deah boy!”

The savage was feeling over the top hat. The nap of that hat had suffered considerably from wear and tear in the last few days, and D’Arcy was very nervous about it. But he did not like to offend the stranger by stopping him.

The islander felt the hat all over. Top hats were evidently as strange to him as firearms were. Suddenly the hat toppled off under his pressure, and he started back in alarm. He uttered a loud cry, and prostrated himself upon the earth.

“Bai Jove!”

“Ha, ha, ha!” yelled Lowther, almost in hysterics. “He didn’t know it came off. He thought it was part of the idol.”

The juniors shrieked.

Arthur Augustus, with a very red face, replaced the silk hat. It was some minutes before the savage ventured to raise his face from the earth. When he saw the silk topper

in its place again he calmed down, and rose to his feet and continued his investigations.

He felt over the eyeglass that was jammed in D’Arcy’s eye. D’Arcy involuntarily let it drop to the end of its cord, and again the savage jumped away in alarm.

“He thinks you take to pieces now like a mechanical toy!” grinned Lowther.

“You uttah ass!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

D’Arcy replaced his eyeglass. He was beginning to get a little “fed up” with the investigations of the islander.

But the stranger had apparently finished now. He began to make signs with his hands, pointing to the interior of the island, and indicating that the juniors should follow him.

“He wants us to go to his village,” said Manners. “I think we might as well. I should like to get some photographs of a cannibal village.”

Tom Merry looked very dubious.

“I don’t know about risking it,” he said. “This chap is very friendly, but his friends



mayn't take the same view, and if we get among the crowd of them, there might be ructions. We don't want trouble."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We can't speak his blessed lingo, or we could tell him that if he wants to worship our idol, he'll have to come with us," said Wally.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky young wascal——"

The savage was growing excited in his gesticulations. But Tom Merry shook his head, and pointed back towards the beach. It would have been the height of imprudence to risk themselves in the interior of the island, on the faith of a savage.

"We can't come, deah boy, but we shall be pleased to see you if you call again," said Arthur Augustus.

The savage knelt and touched the ground with his forehead. Then, with many backward glances at the juniors, he disappeared among the trees.

## THE TWENTY-SIXTH CHAPTER.

### A Sudden Attack.

"**B**AI Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, when the islander had disappeared. "I wegard that as a most wemarkable expewience."

"Yes," said Tom Merry, laughing.

The juniors gathered up armfuls of the cocoanuts, and carried them back to the beach. Close by the spot where the stream ran into the bay were several high rocks, and there the castaways pitched their camp in the shade. The sun was high in the heavens now, and the heat of the tropical day was pouring upon the island.

"We shall have to wait a bit and see more what the natives are like before we explore the place at all," said Tom Merry. "The other fellows may not be friendly, and there may be more than one tribe, too. And we don't want to leave the shore, either. We want to have what chance there is of seeing a sail."

"Not much chance, I'm afraid," Blake remarked.

"It's our only chance of ever getting off the island," said Tom Merry.

"That's true."

"The boat is stove to pieces, and we could never rebuild it from the fragments," said Tom Merry. "Besides, we have no provisions to put to sea with. We couldn't sail away with a cargo of cocoanuts and water enough for only four days. That's all the kegs will hold."

"Wathah not."

The juniors looked very serious. They had been so overjoyed at escaping from the horrors of the open boat, and finding themselves on firm land with food and drink in abundance, that they had not considered their prospects further. Now they had to consider them. They had been fortunate—there was no doubt about that. But the prospect was that they would remain a long time, perhaps years, perhaps for life, on that lonely island, and the thought of it made their faces grave.

"Bai Jove, it's wotten!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Might have been worse," said Blake, who always took the optimistic view. "We might have died of hunger and thirst in the boat."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"No good giving up hope," said Tom Merry. "We're alive and well, that's one comfort, and we're all together. I wish we knew what had become of the other boat."

"Yes, rather!"

"Old Herries was in it," said Blake. "It would be frightfully rotten if anything happened to old Herries. Of course, it would be rotten if anything happened to the other chaps, too."

"They had a better chance than we had," Manners remarked. "It was a larger boat, and better supplied with provisions and water. If they're still at sea in it, they haven't run out of water and grub yet, by a long way. Lord Conway intended the two boats to remain together, and in the morning they'd have passed more grub into our boat—only we got separated. But they're better off than we were."

"Yes, that's a comfort."

The sun was at the zenith now, blazing down upon the island. There was no sign of the savages. The sea, calmer and calmer, every hour, was rolling now in gentle ripples on the



shore, curling in white lines of foam on the golden sand.

In the blaze of noon the juniors lay and rested in the shadow of the big rock. Some of them slept. But always some two or three were awake to watch for a possible visit of the natives, and the firearms were kept ready.

But the islanders did not appear. If the man they had seen had carried the news to his friends, they had not come yet to see the strangers. It might mean that the savages were seeking to lull the castaways into a sense of security, with the intention of taking them by surprise. The juniors were very much on their guard.

In the cool of the afternoon, Tom Merry went down the beach to look for the treasure-chest. It lay where it had fallen from the boat, half-buried in the sand, with the waves of the Pacific curling over it. One iron-bound corner stuck up into view from the water, and glistened in the sun.

The schoolboys' gold was safe so far, but it was not in a safe position. Tom Merry suggested dragging it ashore with the ropes that had been saved from the boat.

"If we get off, we want to take the gold with us," he said. "We can bury it in the sand, and come for it whenever we please."

"Jolly good idea!" said Digby.

The rope was passed round the sunken chest, and it was dragged with great efforts through the soft sand, and above the high water mark. Then the sand was scooped out into a hollow, and the chest was rolled in, and covered up.

The juniors stamped down the sand round and over it.

"We ought to make some indication of where it is, to remember it," Manners suggested.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry paced the distance from the buried chest to the big rock in whose shade they had camped.

"Twenty paces," he said, turning and pacing back, "and as you come from the rock, you keep exactly in a line with that bunch of palm trees yonder."

"Good!"

"Let's write it down, in case of accidents," Digby suggested.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"No fear. If Pablo Lopez comes, and he may, we don't want to have any written clue he might get hold of."

"True."

"We shall remember that, if we need to dig up the chest again," said Tom Merry. "Twenty paces from the big rock, in a line with the bunch of palms."

"Good!"

"Look out!" shouted Blake suddenly.

The juniors rose upon their feet in a moment.

From the trees, a crowd of tattooed savages had suddenly burst, yelling and waving their spears in the air.

They rushed straight at the juniors.

"My hat! There's our old friend at their head too," said Monty Lowther, in surprise. "But they're on the war-path now, and no mistake."

The early acquaintance of the juniors was coming on at the head of the rushing savages. He was waving a spear like the rest.

"My hat! Look out!"

"Man Friday seems to be as excited as the rest," Blake remarked. "It looks like a tussle."

The juniors gathered together, close against the big rock. Tom Merry levelled the rifle, and Peter Raff and Lowther, and Blake and Figgins, who had a revolver each, raised their weapons. The other juniors had nothing but sticks and boathooks, but they were prepared to put up a good fight. It looked like trouble.

Yet they hesitated to fire.

The savages rushed right on, yelling and gesticulating, till they were quite close. Then they suddenly halted, and the Man Friday, as Blake had named the savage, after Robinson Crusoe's old friend, came forward alone.

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"Don't shoot till you have to," he muttered.

"Right-ho."

Man Friday, to give him that name—he probably had one of his own, but the juniors did not know what it was—stepped towards Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He knelt at D'Arcy's feet, and touched the sand with his forehead, and at the same time the rest of the natives knelt down before Arthur Augustus.



"Bai Jove, they mean well enough, aftah all," said the swell of St. Jim's, in great relief.

"Good old Friday!" murmured Lowther.

Friday rose to his feet, and gesticulated, and pointed to his friends, and then with his spear to the interior of the island. His meaning evidently was that D'Arcy should go with him. Of the others he took no notice.

"They want you, Gussy," said Manners.

"Bai Jove!"

"They want our giddy idol," grinned Wally.

"Weally, Wally——"

"Gussy's not going," said Tom Merry. "There may be a cooking-pot at the end of the journey. Here, you, Friday, you buzz off."

He laid his hand on the savage's shoulder.

Friday turned upon him, with a sudden ferocious glare in his face, and made a savage thrust with his spear. Tom Merry just saved himself by leaping aside.

"Look out!" shouted Blake.

Friday made a rush at Tom Merry, thrusting again. The savages made a simultaneous move forward. Tom Merry countered with his rifle barrel, and knocked the spear aside. The savages were closing up.

"Shoot!" shouted Peter Raff.

There was nothing else for it. D'Arcy was evidently sacred in the eyes of the savages, but they were prepared to murder the others with the peculiar irresponsibility of the savage nature.

"Shoot! Shoot!"

Tom Merry threw his rifle up.

Crack!

Man Friday gave a terrific yell, leaped into the air, and dropped flat upon his face.

## THE TWENTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### The Spaniard Again.

THE report of the rifle rang in a thousand echoes along the beach and reverberated back from the wood.

The savages stopped dead, as if thunder-struck.

For one moment they stood paralysed, and then, with loud cries of fear, they took to their heels and ran.

It was like the change of a kaleidoscope. One moment a yelling horde surrounded the juniors, and the next, the beach was clear, save for themselves and the fallen savage. The blacks had vanished into the trees.

Friday lay motionless where he had fallen.



Peter Raff touched Tom Merry's arm. "Shoot—shoot!" muttered the sailorman. "You'll never have another chance like this, Master Tom—never!" (See page 337.)

Tom Merry was very pale.

"Good heavens!" muttered Blake.

"Is he dead?" whispered Wally.

"Heaven forbid!" said Tom.

"It was his own look-out, Master Tom," said Peter Raff. "He tried to kill you with his spear."

"I know; but I did not fire to kill," said Tom Merry. "I think he is more frightened than hurt. I wanted the bullet to graze his head, and I think it did not go too close."

He stepped towards the fallen savage.



Friday lay motionless.

There was a trickle of blood from his ear, where the bullet had carried away a fragment of skin. The wound was trifling, but the savage did not move. He seemed to be frightened to a comatose state by the report of the rifle.

Tom Merry caught up his spear, and passed it away to Kangaroo. It was safest to disarm the savage. Then he touched the man, and and he stirred and moaned.

"It's all right," said Tom Merry. "You're not hurt! By George, I wish I could speak his language! Don't you know any of the lingo, Kangy?"

"I know some black fellows' talk," said Kangaroo. "I don't suppose this chap talks the Australian bush language, though, I'll try."

He spoke a few sentences in a strange tongue. But the savage did not move.

"He doesn't savvy," said Blake.

"I expect he'll come round," said Tom Merry. "Poor chap! I'm sorry to scare him like this; but those beggars meant murder."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"They're coming back, sir," said Peter Raff.

On the edge of the wood, the black-brown faces were reappearing. The savages, evidently frightened, were peering out from the trees in dread and wonder.

Friday sat up at last. His face was full of pitiful terror. He shuddered as he looked at the rifle in Tom Merry's hand, and crawled towards it on his hands and knees and touched the sand with his forehead before it.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy. "He think's it's alive, you know. He must take it for an idol too."

Friday rose to his feet at last and backed away from the rifle. His aspect had lost all its ferocity. His brown face expressed nothing but humility and fear.

"It's all wight, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "We're not going to hurt you."

Friday prostrated himself before D'Arcy. Then he wriggled away into the wood and disappeared.

"Well, if this doesn't beat the Dutch," said Kangaroo.

"It's a vewwy wemarkable expewience."

"Poor wretches," said Figgins. "They've

never seen a firearm before, you can see that. I fancy we shall be safe from them after this."

"Yaas, wathah."

Man Friday having rejoined his comrades, the whole of them disappeared. The juniors remained very much shaken up by the strange adventure. It might have ended very much worse for them, they knew that. But for the terror inspired by the firearms, they would have had little chance in a struggle with a horde of armed savages. The spears and clubs would have done deadly work.

But the sudden glancing of a white sail on the sea caught the attention of the juniors, and in a moment the savages were forgotten. Kerr was the first to see it, and he shouted:

"A sail!"

Tom Merry caught up the binoculars, and turned them upon the sail, which had glanced up like a white bird's wing from the blue of the sea.

Then he uttered an exclamation of disappointment.

"The felucca!"

"Lopez again!"

The felucca was standing into the bay. The dwarf figure of the Spaniard could be seen at the helm.

"The felucca!"

"And the Spaniard!"

"Cover!" said Tom Merry, quickly.

The juniors gathered behind the big rocks. So far, the Spaniard could not have seen them. It was as well to keep their presence from his knowledge, if possible.

The felucca came closer in. The four blacks who formed the crew could be seen on the deck, and the voice of the Spaniard rapping out orders came on the wind, though the juniors could not understand the words.

"He's going to anchor here," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But what is he doing here at all?" Blake exclaimed, in amazement. "Can he know anything about the yacht being wrecked?"

Tom Merry nodded quickly.

"That's it! He's found some of the wreckage, or—or perhaps Lord Conway's boat."

"Bai Jove!"

"And he knows the treasure is still in the



South Seas," said Tom Merry. "He's searching for it, and us."

The juniors looked grave. It was only too likely. It meant another fight with the Spaniard if he found them on the island. Not that they were afraid; there were too many of them for the Spaniard, if it came to open warfare. But there would be bloodshed, there was little doubt of that.

Tom Merry watched the felucca as it swept closer in under its lateen sails. The Spaniard at the helm was in full and easy view now, in easy range. Tom Merry half-raised the rifle.

He could have picked the man off as easily as a rabbit.

Peter Raff touched his arm.

"Shoot—shoot!" muttered the sailorman. "You'll never have another chance like this, Master Tom—never."

"It would be only prudent," said Tom. "But——"

"But you can't do it, Tom Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm surprisid at you, Petah. It would be howwid."

"The man's a murderer," said Peter Raff—"a murderer twice over, as I've seen. He means death to us."

"Yaas, but——"

Tom Merry shook his head. It would have been, as he had said, only prudent, but it was impossible. He could not shoot a man down in cold blood.

"He deserves it," he said. "But it can't be done. Besides"—Tom Merry's eyes gleamed as a new idea flashed into his brain.

"What are you thinking of?" Blake asked.

"We might capture the felucca!"

"What?"

"The rascal's going to anchor in the bay here," said Tom Merry, his eyes gleaming. "He will leave the felucca some time, if only to search for us. He can't fail to see the fragments of the boat on the beach. Well, when he is in the woods, we can have a try for the felucca. I don't think the niggers will stop us."

"No fear."

"It's a ripping idea!" exclaimed Kerr. "We can take the felucca—the rascal's declared war himself, and we're entitled to capture his craft if we can. We can maroon the

brute on the island here, where he can't do any damage, and sail away with the treasure-chest in the felucca."

"I suppose we could handle that craft," Figgins said, with a dubious glance at the great lateen sails, which the negroes were now lowering.

"We could learn," said Tom Merry. "After all, most of us can sail a boat at home, and we could soon get in the way of handling a felucca. Better than building a raft to get away from the island upon, and that's what we thought of first."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And there will be provisions on the felucca, too," observed Fatty Wynn. "We shall have plenty of grub for the voyage, and——"

"Hallo! Hold on, Peter Raff!"

The sailorman had suddenly dragged the revolver from his belt, and levelled it at the Spaniard on the felucca. Tom Merry dragged his arm down just in time.

"Stop it!" he shouted.

The sailorman looked sullen.

"It's the safest way," he muttered.

"It's murder."

"It's what he means for us, Master Tom."

"We can protect ourselves. I tell you you shall not shoot," said Tom Merry; and he jerked the revolver away from Peter Raff, "Now——"

The sailorman nodded.

"I give in to you, Master Tom; but you'll be sorry for not letting me shoot the villain down while we had a chance."

"I don't think so."

The great sails were down now, and the felucca floated gently in the bay. The anchor slipped into the water, and the handsome craft rocked on the waves a score of yards from the shore. A little skiff dropped into the water, and the Spaniard rowed himself ashore. The blacks remained on board the felucca. They were close enough for the juniors to see their faces, and it was easy to see that they were simple black sailors, with none of the ruffianly characteristics of the Spaniard about them. Probably Lopez dared not sail in company with scoundrels like himself—for if a gang of his own kidney had helped him to win the treasure, they would certainly have murdered



him for the possession of it afterwards. He preferred to rely upon himself, and have nothing to fear, at all events, upon his own vessel.

The skiff grounded on the sand, and the Spaniard leaped ashore. The juniors drew closer into the cover of the rocks, watching him.

That the Spaniard was suspicious was evident. He stood scanning the shore, and watching the woods, with a keen, gleaming eye. It was very clear that, out at sea, he had heard the report of the shot Tom Merry had fired at Man Friday, and that it had warned him that there were whites on the island. And in those lonely seas it was not hard for him to conclude that they were the party he sought.

He uttered an exclamation in Spanish as he caught sight of a broken oar lying on the sand. He picked it up, and looked at it, and then searched along the beach. He came upon many fragments of wreckage, and the bows of the broken boat still embedded in the sand. Again his voice was heard on the silent shore.

“Carambo!”

Tom Merry held his rifle ready. The Spaniard was on the track now with a vengeance. The footprints in the sand caught the man's eye, and he followed them, scanning the sand eagerly. He came striding towards

the big rocks behind which the juniors were concealed, and they drew back closer into cover.

His heavy boots could be heard grinding the sand as he came on, closer and closer. In a few seconds he would be round the rocks, and in full view of the castaways. Tom Merry raised

his rifle ready, his finger on the trigger.

“Bai Jove!” murmured D'Arcy “Look out!”

A shadow fell at their feet. The Spaniard came swinging on, round the big rock. He started back, his hand flying to his belt as he caught sight of the juniors. But he had no time to draw a weapon. The muzzle of the rifle was at his breast.

Tom Merry's voice rang out.

“Halt!”

## THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Face to Face.

PABLO LOPEZ halted.

He had no choice in the matter, for the

muzzle of the rifle was within a foot of him, and Tom Merry's finger was on the trigger, Tom Merry's steady eye glancing along the barrel.

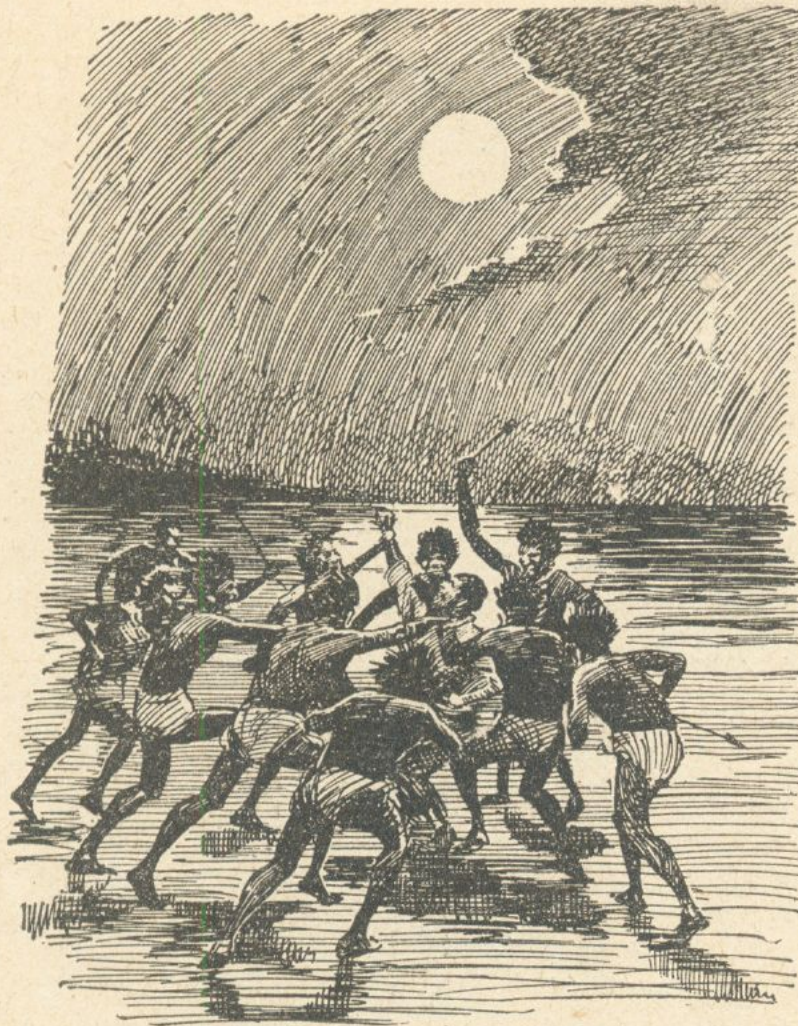
“Carambo!”

“Halt, you scoundrel!”

The Spaniard stood with his hands clenching and unclenching, his features working with passion.

But his rage was nothing to the juniors.

He was at their mercy now.



The fighting, struggling forms leaped into view as the moon came grandly out from the clouds. Pablo Lopez was in the grasp of the savages! (See page 341.)



"Don't try to touch your pistol," said Tom Merry quietly. "I shall send a bullet right through you if you do."

"Carambo!"

"I don't know what cawambo means," said D Arcy; "But fwom the way that wottah uttaks it, I should take it as a swear word, and I object to it. I insist upon the wascal usin' more wespectful language."

"Disarm him, Peter," said Tom Merry. "I'll keep him covered, and shoot him if he resists."

The Spaniard was trembling with passion. Peter Raff was trembling, too, but it was with dread of the man he feared so much. Yet at other times Peter Raff had shown himself to be a brave man.

But the sailorman obeyed Tom's order. He stepped towards the Spaniard, and took the pistol and the knife from his belt, and unslung the rifle from his shoulder, and then took off his bandolier.

"Oh, but you shall pay for this yet, all of you," said the Spaniard between his teeth.

Tom Merry made a gesture of contempt.

"We are not afraid of you," he said. "You will be wise to keep clear of us from this moment. I warn you that we shall not show any mercy if you attack us."

Lopez ground his teeth.

"Why not make him a prisoner now," Blake exclaimed. "If we tie the cad up, he will be unable to do us any harm."

"Yaas, wathah."

The Spaniard sprang back.

"You will not make me a prisoner, senioritos," he said, in a voice choking with passion. "You may kill me, but you will not make me a prisoner."

"We'll see about that!" Blake exclaimed.

"Collar him!"

The juniors rushed forward.

Lopez sprang away.

It would have been easy for Tom Merry to shoot him down; but that the cunning rascal knew very well the junior would not do, excepting in self-defence. Lopez sprang away round the rocks, and dashed across the sand towards the felucca.

"After him!" yelled Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! Collah the cad!"

"Hurrah!"

The juniors entered into the chase with zest. Strung out in line, the fleetest ahead and the slower ones behind, they raced over the sand after the Spaniard.

But Lopez reached his skiff first.

He leaped into it, and pushed off, and the skiff went rocking away towards the felucca, the Spaniard standing up in it, oar in hand, ready to strike down any of the juniors who should pursue him further.

But that they did not do. They halted on the shore, baffled, while the boat rocked away towards the anchored craft.

"Bai Jove! The wascal's gone!"

The Spaniard glared at them from the boat. "Oh, but wait a little, senioritos!" he exclaimed. "You have not seen the last of Pablo Lopez."

And he dipped the oar into the water and sculled away to the felucca, and the juniors saw him jump aboard.

"Will he go now?" Blake muttered.

"I should say not."

Tom Merry was right.

The Spaniard had disappeared on board the vessel, but the great lateen sails were not raised, and the craft did not move from her anchorage. Pablo Lopez had come to stay.

## THE TWENTY-NINTH CHAPTER.

### Fallen Among Foes.

THE juniors returned to their camp behind the rocks.

The situation on the island was growing curious. On the one side were the brown-skinned natives, whose ferocious enmity might break out again at any moment. On the other was the Spaniard. It was pretty certain that Pablo Lopez was waiting on the felucca for the fall of night, with the intention of trying his luck a second time under cover of darkness. And without being timid, the juniors looked forward to nightfall with some uneasiness.

"I can tell you what his little game is, young gentlemen," Peter Raff said moodily. "He intends to hang about us in the dark and kill us one by one if he can. He has more firearms aboard the felucca, for a certainty, and he will get ashore in the dark



and pick us off whenever he gets a chance of sniping."

"If he shoots, we shall shoot," Tom Merry said.

Peter Raff shook his head.

"You won't have another chance, Master Tom."

"Bai Jove, I must wemark that you're an awful cwokah, Petah!" Arthur Augustus exclaimed. "I wathah think that we shall be a match for the wuffian."

"And what about the black fellows?" Kangaroo exclaimed. "I don't believe they will give up the game either."

Tom Merry smiled.

"If they both come after dark, we shall have a lively time," he said. "We can only sit tight and hope for the best."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We'd better get some more grub here in case of accidents," said Fatty Wynn anxiously.

"If the niggers start on us, we shan't be able to go to the wood."

"Quite wight, deah boy!"

"It will be awful to have to live on cocoanuts," Fatty Wynn remarked despondently.

"What price a good rich beefsteak, Figgy, with onions, and——"

"Oh, shut up," said Figgins, "you make me feel famished!"

"What price a nice juicy pork-pie——"

"Shut up!" roared the juniors.

And Fatty Wynn sighed and shut up.

But his suggestion was good, and as the sun went down the juniors gathered armfuls of cocoanuts and carried them back to the camp in the rocks. A change of diet was very desirable, but cocoanuts were better than nothing. As for hunting some of the wild goats they had seen in the distance, Tom Merry decided that it would be too imprudent.

The savages were still probably lurking in the woods. After all, as Kerr remarked very thoughtfully, they were lucky to have plenty of cocoanuts.

The sun sank in the west.

With the quick nightfall the juniors became more watchful and anxious. Fatty Wynn sat munching endless cocoanuts, and dreaming with deep yearning of beefsteaks, onions, fried potatoes, and pork-pies. The other

fellows waited and watched while they rested.

"We'll see about building some shelter to-morrow," Tom Merry remarked. "This would be a pretty open spot if it rained again. It's all right for to-night, though."

"We ought to have a stockade, you know," said D'Arcy, with a dim remembrance of some treasure story. "A stockade and a blockhouse, you know."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I don't know where we shall get them," he said, "but we'll see what we can do in the morning. We shall have to look for some grub a bit more solid than cocoanuts."

"Yes, rather!" said Fatty Wynn emphatically.

"Listen!" said Jack Blake.

He held up his hand.

It was very dark now; and the juniors, as they listened, could hear a sound of rustling from the distant trees.

They had no doubt as to what caused it.

Man Friday and his friends were reappearing on the scene, encouraged by the fact that the darkness made them invisible to the castaways.

"Hark!"

It was a splash from the sea.

"Lopez!"

"Both together!" said Figgins. "We are booked for a warm time. Look here, let's climb up on top of these rocks. The moon will be up soon, and we could hold the rocks for a long time against those blessed niggers, and without shooting any of them. I shall be sorry to have to pot Man Friday."

"Yaas, wathah!"

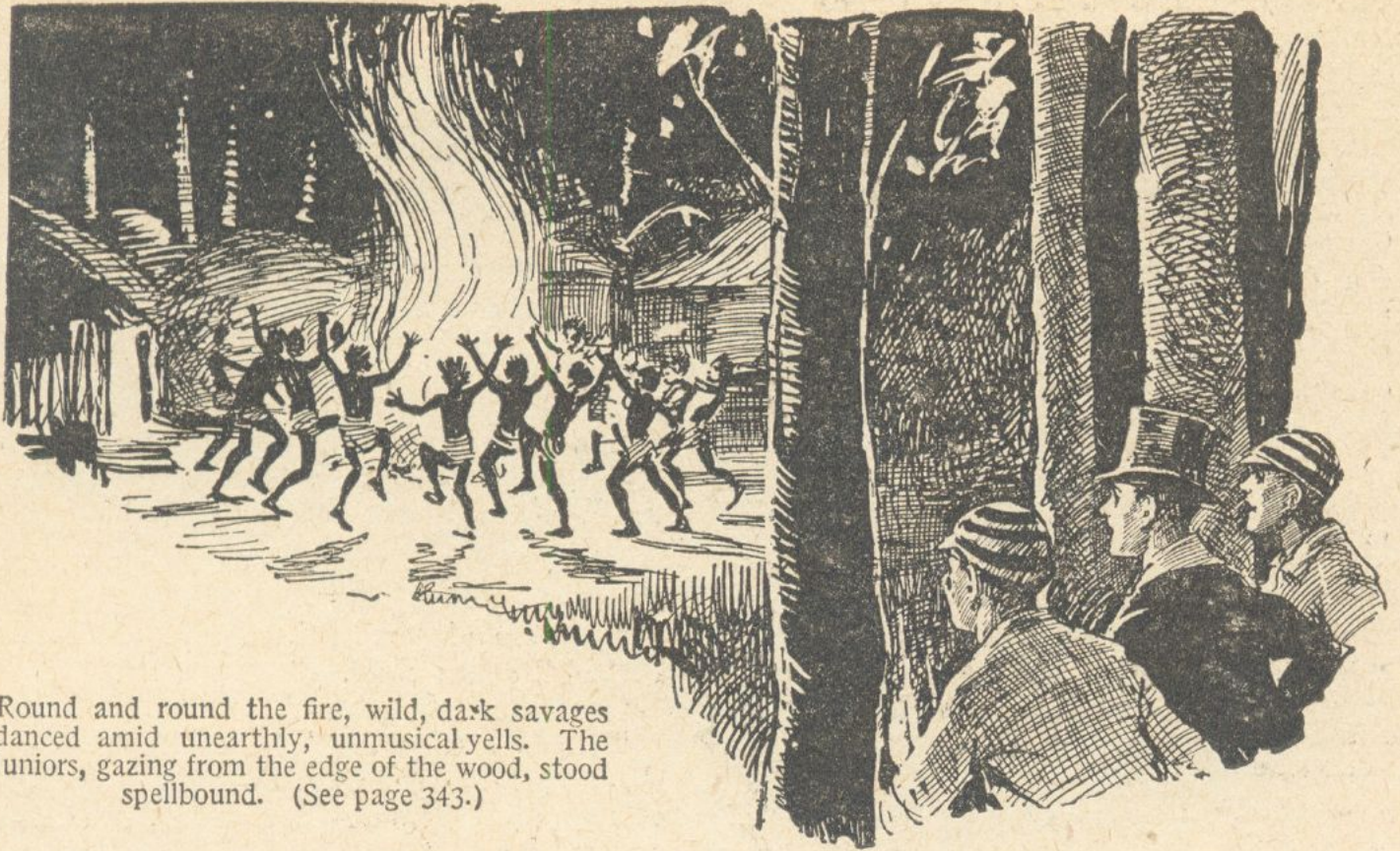
"It's a good idea!" said Tom Merry.

The juniors clambered up the rocks. The rugged slopes below them did not favour a rushing attack, such as the savages were most likely to make. Among the rocks the castaways had no doubt of being able to hold their own by using their firearms, but that, of course, they were very reluctant to do. But if the savages pushed them hard, they had no other resource.

From the darkness of the beach came faint sounds, of bare feet crunching on sand, of men stumbling over stones and over the fragments of the wrecked boat.

The islanders were coming on!





Round and round the fire, wild, dark savages danced amid unearthly, unmusical yells. The juniors, gazing from the edge of the wood, stood spellbound. (See page 343.)

Suddenly the sound of advance ceased. The juniors strained their ears, but they could hear nothing.

Not a sound, not a motion from the darkness.

What did it mean? What were the islanders doing? What was the meaning of the sudden halt? The juniors strained their eyes in the darkness in vain, and listened and waited with beating hearts.

In the black sky an edge of silver appeared. The moon was about to emerge from behind the banks of clouds.

The silver glimmer danced on the sea, and threw a shimmer back from the forest. The moon came slowly out.

Suddenly, from the darkness of the shore, came a terrific uproar. A crack, crack, crack! of a revolver; wild, savage yells of pain and fury; the hoarse voice of a white man; sounds of a desperate struggle, of wrestling forms and trampling feet and crunching sand.

The juniors started, and listened in horror. What was happening there in the darkness? One word was on all lips:

“Lopez!”

Was it the Spaniard?

They could see nothing; they could hear only the sounds of wild-beast-like conflict, growing fainter now.

A sheet of silver danced on the Pacific; the moon came grandly out from the clouds, and light descended upon the scene.

The fighting, struggling forms leaped into sudden view. On the sandy shore Pablo Lopez was struggling, with failing strength, in the grasp of the savages. A dozen or more of the islanders were piling on him, and even the great strength of the dwarf was giving way.

Several of the savages showed wounds, and blood was on the face of Man Friday, whom the juniors recognised in the midst of the conflict. What had happened was very clear. The Spaniard, stealing upon the camp in the darkness, had blundered into the savages, not knowing that they were there. And the islanders had seized upon him instantly. The dwarf's struggles ceased, and he lay helpless under the shrieking savages.



Tom Merry half raised his rifle, and lowered it again.

He had no right to shoot in defence of the Spaniard. Lopez's life was of no more value than the life of any savage there.

The savages, with yells of triumph, dragged their prisoner away towards the wood. With the curious irresponsibility of the savage mind, they had forgotten or abandoned their original intention of approaching the camp. With the gasping, feebly struggling Spaniard in their midst, they swarmed away into the forest and disappeared, but for a long time their savage yells rang in the ears of the juniors.

## THE THIRTIETH CHAPTER.

### To the Rescue.

"**B**AI Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, breaking a long silence. "Bai Jove, deah boys!"

Tom Merry shivered.

"It was Lopez's own fault," he said. "He came here looking for trouble—and he found it, though not the sort he was looking for."

"What will they do with him?" muttered Lowther.

"Goodness knows!"

"He wounded some of them. They may——"

"Kill him, perhaps."

Tom Merry made a restless gesture.

"He must face the music himself," said the hero of the Shell. "He's brought this upon himself; it's his own look-out."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Suppose——" began Digby, and he paused.

"Well, suppose what?" said Tom Merry almost irritably.

"Suppose they're cannibals?"

"Bai Jove!"

"I don't see that we need suppose that," said Tom Merry gloomily. "They looked friendly enough at first—or Man Friday did, anyway. And they weren't going to attack us, either, this afternoon; they only wanted Gussy for an idol."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"But they attacked us afterwards," said Blake; "and that chap Friday, quiet as

he was at first, tried to stick you with a spear. You can't trust savages."

"Quite wight, Blake."

"If they're cannibals——"

"Well, I don't see what we can do," said Tom Merry. "It would be madness to risk our lives to save such a brute as Pablo Lopez—especially when he would return the favour by cutting our throats if he could."

"Well, that's right, too."

"Besides, we shouldn't have the right to shoot down those poor wretches to save such a man," said Tom Merry.

"Let him go," said Peter Raff—"let him go! If they eat him, I wish them joy of him. Do you think he would trouble his head about us?"

"Are the niggers in these parts cannibals, Peter?" asked Kerr.

The sailorman grinned.

"I guess they are," he said. "They're pretty sure to be, sir. Those black fellows will eat their prisoners as a matter of course. It's their way."

Tom Merry shuddered.

"We cannot be sure," he said.

"Ay, ay, sir; it's sure enough!"

Tom Merry did not reply. The thought of it was heavy and painful in his mind. If the islanders were savages—if they were going to murder their prisoner and devour him—could the juniors abstain from interference? The Spaniard was their bitter foe, but——

A red glare from the distance lighted up the sky, and cast a strange reflection upon the moonlit heavens. The red flamelight danced on the branches of the trees; the flare came from beyond the forest, in the direction the islanders had taken.

"What on earth's that?" Figgins exclaimed.

"The forest on fire!"

"It ain't," said Peter Raff. "It's a fire in the village—the place where those brown devils hang out."

"Some celebration, I suppose?"

The sailorman grinned.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"What do you mean?" demanded Tom Merry sharply. "Do you think the fire has



anything to do with their having captured Lopez?"

"I'd better not say, sir."

"Tell me!"

"Well, I reckon the fire's lighted to cook him, sir," said Peter Raff. "But what matter? It was his own business; he should have kept to the felucca. He landed to murder some of us in the dark."

"Very likely; but——"

"Look here, Raff," said Blake abruptly. "I suppose you know the customs of these horrible brutes! If they eat their prisoners——"

"They do that, sir."

"Do they torture them?"

Peter Raff was silent.

"What do you say, Peter?"

"Well, sir, the man might be dead before they cook him, or—or he mightn't," said the sailorman reluctantly. "There's no telling."

Tom Merry gave a horrified start.

"Do you mean that they might roast him alive?" he cried.

"I s'pose they might."

"Gweat Scott!" muttered D'Arcy, with the perspiration running down his face. "The howwid wottahs! I—I say, Tom Mewwy, we can't stand this."

"My only Aunt Jane!" said Wally. "We shall have to chip in."

"We must," said Tom Merry. "If the brutes treat their prisoners like that, they ought to be shot down like mad dogs. It's all rot to say that their training doesn't teach them any better; they must know perfectly well that they are wicked beasts. If Lopez were ten times as bad as he is, I wouldn't stand by and allow that."

"Wathah not!"

"Come on."

"Hold on, sir," said Peter Raff. "There's one thing that you've forgotten, Master Tom."

"What's that?"

"There are a dozen of us," said Peter, with a troubled look. "But there may be hundreds of the cannibals, sir. And if they get the better of us, we shan't save that Spanish brute, sir; but we shall get served the same as him."

The juniors exchanged glances. The danger was terrible—the price of failure was enough to give them pause—death, perhaps the most horrible of deaths. But to the credit of the St. Jim's juniors, be it said, the pause was but momentary.

"I don't care," said Tom Merry determinedly. "I believe we shall be more than a match for them, with the firearms; anyway, we're going to try."

"Yes, rather!"

"March on, deah boys," said D'Arcy. "I suppose I had better take the lead, Tom Mewwy——"

"I suppose you hadn't," said Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Come on," said Tom Merry, and he started off with his rifle under his arm. And the juniors followed him fast.

The red glare in the sky was growing redder, brighter. It was evident that a tremendous fire must have been kindled at the natives' village.

The red glare lighted up the wood as the juniors plunged into it, and it guided them on their way. They had no other indication of the direction of the savages, but the glare over the trees was sufficient.

For a great distance they threaded their way through the dusky aisles of the forest. The trees gave place to a wide clearing at last—a level glade, with trees in the distance beyond the green level. In the glade was a collection of rude huts, and on the open ground outside the village a huge fire was blazing away, fed by logs and branches. Round the fire, wild, dark figures danced amid unearthly, unmusical yells.

It was a strange and terrible scene, and the juniors, gazing at it from the edge of the wood, stood spellbound.

## THE THIRTY-FIRST CHAPTER

### Saved From the Cannibals!

JACK BLAKE grasped Tom Merry's arm with one hand, and pointed with the other.

"Look!" he muttered.

It was the Spaniard.

Close by the fire—so close that the sweat was running down his dark skin from the heat of it—lay the dwarf.



The juniors were near enough to see his features, and to make out the play of emotion in the dark and savage face.

Lopez lay upon the ground, his hands and feet tied tightly with hide—so tightly that the bonds evidently caused him pain.

His face was deadly white through the dusk of the skin, and his black eyes gleamed with horrible fear.

It was clear that he knew that he was doomed; that he had no hope of rescue; that every nerve in his body was quivering with horror of his doom.

Ruffian as he was and merciless enemy, the juniors could not help feeling a sentiment of pity, as they watched his ghastly face, and read the fear and anguish there. For a long time the dance continued, the savages



working themselves up to a higher and higher pitch of wild, frenzied excitement.

Suddenly the dance ceased.

A rush was made for the Spaniard, and he was lifted from the ground in the arms of several of the savages. Man

Friday could be seen driving a stake into the ground close to the blaze of the fire.

The heat drove him back, sweating and panting. But it was plain what the stake was for. It was to secure the prisoner.

The Spaniard was to be roasted. There was no doubt about it. The juniors were sick with horror as they watched. The dwarf was dragged towards the fire, and one of the cannibals had looped a rope to fasten him there quickly, so that his captors could recede from the heat.

Tom Merry raised his rifle.

“Shoot!” he muttered. “Shoot at their legs; we must not kill; if it can be helped.”

“Yaas, wathah!”

The Spaniard was shrieking with fear. His shrieks were answered by savage yells and cries from the cannibals.

Crack-ack-ack-ack-ack!

From the wood came a sudden burst of firing.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The juniors blazed away fiercely.

They aimed low to avoid killing if possible. But it was no time to stand too much upon ceremony.

Crack! Crack!

The savages who were holding the Spaniard let him drop instantly, and he rolled on the ground. The cannibals were falling on all sides—some of them struck by the bullets, some in sheer terror.

Crack! Crack!  
Crack!

“Charge!” shouted Tom Merry.

The juniors rushed towards the fire, still blazing away with the revolvers. With yells of terror the savages fled.

In a frenzied horde they went dashing into the village, and through it, and away

to the forest beyond, sending back affrighted yells.

Tom Merry stopped by the Spaniard. Lopez looked at him, dazed with astonishment. Tom opened his knife, and cut the hide that secured the Spaniard's feet.

“Come!” he muttered.

“Loose my hands,” muttered Lopez.

“Your hands will do very well as they are,” said Tom Merry curtly.

“But, señorito——”

“Come!”

Tom Merry dragged the Spaniard up.

“Let's get off!” he exclaimed. “They may rally, and there are hordes of them.”



"We'd better be gone before they come back."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And with the rescued Spaniard in their midst, the juniors ran into the wood. They left more than a dozen savages on the ground. Some of them were wounded, some only scared to stupefaction. Whether any were dead the juniors did not stop to look; it was better not to know. But they hoped not.

At a run they plunged on through the wood, back the way they had come.

The Spaniard ran with them. He was as anxious as the juniors could be to get away from the vicinity of the cannibals.

That the cannibals would rally when their first fright was over, Tom Merry felt certain, and he was right.

Before the fugitives were half-way to the shore, they heard savage yells behind, and in the red glare that fell among the trees, dark forms could be seen moving swiftly.

"They're after us!" panted Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry looked back, and grasped his rifle.

"Look after Lopez," he said.

"Right-ho!"

Crack!

The nearest of the cannibals jumped into the air, with a terrible yell, as a bullet struck him in the leg. He came down with a crash, and lay groaning.

There was a howl from the others, and they gathered round the fallen man, looking at him in wonder, evidently quite at a loss to account for his fall and his wound. They did not understand yet the weapon Tom Merry carried, but they understood enough to terrify them. Leaving the wounded man where he had fallen, the horde of them bolted back towards the village.

The juniors tramped on towards the shore at a more moderate pace.

They came out into the bright moonlight there.

The Spaniard stopped, panting, white, the prey of conflicting emotions. Even his hard and wicked heart could not be wholly insensible to what the juniors had done for him.

Tom Merry looked at him sternly.

"We have saved your life, Lopez," he said.

"But you will remain a prisoner. You understand that?"

The Spaniard nodded.

"We are going to take your felucca, and leave the island. You can remain here, or come with us as a prisoner, as you prefer."

"Loose me——"

"We shall do nothing of the kind. You are too dangerous a villain to be let loose," said Tom Merry curtly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Why did you save me, then?" the Spaniard exclaimed, unable to control his curiosity. "Why did you rescue me from the savages?"

"Because they were savages," said Tom Merry quietly. "We could not leave our worst enemy in their hands so long as there was a chance of saving him. But I don't suppose you would understand our motives, anyway."

"It was a case of noblesse oblige, deah boy!" said D'Arcy. "We shouldn't expect you to do anythin' of the sort, but we were bound to do it."

"I am grateful," said the Spaniard. "If you loose me, I will promise——"

Tom Merry interrupted him with a gesture.

"Nonsense! We shall maroon you on this island, or take you a prisoner on board the felucca. Which do you prefer?"

Lopez gritted his teeth.

"The felucca," he said. "I do not wish to be left here to be devoured by the cannibals."

"Very well!"

"The sooner we get on board the better," said Blake. "Those black villains are certain to come prowling round again, and, if they once get over their fear of the firearms, there are enough of them to eat us."

"Yaas, wathah! Buck up, deah boys!"

"Where is your boat, Lopez?" asked Tom Merry.

The Spaniard did not reply.

"We shall take your boat, and when we get near the felucca, you will order your men to admit us on board, without any trickery," said Tom Merry sternly.

"I am willing to make terms, seniorito——"

"You are not in a position to make terms."



You will take orders, Lopez—or else you will be left here for the cannibals.”

“Better leave him!” muttered Peter Raff.

“I will obey you, seniorito,” said Lopez, between his teeth. “The boat is by the rock here; it shall be as you say.”

“Come on, you fellows!”

In a few minutes the juniors were at the skiff. It was not large enough for all of them, and six of them went on board it with Lopez—Tom Merry, Figgins, Kerr, Lowther, Blake, and Kangaroo. They pulled out to the felucca, which lay glimmering on the bay in the moonlight.

Tom Merry’s grasp closed on Lopez’s shoulder.

“You will speak in Spanish,” he said.

“But if there is a trick, you go over the side, bound as you are—on my word.”

And there was no trickery. The staring black faces looked over the side, and the Spaniard growled out an order, and the juniors were helped on board by the negroes. The black seamen stared at seeing their captain a prisoner, and the juniors were quite prepared for any attempt at a rescue, but none was made. The negroes were not armed; probably the Spaniard did not trust them with weapons; he could not have been a popular skipper, and if he had once taken the gold aboard, his life would not have been safe with an armed crew. The Spaniard was bound to the mast for security, and then the skiff was sent back with Figgins in it, to fetch the rest of the party. Ten minutes later, they were all on the deck of the felucca.

## THE THIRTY-SECOND CHAPTER

### Picked Up.

**T**OM MERRY & Co. were very wakeful that night. The exciting adventures they had passed through left them in little humour for sleep. And there was always danger of an attack from the cannibals. During the night, at intervals, they saw moving forms on the shore in the moonlight, and heard loud and savage yells. The cannibals had mustered courage to follow them as far as the bay. But they did not attempt to swim to the felucca,

and morning dawned upon the Pacific without any attack having been made. With morning the islanders disappeared from sight, streaming away through the wood.

Tom Merry rubbed his eyes.

“They’re gone,” he said. “Time we were gone, too. No need to stay here any longer, except for——”

“The treasure!” said Figgins.

“Yaas, wathah!”

“And the cocoanuts,” said Fatty Wynn.

“I don’t know how this craft is provisioned, but a boatload of cocoanuts would be a good idea.”

Tom Merry laughed.

“Right you are, Fatty! And we’ll see how the water is, too—we want to take as much of that as we can.”

“I wonder what the niggers are gone for, though?” Kangaroo remarked thoughtfully.

“They’ve certainly got their backs up now, and want to get at us. I doubt if even a free gift of Gussy, to be used as a tribal god, would appease them!”

“Weally Kangawoo——”

“I think I can give a guess,” said Kerr quietly. “I expect they have canoes somewhere—perhaps on the other side of the island—and they may be gone for them. If we stay here much longer, we may have a crowd of canoes about us.”

“Bai Jove!”

“Very likely,” said Tom Merry. “Most likely, in fact. We’ll get out to sea the moment we can. Let’s overhaul the felucca and see how we’re off for supplies.”

That did not take long. They found that Lopez had provisioned himself well for his voyage, and that there need be no anxiety on that score. The water was running low, but that could easily be renewed at the stream in the bay. The juniors set to work at once; and Tom Merry, finding that the black sailors understood a few words of English, gave them orders, which they obeyed cheerfully enough. Peter Raff added orders in Spanish, and by the promptness with which he was obeyed, it is probable that he added threats in that unknown tongue.

An hour or more was occupied in bringing



the water on board, and a load of cocoanuts was brought by special request of Fatty Wynn. Then it was a question of removing the treasure.

Pablo Lopez heard the juniors discussing the matter, and his black eyes gleamed and glittered as he listened. He was to sail with the gold on his felucca at last; but it was as a prisoner in the hands of his rivals, and the gold was not his. But perhaps the Spaniard had not given up hope yet.

The juniors kept a sharp look-out for the savages while they uncovered the great chest in the sand. It was taken into the little skiff, weighing it deeply down, and rowed off to the felucca. Getting it on board was a difficult task enough, but with all hands to work it was managed, and the great chest was dumped down on the deck.

The Spaniard's eyes seemed almost to start from his head as he looked at it.

"Senorito," he said huskily, "is that the treasure?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry.

"May I see it, seniorito—I beg of you."

"Very well; when we are at sea."

"Look out!"

"What is it?"

"Canoes!"

Round the point of land at the head of the bay, a canoe had appeared, with a dozen savages in it paddling. Another and another followed.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "We're only just in time."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I think we could keep them off—but there won't be any need of shooting now. Up with the anchor!"

The anchor was hauled in, and the black sailors, under Peter Raff's loud orders, set the huge sails. The keen breeze caught the great expanse of canvas, and the felucca moved like a great white bird out into the bay.

There was a loud yell from the canoes. A dozen or more had come into sight in a few minutes, and the savages were paddling their hardest to cover the distance. They were trying to cut off the felucca from the open sea—but it would have gone hard with them if they had. The juniors stood with firearms

ready, in case the canoes should come too near.

But they did not.

The great lateen sails bellied out in the wind, and the felucca tore through the water. The nearest canoe was fifty yards away when the felucca passed, and swept out to sea, leaving the cannibals yelling and waving their spears in savage disappointment.

The islanders paddled after the felucca, apparently in some hope of overtaking her; but in five minutes or less the last canoe was out of sight astern. The island itself was fading down to the sea.

"Once more upon the waters," quoted Kerr. "My hat, how this craft gets along."

"She sails well, sir," said Peter Raff, "and I think I shall get on well with these niggers, sir. They know how to obey orders, and they're tame enough."

"Senoritos!"

"Hallo!"

"You promised to let me see the treasure."

"Very well," said Tom Merry.

The great chest was opened. Pablo Lopez stared with straining eyes at the great gold bars and gold ingots, the rolls and heaps of coins. A strange pallor showed through the dusk of his skin.

"Dios!" he muttered. "Dios!"

"Are you satisfied?" said Tom Merry.

"Gracias, seniorito!"

"It would not be a bad idea to fill our pockets with some of that stuff, in case of accidents," said Kerr. "What about taking a handful of those big doubloons each. If anything happened to the felucca, that chest would go down like a stone."

"Jolly good idea!"

And the "jolly good idea" was carried out. The juniors filled their pockets with gold Spanish doubloons, and so, whatever happened to the treasure, they were certain of saving something. And the fate of the great chest was very dubious, for storms were sudden and violent in the Pacific, and the felucca was a small craft to traverse that wild waste of waters.

The juniors looked back towards the island; it had vanished into the blue sea and sky. Round them was the Pacific once more. The



Spaniard, stirring uneasily in his bonds, called out to Tom Merry :

"Senorito! Do you intend to keep me trussed up like this? I am cramped in every limb."

The juniors consulted on the subject. It certainly was not safe to let the Spaniard loose, yet to keep him bound to the mast throughout the voyage was impossible. There were no manacles on board the felucca.

They decided finally to release him, but to keep his hands shackled to his sides, the rope loose enough to allow him to eat, but not to untie himself. This was managed at last, and the Spaniard sullen and savage, was allowed to move about as he wished. His black looks did not trouble the juniors; as Blake said, his teeth were drawn.

Sailing the felucca did not prove a difficult task, and the black sailors obeyed Peter Raff's orders as they had obeyed the Spaniard. The day passed in perfect calmness, the felucca speeding along before a strong breeze. It was towards sunset that Kerr was observed to have his gaze fixed attentively upon a spot on the blue horizon. Tom Merry joined him.

"What are you looking at, Kerr?"

"There's something yonder," said the Scottish junior. "It might be a whale or sea-serpent, but——"

"But what?"

"It might be a boat."

Tom Merry started. The course of the felucca was changed a little to bring her directly upon the unknown object. The juniors crowded in the bows, watching. The thought that it was a boat, that it might be Lord Conway's boat, was in every mind.



The felucca ran down close beside the drifting boat. Tom Merry shouted over the side. "Ahoy there! St. Jim's to the rescue!" (See page 349.)

Tom Merry's idea had been to get to the nearest port in New Zealand, and there send vessels in search of the missing boat, for money would have been spent like water in the search for Lord Conway, and the juniors would gladly have devoted every ounce of the treasure to the task of finding him and rescuing him and his companions.

"It's a boat!" Digby exclaimed.

It was a boat, certainly. As the felucca drew nearer they could make out a ragged signal flying from the mast. The sail was in tatters; the boat had evidently been through rough usage. Tom Merry scanned it, with the binoculars, and

made out several forms in the boat, most of them lying down.

"A shipwrecked crew, anyway," he said. The felucca raced on.

In the distant boat a man was seen to jump up and wave his hand frantically. He had evidently seen the sail. Then, after a few minutes, the boat was put before the wind, and



the ragged sail bellied out, and the boat flew away from the felucca as fast as she could sail.

Tom Merry was puzzled for a moment.

"What on earth does that mean?" he exclaimed. "They are turning their backs on us."

"It means that it's Lord Conway's party," said Kerr quietly. "They recognise the felucca, and think that it's Pablo Lopez after them."

"Bai Jove!"

"Why, of course!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Well, we shall run them down under half an hour, that's a comfort."

The felucca was tearing through the water. She sailed four lengths to the boat's one, and the race was only a matter of time. Soon the juniors could see the occupants of the boat, and Lord Conway's tall form was recognised standing by the sail. Herries could be seen lying on a rag of canvas in the stern. Mr. Dodds was at the tiller. The seamen of the Silver Scud were there, and the juniors counted them anxiously, and were relieved to count up the full number.

They shouted to the boat, but for a long time the wind carried away their voices, but suddenly Lord Conway, who was looking back towards the felucca, was observed to give a start. He had seen the juniors waving to him, and understood that matters were not as he had supposed on board the felucca.

The boat swung round.

A few minutes more and the felucca ran down close beside the drifting boat. Tom Merry shouted over the side:

"Ahoy there! St. Jim's to the rescue!"

"Thank Heaven!" said Lord Conway.

## THE THIRTY-THIRD CHAPTER

### Lopez's Last Blow

IT did not take long for the castaways to clamber on board. They were in a terribly emaciated condition. They had not, as Lord Conway said, come to the end of their provisions yet, but they had been on short rations of both food and water, and it had told upon them. The juniors gathered round Herries, and D'Arcy offered to carry him down to the cabin. Herries glared at him.

"Do you think I can't walk?" he demanded.

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"And how the dickens are you going to carry me when I'm twice as big as you are?" Herries inquired.

"I wefuse to admit anythin' of the sort, Hewwies. You are a little fatter and clumsier, I know, but you are not tallah, and I could cawwy you quite easily."

"Ass!" said Herries.

"Weally, you chump——"

"Hallo! Rowing already?" asked Mr. Dodds.

"Oh, that's all right! That's only Gussy's way of welcoming a long-lost chum," said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lowthah, you ass——"

Herries was helped down to the cabin. He was really very weak, though nothing would have induced him to admit it. Fatty Wynn, who always had a ready eye for very important matters of this sort, spread the table with every delicacy that the felucca's lazarette could muster. Herries began to eat.

The others were well looked after, too, but, naturally, Herries was the lion. Any number of grown-up people could not, of course, be considered as being of as much importance as a chap in the Fourth.

"Well, I must say that this takes the cake!" Lord Conway said, as he looked at the treasure-chest and then at the shackled Spaniard, and glanced up and down the felucca. "You seemed to have scored all along the line, you youngsters. Next time I set out on a voyage for treasure I shall ask the Head of St. Jim's to send me a junior to take command."

"Bai Jove, that wouldn't be a bad ideah," said Arthur Augustus innocently. "I should be vewy pleased, Conway, deah boy."

And the juniors roared.

The rescued crew crowded the felucca somewhat, but with Lord Conway in command, and plenty of hands to do the work, the little craft was undoubtedly safer. Tom Merry willingly resigned the command to the viscount.

Lord Conway was a good navigator, and he fell into his new duties at once. Day after



day the felucca glided on with fair winds and a cheerful crew. The expedition, after so many adventures and vicissitudes, was turning out a splendid success, but the end had not yet come.

The Spaniard had fallen into a quiet sullen humour, and he moved about the ship with downcast face and silent lips. After a couple of days the man was allowed the freedom of his limbs. There were so many Englishmen on board that it was absurd to think he could attempt any desperate move for regaining possession of the felucca, and he was not allowed a chance of getting at any weapons. Disappointment and chagrin seemed to have an effect upon him, and on the fourth day he took to his bunk, and did not leave it. He lay there through the sunny hours, eating little and speaking not at all. To a sick man the juniors were disposed to be kind, even after all his villainies; but the Spaniard spoke no word to them, and refused even kindness.

"We shall be at anchor to-morrow in Hawke Bay, in the North Island," said Lord Conway, one moonlit evening, on deck, as he smoked his cigar. "There we can get the chest ashore, and, I hope, pick up a steamer. The felucca would not take us back to Europe."

"I shall be sowwy to leave her, though," D'Arcy said, glancing up at the big sails. "We have had a good time, and I think we are entitled to regard her as a prize."

"I suppose we shall leave her to the Spaniard?" Tom Merry remarked.

The viscount nodded.

"Yes, he can have his vessel back when we are ashore with the gold. The way things have turned out I think we can afford to forgive him his rascality."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The felucca doesn't seem to be sailing so well just now," Figgins remarked, with a puzzled look. "She seems to be dragging, and look how the bows are dipping."

Lord Conway rose, and threw away his cigar.

"That's very curious," he said.

"Bai Jove! Yaas! The cwaft is wobblin', too."

Peter Raff came up to them with an anxious expression.

"There's something wrong with the craft, sir," he said. "Looks to me as if there's a leak sprung somewhere below."

"Look at once, Raff."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

Peter Raff ran down below, and the next moment his voice was heard calling hoarsely for help.

"Lopez!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

They rushed down. Water was splashing over the planks of the cabin floor, and Peter Raff was struggling in the grasp of the Spaniard. The ruffian was grasped at once and torn away from the panting sailorman.

Peter Raff staggered up.

"She's scuttled, sir!" he panted.

"Good heavens!"

Lopez, in the grasp of the seamen, turned a look of savage hate upon the Englishmen.

"Carambo! Did you think you would have the treasure, then?" he exclaimed. "Yes, I have scuttled the felucca! The treasure and all of us can go to the bottom together!"

"You hound!"

Lopez laughed exultantly.

"I have had my revenge!" he said.

The Spaniard was dragged on deck. Lord Conway made an attempt to get to the leak, but the hold was full of water.

"Fortunately, we are near the shore, and the boats will hold us all at a pinch," said Mr. Dodds.

"But the treasure——"

"We may have time to save it yet," said Lord Conway. "Lower away the boats."

The treasure-chest had been placed below in the after cabin. The door of the cabin was locked, and there was no key. They turned savagely to Lopez, and demanded the key, and the Spaniard, with an evil grin, pointed to the sea.

"The key is there," he said, "and the treasure will soon be there also, senores. That is the revenge of Pablo Lopez. Now do with me as you will."

Crash!

The felucca was heeling over, and one of the great sails dragged down into the water. The mast snapped like a match. There was a rush of water below, and the men gathered at the cabin door were driven up the ladder.



Lord Conway set his lips.

"To the boats—quick!" he shouted.

There was no time for anything else.

"Leave the Spaniard here," Peter Raff exclaimed. "Let him go down with the treasure."

The crew were in a mood to do it, too. There was no chance of saving the gold—a doubt whether they could save themselves. Black looks were cast at the Spaniard, but Mr. Dodds spoke in his quiet way.

"We cannot leave him to death," he said.

"Put him into the boat!" said the viscount shortly.

The Spaniard was tossed into a boat, roughly enough. The crew pulled away from the felucca, which was now rolling over helplessly in the trough of a sea. The great sails flapped into the water, and disappeared.

*The felucca, the treasure, were gone.*

The boats pulled for the shore. The Spaniard sat silent now, but with the same grin of evil triumph upon his face. He had lost the treasure, but the rivals in the quest had lost it, too, and that was consolation enough to Pablo Lopez.

A few hours later the twice-wrecked voyagers landed on Maori soil. Their voyage was over, and it remained only to get to the nearest steamer and return to England. The Spaniard was released—there was nothing else to be done with him. Of the treasure of the Pacific island all that remained was the Spanish doubloons the juniors had in their pockets, but that, at least, would suffice to show the fellows at St. Jim's that they really had found a treasure in the South Seas; and, after all, as Blake said, that was the chief consideration. And so the St. Jim's party were cheerful enough when they trod the deck of a steamer, homeward bound.

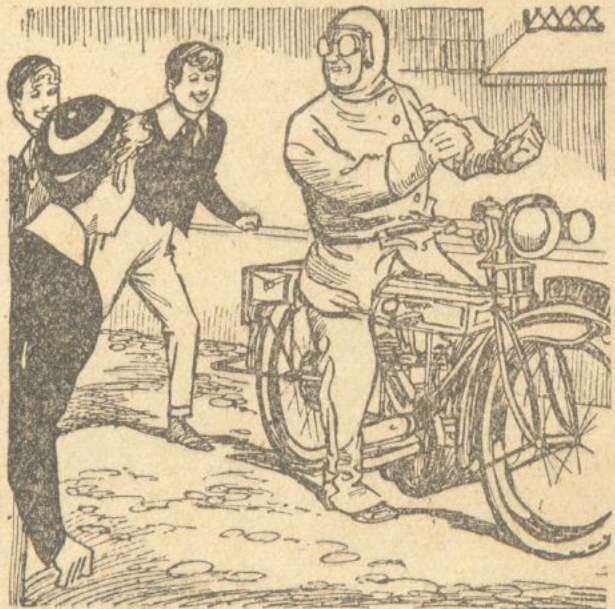
"We shall have two or three hundred pounds between us," Tom Merry remarked, "and I think we'll blue a good bit of it in a celebration at St. Jim's—what?"

And the juniors agreed that they would.

THE END.

## Great Days at Greyfriars

### Breaking-Up Day



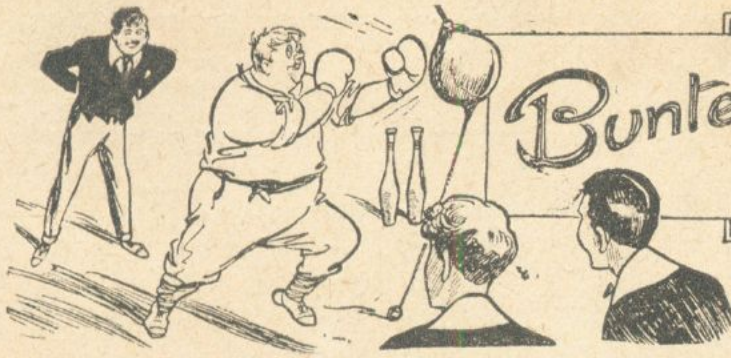
Of all the days we love the best  
This happy day predominates;  
A day of idleness or rest  
The average boy abominates.  
But on this day of breaking-up,  
When all are packing busily,  
We have no time for bite or sup,  
The hours speed by so dizzily.

Soon, very soon, we shall escape  
From Quelchy's frowns and chastening;  
Each boy is grinning like an ape,  
And down the passage hastening  
With bags and boxes, hefty trunks,  
And various miscellania;  
Then back into his study bunks,  
Fired with the packing mania!

There's Horace Coker going off  
Upon his motor-bicycle;  
And while spectators stand and scoff,  
His glance is like an icicle.  
He freezes all the fellows there  
With looks of animosity;  
When he goes rushing through the air  
With breathless, fierce velocity!

This truly is a day of days,  
Good-bye to books and lexicons;  
The fellows go their several ways  
As wild and free as Mexicans!  
The cabs and carriages depart,  
There's not a sign of tearfulness;  
For there is joy in every heart,  
And songs ring out with cheerfulness!





# Bunter's Boxing Bout!

A Play in verse for Amateur Actors  
By DICK PENFOLD

[NOTE.—As in the case of previous Plays published in THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL, performances may be given by parties of our readers, without fee or licence, on condition that the words, “By permission of the Editor of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL,” appear on each programme.]

## Characters :

BILLY BUNTER..The Fat Boy of Greyfriars.  
 PETER TODD  
 ALONZO TODD } Study-mates of Billy Bunter.  
 TOM DUTTON }  
 HARRY WHARTON }  
 BOB CHERRY } The Famous Five of  
 FRANK NUGENT } the Greyfriars Remove.  
 JOHNNY BULL }  
 HURREE SINGH }  
 SAMBO THE SLOGGER..A Young Negro Pugilist.

## ACT I.

SCENE.—No. 7 Study in the Remove Passage.

(BILLY BUNTER is alone in the apartment. His coat is off, and his shirt sleeves rolled back. He is vigorously attacking a punching-ball suspended from the ceiling.)

BUNTER :  
 I love to stand and punch this ball,  
 It doesn't tire me out at all.  
 I'm putting lots of vigour in it  
 And growing stronger every minute!  
 (Biff! Thud! Biff! Thud!)

BUNTER :  
 If this ball were a human face  
 I'd puncture it in every place!  
 I'm not at all a warlike chap,  
 But now and then I love a scrap!  
 (BUNTER attacks the ball with renewed ferocity. He misses his punch, overbalances, and topples to the floor with a crash. Enter PETER TODD, ALONZO TODD, and TOM DUTTON.)

PETER :  
 What ever's going on in here ?  
 ALONZO :  
 Bunter has come to grief, I fear.  
 DUTTON :  
 Billy, you chump! What made you fall ?  
 BUNTER :  
 Ow-ow! I missed my punch, that's all!  
 PETER :  
 But why this energy and vim ?  
 BUNTER :  
 I'm fighting some one in the gym.  
 PETER :  
 Your look of hate is simply Hunnish.  
 Pray, whom do you propose to punish ?  
 BUNTER (rising to his feet) :  
 You've heard of Sambo, that young nigger,  
 Who cut a most attractive figure  
 In Courtfield Town the other night,  
 And never yet has lost a fight ?  
 I've challenged him to meet me here,  
 And I shall lick him, never fear !  
 PETER (aghast) :  
 You've challenged Sambo to a scrap ?  
 BUNTER :  
 Right on the wicket, dear old chap !  
 PETER :  
 Why, Bunter, you will be demolished !  
 ALONZO :  
 You're neither skilful, strong, nor polished !  
 DUTTON (who is deaf) :  
 What's all this chattering about ?  
 Just whisper it ; no need to shout.



PETER :  
We were discussing Billy's fight——

DUTTON :  
Eh? Did you call me "silly kite?"

PETER (*indignantly*):  
I called you nothing of the sort!

DUTTON :  
How dare you tell me that I snort?

PETER :  
Oh, dear! Your deafness is appalling!

DUTTON :  
Are you accusing me of brawling?

PETER :  
Help! I shall  
soon give up  
the ghost.  
I might as well  
address a post!  
Your deafness is a  
sore affliction,  
It causes quite a  
lot of friction.

BUNTER :  
I say, you fellows,  
just watch me!  
I'm going to biff  
the punch-ball,  
see?

(BUNTER resumes  
operations. After giving  
the ball several vigorous  
thumps, he misses it,  
and strikes ALONZO  
TODD on the nose.)

ALONZO (*clapping his nose*):  
My nasal organ has been smitten!

BUNTER :  
Bah! You're as nervous as a kitten.

ALONZO :  
You smote me with terrific force——

BUNTER :  
I meant to hit the ball, of course!

PETER :  
Stand clear of danger, Lonzy dear;  
Bunter is most unsafe, I fear.  
When is this battle coming off,  
My priceless porpoise?

BUNTER :  
Do not scoff!  
It's coming off on Wednesday night,  
And I am ready for it, quite!

When at the ringside I appear  
The crowd will cry, "Jack Johnson's  
here!"

Or else they'll say, "This chap excels  
At boxing, more than Billy Wells!"  
I'll give that dusky nigger socks,  
And fell him like you'd fell an ox!  
I'll make him bite the dust, and feel  
That he's completely brought to heel.  
I'll give his jaw such hefty punches  
That for a week he'll eat no lunches.  
He won't survive a single round  
Of my hard hitting, I'll be bound!

PETER (*grinning*):  
Billy, you'll be the  
death of me!

DUTTON :  
I vote we all sit  
down to tea!

(BILLY BUNTER puts  
on his coat, while the  
others proceed to lay the  
table. A large plum  
cake is brought forth,  
also a dish of assorted  
pastries. One of the  
juniors boils a kettle  
on a small spirit-stove.  
There is plenty of hustle  
and bustle in the course  
of these preparations,  
and ALONZO TODD  
causes a diversion by  
dropping a tray of

crockeryware. At last everything is in readiness  
for the meal, and the juniors seat themselves at  
the table.)

ALONZO (*cutting the cake*):  
Now, my dear Bunter, will you take  
A good, stout slice of this fine cake?

BUNTER :  
No, thank you, Lonzy; not for me.

PETER (*in amazement*):  
What! Aren't you having cake for tea?

BUNTER :  
No, no! If I'm to get quite fit  
I mustn't touch a single bit.

ALONZO :  
You'll have a doughnut, won't you,  
Billy?



Billy Bunter missed his punch, overbalanced,  
and toppled to the floor



BUNTER :

To train on doughnuts would be silly !

PETER :

What are you going to have, you duffer ?

BUNTER :

No cakes, or I shall surely suffer.

ALONZO :

Come! Try this succulent jam-tart!

BUNTER :

No fear! It would affect my heart.

DUTTON :

What's Bunter having for his tea?  
There's nothing on his plate, I see.

BUNTER :

I'll have a slice  
of plain, dry  
toast,  
Or just a couple,  
at the most.  
A cup of water I  
will drink,  
And that will be  
enough, I think.  
I must be sound  
in every limb  
When I meet  
Sambo in the  
gym.

PETER :

You're building  
castles in the  
air.

You may as well  
at once despair  
Of winning this  
unequal bout:

Sambo will surely knock you out!

BUNTER :

Nonsense! A fighting-man like me  
Will win hands down, as you will see.

ALONZO :

You are so bumptious and conceited,  
'Twill do you good to be defeated!

BUNTER :

Defeat? I do not know the term!  
I'll make that black-faced nigger squirm!  
I'll punch him on the nose and chin,  
And he'll see stars when I begin!  
I'll drive him round and round the ring  
And wallop him like anything!  
So fiercely I'll chastise the fellow

That he'll be black and blue and yellow!  
The crowd will cry, in tones of dread,  
"Look! Billy Bunter's seeing red!"  
Heigh-ho! What triumph and delight  
I shall enjoy on Wednesday night!

PETER :

Dear boy, you're talking tommy-rot.  
Sambo will let you have it hot!  
He'll lead you such a merry dance  
We'll have to fetch the ambulance!

BUNTER :

You think I am a weakling, Toddy,  
But I'll stand up to anybody!  
I'll give old Sambo such a drubbing

He'll kneel and  
beg for mercy,  
blubbing.

ALONZO :

Oh, fat and foolish  
youth! I fear  
You'll be the one  
to shed a tear!

DUTTON (*passing the  
cake*):

Come, Billy!  
Sample this  
plum cake.

It's jolly good,  
and no mistake.

PETER (*passing the  
pastries*):

Come, sample  
these delightful  
dainties!

Keen hunger —  
that's what your complaint is!

ALONZO (*passing the scones*):

No scones in all the world like these,  
So try one, Billy, if you please.

BUNTER (*rising from the table*):

Not if you tempt me all the night  
Will I enjoy a single bite!

I've had my toast, and water, too,  
Now I've more training work to do.  
The dumb-bells I shall briskly swing,  
Then practise sparring in the ring.  
I mean to get myself in trim—  
Sound as a bell in wind and limb!

PETER :

You mark my words: on Wednesday  
night



Bunter: No, no! If I'm to get quite fit I mustn't  
touch a single bit



Your knees will quake with fear and  
fright.

The perspiration on your brow  
Will stand in hefty beads, I vow.  
That nigger boy from Courtfield Town  
Will biff you, bump you, knock you down,  
Correct you, conquer you, chastise you,  
Pommel you, punch you, pulverise you!  
He'll chase you round and round the ring,  
Then floor you with a strong right swing.  
You'll tumble in a huddled heap:  
The crowd will say, "Our Bill's asleep!"  
Just wait and see if I'm not right.  
Tragic your fate on Wednesday night!

BUNTER:

Peter, I scorn your  
words of woe!  
Unsympathetic  
beasts, I go!

(Exit BILLY BUN-  
TER, in dignity and  
scorn. PETER TODD  
and TOM DUTTON throw  
cushions after him, and  
he disappears from  
view, uttering wild yells  
of anguish.)

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

SCENE. — The gym-  
nasium at Grey-  
friars. There is a  
boxing ring, roped  
in, ready for the  
big contest. THE

FAMOUS FIVE are seated in chairs at the  
ringside. (There are other spectators, but  
only THE FAMOUS FIVE are shown on the  
stage.)

WHARTON:

The fight begins at seven o'clock—

CHERRY:

And Bunter will receive a shock!

NUGENT:

Sambo will knock him into space—

BULL:

It won't improve poor Bunter's face!

HURREE SINGH:

In my opinion, worthy chums—

WHARTON:

One moment, Inky! Someone comes!

(Enter SAMBO THE SLOGGER. He is a  
dusky nigger-boy, wearing a light raincoat over  
his boxing attire. He grins broadly at THE  
FAMOUS FIVE, and bows to them.)

SAMBO:

Me just arrived from Courtfield Town.

(De taxi fare was half-a-crown.)

CHERRY:

My hat! Against this sturdy nigger  
Bunter will cut a sorry figure!

SAMBO (looking round):

Where is dis Bunter? Has he bunked?

Don't tell me dat  
de fellah's fun-  
ked!

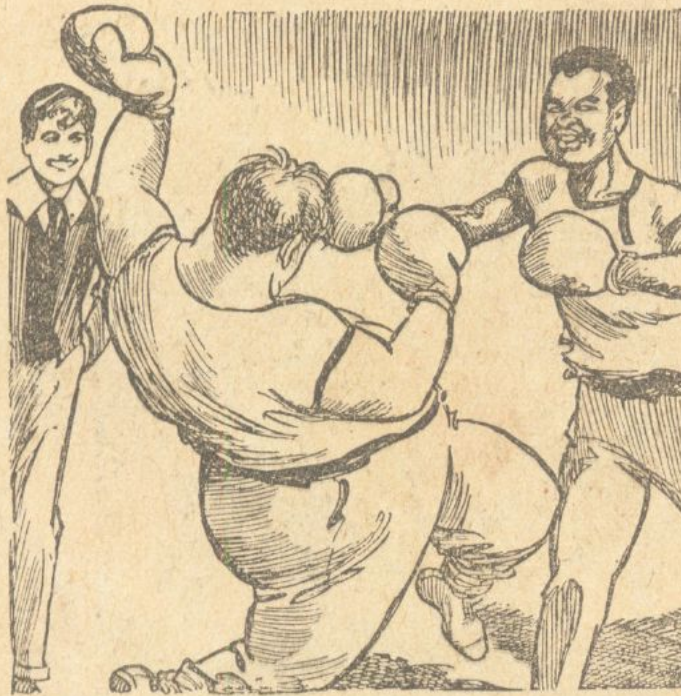
NUGENT:

Oh, he'll be here  
in half a min-  
ute—

SAMBO (taking off his  
raincoat):

De fight! Me  
anxious to be-  
gin it!

(Sounds of commo-  
tion without. There is  
a scuffle and voices are  
heard saying, "Go  
along, Bunter!"  
"Don't be a funk!"  
"You challenged  
Sambo to a fight, and  
now you've got to go  
through with it!")



Billy Bunter was floored by a powerful drive to the  
head.

Cries of protest from BILLY BUNTER, who is  
bundled unceremoniously into the gym. He  
alights on all fours, amid laughter from THE  
FAMOUS FIVE.)

BUNTER (scrambling to his feet):

Oh, dear! I've no desire to fight!

WHARTON:

Yet you arranged it for to-night.

BUNTER:

I planned it when I felt quite fit,  
But now I'm not—no, not a bit!

CHERRY:

Why, what's the matter with you, Bill?

BUNTER:

Fact is, I'm feeling very ill!



BULL :  
You're suffering from cold feet, you  
duffer !

NUGENT :  
From which complaint all cowards suffer !

BUNTER :  
I'm not a coward—not at all.  
I fear no fellow, great or small.  
If Wells or Beckett came here now,  
I'd fight 'em cheerfully, I vow !

SAMBO :  
Well, Massa Bunter, here's your chance !  
You said you'd lead me quite a dance.

BUNTER :  
And so I will !  
Am I afraid ?  
Was ever a Bun-  
ter weak, dis-  
mayed ?  
I'll take my coat  
off right away  
And boldly plunge  
into the fray !

*(Removes coat and  
puts on boxing-gloves.  
SAMBO also dons gloves.)*

WHARTON : I think I'll  
act as referee.

CHERRY :  
Yes, go ahead !  
We all agree.

NUGENT :  
We'll want a  
stretcher here  
for Billy.

BUNTER :  
Oh, shut up, Nugent, don't be silly !  
*(WHARTON steps into the ring and introduces  
the boxers to the public.)*

WHARTON :  
Gentlemen ! In this ring you see  
A youth named Bunter, W. G.  
Also a youth from Courtfield Town,  
A coloured boxer of renown.  
They wish to try conclusions here,  
And Bunter will be licked, I fear.  
Rely on me to see fair play,  
I've refereed before to-day !

HURREE SINGH :  
Cut out the gas, my worthy Harry.  
On with the scrapfulness : don't tarry !

CHERRY :  
Hear, hear ! I'm waiting, with a grin,  
For the performance to begin !

BUNTER :  
I say, you chaps ! Before we start,  
Let me sit down and rest my heart.  
I've got a very queer sensation,  
I think it's chronic palpitation !

WHARTON :  
You should have thought of that before.  
I think it's funk, and nothing more.  
Stand boldly up, and meet your man !  
Give him a hiding—if you can !

BUNTER *(aside)* :

I wish I'd never  
planned this  
fight.  
That nigger fills  
my soul with  
fright !

BULL :  
You are a coward  
and a skunk !

NUGENT :  
You are a chicken-  
hearted funk !

CHERRY :  
You don't possess  
an ounce of  
gumption—

BUNTER :  
That is a very  
base assump-  
tion !

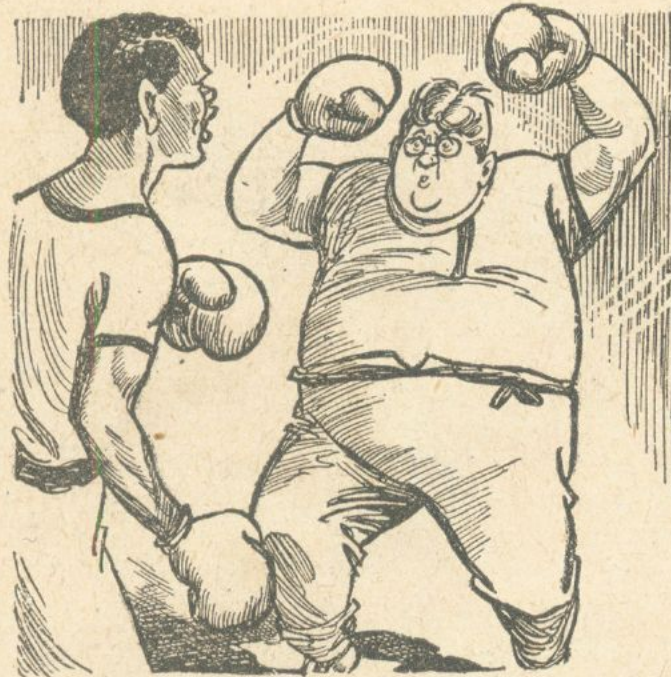
WHARTON :

The hour of seven begins to chime.  
We will delay no longer.—TIME !

*(BUNTER rushes blindly towards his op-  
ponent. SAMBO, grinning broadly, steps very  
smartly to one side, and BUNTER'S fists smite  
the air. The fat junior loses his balance, and  
crashes to the boards.)*

CHERRY :  
“ There, at the foot of Pompey's statue,  
Great Cæsar fell ! ” Look out, he's at  
you !

*(BUNTER totters to his feet, and for two  
minutes he manages to dodge SAMBO'S blows.  
Then he is knocked down by a powerful drive  
to the head. This time he lies still, and makes no  
effort to rise. Bell rings, end of first round, and*



Bunter rushed at Sambo, hitting out wildly



SAMBO retires to corner, BUNTER being dragged to his corner.)

SAMBO :

Dat's done de trick, widout a doubt !

BUNTER :

I'm beaten, Wharton ! Count me out !

WHARTON :

You're simply shamming on the floor.  
Get up, you worm, and have some more !

BUNTER :

I can't get up ; my back is broken !

NUGENT :

The biggest fib you've ever spoken !

BUNTER :

My spinal column's rent in sunder—

CHERRY :

Then why are you alive, I wonder?  
(Laughter.)

BUNTER (groaning piteously) :

I'm absolutely done, I fear ;  
I cannot see, I cannot hear,  
I cannot feel, I cannot think,  
I cannot eat, I cannot drink,  
I cannot speak—

WHARTON :

You're speaking now !

BUNTER :

Oh, come and fan my fevered brow !

SAMBO :

Dis fellah Bunter's telling lies.  
Make him get up ; me black his eyes !  
Me knock him round and round the ring,  
Me make him howl like anyting !

BUNTER :

Black brute ! You've punished me enough !

BULL (scornfully) :

You are not made of heroes' stuff !

CHERRY :

"Charge, Chester, charge !" On, porpoise, on !

BUNTER :

All hopes of victory are gone.

WHARTON :

I'm going to hoist you to your feet.  
And make you fight until you're beat !

BUNTER :

Don't be an ass ! I'm licked already !

NUGENT :

Convince yourself you're strong and steady !

CHERRY :

Dash manfully into the fray,  
And you are bound to win the day !

(The fat junior shakes off his attack of funk, and glares defiantly at his opponent.)

BUNTER :

I've pulled myself together fine.

I'll fight, and victory shall be mine !

A Bunter's blood flows in my veins,

I'm not afraid of aches or pains.

Did not my grandsire dare and do

Upon the field of Waterloo ?

Did not my father, on his hoss,

Join in the Charge

of Charing Cross ?

Were not the Bunters to the fore

In many thrilling scraps of yore ?

And shall I play a coward's part ?

No, no ! I'll show a fearless heart.

Once more unto the breach, dear friends !

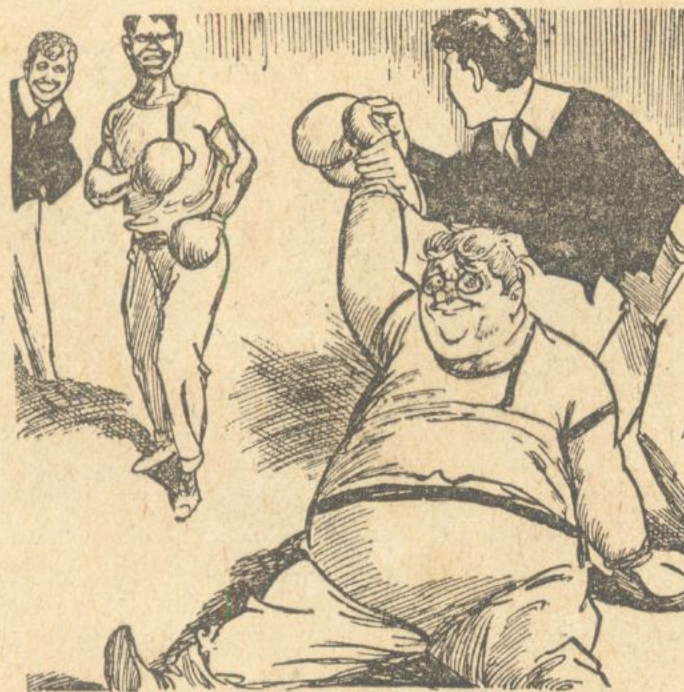
On with the fight, until it ends !

WHARTON :

That is a most courageous speech.

Let's see you practise what you preach !

(Bell rings for next round. BUNTER promptly rushes at SAMBO, hitting out wildly. Most of his blows are dodged, but many get home. SAMBO is amazed at BUNTER'S sudden onslaught, and he gives way before it. It is a



Wharton : A foul ! A foul ! I stop the fight.  
Bunter is the winner !



wild and whirling fight, and the onlookers cheer loudly.)

NUGENT :

Wonders will never cease, you chaps !  
Bunter will win this fight—

THE OTHERS :

Perhaps !

CHERRY :

He's putting up a splendid show.

BULL :

But Sambo's giving blow for blow !

BUNTER (*breathlessly*) :

Take that—and that—and that—and that !

SAMBO (*retaliating*) :

Take dat—and  
dat—and dat  
and dat !—

(*The battle proceeds in hammer-and-tongs fashion. Presently SAMBO puts out his foot for his opponent to trip over, and BUNTER goes sprawling.*)

WHARTON :

A foul ! A foul !  
I stop the  
fight !

SAMBO :

Dat trip was  
accidental,  
quite !

WHARTON :

Nonsense ! It was  
a crafty action.

And Bunter has the satisfaction  
Of hereby being hailed as winner !

CHERRY :

We'll treat him to a stunning dinner !

BUNTER (*sitting up dazedly*) :

I say, you fellows, have I won ?

NUGENT :

Yes, what you planned to do, you've  
done !

WHARTON :

The nigger is disqualified.

BULL :

I'd like to tan his dusky hide !

SAMBO :

Dis child fought fair and square, you  
know !

WHARTON :

Put on your coat, you cad, and go !

(SAMBO shows defiance ; whereupon THE FAMOUS FIVE rush towards him, wrench off his boxing-gloves, hustle him into his coat, and send him whirling through the exit. BOB CHERRY takes a final kick at the retreating figure.)

CHERRY :

Hurrah ! We've sped the parting guest.

BUNTER :

I say, you chaps, I want to rest.

WHARTON :

You've had a jolly strenuous fight—

NUGENT :

And won it, too,  
to our delight !

HURREE SINGH :

So now, with joy  
and jubilation,  
We'll hold a study  
celebration.

Bunter shall be  
the guest of  
honour :

As to the feast,  
I'll be the  
donor.

WHARTON :

Come, Billy, filled  
with joy and  
glee,  
And taste the  
sweets of vic-  
tory !

(*Exit EVERYBODY.*)

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE.—No. 1 Study in the Remove Passage.

(BILLY BUNTER is propped up on the sofa by a number of cushions. Various pieces of sticking-plaster adorn his face, and there is a bandage round his head, covering his right eye. But he is smiling and happy.)

BUNTER :

Now that the battle's fought and over  
The happy victor is in clover !

Oh, what a ripping stroke of luck.  
The Famous Five are buying tuck.  
There's going to be a topping feed,  
And it's the very thing I need.



Bunter : I've not had such a jolly day since I  
was home on holiday !



Lonzy and Dutton are invited,  
And Peter also ; I'm delighted !  
(Enter a procession of juniors in single file,  
as follows) :

HARRY WHARTON (carrying a loaf).

BOB CHERRY (carrying a cake).

FRANK NUGENT (carrying a pie).

JOHNNY BULL (carrying a dish of tarts).

HURREE SINGH (balancing a pile of  
plates).

PETER TODD (with a kettle).

ALONZO DUTTON (with a teapot).

TOM DUTTON (with a toasting-fork).

(Each junior deposits his burden on the table,  
with the exception of PETER TODD, who places  
the kettle on the spirit-stove.)

BUNTER :

I say, you fellows, this is great !

CHERRY :

We did our best, at any rate.

BUNTER :

That is a really ripping pie !

NUGENT :

Selected it myself, that's why.

BUNTER :

That dish of tarts looks simply topping !

BULL :

I am a master hand at shopping.

BUNTER :

It warms the cockles of my heart  
To view this tuck. Say, shall we start ?

CHERRY :

Yes ! Here's a slice of cake, friend Bill.  
No need to come for it ; lie still !  
We'll wait on you with pride and pleasure.  
Lie on the couch, and feed at leisure.

BUNTER :

I've not had such a jolly day  
Since I was home on holiday !

WHARTON :

You certainly deserve this feed.  
For once, we will excuse your greed.

NUGENT :

You knocked out Slogger Sam in style.  
Cheers could be heard for quite a mile !

HURREE SINGH :

The shouting and the cheerfulness  
Rang sweetly in the earfulness !

PETER TODD :

Billy, you'll be a brave man yet ;  
A burly pugilist, I'll bet !

ALONZO :

The manly art of fisticuffs  
Will help you conquer louts and roughs.

(BUNTER speedily consumes his slice of cake.  
He smacks his lips, and gazes eagerly towards  
the table.)

NUGENT :

Finished your cake, old chap ? Then try  
A portion of this rabbit pie !

BUNTER :

Thanks, Nugent ! Is it wrong to wish  
That I could polish off the dish ?

NUGENT :

Certainly not, my dear old top !  
Gorge merrily, and do not stop.

WHARTON :

This is a joyous celebration !  
Bunter has won our admiration.  
Who would have thought that he could  
box,

And give his black opponent shocks ?

But yesterday, he was a funk :

At thoughts of battle, he would bunk.

He was a coward, a poltroon :

When smitten, he would promptly swoon.

But the Bill Bunter of to-day

Is not the funk of yesterday.

Look how he faced and fought his foe !

He was a masterpiece, you know.

BUNTER :

I fear no foe in shining armour——

CHERRY :

We're well aware of that, plump charmer !

BUNTER :

I'd fight Jack Johnson—yes, this minute !

BULL :

Of course ! There would be nothing in it.

BUNTER :

I feel the world is at my feet.  
(This rabbit pie is hard to beat !)

PETER TODD :

“ Eat and grow fat ! ” a proverb pleasant.  
You're really much too thin at present !  
(Laughter.)

BUNTER :

I fasted for a whole long week,  
And the experience was unique.  
I had to get myself in trim  
For that stern contest in the gym.

ALONZO :

But fasting days are over now,



The victor's wreath adorns your brow.  
You are a very valiant Bunter,  
Not merely a conceited stunter!

DUTTON:

I can't hear what you chaps are saying.  
Sounds like a lot of donkeys braying!

WHARTON:

The victor we acclaim with cheering—

DUTTON:

Speak up, my son, I'm hard of hearing!

WHARTON:

Enough to make a fellow groan,  
"My kingdom for a megaphone!"

CHERRY:

Let's call on Bunter for a speech!

ALL:

Yes, yes! A speech we do beseech!

BUNTER (*rising with difficulty from the couch*):

Gentlemen, pals, and chums—

ALL:

Hear, hear!

BUNTER.

I am no hand at this, I fear.

NUGENT:

What nonsense! You are simply "IT"!

BULL!

Best orator since William Pitt!

BUNTER:

A fellow of few words am I,  
Made drowsy by a rabbit pie.  
My thoughts are anything but clear,  
But I will try and persevere.  
I thank you for this ripping feed,  
Which I've devoured with eager greed.  
I thank you, too, for your applause.  
It's touched my heart—

CHERRY:

Dramatic pause.

BUNTER:

Before you drink my health in tea,  
I think you'll all agree with me  
That I'm the very best of boxers,  
And give my opponents scares and  
shocks, sirs!  
So you must never taunt or tease,  
But always mind your q's and p's.  
I've got it wrong way round, but still,  
Heed these remarks of Brother Bill!

WHARTON (*proposing the toast*):

A health to Bunter, W. G.!

ALL (*rising*):

A mighty man of valour he!

CURTAIN.

## A FINAL WORD.

Those of my readers who have, in the foregoing pages, met for the first time the famous school-boy characters who are the familiar favourites of countless thousands of boys and girls to-day, will doubtless be eager to read more about them at the first opportunity. They will welcome, then, the information—which is no news, of course, to the vast majority of my readers—that Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars School, appear every Monday in the "Magnet" Library, in a long, complete 30,000 word story; that the major portion of the "Gem" Library, published every Wednesday, is devoted to the doings of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's; that every Monday's issue of that old and tried favourite of 28 years' standing, "The Boys' Friend," contains a long story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood; while in the "Popular," which enlivens Tuesday mornings throughout the land, complete stories of all three of these famous Schoolboy Co.'s, appear regularly each week, with that world-renowned journal, "Billy Bunter's Weekly," as an additional attraction.

My younger friends are catered for by that cheery picture and story paper, "Chuckles," which is printed in colours and published each Thursday.

Each of the above-named Companion Papers has a great reputation to maintain for wholesome, clean and vigorous fiction, of the sort that has made the "Holiday Annual" the most popular book of its kind in existence. Between them they offer an unequalled range of reading suitable to all tastes, at all times and seasons. To all who have read this issue of the "Holiday Annual" with appreciation, the Companion Papers will appeal with especial force.

THE EDITOR.



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