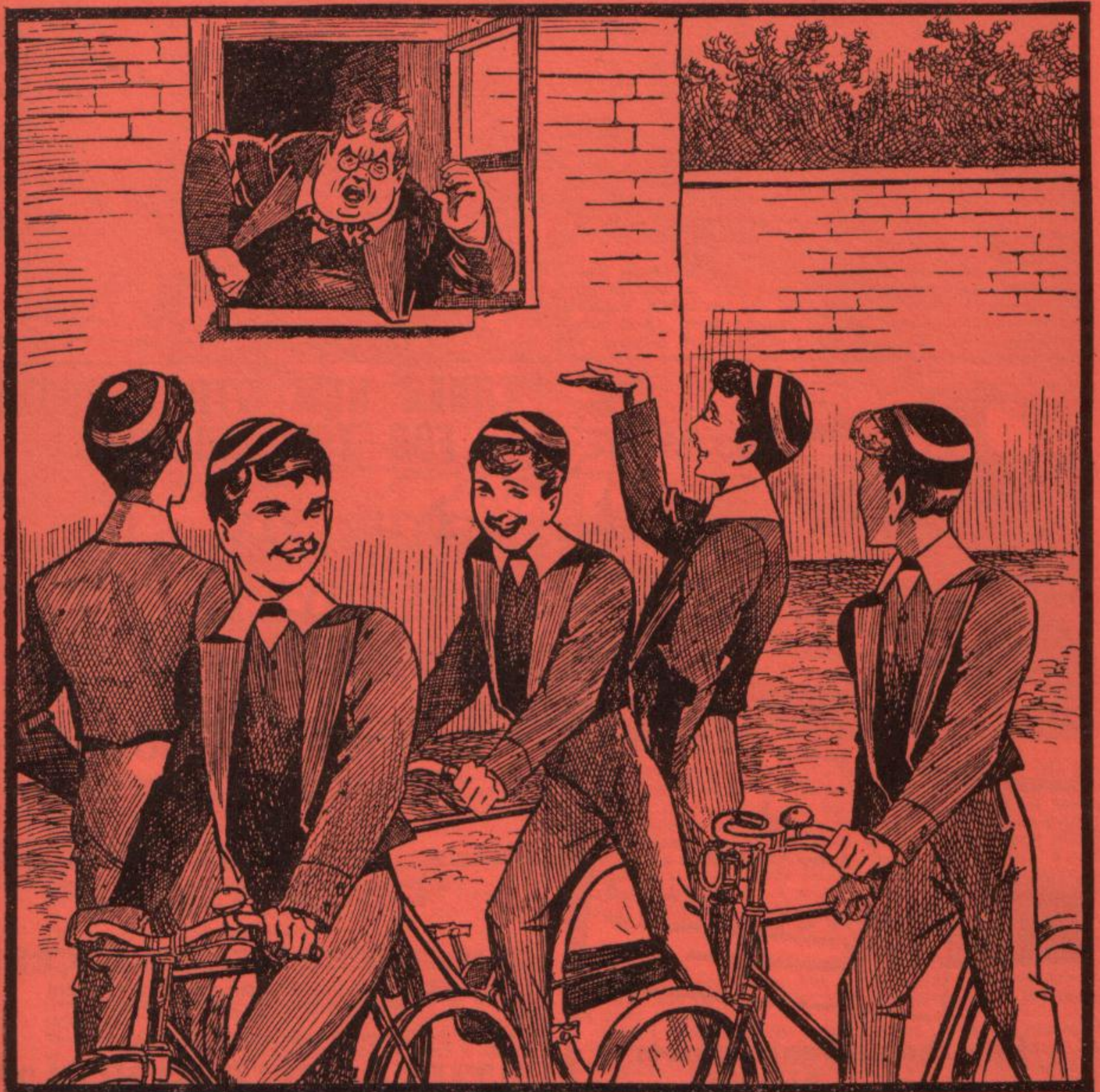
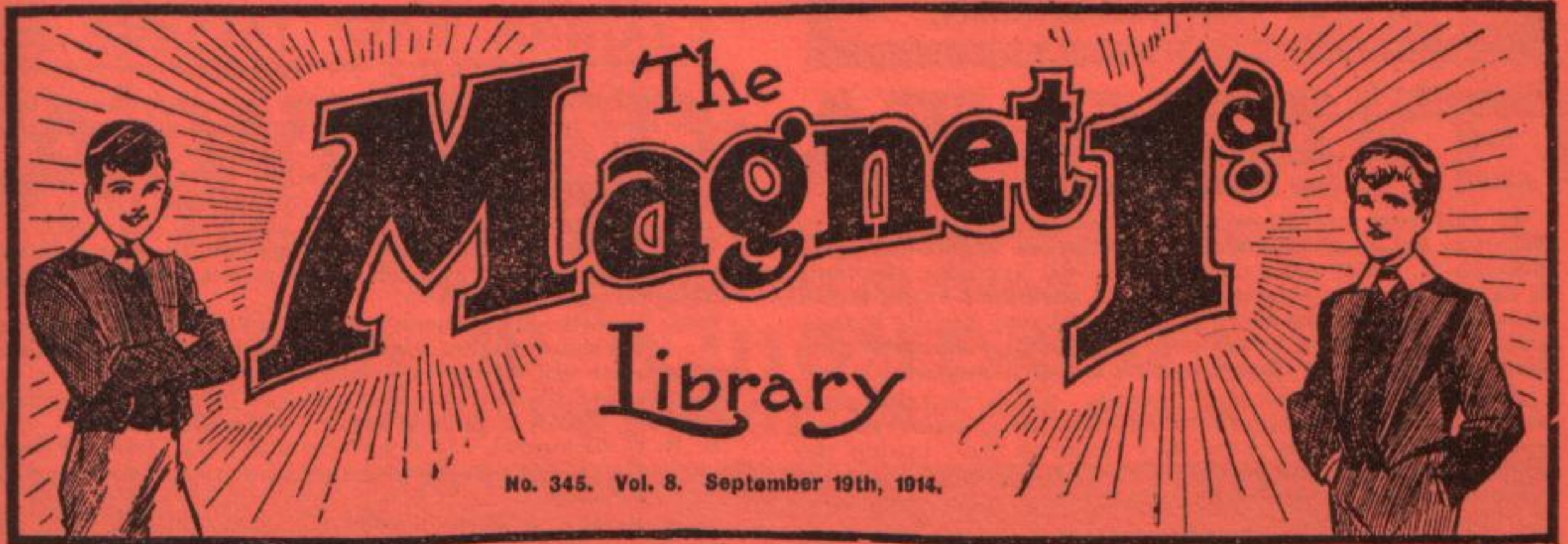


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**The EDITOR'S WEEKLY CHAT
WITH HIS READERS.**

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"HARD UP!"

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

In this new and amusing, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars, Ponsonby of Highcliffe "goes through it" once more, but his revenge upon his assailants is complete! The Famous Five and their new chum Squiff are dropped on by the Head of Greyfriars very heavily indeed, and, in addition to a severe dose of corporal punishment, are landed with the task of paying off a heavy money debt.

A state of "stoniness" ensues, which is absolutely unparalleled in the experience of the unfortunate chums, and desperate are the shifts they resort to for "raising the wind." The net result of their efforts, however, leaves them with a choice collection of bruises and black eyes, but just as

"HARD UP!"

as ever!

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During the progress of the great European War, on which all our thoughts are centred in these times, a number of thrilling and accurately-drawn pictures, executed by our special artists, will appear in THE MAGNET LIBRARY and its companion papers. There is nothing so effective as a really good picture to stir the imagination, and to help the understanding to realise what modern warfare really is like, terrible, relentless, cruel, yet bringing out all the noblest qualities of the human race. The spirit of devotion, of valour, of self-sacrifice, and of fortitude is called forth by war in every citizen, high-born or lowly, in the land.

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REPLIES IN BRIEF.

A. T. (Tufnell Park).—I am afraid your reply would take up too much space. Send me your name and address, so that I can write you.

"Oiseau" and "Constant Reader."—Write to Messrs. Glaisher & Sons, of 32, Charing Cross Road, W.C., who should be able to supply you with the book you need.

W. E. Devereaux (Southwark Bridge Road).—Many thanks for your letter and appreciative remarks concerning our companion papers.

Rebe Nesbitt.—The places you mention are purely fictitious.

H. Drinkwater.—I am afraid I cannot make any definite promise, but will do my best in the near future.

Claude Nye (Norwich).—Many thanks for your suggestion. I may say that it is already under consideration.

B. R. C. (Glasgow).—It is unlikely that Jack Holt will come back to Greyfriars. In all probability, more will be heard of Henry Hammond.

John P. Jayne (Surrey).—We cannot do anything on the lines you suggest at present. Something might be done later, however.

E. Scroggs (Holloway).—The Famous Five are all about fifteen years old.

E. Wild (Liverpool).—Many thanks for your most interesting letter, and for your kindness in getting new readers.

"Dispatch Rider."—Billy Bunter's father is a stockbroker.

T. Maynard.—See reply to "Oiseau."

E. Winsor.—See reply to Rebe Nesbitt.

Clifford A. Price.—Kildare's age is seventeen years. The Head of Greyfriars is getting quite an old gentleman.

L. Winston and J. Quann (Raynes Park).—Thanks for your suggestion. I will most certainly do my best for you.

Alfred Norton (Chislehurst).—Thanks for card. I do not expect you are the only one who has lost a holiday through the war. Best wishes,

The Editor

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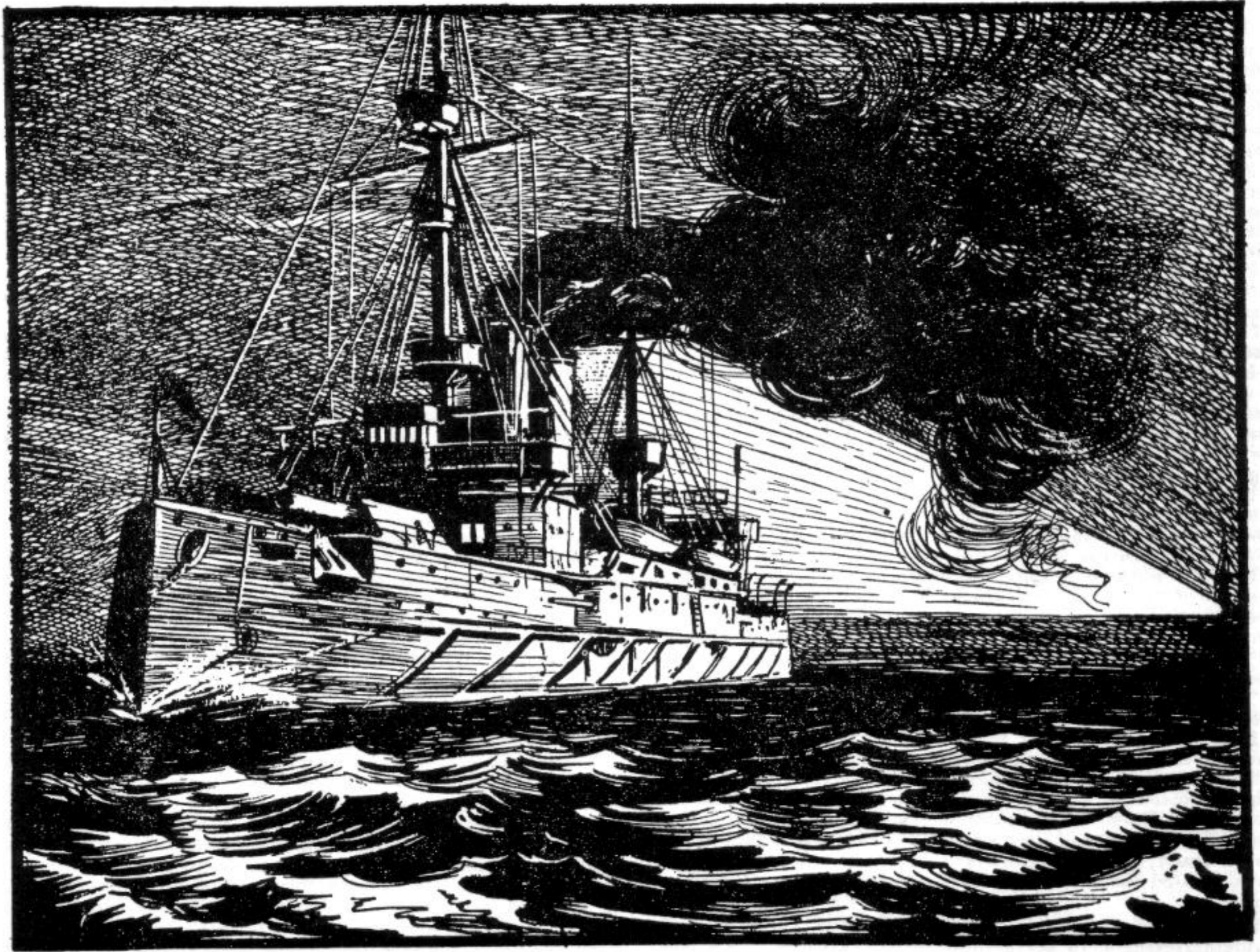
JUST STARTED!

A WORLD AT STAKE!

A Stirring Story of the Supreme Struggle between the
British Empire and its Hated Foe.

By **W. B. HOME-GALL.**

(Now Serving His Country with the British Army.)



READ THIS FIRST.

THORPE THORNHILL, a practically penniless inventor, who has constructed a wonderful airship, with the aid of his brother,

DICK THORNHILL, astonishes

FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS, who is in command of the British troops at manoeuvres, and tells that officer, when he alights, that the British Government had refused to buy the invention. With Roberts are the military attaches of Germany and France.

COLONEL GIRAUD, who represents France, and

MAJOR SEIGNER, the German attache, both attempt to buy the airship for their respective nations. Giraud, when he hears that Thorpe will not sell his invention to anybody save the British Government, retires gracefully. But Major Seigner, offering a million pounds and a principedom of the German Empire, resorts to threats, and is thrown out of the house. It is then that

CAPTAIN HORSHAM, an old school friend of the Thornhills, visits them, and warns them to beware of the German. One of the most trusted men in the Thornhill works is a German named Julian Hartz, who has invented a gun

which he refuses to sell to the German Government. He flees to England, and, by the Kaiser's orders, Major Seigner traps the man on board a ship by the simple means of telling Hartz his wife and child are on board. Here Major Seigner puts a pistol to his head, and demands that Hartz should deliver the airship in Germany's hands—or, at least, a copy of the plan. Hartz hotly refuses. "I count three!" says the major. "If you do not promise before that you are a dead man! One—"

(Now go on with the story.)

The Interrupted Message!

Hartz did not speak, but his agonised thoughts flew to his wife and child, so soon to be left penniless at the mercy of their enemies.

"Two! Speak, before it is too late! Will you consent?"

Still Hartz remained silent, though his whole frame was trembling beneath the struggle going on within his bosom.

"Three! Fi—"

"Stop! I give in. Miserable coward that I am, I dare not die."

The works on Seamew Island, gaily adorned with flags, presented a brilliant spectacle, for the Night Hawk was at last completed.

Seated at a table along one side of the gleaming hull of the airship were the Thornhills' employees.

At a small table on the deck of the airship sat Thorpe Thornhill, his brother Dick, and Captain Horsham.

One place was vacant, for Hartz had been summoned to Colchester by a telegram that afternoon. The Thornhills were disappointed that one who had done so much to make the airships the success they undoubtedly were should be absent on this festive occasion, but his absence was not allowed to check the hilarity of the evening; and, as there were several good singers amongst the employees, while both liquid and solid refreshments were abundant, the time passed swiftly, until about eleven o'clock, when the door opened and Hartz entered.

"Good heavens, man, what ails you?" cried Thorpe Thornhill, springing to his feet and advancing towards the German.

"Ails me? Nothing! What should ail me?" replied Hartz, with a ghastly attempt to smile. "I am again disappointed, that is all. My wife has not yet arrived, and I fear the worst. Heaven help her—and me!"

Thorpe Thornhill looked sharply at the speaker. Like most great thinkers, Hartz's face was always pale, but now it was ghastly. Never had Thorpe seen so great an alteration in so short a time. He seemed to have put ten years on to his life since he had left Seamew Island for Harwich, that fatal evening a week ago. The Thornhills were relieved when he departed in the direction of his own room.

"Poor Hartz, he is awfully cut up. He has been looking forward to seeing his wife, and these continued disappointments are telling upon him terribly," said Dick, who had a genuine affection for the German, and was anxious to excuse his strange conduct to their guest.

"Hartz? It is a German name," said Captain Horsham.

"Yes, he's a German, but he's a jolly good fellow," declared Thorpe, "and thoroughly trustworthy. Eh, Dick?"

"I'd trust him with my life," declared his brother emphatically, and the matter dropped.

It was long past midnight ere, with loud cheers for their generous employers, the workmen sought their rooms, whilst Dick accompanied his brother and their guest to a balcony in the rear of the premises, against which the Falcon was moored, for Thorpe Thornhill and Horsham intended returning that night to Woolwich Dockyard.

Dick bore in his hand a little box containing a wireless telegraphic apparatus, for during their journey back to London Thorpe intended experimenting with Marconi's wonderful invention.

For this purpose a small tower had been erected on the summit of the works, in which Dick took his place when, about half an hour later, the Falcon rose in the air, and turned her head seawards.

"Good-bye, Dick! Expect us down about eleven to-morrow!" cried Thorpe.

"All right, old boy! I'll have the Night Hawk ready," returned his brother.

Little either knew that many a long, anxious day would pass ere they would see each other again.

Some three miles from land, the Falcon received his first wireless message, and for nearly an hour the experiments continued. Then, as the moon had already disappeared beneath the horizon, and they would have as much as they could do to reach Woolwich Dockyard before the first streaks of dawn lighted the sky, they turned the Falcon's head Londonwards.

It was a glorious night, and both Thorpe Thornhill and Captain Horsham, to say nothing of the two men and a boy who composed the crew of the airship, were in the highest spirits, for at so many thousand feet above the earth the air was exhilarating as champagne.

On they flew, cleaving their way through the air as swiftly as a swallow flies; but, quick as they went, the messages of the brothers flashed backwards and forwards quicker.

"London in sight. Go to bed, like a good little boy, Dick!" telegraphed Thorpe.

"Good-night, you old bounder!" came back from Dick.

"See you to-morrow. By the by, I wish you would—"

Then came a break.

"Well, what?" asked Thorpe.

But there was no answer.

"Hallo, Dick! What's up?" he asked, again trying to call up his brother.

Still no answer.

"I suppose the box of tricks at the other end has busted!" suggested Horsham, leaning over Thorpe's shoulder.

"Maybe; but it seems strange it should have gone wrong so suddenly. Go slow a bit," he added, turning to Pat Denver—a handsome, merry-faced Irishman, who was steering. "We

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don't want to overshoot our mark; and amongst all these lights it is not very easy to pick out the dockyard."

For ten minutes nothing was heard but the whirring of the machinery which propelled the Falcon through the air; then tick, tack! tick, tack! came from the recorder.

Horsham and Thornhill rushed to the machine and fixed their eyes upon the quivering needle, which glittered beneath the glare of the ship's electric light.

"We are attacked! Help!"

"Round with her head, Pat! Take an elevation of two thousand feet, then full speed ahead!" cried Thorpe.

Like a bird startled by a sportsman's gun, the Falcon swung gracefully round, her screw propeller beating the air with a pleasant, musical rhythm as she made straight for the spot—some sixty miles away—where Thorpe knew his brother was fighting for his life.

Unfortunately, the wind was against them; and, though their speed-indicator showed that the engines were doing their utmost, an hour and a half elapsed since the receipt of the alarming message ere Thorpe Thornhill, who was in the bow of the vessel scanning the horizon—now grey with coming dawn—through his glasses, uttered an exclamation of horror and dismay; for far away, on the very edge of the blue line that denoted the sea, arose a tall column of thick black smoke.

"Quicker, Benson! Can you not get any more out of the engines? We seem crawling! The works are burning!" cried Thornhill through the skylight into the engine-room.

Benson, the engineer, looked up.

"My engines are working as they have never worked before, sir. It is the wind that keeps us back," he said.

Thorpe shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"Yonder is Major Karl Seigner's doing!" he said, in a low, intense voice, turning to Captain Horsham. "If he has hurt one hair of my brother's head, may Heaven have mercy on him! I will have none!"

"I am afraid your surmise is correct," admitted the captain. "And yet it seems incredible that he should dare to obtain the Night Hawk by force in that open manner."

"It is cheaper than the million and the principedom, at any rate!" returned Thorpe Thornhill, with a bitter laugh. "But see! What is that yonder? By Heaven, it is the Night Hawk!"

As he spoke Thorpe Thornhill pointed to where the first beams of the rising sun glittered upon what looked like a ball of silver—a mere speck in the distance—far away over the sea.

"Follow her, Thornhill! Your guns are loaded. You have plenty of ammunition on board. That ship must never reach Germany!" cried Horsham eagerly.

Thorpe Thornhill shook his head.

"I am as keen as you can be that our foes should not triumph over us, but think of Dick. Perhaps he is even now lying wounded amongst yonder ruins," he replied, pointing to the blazing building they were rapidly approaching.

Captain Horsham had it on the tip of his tongue to say that greater interests even than the life or death of the inventor's brother were at stake, but the misery in Thornhill's face was too plain to be ignored.

"Do as you will, Thornhill," he said; "but, for our country's sake, make haste!"

Nearer and nearer to Seamew Island the Falcon flew, each beat of her propeller bringing her closer to the burning workshop.

For the time Thorpe was paralysed with grief, stricken dumb by the suddenness of the blow. But his was not a nature to remain long in servitude to despair.

Shaking himself, as though throwing off some heavy load, he returned to Captain Horsham, who was standing by the bridge; then, lifting to his lips the transmitter of the engine-room telephone, became once more the guiding spirit of the Falcon.

"Half-speed! Slow! Dead slow! Stop!" came from his lips in hard, steady accents.

Then, going to the well, he leaned over, grasped one of many cylindrical objects fastened round the Falcon's side, and a cry of horror burst from Horsham's lips as he saw the young inventor jump, apparently to his death, over the railings.

But barely had the exclamation of horror found utterance ere it was succeeded by a sigh of relief; for, bursting open, the cylinder disgorged a mass of silk, forming a parachute, with the aid of which Thorpe Thornhill was floated down softly and safely to the ground.

The Attack at Seamew Island!

We must now pick up the thread of our story where we left Dick Thornhill exchanging wireless telegraphic messages with his brother.

That hour was perhaps the happiest of the young chemical expert's life, for on the morrow the airship, the

Building of which he had personally superintended from keel to upper-deck, would be launched. The culmination of his hopes was at hand. A few short hours, and the Night Hawk, proved worthy of a place as pioneer in the aerial navies of the world, would be taken off his hands by the British Government.

As we know, "Good-night, you old bounder! See you to-morrow!" had been almost the last message the magnetic needle of his wireless telegraph had recorded.

Then Dick laughed softly to himself. Inventors are proverbially careless of appearances, and he suddenly remembered that he had not got any decent clothes at the works in which to appear before the big-wigs who would arrive to-morrow to take over the Night Hawk.

"By the by, I wish you would—"

He sprang from off his stool and peered eagerly into the darkness around.

Surely that sound he had just heard was the grating of a boat-keel on the mud of the island?

Scarce daring to breathe, he listened intently for a few moments; then, satisfied that his fears were unfounded, he had clambered once more on to his stool in front of the despatcher, for the telegraphic receiver was swiftly tapping out his brother's anxious inquiries, when a low splash almost immediately at his feet attracted his attention.

There was no mistake this time. Unauthorised prowlers were seeking to gain a footing on the island.

Darting to a lever in one corner of the look-out, he grasped it with one hand, whilst with the other he touched an electric button on the wall.

Immediately the loud ringing of an alarm-bell filled the air; then, as the working lever swept on the electricity, the bright beams of a powerful searchlight rendered every object on either side of the works plainly visible.

A gasp of astonishment, not unmingled with fear, burst from his lips.

Three boats, each containing a dozen men, clad in the rough garments of peaceful fishermen, but carrying their rifles with the unmistakable smartness of trained sailors, had already disgorged their armed crew on the flat shores of Seamen Island.

"To arms! Man the loopholes! We are attacked! To arms! To arms!" he cried; then rushed back to the telegraph and sent the message which brought Thorpe back at full speed to his rescue.

The sound of excited voices and hurrying footsteps in the hall below told him that his men were on the alert. Then he ducked his head as a score of slender spears of flame shot from the ranks of the advancing enemy, and as many rifle-bullets hissed through the tiny compartment in which he sat.

That was no place for him. Although protected by the fierce glare of the electric light, a stray bullet might easily find its billet in his body. Yet, brave to a fault, he would not leave until a glance around had shown him the position of his mysterious foes.

Three sides of the building were being attacked, but the fourth—that to which the water-gate gave admission—had as yet no assailant.

But, even as he looked, the darkness outside the circle of light was dotted by a moving column of upward-shooting sparks, as a steam-launch made straight for the water-gate. Confident indeed of success must be their foes, or they would not have dared to venture on an attack. Yet without artillery what hope could they have of forcing their way into a building, the only entrance to which, except the water-gate, was twenty feet from the ground?

Rapidly though these thoughts flashed through the young leader's head, his gallant assistants had already opened fire upon the swarming foes with fatal effect, for several had already stumbled in their tracks and fallen.

One glance at the approaching launch, one swift survey of the landing party, and Dick Thornhill flew down the iron staircase to a platform running entirely round the building, from which his men were firing as quickly as they could pull the triggers of their magazine-rifles.

The din of the sharp, short reports was deafening. Already three of the little garrison were down, more or less terribly wounded.

"Courage, lads! They can't force an entrance without help from within, and there are no traitors here. Keep them out for half an hour, and the sound of firing will bring assistance from the mainland. Let them have it, boys! Let them have it: hot, the German swine!" cried Dick, as, armed with a Mauser pistol, he rushed from point to point, stopping now and again to fire from a loophole.

"Hurrah! They have already had enough of it! See, they are turning tail! Hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah!" cried Dick, almost beside himself with astonishment as the landward attackers, leaving several of their number writhing in agony on the ground, rushed headlong for their boats.

"Hip, hip, hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah!" echoed the gallant defenders of the works.

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Alas! their loud, triumphant, British cheers, the very sound of which is a sure presage of victory, no matter where or when uttered, drowned the ominous thud as the launch Dick Thornhill had seen creeping towards the water-gate came to a halt inside the building, and within five yards of the Night Hawk.

"Well done, lads! A pound each for this night's work!" cried Dick exultantly. "The cowardly dogs! They—"

He ceased speaking, deafened by a fierce, roaring volley, hurled at the men on the platform from a number of armed figures clustered on the little quay, and on the deck of the Night Hawk. This first volley was followed by another and another, their loud reverberations drowning the shrieks of pain, agony, and surprise wrung from the lips of the dying defenders, who, taken completely by surprise, without so much as a box behind which to hide, were easily shot down by those unexpected assailants, who had appeared in their very midst.

Dick, staggering back against the loophole of the outer wall, stared thunderstruck at the swarming figures clambering over his precious airship as he realised how completely he had been fooled.

Despite his confident assertion that there was no traitor in the works, someone had opened the water-gate to their foes whilst the attention of the defenders was concentrated upon a sham attack in their front.

Then a wild, mad rage filled his heart, as, standing on the deck of the Night Hawk, by the side of Major Seigner, he recognised their trusted assistant, Julian Hartz, and, taking a careful aim, pulled the trigger of his Mauser.

Julian Hartz moved neither hand nor foot to avoid the threatened death, but looked up at his would-be slayer with a sad smile, which, although he knew that he owed all his misfortune to him, went to Dick's heart, and the bullet aimed at the traitor's heart hurtled harmlessly into the wood-work behind him.

But Seigner was another matter. Again taking aim, he raised his weapon, and again he pulled the trigger. But, alas! only a click came from his weapon. He had fired his last cartridge, and was practically unarmed.

The discovery undoubtedly saved his life, for, in his mad rage at the prospect of being robbed of the fruits of his toil, he would have carried out his rash intention, and died fighting to the last, content so long as he sold his life at the price of at least one of the hated Germans.

But from a boy he had been brought up in a school which teaches the grand lesson of perseverance against all odds, the school of the would-be inventor. Often in the past had the Thornhills been tempted to throw aside their work, baffled by some apparently insurmountable obstacle; but ever, when things had seemed at their worst, a solution of the difficulty facing them had come into their minds.

Why then despair? The Night Hawk, it is true, was captured, but it was not yet entirely in their foe's hands. If he could but reach the storeroom where the explosives were kept, one carefully thrown box of cartridges would make the German's victory useless.

A bullet whistled over his head, and, throwing up his arms with a shrill shriek, he sank to the platform as though dead, then cautiously peered round him.

How could he reach the store-room? The staircase by which alone he could descend was already in the occupation of the Germans.

Rolling as near the outer wall as he could get, he crawled, snakelike, towards the outer staircase; then, rising to his feet, flung himself, rather than ran, down the iron staircase, hoping to gain his goal ere the Germans could realise his object.

But, alas! almost at the foot of the stairs he stumbled over the dead body of a slain comrade, and, falling heavily to the ground, struck his head against the edge of the very door he had striven so pluckily to gain.

Then for a short space all was blank.

When he came to himself he was lying on a couch in one of the Night Hawk's cabins. A low, hoarse hissing told him that the hollow walls and framework of his loved machine were being filled with gas, preparatory to its flight. Putting his head close to the wall, he listened intently, and his well-trained ear told him that the gas chambers would take at least five minutes longer to fill.

Eagerly he looked around him. The door was closed, and a cautious tug at the handle proclaimed it locked; but the window of his cabin, through which came the bright glare of the electric light within the building, was open.

Hoarse, guttural voices reached his ear. Hartz was speaking.

"For Heaven's sake, major, grant me this one favour! Is it not enough that you have robbed me of my honour, ruined me, made my name a by-word in ever honest man's mouth? Will you also make me the murderer of one who has always

trusted me, and one whom I love? Let him go free! You have the airship! Let that content you!"

"You are a fool, Julian Hartz," Dick heard Major Seigner reply, "to think that any word of yours could make me swerve one tittle from the course I have already determined upon! The Thornhills jeered at me! They dared even to threaten me—me, Karl Seigner, trusted agent of his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Germany! I will do more than threaten! Richard Thornhill shall live; but it shall be as my slave, using his brains and ingenuity in the service of his country's enemies! It is a fine revenge—a grand revenge!"

"Then you will not kill him?" Dick heard Hartz pleading eagerly.

"Kill him? No—not yet, at any rate! His life is too valuable to be thrown away!"

Dick was certainly very much relieved to find that his life was in no immediate peril—not that he was afraid of death. He would have faced it without a quiver of a muscle had there been any counterbalancing benefit to be achieved by dying. But, dead, he was useless to his country or to his brother. Living, he might do much. If he could but communicate in any way with Thorpe, they might together find some way of baffling their at present victorious foe.

"Hasten, you dogs, hasten, or the quarter-master shall lay his whip across your shoulders!" The voice of Karl Seigner broke in upon his thought, shouting in the courteous language usually adopted by German officers to their men. "We must be in Berlin ere there are many people about!"

Dick looked round him eagerly. Here was information that must be conveyed to his brother at any hazard. Oh that he could reach the wireless telegraph! But that was impossible. A letter? Yes; but how could he hope to deliver it? Still, it was his only chance.

Frantically he searched through his pockets, but they were empty. Evidently anticipating some such attempt, his captors had taken his pocket-book from him; but in the lining of his waistcoat he felt a short piece of pencil, which had slipped through a hole in his pocket some days before.

Tearing the cloth, he drew the coveted stump from its hiding-place. Then—for the trampling of feet above his head and the humming of machinery told him that the Night Hawk would speedily commence her flight seaward—he searched for paper.

But there was none—not a scrap—not so much as a piece of wrapping-paper on which he could scribble his message.

An idea entered his head. Throwing aside his coat, he tore off his shirt-cuff; then, with the whirring of the wings in his ear, wrote rapidly:

"Attacked by Germans! All slain! Self a prisoner! Hartz the traitor! Heard Seigner say Berlin destination! Intercept if possible. We'll diddle 'em yet!—DICK."

The last characteristic sentence written, Dick ran to the window. The Night Hawk was just rising from its stocks and gliding through the movable roof, which had been slipped on one side for its flight.

A new difficulty presented itself. If he flung out the cuff, it would probably be carried by the wind into the sea and be lost.

A heavy gold watch, presented to him some years before by the Royal Humane Society for saving life, was in his pocket. He valued it highly. But every second was of consequence. Slipping the end of the chain through the button-hole of the cuff, he swiftly tied it twice; then, as a second glance through the window showed that the Night Hawk had cleared the shed, he thrust his hand through, and let the watch, with its attendant cuff, laden with enormous consequences to two nations, fall to the ground.

Eagerly he listened for some ejaculation which would tell him that his trail messenger had been discovered, or, what he dreaded equally as much, a faint splash, which would show it had fallen into water. But none came, and, with a sigh of relief, he realised that the cuff had fallen on dry ground.

There was no motion on the airship—nothing but the whirring of its many wings to tell that they were moving; but from the window Dick saw, almost level with his head, a bank of clouds, flushed rosy-red like the blush on a woman's cheek, and knew that the morn had broken, and that every minute, every second, every beat of the wings, bore him further away from England and all that he held dear on earth.

Yet he did not despair. The increased peril served only to redouble his power of thought.

Presently the door opened, and a man, attired in the uniform of the German Navy—there was no pretence now; doubtless Seigner thought all chance of recapture past—entered, to summon him on deck.

Seigner and Hartz were standing in the stern, gazing to where a pillar of lurid smoke, rising heavenwards, proclaimed the burning works.

"Good-morning, Herr Thornhill! Welcome on board his Imperial Majesty's airship!" cried Seigner, with a taunting

laugh, as Dick appeared. "Allow me to introduce you to Herr Hartz! Perhaps you have met before?"

Paying no attention to Seigner's mocking words, Dick looked at Julian Hartz, and surveyed him, with a glance of utter contempt, from head to foot. Then he shook his head.

"No, I don't think it is possible that I have met this man before. The Julian Hartz I knew was a staunch, loyal friend, who would have died rather than have betrayed those who trusted him!"

Hartz's white face flushed deeply, then became once more as white as death. He tried to speak, but words would not come, and, covering his face with his hands, he leant over the stern-rail of the airship, and burst into loud, almost hysterical sobs, much to Karl Seigner's gratification, whose cruel nature rejoiced at this exhibition of mental agony in one whom he hated for no other reason than because he was an honest man.

"Our friend seems strangely affected by your words, Herr Thornhill. Can you say nothing to comfort him? Could you not tell him not to worry? For ere long you will be working by his side, manufacturing fresh airships for my Imperial master?" demanded Seigner, who was evidently in the best of spirits.

Dick had already made up his mind what course to take.

"Being an English edition of George Washington, Herr Major, I cannot tell a lie. This ship is useless without me, but I have certainly no intention of giving my services for nothing," he said significantly.

"You are not indispensable. I think we are going along very well, even without the assistance of Mr. Richard Thornhill!" sneered Seigner.

"Indeed! Then may I ask why your engines——" began Dick, when, with a cry of despair, Julian Hartz flung his arms so wildly aloft that the back of his hand alighted with no little force on the speaker's mouth.

Dick turned angrily upon him. Their eyes met in a brief glance of mutual intelligence, and Dick, to whom a nod was as good as a wink, allowed the words to remain unspoken, and, with a muttered apology, Hartz left the deck.

The incident appealed to Seigner's brutal nature, and he laughed heartily.

"Now, what is it you were saying about the engines?" he demanded presently.

"Merely that they are being driven much too fast, if you wish to travel any distance," explained Dick readily.

Karl Seigner looked suspiciously at the speaker; but Dick met his glance without a quiver of the eyelids, and he summoned Hartz to his side once more.

"What do you mean by risking the engines like this?" he demanded hoarsely. "Slow down at once!" Then, as Hartz turned towards the engine-room without a word, he continued: "To think that you fools refused a million sovereigns—a million golden sovereigns—a ton of money—for this airship! Where will your British supremacy be now?"

"You forget my brother is still in England, and he can make others," returned Dick, wondering if Seigner had yet discovered that there were two flying-ships in existence.

The German shrugged his shoulders.

"We have taken steps to prevent that. Possibly already—certainly by to-morrow morning—your brother will be dead!"

Dick turned pale.

"Do you think that the English Government will not avenge the death of those you have murdered?"

"Bah! What can they do?" returned Seigner, with a contemptuous shrug. "Germany has now the only airship that can readily fly, and with that she can easily sweep the British Navy from off the seas, her garrisons from out her Colonies——"

"But are you sure this is the only one?" asked Dick, with a strange smile on his lips.

Karl Seigner shot a quick, suspicious glance at the speaker; then his jaw dropped, his brow grew black as night, and he trembled so that he was obliged to hold on to the airship's rail. For swiftly through the early morning air, the sun reflected from her gleaming hull and the muzzles of her frowning guns, came the Falcon.

"Scoundrel, you have deceived me!" he cried furiously, turning upon Hartz, who joined them at that moment, and seizing him by the throat. "What is that yonder?"

"That is the Falcon—the ship you saw on Salisbury Plain!" returned Hartz, unable to prevent the triumph he felt from showing itself in his eyes.

"Then what ship is this?" demanded Seigner, looking from Hartz to the young chemist.

"This," put in Dick, "is her sister ship, the Night Hawk. So, you see, if Germany declares war, England will be at least equally well armed for the struggle."

(This Grand New Serial will be continued Next Monday. Order Early.)

SPIRITED AWAY!

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Tight Fit!

"I GUESS you can vamoose!"
"Oh, really, Fishy—"
"I'm not taking any!"
"Hop it!"

"But I say—"

"Absquatulate, I tell you!"

Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, had just come out of the School House, when the sound of the two voices in altercation fell upon their ears.

The chums of the Remove were in their Norfolk jackets, and they were about to go round to the bicycle-shed for their machines. It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and the Famous Five intended to improve the shining hour by taking a long spin in the country.

But they paused as they came upon Fisher T. Fish and Billy Bunter in warm dispute.

Fisher T. Fish, the American junior in the Remove, seemed excited. He was shaking an extremely bony fist in Billy Bunter's fat face. Bunter blinked at him indignantly through his big spectacles.

"Absquatulate!" repeated Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I'm not taking any—not F. T. Fish, sir! You vamoose the ranch! You hear me?"

"I'm jolly well coming if I like!" said Billy Bunter.

"You're jolly well not going to keep him all to yourself—I mean, it's my intention to look after the new kid a bit, and—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry genially. "Wherefore this trouble in the family, my infants?"

Fisher T. Fish snorted.

"That fat galoot wants to plant himself on me, because—"

"That rotten Yank wants to keep me out of it, because—"

"I guess—"

"I tell you—"

Bob Cherry waved his hand soothingly.

"Gently, gently, my children! Take it calmly! Don't get excited, but confide it all to your Uncle Bob! What's the row?"

"There's a new kid coming here this afternoon," said Billy Bunter, with deep indignation in his fat voice. "A kid from America—the son of a millionaire. He's a little kid for the Second Form. Now, I've got a minor in the Second Form—my young brother Sammy. I'm going to ask Sammy to take care of him, and I'm going to look after him a bit myself. It's only decent, considering that the kid is coming from a frightful distance—California or somewhere!"

"I guess I'm looking after the kid!" said Fisher T. Fish emphatically. "I'm not going to have that fat owl squeezing dollars out of him the minute he gets out of the train! No, sir! Why, my popper has written to me from Noo York to see him when he comes, and take him under my wing!"

"A new kid from America!" said Harry Wharton, with interest. "Any relation of yours, Fishy?"

"Nopè! But I guess I'm going to look after him. I



For several minutes Harry Wharton knocked in vain, but at last an upper window opened, and a night-capped head was put out. An extremely cross face looked down upon the junior. "Go away, drat you!" shrieked a shrill voice. "Go away, you young raskil!" "Sorry, Mrs. Harris," said Harry Wharton. "I've come for Jackson, the postman. He's wanted!" (See Chapter 14.)

guess he'll want looking after, too, considering what he's been through," said Fish. "And I'm jolly well going to keep Bunter off him—just a few!"

"You—you rotter!"

"I dare say you've heard of Abraham Sylvester?" went on Fisher T. Fish.

The Famous Five shook their heads.

"Blessed, if I have!" said Harry Wharton. "Who is he?"

Fish snorted again.

"He's the multi-millionaire of San Francisco—got more dollars, sir, than he could count in a month of Sundays. This kid who's coming here is his son—Bertie. My popper's told me all about it. The kid's been kidnapped twice in San Francisco. I guess you've heard of that?"

"Never!"

"Oh, you don't get any news over here!" said Fisher T. Fish contemptuously. "Why, the American papers were full of it—dozens of columns, sir, with photographs of the kid, and of all his relations, and his popper's house, and his motor-cars, and—"

"And everything that is his, I suppose!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "What did they kidnap him for, Fishy?"

Fisher T. Fish gave another scornful snort. This utter ignorance of the affairs of the great United States made him tired.

"Oh, you don't hear anything in this little island!" he said. "Don't you know that's a regular business in the Yew-nited States, kidnapping the sons of millionaires, and holding them to ransom? They do it every day. The police can't do anything. Sometimes they're in the little game themselves; and, anyway, the kidnapers are too cute for them. I tell you, we've got criminals over there that could

NEXT
MONDAY—

"HARD UP!"

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knock spots off anything you could produce in this country!"

"You're welcome to them!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Old man Sylvester has had to shell out the dollars twice for that kid," said Fish impressively, "and he's got fed up. That's why he's sending him to school in England, my popper says. Cute idea of old man Sylvester—what?"

"And he's coming to-day?" said Frank Nugent. "Yep! His tutor has brought him across the herring-pond, and they're getting here this afternoon," said Fish. "I guess, I'm going to wait at the station to see their train in, and let the kid know that he's got a friend here. And this fat oyster—"

"I'm jolly well going to meet him, too," said Billy Bunter. "As I've got a minor in the Second Form, and young Sylvester is going into the Second—"

"How do you know that?" asked Wharton. "I heard the Head say so to Mr. Twigg. I happened to be passing his window, and as it was open, I happened to hear!"

"You'll happen to get a thick ear if you happen to hear things you're not intended to hear, you fat boulder!" said Bob Cherry, frowning. "Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows, Bunter has been eavesdropping again—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"
"And he's got on the track of a new kid with plenty of money, and he's going to squeeze some of it out of him—"

"Look here—" roared Bunter. "Therefore it is up to us to chip in," continued Bob. "Fishy, you can go and meet your fellow-countryman, and we'll look after Bunter."

Fisher T. Fish looked at his watch. "I guess the train's nearly due," he remarked. "I must hop it. Many thanks!"

And Fisher T. Fish walked away to the gates, his long, thin legs taking long strides. Billy Bunter made a movement to follow; but Bob Cherry took one arm of the fat junior, and Johnny Bull took the other.

"Won't you bestow the honour of your company on us for a bit, Bunt?" asked Bob persuasively.

"Leggo, you rotter!"

"Won't you walk round to the bike-shed with us?"

"No, I won't! Leggo!"

"Your mistake—you will!" said Bob cheerfully. "Come on, you chaps! If Bunter lags, touch him up with your feet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull started towards the bicycle-shed, and, as they had a tight grip on Bunter's fat arms, the Owl of the Remove had no choice but to walk with them. He wriggled in their grasp, but a touch from Frank Nugent's boot bucked him up, and he walked on more quickly. His fat face was red with rage.

But there was no help for it. The Famous Five were looking after Bunter, and the fact that Bunter did not want to be looked after made no difference at all.

Billy Bunter was almost at boiling-point by the time they reached the bike-shed. Bunter was in his usual state of impecuniosity, and the news that a millionaire's son—a mere "kid" of twelve—was arriving that afternoon had seemed like a windfall to him.

Bunter was very keen on new boys. He was a borrower of wonderful skill; but fellows who knew him knew too much to lend him anything. But whenever a new kid arrived at Greyfriars, Billy Bunter was on his track at once. And this was a unique opportunity—a millionaire's son from a distant country; and the Owl of the Remove simply wriggled with rage at being forcibly kept away from his prey.

"I say, you fellows!" he gasped. "I say, stop it, you know! I—I'm going to get my minor to look after that kid!"

"Your minor will look after him all right if he's got any money," said Bob. "Don't you bother about that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, lemme go!" roared Bunter furiously. "What do you mean by dragging me off like this? I won't stand it! I tell you I won't stand—"

"Right-ho! You can sit down if you like!" said Bob.

"Yow-ow!" yelled Bunter, as he plumped down on the floor of the bike-shed. "Yow-ow-ow! Ow! Beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five wheeled their machines out, as Billy Bunter sat on the floor gasping for breath. Then Bob Cherry coolly closed the shed door, and wedged a large chip of wood under it, so that it could not be opened from inside. Billy Bunter hammered furiously on the inside of the door.

"Yah! Beasts! Lemme out!"

"You can stay there for a bit," said Bob affably. "I dare

say somebody will hear you presently, and come and let you out. Ta-ta!"

Billy Bunter's fat face appeared at the window of the bike-shed as the grinning juniors wheeled their machines away. Anybody but Bunter could have escaped by the window, but Bunter's girth was a little too extensive for that. He shook a fat fist after the Removites, and roared.

"Come and lemme out! Yah! Help! Fire!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll come out of the window, you beasts! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Let's see you do it, Bunt!"

Billy Bunter squeezed himself through the window. It is said that wherever the head can go the body can follow; but that was not the case with the Owl of the Remove. His head came through quite easily, and his fat shoulders followed, but his waist refused to pass through the narrow aperture. His fat face grew redder and redder as he strove to squeeze himself through. The juniors watched his frantic efforts with loud laughter.

"Go it!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly. "Put your beef into it, Bunt! Pile in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The gofulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the esteemed Bunter is in danger of the bustfulness."

"Grooh!" Bunter made a final terrific effort, and stuck fast. "Grooh! I—I c-c-can't get through!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Go back, then!"

"I—I c-c-can't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooh! I'm stuck fast! Grooh! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Almost weeping with laughter, the chums of the Remove wheeled their machines away, and disappeared from the view of Billy Bunter; and the fat junior was left to the long and arduous task of extricating himself from the window. It was pretty certain that the new kid would not be bothered by Billy Bunter that afternoon.

THE SECOND CHAPTER, The Kidnappers!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
"What the dickens—"
"My hat!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared in blank astonishment.

The five cyclists had pedalled away from Greyfriars down Friardale Lane. They were half-way to the village, when, on the crest of the little hill, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's tyre punctured, and he jumped off. The other juniors dismounted while Inky examined the damage. As they stood holding their machines, under the shade of the overhanging trees that met across the lane, a trap came in sight, driven at an easy trot from the direction of Friardale.

The juniors glanced at it carelessly. There were three persons in it, one of them Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. Beside him sat a little lad with an olive complexion, in a little Panama hat. Next to him was a man of middle age, dressed in black, with thin, sharp features. It was easy for the juniors to guess who they were. Fisher T. Fish had evidently met the new kid and his tutor at the station, and was driving them to Greyfriars.

The trap was coming on at an easy trot, and the halted cyclists were looking at it down the slope of the road, while Inky examined his tyre, when all of a sudden came a startling happening that made them rub their eyes.

It was like the scene on a cinematograph, so sudden and startling and dramatic was it.

From the trees that bordered the road two men suddenly leaped. The trap was then about a hundred yards past the juniors.

The two men, both of whom wore slouched-hats, ran directly at the trap.

One grasped the horse's head and stopped him, the other sprang into the trap.

What followed passed like a flash.

Fisher T. Fish, before he knew what was happening, was tossed bodily out of the vehicle, and rolled, gasping, in the grass beside the road.

The tutor jumped up, and the next instant was seized and hurled after Fish, with a heavy bump to the ground.

Then the assailant grasped the reins.

The man holding the horse turned the trap round, let go, and disappeared into the trees.

The man in the trap snatched up the whip and gave the horse a vicious cut, and the trap leaped forward after the startled animal, now galloping.

Fisher T. Fish and the tutor staggered to their feet; but the trap was already gone.



"'Elp a pore man——" began the tramp as the juniors came up. "I'll help you," said Fisher T. Fish, and he made a sudden grab at the straggling beard, and jerked at it with all his force. Then there was a fiendish yell from the unfortunate old man. "Ow! Wow! Leggo, you young villain!" (See Chapter 8.)

The little boy in the Panama hat was still sitting in his place, looking dazed. And the man who had taken possession of the vehicle was driving on furiously.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared blankly at the trap as it dashed on towards them.

So suddenly had it all passed—in a few seconds—that they could scarcely believe that it was real.

But back into their minds came, like a flash, what Fisher T. Fish had told them of the new kid, and his experiences in the hands of the American kidnapers.

"My only hat!"

"It's the new kid, and——"

"And he's being kidnapped!" gasped Wharton.

"Great Scott!"

"Stop the trap!" yelled Bob Cherry.

The juniors leaped into the middle of the road.

The trap was thundering on towards them; but the driver had not seen them yet under the trees.

But he saw them as they leaped out into the road, and he dragged on the reins.

But the trap did not halt.

To the driver's left the lane leading to Redclyffe turned off, and, with instant promptness, the kidnapper turned the horse round the corner, and the trap sped on, vanishing from the juniors' sight like a vision.

Clatter, clatter, clatter!

The staccato beat of the horse's hoofs came back across the fields to their ears, but the trees and the high hedges hid the trap from their eyes.

Clatter, clatter, clatter!

"My hat!"

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"HARD UP!"

Harry Wharton leaped upon his machine.

"After him!" he shouted.

"Hurrah!" gasped Bob Cherry. "This is where we come in! Back up, Greyfriars!"

Wharton was speeding away like an arrow, and in an instant Nugent and Bob and Johnny Bull were speeding after him.

Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh regarded his punctured tyre ruefully. He was out of it. But there were four sturdy cyclists on the track of the stolen trap.

The four swept round the corner into Redclyffe Lane at top speed, and pedalled on as if they were on the cycle-track for the race of the season.

The trap was in sight again now.

The man in the slouch-hat was driving on furiously, the little fellow seated still by his side, holding on with both hands, for the trap jumped and oscillated on the rough road, and there was danger of his being pitched bodily out.

The kidnapper glanced back, and a fierce, dark look came over his face as he saw the four cyclists behind. He cut savagely at the horse, and the animal bounded on faster than before, the trap rocking and swaying.

"Keep at it!" panted Harry Wharton. "We're bound to run him down! We can beat that horse on the bikes any day!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Put it on!"

The bicycles fairly whizzed after the bumping, clattering trap.

Harry Wharton & Co. were in deadly earnest. The sight of the kidnapping, in the open road and the broad daylight,

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had nearly taken their breath away at first. They knew that the man who had carried out such a coup must be a bold and desperate character—not at all an easy customer to deal with when they ran him down. But that did not make them hesitate. There were four of them, and they were sturdy and plucky. They were quite prepared to deal with the kidnapper at close quarters, big and powerful as he looked.

The story Fisher T. Fish had told them of the kidnapping of the millionaire's son in San Francisco they had heard as they usually heard Fish's stories of happenings in his native country—taking it with a very liberal grain of salt. It had sounded to their ears like one of Fisher T. Fish's "tall" stories. But there was evidently something in it. And more than that, the multi-millionaire of San Francisco had not rendered his son secure, as he had hoped, by sending him across the Atlantic to an English school. The kidnapping gang had evidently tracked him across the sea, hoping to carry out their nefarious schemes even more easily in the Old Country, where such desperate deeds were of less common occurrence. And certainly, but for the presence of the Greyfriars juniors on the scene—by a mere chance—the rascal would have succeeded without a hitch. It remained to be seen whether Harry Wharton & Co. could baffle him.

It was soon clear enough that the trap could not escape by speed. Fast as the horse was, urged by the cruel lashing of the whip, the cyclists rode faster. Closer and closer the whizzing bikes drew, through the cloud of dust left behind by the thundering vehicle.

The big American drove with utter recklessness. More than once the trap had a narrow escape of collision as he passed some other vehicle, and more than one startled cyclist ran into the grassy bank beside the lane in alarm as the trap thundered down towards him.

But still, clinging close to his track, the four juniors came pedalling swiftly on behind—closer and closer.

"We've got him!" said Wharton between his teeth. His front wheel was within a couple of feet of the tailboard of the trap now. He swerved to pass the vehicle.

He shot past, and the whip lashed him savagely across the shoulders as he passed, and he set his teeth hard.

But he was ahead of the trap now. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Nugent rode abreast behind it, just keeping pace.

The escape of the kidnapper was cut off now, but it was still a question how the trap was to be stopped.

But so long as the juniors were keeping it company, ahead and behind, it was impossible for the rascal to escape with his prisoner.

The man's face was set and desperate now. The horse slackened speed. The kidnapper grasped the reins in his left hand, and his right went to the pocket at the back of his trousers.

It came out again, and there was a gleam of steel in the sunlight. Then the man shouted to the junior who was riding ahead of the trap.

"Boy! You hear me?"

"I hear you," called back Wharton, without turning his head.

"Clear off!"

"Rats!"

"I'll guess you'll vamoose. I've got a shooter here, and if you don't clear off I'll drill a hole through your neck!"

Wharton's heart thumped.

He knew that he had a desperate man to deal with; yet it seemed impossible that even the most utter desperado would venture to use a firearm in the broad daylight upon a public high-road.

"Do you hear me, younker?"

"Yes."

"Will you clear off?"

"No."

"Then you're a gone coon!"

Crack!

The man fired, and the bullet whizzed over the head of the cyclist. Wharton set his teeth; he was pretty certain that the shot was only intended to scare him. But the captain of the Greyfriars Remove was not so easily scared. He ducked his head involuntarily, but that was all. He rode on steadily, keeping his distance ahead of the trap.

He knew that the horse must tire soon. Horses let out with hired traps in Friardale were not first-class specimens of horseflesh. The tremendous speed of the last two miles had taken it out of the unfortunate animal. In spite of the lashing whip, the horse was slowing down.

Slower and slower—and the three cyclists behind the trap slackened too, to avoid running into it. The man's face was desperate now. He dared not use the revolver in earnest, and the juniors had refused to be scared off by shots fired in the air. Bob Cherry slipped off his machine, sending it spinning into the hedge, and sprang upon the slow trap

behind. Before the man, whose eyes were upon Wharton ahead, knew what was happening, Bob had clambered into the trap.

The man turned his head, his eyes blazing with rage. He levelled the revolver at the junior in the trap.

"Jump out!" he rapped out hoarsely. "Jump, or, by gum—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Bob coolly. "You're not in San Francisco now, and you know you dare not. Chuck it!"

"I tell you—"

The man broke off. Wharton had jumped off his machine now, letting it slide whither it would, and grasped the horse's head. The exhausted animal was almost staggering now, and the junior easily brought it to a standstill. The big American swung round towards Wharton.

"Let go that horse, or—"

He did not finish. For the moment he turned from Bob Cherry, that enterprising junior leaped on him, grasped him by the back of the collar, and dragged him backwards into the trap.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Removites to the Rescue!

"GOT him!" roared Bob Cherry. "Come on!"

"Hold him!"

"Hurrah!"

The revolver went spinning into the ditch. The kidnapper was on his back in the trap, struggling furiously with Bob Cherry.

Bob would not have stood much chance against the big, muscular fellow, but his chums were springing to his aid in an instant.

Harry Wharton leaped into the trap from the front, and Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent from behind.

The four juniors piled on the rascal, and he was pinned down in the bottom of the trap by sheer weight.

The horse, exhausted by the rapid gallop, remained still, panting. The little fellow in the Panama hat had hardly moved; he seemed dazed by the whole occurrence. He gazed at the struggling juniors in the trap with wide-open eyes.

"Got him!" panted Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah! Pile on the rotter!"

"Gr-r-r-r!" came from the rascal, crushed under the weight of the juniors. "Let me get up! I guess I'll—

Ow! O-o-o-ogh!"

"Now, all we've got to do is to drive to the nearest police-station, and give him in charge," panted Nugent.

"And that will put a stop to his little game," grinned Johnny Bull breathlessly. "My hat! The nerve of it!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter with him?"

The man's struggles had suddenly ceased.

He lay stretched motionless in the bottom of the trap, his eyes closed, and seemed hardly to breathe.

"My hat! He's fainted!"

The juniors rose breathlessly. Though they were four to one, it had been a hard struggle. The man had seemed to have almost the strength of a giant.

Harry Wharton turned to the new "kid."

"Hallo!" he said cheerily. "Don't be scared, young 'un! You're all right now."

"Thank you," faltered the boy—"thank you!"

"You are the new kid for Greyfriars?" asked Wharton.

"Yes."

"Bertie Sylvester?" asked Harry, remembering the name Fisher T. Fisher had mentioned.

"Yes; that is my name."

"Do you know that brute?"

Sylvester shivered.

"Yes; I guess I know him. He is the man who kidnapped me at home. He is Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith."

"My only hat! What a name! What is he called that for?"

The little fellow smiled. Now that he realised that he was safe, the colour was coming back into his cheeks. He was a good-looking lad of about twelve, with a sunburnt, olive face and dark eyes.

"There was a reward of five hundred dollars offered for him, a long time ago, for kidnapping a man," he explained.

"That is how he got the name. I guess he's one of the most dangerous crooks in 'Frisco."

"We'll give him something to cure all that," said Bob Cherry cheerily. "We'll tie the beast up, in case he comes to—"

"Look out!" shouted Wharton suddenly.

The man had made a sudden leap.

Before the juniors could grasp him, he was out of the trap, and rolling over in the road.

The juniors leaped after him, but with a bound he was

upon his feet; another bound carried him across the ditch, and he ran at top speed across the meadows.

"My hat! He's gone!"

"After him!"

"Hold on!" said Harry Wharton. "No good chasing him now. We could never run him down."

The man had already reached a fir plantation on the opposite side of the field, and he disappeared at once among the trees. Pursuit would have been extremely difficult, if not hopeless.

"The awful spoofer!" said Bob indignantly. "He was fooling us all the time! He never fainted at all."

Sylvester grinned.

"He's a cute rascal, Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith," he remarked. "They won't nab him very easily. But"—his olive face grew very serious again—"that means that he will have another try for me. Popper thought I should be quite safe over here; but I guess Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith means business."

"Oh, you'll be all right at Greyfriars," said Frank Nugent. "The rotter won't dare to come there, I fancy."

Sylvester shook his head.

"I guess you don't know him," he said. "He's come all the way from the States, and I guess he won't be easy to stop."

"Well, you're coming to Greyfriars now," said Harry Wharton. "I'll shove my bike into the trap, and drive, and you chaps can ride along."

"Right-ho!"

Wharton's bike was lifted into the trap, and he gathered up the reins. With the other juniors riding alongside, Wharton drove away in the direction the trap had come. A mile back on the road Inky was seen. He had finished his puncture, and come on, in the hope of being in time for the "scrap." Wharton waved the whip to him.

"Here we are, Inky! All serene!"

"The serenefulness is terrific!" grinned the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Fishy and the esteemed lanky gentleman have gone on to Greyfriars, in a state of esteemed stew."

"We'll soon relieve their minds. Trot along."

Hurree Janset Ram Singh turned his bike, and joined his chums, and the trap drove on to Greyfriars, escorted by four cyclists, in triumph.

Bertie Sylvester glanced round many times as the trap bowled on, as if expecting to see the hard, square-jawed face of his enemy peering at him from the trees and the hedges. But nothing more was seen of the desperate rascal who rejoiced in the extraordinary name of Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith. The gates of the school came in sight at last.

Harry Wharton & Co. had lost their afternoon's spin, but they were very well satisfied with their adventure. But for their prompt interference, the new fag would never have reached Greyfriars that day. Wharton raised the whip and pointed to the old school.

"There's Greyfriars, kid," he said. "You'll be safe there."

And the trap drove in in great style.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

All Serene!

GREYFRIARS was in a state of commotion.

The old Close was crowded with fellows in excited talk.

Fisher T. Fish and Mr. Hiram Kick, the tutor, had arrived there, in great agitation, to report the astounding kidnapping of the millionaire's son in Friardale Lane.

Fish was recounting the circumstances to a crowd of fellows for the tenth or twelfth time; and it was evident that the Yankee junior felt, more than anything else, admiration for the daring and resource of the criminal. As he proudly remarked, there wasn't a criminal in the Old Country who would have conceived and carried out so daring a stroke of business. Even in the department of crime and kidnapping, the great Yew-nited States were ahead of the old island.

The unhappy tutor was with Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars. He was not sharing Fisher T. Fish's admiration for Mr. Smith's stroke of genius. He was almost in despair. Mr. Kick almost tore his scanty hair, as he explained to the Head of Greyfriars what had happened.

Dr. Locke listened in blank astonishment. He knew Mr. Sylvester's motives for sending his little son to an English school. He had never dreamed that the enterprising kidnapers of San Francisco would transfer the scene of their operations to the Old Country. In the quiet life of the headmaster of Greyfriars, violent and dramatic happenings were rare, or rather, unknown; and he was almost as completely "floored" by the occurrence as Mr. Hiram Kick himself.

"I—I will telephone to the police station at once," stammered the Head. "This—this is a most extraordinary occurrence. Unheard-of! Amazing! Really, Mr. Kick, you have quite taken my breath away! You—you are quite sure that—that this is a case of kidnapping?"

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"HARD UP!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

Mr. Hiram Kick groaned.

"Only too sure, sir! And the boy's father trusted him to me; and I have brought him safely from San Francisco to England. I was afraid there would be some attempt in New York—but once in England, I felt quite safe. That, I guess, was what the villain was counting upon! He guessed that I should not be taking precautions here. And now he has taken the boy—"

"He! Who? You know the man?"

"I guess it's the same man—one of the most daring crooks in the States—"

"One of the—the what?" stammered Dr. Locke.

Dr. Locke knew most of the modern languages, and several of the ancient ones, but he was not "well up" in American.

"Crooks—criminals!" explained Mr. Kick.

"Oh I see! Truly, he must be a very daring criminal to form and carry out such a scheme," said Dr. Locke. "The same man, you say?"

"Yes; a crook known among his associates as Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith!"

"Dear me!"

"He had another man with him—some confederate—who held the horse while he pitched me out of the trap. Of course, I wasn't expecting anything of the kind—"

"Naturally! Such occurrences are not common in England," said the Head, a little drily. "But he went alone with the boy, you say?"

"Yes."

"It should not be difficult to find him. I will telephone—"

Mr. Kick made a despairing gesture. He did not feel much faith in the powers of the English police to deal with so notorious a "crook" as Mr. Smith, for whose apprehension the American police offered the sum of five hundred dollars.

"I fear that nothing will be heard of him again, till his father receives a demand for a ransom of fifty thousand dollars," he groaned.

"Bless my soul! What is that disturbance in the Close?" exclaimed the worried Head.

He had taken up the receiver, but put it down again to glance out of the study window. There was a roar of voices in the Close, cheering.

"Dear me!" said the Head. "What is this—who is that lad—bless my soul!"

"My pupil!" yelled Mr. Kick, looking out of the window.

"It is Sylvester! They have brought him back!"

The Head and the tutor stared in amazement from the window. A trap had driven up to the School House with Harry Wharton of the Remove holding the reins, and a little lad in a Panama hat by his side. Four dusty cyclists rode after the trap. Mr. Kick's eyes almost started from his head as he gazed at his rescued pupil.

"It is he!" he exclaimed. "It is Master Sylvester! Those—those boys must have found him! It is amazing!"

Harry Wharton & Co. passed into the house, taking the little fag with them. The fellows in the Close were cheering. There was a tramp of feet in the passage, and a knock came at the study door.

"Come in!" said Dr. Locke faintly.

The door opened, and the Famous Five walked in, dusty and triumphant. Little Sylvester came in with them.

"Here he is, sir!" said Harry Wharton.

"Thank goodness!" said Mr. Kick fervently. "My dear boy, you are not hurt?"

"I guess not," said Master Sylvester cheerfully.

"But—but how—"

"We spotted the rotters—ahem, I mean the man—in the trap, and buzzed after him, sir," said Harry Wharton. "We got the kid back, and here he is."

"Dear me!" exclaimed the Head. "My dear boys, you have done very well, and very bravely. But—but do you mean to say that that desperate man allowed you—"

The juniors grinned.

"He didn't exactly allow us, sir," said Bob Cherry. "There was a bit of a scrap. But we downed him."

"Only he got away, sir," said Wharton regretfully.

"Never mind that," said the Head. "I am only too glad to see Master Sylvester here, safe and sound. You have acted very bravely, my boys, and I thank you for what you have done."

"Not at all, sir," said Wharton. "We weren't going to see a Greyfriars kid done in by that rotter."

"No fear!"

"The no-fearfulness is terrific!"

And the Famous Five left the study feeling very satisfied with themselves, leaving little Sylvester with his tutor and the Head.

For some time after that the Head was busy with the tele-

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton
& Co. by FRANK RICHARDS.

phone, and when he quitted the receiver at last, he assured Mr. Kick that it was only a question of time before the police would have the reckless kidnapper safe under lock and key. Sylvester had been able to give an accurate description of him, and that was all they needed. It was a question, perhaps, of hours.

But Mr. Kick had his doubts about that.

Meanwhile, a crowd of fellows had surrounded the Famous Five, and insisted upon having the details of their adventures with the American kidnapper.

"Well, it takes the cake!" Mark Linley observed. "We read of this kind of thing in the news from America, but—"

"But it doesn't often happen over here," said Bolsover major.

"I say, you fellows—"

"I guess we can lay over anything that happens in the Old Country," said Fisher T. Fish complacently. "You couldn't scare up a criminal like that in a month of Sundays."

"Jolly glad of it, too!" said Tom Brown.

"I say, you fellows," persisted Billy Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Did you get out of that window after all, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Owl of the Remove blinked reproachfully at the Co.

"I say, you fellows, you see what's happened through keeping me from meeting young Sylvester. If I had been in the trap with him, it wouldn't have happened. I should have knocked the fellow right out of the trap on the spot—"

"Yep! I guess I can see you doing it!" snorted Fisher T. Fish. "Why, the fellow handled me like a sack of coke—and I'm no slouch in a scrap, I guess!"

"Here comes Long Legs," remarked Peter Todd.

By that disrespectful appellation, Todd referred to Mr. Kick. The tutor came down the passage from the Head's study, having taken his leave of Dr. Locke. The American gentleman stopped to speak to Harry Wharton & Co., and thank them in very warm terms for the rescue of Mr. Sylvester's boy.

"Decent old chap!" remarked Bob Cherry, when Mr. Kick was gone. "I expect we saved him from having his hair combed by the old gentleman in San Francisco."

"I guess I don't quite savvy how you worked the raffle!" said Fisher T. Fish, who was greatly amazed by the rescue of the millionaire's son by the juniors. It did not seem quite in keeping with the great cuteness of the San Francisco "crook."

"How we worked which?" asked Bob Cherry.

"The raffle—I mean, how you did the trick," said Fish.

"I guess I'm surprised. Why, the police force over there simply can't touch Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith, and here he has been clean done—by you. I guess I can't get the hang of it!"

"Oh, he's not quite up to the form of the Remove, that's all," said Bob Cherry loftily. "I kinder guess and calculate some that the Greyfriars Remove can lay over anything you can produce in the Yew-nited States—just a few! Come and have tea, you chaps!"

And the Famous Five went up to No. 1 Study to tea. Billy Bunter blinked after them, but he did not follow on their track. The Owl of the Remove was looking out for Sylvester of the Second Form. The millionaire's son had escaped Mr. Smith, but—if Bunter could help it—he was not to escape Billy Bunter!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A False Alarm!

SYLVESTER of the Second Form attracted a good deal of notice at Greyfriars in his first few days at the school.

He was a quiet and inoffensive little fellow; not in the least like the somewhat aggressive and assertive Fisher T. Fish.

The fact that his father was a man of tremendous wealth, and that the little fellow had been the object of the attack of a gang of kidnappers in the United States, and especially his adventure on the day of his arrival at the school, drew attention on him at first.

But the incident was soon almost forgotten; and Sylvester of the Second Form dropped into his place among the other fags, and was unnoticed.

Quiet and inoffensive as he was, he was cute enough, however; and Billy Bunter discovered that, however much money he might be in possession of, he also knew how to take care of it. Indeed, after a few days, Bunter announced in No. 7 Study, in great disgust, that he was "done" with that kid Sylvester. He explained indignantly that he had intended to be kind to him, to look after him, and, in fact, to take him

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under his wing; but the black ingratitude shown by Sylvester made him reconsider his kind intentions.

"Which means," snorted Peter Todd, "that you've been trying to squeeze cash out of the kid, and he's not taking any."

Billy Bunter grunted.

"I asked the little beast to cash a postal-order for me," he growled, "and he refused—actually refused, after all I've done for him."

"What have you done for him?" asked Todd.

Bunter did not reply to that question.

"Actually had the cheek to refuse," he repeated, "and he's got plenty of tin. Only a postal-order for five bob, too."

"Got it about you?" sniffed Todd.

"I'm expecting it to-morrow morning," said Bunter, with dignity. "I explained to Sylvester that I should hand it over immediately it came. But—"

"What did he say?" grinned Peter.

"The little beast said he guessed he had cut his eye-teeth in 'Frisco!" said Bunter, with a snort. "As he distrusted me, I declined to pursue the matter. I've done with him."

"Good thing for him, I should say!" growled Peter.

Although he had lost the valuable friendship of William George Bunter, little Sylvester was popular in his own Form. Dicky Nugent and Gatty and Myers took him in hand and chummed with him. Possibly the fact that Sylvester stood a good many feeds at the tuckshop had something to do with his popularity among the fags.

Indeed, Nugent minor and Gatty and Myers swore eternal friendship with the fag from San Francisco—or 'Frisco, as he called it—and sealed it with ginger-beer and tarts galore.

Meanwhile, the police, with the description of Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith to help them, were searching actively for that enterprising gentleman.

But he was not to be found.

As a long term of imprisonment awaited him in the event of capture, and as his appearance was known, the probability was that he had vanished for good. Most likely he was on his way home to California, and the Greyfriars fellows never expected to see anything of him. That he would venture to make any attempt upon the fag in the crowded school was hardly to be thought of.

But every precaution was taken for little Sylvester's safety.

By his father's instructions, he was never allowed to go out of gates alone; and within the school gates he was, of course, safe from any attempt of the kidnapping gang, if they were still in England.

Harry Wharton & Co. took a certain amount of interest in the fag from the dramatic circumstances under which they had made his acquaintance. But, naturally, they did not come much into contact with a fag in the Second Form.

In a few days time, Sylvester himself seemed to have forgotten his perilous adventure, and share the general opinion that the kidnappers had made their last attempt, and given up the enterprise in disgust.

There was one fellow, however, who persisted in a fixed belief that Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith had not been seen the last of. That was Fisher T. Fish. Fish seemed to regard it as a stain on the Star-Spangled Banner, that a renowned American crook should allow himself to be "done" by a parcel of schoolboys.

"You hear me talk!" Fish would say to his study-mates, Johnny Bull and the Australian junior, whose name was Sampson Quincy Ifley Field, but who was never called anything but Squiff. "You hear me yaup! I guess that galoot isn't done yet! I calculate that he's only biding his time! 'Tain't so jolly easy to lay over a first-class product of the Yew-nited States! You hear me!"

To which Squiff and Johnny Bull would reply with brevity and elegance:

"Rats!"

Indeed, the juniors grow quite tired of hearing of the wonderful cuteness of American criminals—in general, and Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith in particular. And one afternoon at tea-time, Bob Cherry rushed into Fish's study with an alarmed face.

"Seen Sylvester?" he gasped.

Fisher T. Fish jumped up.

"Nope! Is he missing?"

"He's not in the School House!" gasped Bob. "I saw him talking to a man in the Close about an hour ago; and now he's not to be seen. But I suppose it's all right."

"All right!" yelled Fish. "Oh, you jay! It's Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith again, of course! What have I been telling you all along! Oh, my hat! They've got him again."

And Fish rushed out of the study excitedly. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Squiff followed him. Up and down the School House went Fisher T. Fish, demanding excitedly to know if anyone had seen Sylvester of the Second.

No one had—for at least an hour! Fish searched the studies

and the passages—the common room and the library! The gym was drawn blank, and there was no sign of the fag in the Close or in the Form-room!

He seemed to have vanished as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up!

"I guess it's all U P!" gasped Fish at last. "Sure you fellows haven't seen him?"

"I saw him talking to a man——"

"What kind of a man?" asked Fish eagerly. "Of course, it was Smith! I suppose he was in disguise; but I guess I should have spotted him at once. Of course, you wouldn't! Give me the galoot's description, and I'll go to the Head at once."

"The Head?"

Fish gave an impatient snort.

"Of course! The police will have to be called in instanter. Not that I expect they'll be any good! Your sleepy old bobbies can't touch Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith, I reckon. But something will have to be done, you jays! What was the man like you saw him talking to, Bob Cherry?"

"A respectable-looking old gentleman," said Bob. "He didn't look the least bit like a kidnapper in disguise."

"Did you expect him to?" said Fish, with crushing scorn. "I guess that when Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith disguises himself, he won't look like a kidnapper in disguise."

"He had a white beard," said Bob reflectively.

"False beard, of course."

"It didn't look false," demurred Bob.

"It wouldn't, you jay. Smith would take care of that. What was he wearing?"

"Lemme see. He had a gown on. Just the same kind of gown that the Head wears."

"By gum!"

"Looked like a schoolmaster, in fact!"

"Oh, the deep galoot!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish, in almost an ecstasy of admiration. "That fairly puts the lid on! Did you hear anything of what he was saying to the kid?"

"Yes; they were standing quite close to me. He was asking young Sylvester to come to tea with him."

"By gum! Did the kid say he would?"

"Yes; he seemed very flattered, and he accepted."

"The young ass! He ought to have guessed! You ought to have guessed too, Bob Cherry! You're responsible for this! Did young Sylvester go with the man?"

"Yes."

"What!" shrieked Fish. "You saw them go off together, and never suspected anything!"

Bob shook his head.

"Nothing at all," he confessed.

"Well, you must be a jay from Jaysville!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish. "You saw a man with a white beard and a schoolmaster's gown asking that kid to tea—saw them go off together, and you never suspected anything!"

"Blessed if I did!"

"Oh, jumping Jerusalem! I guess I should have spotted it at once. Which way did they go?"

"Towards the Head's house."

Fish jumped.

"The Head's house! Did they go in?"

"Yes."

"They—they went in! By gum! Anybody see them come out again?"

There was a general shaking of heads. There were a dozen juniors gathered round the excited American; and none of them had seen young Sylvester come out of the Head's house again. Fisher T. Fish rubbed his long, thin nose in excited amazement.

"Oh, he's cute—he's cute!" exclaimed Fish. "He's playing some awfully deep game! Why, they may both be inside the place all the time."

"I believe they are," said Bob.

"Then we've got 'em! I guess I'll buzz off to the Head at once!" And Fisher T. Fish's long-legs were instantly in motion.

"Hold on!" called out Bob Cherry. "There's one thing I forgot to mention."

"What's that?" asked Fish, pausing, and looking round impatiently. "Out with it. Spry's the word! There ain't a minute to be lost, I guess."

"About the white-bearded old gent in the schoolmaster's gown, who asked young Sylvester to tea."

"Well?"

"I didn't mention who he was."

"Who he was!" roared Fish. "Who he was? Do you mean to say you know him?"

"Certainly."

"Wha-a-at! Then—then who was he?" gasped Fish.

"The Head!" said Bob innocently.

"What!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

To look upon Fisher T. Fish's face, as he realised that Bob Cherry had been cheerfully pulling his leg, was too much for the juniors. They burst into a yell of laughter.

"Why, you—you—you—you jay!" stuttered Fish.

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EVERY
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you mean to say that it was the Head who asked young Sylvester to tea?" shrieked Fisher T. Fish.

"Yes!"

"You—you—you——"

"And he didn't look the least bit like a kidnapper in disguise," said Bob cheerfully. "And I never suspected anything—nothing at all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish glared at Bob Cherry. His feelings were too deep for words. He had spent half an hour in a wildly excited search for Sylvester of the Second—who had gone to tea with the Head. Fish generally had a liberal flow of language, but it failed him now, and he stalked away without another word. But he left the Removites howling like hyenas.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Corn in Egypt!

"SISTER Anne—Sister Anne, do you see anybody coming?"

Bob Cherry asked that question on the following afternoon.

It was past tea-time, and the Famous Five were admiring the view from the door of the School House at Greyfriars.

Funds were low with the Co.—a thing that sometimes happened. They were, in fact, very low. Even Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who generally had heaps of tin, was in the same state as the rest of the Co.

Like the seed in the parable, the chums of the Remove had fallen upon stony places. They were very stony indeed.

And it was past tea-time.

Tea in hall was over, so that last resource was denied to the Famous Five. Their last hope was in the postman.

If the late afternoon's post brought a remittance for any member of the Co.—it did not matter which—all would be well.

If it didn't——

But the chums did not care to think of what would happen if a remittance didn't arrive. Even borrowing for the occasion was not easy. Vernon-Smith and Lord Mauleverer and Squiff had gone out, and were, therefore, not to be borrowed of. Mark Linley would cheerfully have lent his last sixpence. But as sixpence was not quite enough for the requirements of five hungry juniors, they did not annex it. Tom Brown was stony, too; and so was Bulstrode. As Nugent sorrowfully remarked, in Shakespearean language:

"When sorrows come, they come not as single spies, but in battalions."

Unless a remittance arrived, the Famous Five were reduced to the extremity of wandering up and down the Remove passage in search of a study where supplies could be obtained.

Before they came to that, they intended to try the postman. Wharton was expecting a remittance from his uncle. Bob Cherry was not without hopes of a postal-order from his father. And Johnny Bull had written to his aunt the day before, and was hopefully anticipating a reply to the letter that afternoon.

But the postman had never seemed so late.

Bogg, the Friardale postman, never hurried himself, and he was not uncommonly half an hour behind time. That did not matter, as a rule, but when five famished youths were depending on a remittance for a much-needed feed, it became a serious matter.

"Sister Anne—Sister Anne!" murmured Bob lugubriously.

"I don't see anybody coming," grunted Nugent, looking out over the Close. "Only Coker of the Fifth! And we can't borrow anything of Coker."

"Where's that beastly postman?"

"It's time they gave old Bogg an old-age pension, and got a new one!" growled Wharton. "Why can't he hurry up for once?"

"He doesn't know we're perishing of hunger!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"The perishfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "It is like the leanfulness of Egypt in the years of famine."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Who's this?"

"The postman, by Jove!"

"Tain't Bogg!"

"Never mind; it's a giddy postman! Hurrah!"

Five pairs of eyes were fixed upon the uniformed figure, with a bag over the shoulder, that came in at the school gates, and crossed over to the house.

It certainly was not Mr. Bogg, the usual postman. Apparently the post-office authorities had acted unconsciously on Wharton's suggestion, and "got a new one."

The postman was a much younger man than old Bogg. He was a very big and powerful man, and came across the Close

with long strides. The juniors looked at him curiously. Old Bogg was an institution at Friardale, and was supposed to be the oldest inhabitant; indeed, some of the fellows said that he dated from the time of the Norman Conquest, and some averred that he had been there before the Flood. The new postman was certainly many years younger, and he was rather a good-looking man, with a big brown beard and a large pair of spectacles.

He glanced round him rather uncertainly as he came towards the house, and the Famous Five ran down the steps to meet him.

"New postman, what?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes, sir. I have taken Mr. Bogg's place for this week, as he is laid up," said the man, touching his cap.

"Anything for us?"

"I'm afraid I don't know your name, sir."

"Nugent, Wharton, Cherry, Bull, Hurree Singh," said Bob Cherry. "Anyone will do; it's all in the family."

"Mr. Bogg told me the rule is to deliver the letters in the house, and then—"

"Yes, but this is a special occasion, you see; we're waiting for a remittance," said Bob. "On special occasions you hand out the letters at once. This occasion is very special; very special indeed."

The man in spectacles smiled.

"Very well, sir; if it is the—the rule—"

"Exactly! Go through the sack as quick as you can, if you don't want to see five nice boys perish at your feet."

The postman laughed, and went through his bag. It was a new bag, as well as a new postman, and larger than the one Mr. Bogg used to carry. The postman looked over the letters, and in doing so brought to light a large parcel addressed to Sylvester of the Second.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's for young Sylvester," said Bob. "Looks like a cake! My hat! Do they send him cakes from San Francisco?"

"This was posted in Friardale, sir," said the postman. "The old gentleman who posted it spoke to me in the post-office, and asked me very particularly to see that it was placed in Master Sylvester's own hands."

"Sure he didn't have one for me?" asked Bob.

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Very forgetful old gentleman!" said Bob indignantly.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's a letter for me!"

The postman handed out a letter for Bob. It was addressed in Major Cherry's hand. There were no others for the Famous Five.

"Corn in Egypt!" said Bob, with great satisfaction, opening the letter at once. "Postal-order for five bob! Saved our lives at the last moment. Good old pater! Postman, by the way, what's your name?"

"Jackson, sir."

"Jackson, you're a jewel! You're a treasure—a pearl of price! If you like, I'll take you to young Sylvester to give him that cake. Franky, you can take this postal-order to the tuckshop and change it there, and we'll blow it all in riotous living."

Nugent and Wharton and Johnny Bull and Inky made for the school shop at once with the postal-order. Bob Cherry guided the postman into the house.

"To tell the truth, sir," said Jackson, "the old gentleman gave me a shilling to see that this cake was delivered to Master Sylvester, and gave me a message for him. I suppose it isn't against the rules to deliver it to the young gentleman personally."

"Not for once, anyway," said Bob. "I expect he's in the Second Form-room. This way."

"Thank you, sir!"

Bob Cherry opened the door of the Second Form-room. A good many of the Second Form fags were there, having tea at one of the desks. The Second, being a fag Form, had no studies, and when they did not have tea in hall, they generally "fed" in the Form-room, which they had to themselves after lessons.

Nugent minor and Gatty and Myers and Sylvester were there together, with Sammy Bunter and several more of the Second.

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They looked round as Bob Cherry came in with the new postman.

"Parcel for you, young Sylvester," said Bob.

"Oh, good!" said Sylvester, getting up. "Hand it over!"

"A cake, by gum!" exclaimed Dick Nugent, as the postman handed the parcel to the little Californian. "Who's sending you cakes, young Sylvester? I didn't know you had any people in this country."

"I haven't," said Sylvester, looking at the parcel in surprise; "and this can't have come from 'Frisco, I guess."

"Posted in Friardale; you can see on the parcel," said Myers.

"I guess there can't be any mistake," said Sylvester, regarding the parcel. "There's my name on it right enough."

"The old gentleman spoke to me in the post-office, sir," said the postman. "He gave me a message for you. You are Master Sylvester?"

"I guess so."

"Mr. Vincent asked to be remembered to you, sir. He said he was an old acquaintance of your father in San Francisco," said Jackson. "He is sorry he cannot come and see you, as he is suffering with gout, and has to walk about with a stick when he goes out."

"Well, it's jolly good of him to send me a cake," said Sylvester. "I don't remember his name, but if you see him again, you can give him my kind regards. I say, you chaps, this is a ripping cake!"

And as the postman retired the fags of the Second started operations on the cake. Bob Cherry hurried away to the Remove passage.

The Co. had already arrived in No. 1 Study with supplies from the tuckshop.

In a few minutes more the Famous Five were seated round a well-spread tea-table, and cheerfulness and contentment reigned on all sides. Bob Cherry's remittance had arrived, as Bob remarked, like corn in Egypt in one of the seven lean years, and the Co. rejoiced accordingly.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Fish Makes Inquiries!

"I GUESS I smell a rat!"

Fisher T. Fish made that statement the next day, shaking his head solemnly as he did so.

Harry Wharton & Co. gave him inquiring looks. The remark was addressed to them.

"Not on the track of the kidnapper again, for goodness' sake?" asked Harry.

"I guess so!"

"Please go and tell somebody else about it," said Bob Cherry meekly.

"Please I'm fed-up—right up to the chin!"

"I guess I smell a rat," repeated Fish, "and I guess you fellows would smell a rat, too, if you were spry. You know what's happened?"

"No. What's happened?"

"Young Sylvester received a cake yesterday. I've heard all about it, I guess."

The chums of the Remove stared blankly at Fisher T. Fish. They could see nothing of a suspicious nature in young Sylvester receiving a cake.

"Well, fellows have received cakes before, and no bones broken," Nugent remarked.

"I guess I can see further into things than you jays. I guess I'm waiting here for the postman to come."

"The—the postman?"

"Yep. I'm going to ask him some questions. I don't like the look of it. Who's this hyer galoot, Mr. Vincent? I've asked young Sylvester, and he doesn't remember the name. Says he's an old friend of Mr. Sylvester in 'Frisco—an old acquaintance, anyway. More likely he's Five Hundred Dollar Smith in—"

"In disguise!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Yep."

TYPES OF THE BRITISH ARMY.



A Private of the Famous Welsh Fusiliers, the regiment from "Gallant Little Wales" of which the British Army is so proud.



From the trees that bordered the road, two men suddenly leapt, and ran directly for the trap. One of them grasped the horse's head, and stopped him, and the other sprang into the trap. (See Chapter 2.)

"And he's sending young Sylvester a cake? Do American kidnapers do that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess it looks suspicious. The trouble is, that he hasn't written to young Sylvester, and hasn't asked him to go to tea or anything at his place. If he had——"

"Sylvester couldn't go. He's not allowed out of gates," said Wharton. "His pater has arranged that with the Head."

"Yep. I guess I know that. But Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith don't know it, and this is the kind of game he would be likely to play," said Fish, with a sage shake of the head. "I guess I'm going to see that man Jackson, and ask him some questions. Hallo, here he comes!"

The postman was coming in as usual. Fisher T. Fish stopped him in the Close, and the Famous Five waited to see him do his questioning. They were rather tickled with the idea of Fisher T. Fish playing the part of Sherlock Holmes or Ferrers Locke.

"I guess I want a word with you, Jackson," said Fish.

"Yes, sir," said the postman, stopping and looking at Fish inquiringly through his spectacles.

"You brought a cake hyer yesterday for young Sylvester?"

"Yes, sir."

"From an old gent named Vincent?"

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"Just so, sir."

"You've seen him?"

"He spoke to me very kindly in the post-office, sir. A very generous old gentleman," said Jackson civilly.

Fisher T. Fish sniffed.

"I guess I'm kinder interested in that generous old gentleman," he said. "What sort of a looking man is he?"

The postman looked surprised.

"Oh, speak up, Jackson!" said Bob Cherry, grinning. "Fishy is always asking questions; it's a little way he has with him. When he grows up he's going to be a New York reporter."

"You jest answer me, my man," said Fish. "I guess I've got a reason for being interested in that galoot. What is he like, I say?"

"A very respectable old gentleman, sir," said Jackson. "Looks very benevolent."

"Old?" asked Fish.

"About seventy, I should say, sir."

"Beard, I suppose?" asked Fish suspiciously.

"He has white whiskers, sir, and gold-rimmed glasses. He walks with a stick, and fair hobbles, sir, as he has the gout very bad."

"Is he an Amurrican?"

"I think not, sir. He does not speak like an American gentleman."

"Speaks English—what?" grinned Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith is 'cute enough to speak any way he pleases when he's on a little gum-game!" sniffed Fisher T. Fish.

The postman started.

"Who, sir?" he asked.

"Oh, never mind; you don't know anything about that!" said Fish. "You may not be aware that there was a galoot trying to kidnap young Sylvester the day he came here, Jackson."

"I have never heard of it, sir."

"Of course you wouldn't! But I'm looking after that kid, Jackson!"

"Very kind of you, I'm sure, sir."

The postman gave a glance towards the House, as if thinking that the Yankee junior had taken up enough of his time. But Fisher T. Fish was not finished yet.

"I suppose you've delivered letters to this Mr. Vincent, as he's staying in Friardale?" he asked.

"Several times, sir."

"Then you know where he hangs out?"

"I—I beg your pardon, sir."

"You know where he lives, I mean?"

"Oh, yes, sir! He is an invalid, and he lives in one of the bungalows by the sea. He has a nurse with him, to take care of him."

"Oh! And what is he doing in this place at all?"

"I think he has come here for his health, sir, being an invalid. But I have never asked anybody any questions about him, sir. I have always been very careful to mind my own business, sir!"

The juniors grinned as the postman made this remark. But the hint was quite lost on Fisher T. Fish. He was not at all given to minding his own business.

"I s'pose you've seen this old gent pretty close?" he asked.

"Quite close, sir, when he has kindly spoken to me."

"Did you happen to notice his beard especially?"

"His—his beard, sir!" exclaimed the postman, with a look of astonishment.

"Yep."

"I—I can't say I noticed it particularly, sir."

"It didn't strike you as being a false beard?"

"F-f-false, sir?"

"Yep."

"I—I certainly did not think so, sir. I saw his nurse trimming it one morning when I took in his letters, and certainly I should not have thought it was a false beard, sir. I—I am really very much surprised, sir! If you are finished, sir, I should like to go on, as I have to do my round."

"What's the name of his house?" asked Fish, unheeding.

"Rock Bungalow, sir."

"Good! I guess I'm going to take my bike for a spin in that direction, you fellows. See you later!"

And Fisher T. Fish walked away towards the bike-shed.

The postman gazed after him through his spectacles, and then looked very queerly at the grinning Removites.

"Excuse me, young gentlemen," said Jackson, "but—but is that young gentleman quite right in his head?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's all right!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "He's hunting for a mare's nest, that's all. Otherwise, quite sane."

"His questions seemed to me very strange, sir, that's all."

And the postman touched his cap, and went on to the House. Fisher T. Fish wheeled out his bike, and mounted it outside the school gates, and departed. It was an hour later when he came in, looking very dusty and discontented.

"Well, what's the news?" asked Bob Cherry, meeting him as he came in from the bike-shed.

Fisher T. Fish sniffed.

"I guess it looks all right!" he admitted. "I've spoken to the nurse at the bungalow. He's a man nurse, not a feminine gender. Old Mr. Vincent was in bed, he told me. He spends nearly all his time propped up in bed, when his gout's bad. He goes for a hobble along the front of an evening, with a stick—dot-and-carry-one, you know, or leaning on the man's arm. I've jawed to several people who know him by sight. He seems to be a philanthropist—gives coppers to the kids, and subscriptions to Mr. Lambe's charities. He's very nervous about burglars, as the bungalow is rather lonely; and I've heard that he's asked the Pegg policeman to keep a special eye on his place—tipped him, I suppose."

"Which is just what a professional kidnapper would do, of course!" grinned Bob.

"Well, it might be a trick—to look above suspicion, you know," said Fish. "I admit it looks all right; but I've got

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my suspicions. If I ever hear that he has asked young Sylvester to go and see him, I shall reckon it's a gum-game."

Fisher T. Fish was very dissatisfied. He had "guessed" that he was on the track of something suspicious, and he was not pleased to discover that Mr. Vincent was apparently a harmless and benevolent old gentleman.

He still hoped, however, to hear that the old gentleman had made some attempt to get young Sylvester to visit him at his house.

But it did not happen.

It was natural enough that a confirmed invalid, a victim to so painful an affliction as the gout, should not care to be worried by a schoolboy about his house. Or perhaps Mr. Vincent knew that Sylvester of the Second was not allowed out of gates. At all events, no invitation reached Sylvester from him. He restricted his kindness to sending the fag occasional cakes, and that source of supply came to be quite counted upon in the Second Form. But beyond sending cakes to the little Californian, Mr. Vincent took no notice of his existence, and even Fisher T. Fish had to confess to himself, at last, that he wasn't, after all, on the track of Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Very Suspicious!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! That must be the old gent!"

It was Sunday, and the chums of the Remove were taking their usual "Sunday walk" along the seashore.

Nugent minor and a party of fags were there on the sands, Bertie Sylvester with them.

An old gentleman with white whiskers and gold-rimmed spectacles came along the front, leaning heavily on a stick. A quietly-dressed man, evidently the male nurse, walked by his side.

The chums of the Remove looked curiously at the old gentleman.

This was evidently the Mr. Vincent who sent cakes to Sylvester of the Second. The old gentleman paused as he passed the party of fags on the sands.

He blinked at them through his glasses, apparently without recognising Sylvester.

But he paused in his walk and called to them.

"You belong to Greyfriars, my boys?"

Dicky Nugent looked round.

"Yes, sir," he said.

"Is one of you named Sylvester?"

"I'm Sylvester, sir," said the owner of that name.

The old gentleman looked at him with kindly interest. Harry Wharton & Co. paused, as they remembered Fisher T. Fish's suspicions of that harmless-looking old gentleman. They noted that Fisher T. Fish was hovering near.

"You don't remember me, my little man?" said Mr. Vincent, in a wheezy voice. "I saw you once in your father's home, when I was in San Francisco. I heard that you had been sent to a school here, and I should have come to see you, but I am, as you see, an invalid. I hope you are getting on well in your class?"

"Yes, sir, thank you," said Sylvester.

"I should like to ask you to visit me, but I'm afraid that an invalid's house would be somewhat too dull for a lad of your years," said the old gentleman, with a benevolent smile.

"What-ho—I mean, I guess so, sir."

"Very good. Good-bye, my little man."

And the old gentleman shook hands with Sylvester, and hobbled on.

Mr. Blane, the master of the Second Form, was seated on a rock close by. He was in charge of the party of fags. Sylvester of the Second never left the school unless in company with a master, and then only on rare occasions. That excessive precaution was irksome enough to the fag; but the Head had no choice but to observe his father's wishes.

And the Head, though he was assured that there would be no recurrence of the kidnapping affair, would not have cared to run risks. Mr. Blane had glanced up as the old gentleman paused to speak to Sylvester, and Mr. Vincent raised his hat courteously to him as he passed on, Mr. Blane responding courteously to the salute.

Harry Wharton & Co. glanced at Fisher T. Fish, whose face was a study.

"Well, Fishy?" murmured Bob Cherry. "What price the kidnapper?"

"Oh, rats!" said Fish crossly.

"Trying to get young Sylvester to his house—what?"

"I guess it's all O.K.," admitted Fisher T. Fish. "The galoot was actually excusing himself for not asking young Sylvester there! I guess it's all O.K., after all."

"I guess it is," chuckled Bob Cherry, "and I guess and calculate that you are a first-class ass, Fishy."

Fisher T. Fish grunted and walked away. "Shakespeare says that the thief doth fear each bush an officer," grinned Johnny Bull. "Fishy seemed to see a kidnapper in every old gentleman with a pair of whiskers."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He'll be on the track again soon, I expect," said Harry Wharton. "I wonder whom the next suspicious character will be?"

Harry Wharton was right. When the party of fags returned to Greyfriars under the wing of Mr. Blane, Fisher T. Fish joined the Famous Five with an excited countenance.

"I guess there's something up at last!" he exclaimed.

The chums of the Remove yawned portentously.

"Oh, get a new record, do!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"I guess I've spotted the little game!" said Fish, emphatically.

"Bow-wow!" said Bob Cherry.

"Look there!" said Fish impressively. And he pointed.

The chums of the Remove looked. An old and tattered man, with straggling beard and moustaches, and a battered bowler hat set on a mop of unkempt hair, detached himself from a stile in the lane as the party of fags passed, and held out his hand for coppers.

Little Sylvester good-naturedly stopped, and threw a shilling into the dirty palm.

The old mendicant overwhelmed him with thanks, toddling along the lane for two or three yards beside the fag, while he poured out his gratitude.

Fisher T. Fish's eyes gleamed as he watched him.

"What do you think of that?" he asked breathlessly.

"My only hat! Is there something suspicious in that?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"Just a few!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I've had my eye on that old mugwump! He was watching the fags all the way up the lane—simply watching them."

"Well, he meant to beg as they came by," said Nugent.

"And he spoke to Sylvester—spotted him at once—"

"Did he?"

"Yep! Didn't Sylvester hand him out the cash? Well, you galoots, I guess there's more in that old mugwump than meets the eye. That beard is a false one—I'll bet you my Sunday socks on that. Yes, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle," said Fisher T. Fish disdainfully. "Cackle as much as you like—but I reckon I'm on the trail of that johnny. When that beard comes off him you'll see that he's not so old as he looks—not any older than Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith, I guess."

"What are you up to?" exclaimed Wharton, as Fish strode away towards the old mendicant, who was leaning on the stile again now.

"I guess I'm going to show him up. You galoots can back me up, and collar him as soon as I prove that he's the man I suspect."

"And suppose he isn't?" chuckled Harry.

"Oh, I guess he is, right enough!" said Fisher T. Fish confidently. "I guess I've spotted him. He'd have to get up very early in the morning to pull the wool over my eyes—some."

"How are you going to tell?"

"Jerk off that beard!" said Fish.

"But—but suppose it's a real one—only suppose?" roared Bob Cherry.

"I guess that's all right—it ain't a real one."

And Fish quickened his pace, and bore down upon the beggar. The Famous Five followed him, wondering what would happen when Fish tried to jerk off that beard. As Fish came up, the old man detached himself from the stile again, and held out a dirty hand.

"Kind young gentleman—" he began in a whining voice.

"You want help, what?" asked Fisher T. Fish, with a grin.

"Yes, sir! 'Elp a pore man—"

"I'll help you," said Fisher T. Fish, and he made a sudden grab at the straggling beard, and jerked at it with all his force.

There was a fiendish yell from the unfortunate old man.

The beard did not come off.

But its owner yelled with pain, as well he might, considering the force Fisher T. Fish had put into that tug.

"M-m-my hat," ejaculated Fish, "that's jolly well fixed on!"

"Ow! Ow! Leggo! Yow-yow! You young villain—"

Harry Wharton grasped Fish by the shoulders and dragged him back, and Fish had to let go. The old beggar caressed his chin, grunting with pain.

"You young villain!" he howled. "I'll lay my stick about you! You—you—"

"By gum! It ain't a false beard after all!" ejaculated Fish, in wonder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I've made a mistake, old man. Sorry!"

"Ow! Ow!"

"I guess you have made a mistake, and I guess you're going to pay for it, Fishy," said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "You'll give that old chap a bob for pulling his beard."

"I guess I haven't any bobs to give away."

"Then you'll get a jolly good bumping," said Bob determinedly. "Lay hold of the silly idiot, you fellows, and we'll teach him not to go about yanking respectable old gentlemen by the whiskers."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hyer, I say—let go—chuck it—yow-ow-ow!"

Bump!

Fisher T. Fish descended upon the dusty road, and roared.

"Yaroooh! Chuck it, I say."

"Hand out a bob to the old johnny, then, and pay for damages," said Bob.

"I won't! I—"

Bump!

"Yaroooh! I guess I'll pay up! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish was allow to rise. Very reluctantly he fished a shilling out of his pocket, and handed it to the old fellow, who was grinning now.

"Thank you kindly, young gentlemen!" said the old tramp.

"The young gentleman can 'ave another tug at the same price if he likes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Fisher T. Fish did not want another tug. He was satisfied that the beard was genuine enough now, and that the old tramp was not the kidnapper in disguise. He grunted, and tramped on towards Greyfriars, and the Famous Five followed him, laughing. And the old tramp, who had been the object of such dark suspicions, shambled away to the Cross Keys to expend Fisher T. Fish's shilling in liquid refreshment.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Very Queer!

"Oh, it's rotten!" said Gatty of the Second.

"Beastly!" agreed Dicky Nugent.

"I wouldn't stand it!" remarked Myers.

Little Sylvester smiled and shook his head.

"I guess I've got to," he said.

"But being gated all the time—excepting when you go out along with the master!" said Gatty. "It's simply beastly!"

"Can't be helped."

"There ain't any danger now," continued Gatty. "Besides, we'll look after you, young Sylvester. I'd like to see a blessed kidnapper go for you while we're along with you!"

"Safe as houses!" said Dicky Nugent.

Lessons were over on Monday, and the fags were holding a discussion in the Second Form-room. Dicky Nugent & Co. had planned a little excursion, and they wanted their new chum to join in it. But Sylvester was gated. He had explained to the fags that, until Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith was arrested his father had asked the Head to keep him within gates. And nothing had been heard of the troublesome and enterprising Mr. Smith. Therefore, Sylvester had to remain within gates, excepting on the occasions when Mr. Blane took the fags for a walk.

It was hard on him, but it could not be helped.

"I guess there isn't much danger now," he admitted; "but when I was in 'Frisco I was kidnapped twice. And I don't want to risk it. I guess the popper knows his business, and he's asked the Head to keep me within gates. I'm sorry I can't come with you chaps."

"But it's all rot!" said Gatty. "Look here, just slip out with us for this once, kid. Nobody need know anything about it."

"Yes; come on," urged Nugent minor. "I tell you that kidnapping villain has cleared out of the country—it's a dead cert—and he'll probably never be arrested at all. Now, you can't be gated all the time you're at Greyfriars. It don't stand to reason. Come along with us."

Sylvester hesitated.

The perpetual gating was irksome enough to him, and the danger seemed so remote that the precaution seemed, to his mind, excessive.

"Come on!" said Myers. "We'll all slip out together, and you won't be noticed among us."

"I guess—"

"We'll all look after you," said Myers. "Besides, there really isn't any danger, you know. It's all rot!"

ANSWERS

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NEXT MONDAY—

"HARD UP!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Sylvester jumped off the desk he was seated on.

"I guess I'll come and chance it!" he said.

"Bravo!"

And the fags left the Form-room together. As they came out of the School House into the Close, Sylvester looked round rather nervously. If a master or a prefect spotted him breaking bounds he would be sent back at once, with lines to do. But there was no master in sight, and the fags crossed quickly to the gates.

"All serene!" grinned Gatty.

But it was not all serene. As the fags passed the gateway they met Mr. Blane face to face, coming in from the road.

The Second Form-master halted, and the fags stopped in dismay. Mr. Blane frowned.

"You were going out, Sylvester!" he exclaimed.

"I—I—"

"You know perfectly well that you are not allowed out of gates!" said Mr. Blane severely. "You will go to the Form-room at once, Sylvester, and write out fifty lines of the 'Henriade.'"

"Oh!"

"At once!" repeated Mr. Blane.

Sylvester gave his comrades a hopeless look, and turned back towards the School House.

Gatty & Co. went on out of gates, looking rebellious and discontented. They were allowed out of gates until locking-up.

"How beastly rotten!" said Dicky Nugent. "Blane's a beast!"

"Awful beast!" agreed Gatty.

"Poor old Sylvester! Fifty rotten lines!" growled Myers.

"Well, we'll take him in some of the grub."

"Hallo!" said Gatty, as he sighted the postman coming up the road. "I dare say this chap has got another cake for him. He brings him one nearly every day. Hallo, Jacky!"

Jackson, the postman, stopped, and touched his cap.

"Got anything for young Sylvester?" asked Gatty.

"Yes, sir. A cake."

"Good! He's detained in the Form-room," explained Gatty. "You take it to him there. You know our Form-room?"

"Yes, sir."

And the fags went on, and Jackson continued on his way towards the school. Gatty & Co. felt more contented in their minds about their chum now. Probably the detained fag would devote more attention to the cake than to the fifty lines he had to transcribe from the "Henriade."

Jackson reached the School House, and found the Famous Five waiting for him in the doorway.

"What have you got for us?" asked Bob Cherry.

"There is one for Master Wharton," said the postman.

"Good! Hand it out!"

"I have a cake for Master Sylvester, as usual, young gentlemen," said the postman. "I have just met Master Gatty, and he says Master Sylvester is detained in the Form-room. Under the circumstances, may I take it in?"

"What-ho!" said Bob. "Of course! Why, that's just when a cake would be most welcome, isn't it?"

Jackson smiled.

"Yes, sir; I suppose so, if I should not be breaking the rules."

"Oh, never mind the rules," said Bob Cherry.

"Sylvester is down on his luck. I just saw Mr. Blane marching him into the Form-room, and he looked down in the mouth. Let the poor kid have his cake."

"Ahem! If Mr. Blane is there, perhaps I had better not—"

"That's all right. He isn't there. It was ten minutes ago I saw him, and he went to his study afterwards," said Bob.

"Then if Master Sylvester is alone, I suppose I might take in the cake?" said Jackson.

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific, my esteemed Jackson! The cake will be a windy fall for the esteemed and ludicrous Sylvester."

"Very well, sir, I will do it."

The postman went down the Form-room passage.

The chums of the Remove glanced after him. They rather liked Jackson, the new postman. He certainly seemed a good-natured fellow. Old Bogg, the former postman, would not have risked being called over the coals for the sake of taking in a cake to a fag who was under detention.

Little Sylvester was sitting at his desk, alone in the deserted Form-room, and probably that handsome cake from the benevolent Mr. Vincent would cheer him up. Harry Wharton & Co. saw Jackson stop at the door of the Form-room and tap and open the door. The postman, with his bag on his shoulder, passed into the Form-room and closed the door behind him.

Harry Wharton opened his letter.

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"Good egg!" he exclaimed, with great satisfaction. "My uncle is a brick! A quid—a whole, noble, giddy quidlet!"

"Hurrah!"

"The hurrahfulness is terrific."

"I tell you what—we'll have young Sylvester to tea when he's done his lines," said Harry. "He's a good little chap, and we'll cheer him up—what?"

"Jolly good idea! Rather infra dig to have Second Form fags to tea with the Remove, but we'll stretch a point for once," said Frank Nugent, laughing.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob.

The Form-room door, at a considerable distance down the long, flagged passage, had opened again, and the postman had come out. He had a very puzzled expression on his face, and he came down the passage towards the juniors.

"Did you say that Master Sylvester was in the Form-room, sir?" he asked.

"Yes," said Bob.

"He does not seem to be there now, sir."

"Must be there!" said Bob. "It's hardly more than ten minutes since I saw Blane take him in, and set him doing lines. He hasn't come out that I know of."

"Well, he is not there."

"I say, that's queer. Can the young ass have got out of the window?"

"Come and look," said Harry.

"I think I must go on my round, sir," said Jackson.

"Wait a minute. He ought to have his cake."

"Very well, sir."

Jackson, bag on shoulder, went up the passage with the juniors, and they looked into the Second Form-room.

It was empty.

On Sylvester's desk lay a sheaf of impot paper, and an open copy of the "Henriade," and the pen was sticking in the inkwell. A dozen lines had been written on the paper.

The fag had evidently been there quite lately. Wharton noticed that the ink of the last line was barely dry.

But he was certainly not there now.

"The young ass must be hiding for a joke, I suppose?" said Bob Cherry. "Wasn't he here when you came in, Jackson?"

"No, sir."

"He's been up to something," said Harry Wharton, sniffing suspiciously. "Do you fellows notice a queer smell here?"

The juniors all sniffed.

"Smells like some sort of a giddy chemical," said Johnny Bull.

"I don't notice it, sir," said Jackson, sniffing, too. "Will you excuse me if I go now; I have rather a long round to make. I will leave this cake with you young gentlemen, if you like, and you can give it to Master Sylvester. Or perhaps—no, I had better take it, and bring it back the next time I come—in the morning."

"Leave it with the housekeeper," said Wharton. "That's really the rule—grub that comes for juniors has to be left with the housekeeper, though we don't always keep the rule."

"Very well, sir."

The postman left the Form-room.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked about the room in amazement. That Sylvester had been there up to a few minutes ago was certain; Wharton scanned the lines copied from the Henriade, and smudged the last one with his finger. The ink was quite fresh. Where had the fag gone, at the very moment apparently, when the postman had arrived with the cake?

With a suspicion that the fag might be hiding himself for a joke, though they could not quite see where the joke would come in—the chums of the Remove searched round the Form-room.

They looked into the cupboard, and discovered nothing but an easel and blackboard, and some other equally innocent articles. They looked under the desks, but there was nothing to be seen there but a little dust.

Wharton examined the big windows which looked upon the Close.

There were three windows in a row. Two of them were fastened, but the middle window was open at the top.

But, of course, Sylvester, if he had got out of the window, could not have got out at the top. And the window was so big and heavy that the little fag would have found his strength severely taxed to open it at all.

Wharton pushed it up, and looked out.

In the distance he caught sight of Jackson the postman crossing to the gates, with his sack on his shoulder.

Under the window was a sound of voices. Coker of the Fifth was standing close at hand, talking to Potter and Greene. He was laying down the law on the subject of football, and pointing out that Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, was a silly ass not to think of playing him, Coker, in the first eleven, in the approaching footer season.

"Hallo, Coker!" called out Wharton. "Have you seen a kid get out of this window?"

Coker looked round.

"Don't interrupt me, you Remove fag—"

"But have you seen anybody get out?" asked Harry.

"Young Sylvester was detained, and he seems to have vanished."

"No, I haven't!" growled Coker.

"Have you been here long, you chaps?"

"We've been standing here ever since Coker began to talk," said Potter, with a grunt. "It seems like about two hours."

Coker snorted.

"Ten minutes," he said—"about ten minutes."

"Then he can't have got out of the window without you seeing him," said Harry, greatly puzzled. He closed the window again. "I say, you chaps, this is jolly queer. Where the dickens has young Sylvester got to?"

"He's cut detention, and he's hiding himself somewhere, I suppose!" yawned Johnny Bull. "I'm hungry! Let's go and have tea."

"But I don't see how he could have come out of the Form-room without our seeing him," said Harry. "We were playing leap-frog in the passage while we waited for the postman—after Blane was gone."

"Well, as he isn't in the Form-room, he must have got out of it somehow," said Bob Cherry. "Let's go and have tea."

Harry Wharton was puzzled; but he could not see any grounds for alarm. The kidnapper, of course, came into his mind, but he dismissed the thought. The kidnapper might possibly have got into the school, but Wharton did not see how he could have got out again—with Sylvester. Up to a few minutes ago the fag had been in the room, and he could not have left by the window without being seen by Coker & Co., and Harry Wharton and his friends had been in the passage.

It was very puzzling. Doubtless, however, the fag had slipped quickly out of the room without the juniors noticing him—that was the conclusion Wharton came to. And the Famous Five, abandoning the idea of asking young Sylvester to tea, since he could not be found, repaired to No. 1 Study, where a royal spread was the outcome of Colonel Wharton's "quid."

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Sylvester is Missing!

SYLVESTER!"

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove was taking call-over in Big Hall. The whole school had assembled as usual for the names to be called, and until Mr. Quelch came to Sylvester's name, "adsum" was answered every time.

But Sylvester of the Second did not answer to his name.

"Sylvester!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

No reply.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked over curiously towards the ranks of the Second Form. They saw Gatty and Myers and Nugent minor looking about them.

Sylvester was not there.

Mr. Quelch raised his eyes and looked towards the Second-Formers sharply. In the case of any other boy, the master would have marked him down as absent, if he did not answer to his name. But Sylvester was an exceptional case. All the school knew of the danger little Sylvester had run from the enterprising kidnappers who had followed him from San Francisco.

"Is not Sylvester there?" called out Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir," answered Gatty.

"Do you know where he is?"

"No, sir!"

"Indeed! Has anyone here seen Sylvester lately?"

There was no reply.

"When was he last seen?"

"He—he was with us at five o'clock, sir," said Gatty, colouring. "He was—ahem!—going out, but—"

Mr. Quelch uttered a sharp exclamation.

"Do you mean to say that Sylvester has been out of gates, and has not returned?"

"Nunno, sir!" stammered Gatty, in alarm. "He was going out, but Mr. Blane met him in the gateway, and sent him back, sir."

"Then he did not go out?"

"No, sir. He went to the Form-room, I think."

"He can hardly be there now," said Mr. Quelch. "However, go and see if he is in the Form-room, Gatty!"

"Yes, sir."

Gatty hurried away, and Mr. Quelch went on calling the names. He had finished the roll when Gatty came in again.

"Well, Gatty?"

"Sylvester isn't there, sir."

"Very well, this must be inquired into. Dismiss!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 345.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"HARD UP!"

EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

The school dismissed, with a buzz of voices as they passed out of Big Hall. Young Sylvester had disappeared—apparently. If he had not turned up for calling-over, it was pretty clear that he was not in the school. If he had gone out, there was no reason why he should not have returned in time for calling-over—unless something had happened to him. The fellows remembered the kidnapper at once. Fisher T. Fish especially had no doubts upon the point. Bertie Sylvester was in the hands of Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith at last.

Mr. Quelch walked quickly to the study of the master of the Second. He was a little alarmed. Sylvester was a quiet and orderly little fellow, not at all the kind of boy to miss calling-over, without a good reason.

"Do you know where Sylvester of your Form is, Mr. Blane?" the Remove-master asked.

"No. Was he not at call-over?"

"No."

"He was detained," said Mr. Blane, "I met him as he was about to leave the school, and took him to the Form-room, and gave him fifty lines to do. That is the last I saw of him."

"You left him in the Form-room?"

"Yes—at his desk."

"He is not there now," said Mr. Quelch, knitting his brows, "and he did not come in to call-over. It is very odd."

Mr. Blane frowned.

"He can scarcely have left the Form-room and gone out, against my express orders," he exclaimed.

"Hardly, I should think. I have questioned his friends in the Second Form, and they have not seen him since you took him to the Form-room. It is very odd. Considering the circumstances of Sylvester's case, I cannot help feeling a little alarmed."

"You are thinking of the kidnapper, Smith—"

"Yes," said Mr. Quelch.

"But the man has gone; surely—"

"I supposed so; but we cannot be certain. Yet it seems incredible that he can have penetrated into the school, and taken Sylvester away. The boy would not go quietly. The Close, too, was crowded with boys until dusk. However, I think search had better be made."

"Undoubtedly!" said Mr. Blane.

The two masters lost no time. Wingate and Courtney and the rest of the prefects were called in, and asked to search the precincts of the school for the missing fag. They in their turn called on the juniors for aid, and soon a hundred or more boys were looking for Sylvester.

Harry Wharton & Co. joined in the search with great zest.

But the search was in vain. It disclosed only one fact—that Bertie Sylvester was not within the walls of Greyfriars.

Every possible and impossible place had been searched, and searched again, and there was no sign discovered of the missing fag.

In the Second Form-room his half-written imposition was found, just as he had left it, but that was the only trace to be discovered of him.

The search lasted an hour, and proved beyond doubt that Sylvester was not in the school. Then Mr. Quelch, really alarmed and uneasy, went to report to the Head.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Vanished!

GREYFRIARS was in a buzz now.

Sylvester of the Second had disappeared. There was no doubt about it. The evening was growing late, and he was not in the school. If he had gone out, he would have returned if he had been able to do so. Evidently he had not been able to do so.

There was only one possible explanation.

The desperate rascals who had followed the millionaire's son from the far Pacific Slope, and had attempted to kidnap him on the day he arrived at Greyfriars, had made another attempt—more successfully.

How the boy had been induced to leave the school—how he had been taken away—remained a mystery.

But the fellows had no doubt about the fact. For once, it was admitted that Fisher T. Fish was right. Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith had not given up his scheme in despair; he had remained on the watch, found an opportunity, and seized it.

And where was Sylvester now?

Somewhere in the hands of the kidnappers. That seemed certain; but to the whereabouts of the kidnappers there was not the slightest clue.

"I guess Smith has got him!" said Fisher T. Fish, to an

excited crowd in the junior common-room. "There ain't a doubt about it. He's got him!"

"But how did he get him?" demanded Bolsover major.

"That wants finding out. And I guess there isn't a detective in this old country who will ever be able to put salt on the tail of Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Well, you watch out, and you'll see," said Fish confidently.

Harry Wharton & Co. meanwhile were discussing the matter in No. 1 Study. They shared Fisher T. Fish's opinion that the kidnapper, somehow or other, had got at the unfortunate son of the Californian millionaire. But how he had done it was a mystery. How had Sylvester been ravished away from the school?

"It beats me," said Bob Cherry. "Beats me hollow! We know he was in the Form-room, and how could he have been taken out of it? We were in the passage, and Coker was outside the window. It beats me."

"I think we ought to go to the Head," said Harry Wharton quietly.

"We can't tell him anything."

"We can tell him what we know—and what we don't know," said Harry. "I think they've got an impression that Sylvester went out of gates, and was collared outside the school. Well, we know jolly well that he never went out of gates. If he was collared, he was collared into the School House."

"But how—how? By whom?"

"How I don't know; but by the kidnapper, of course."

"But how could the man have got in—in the broad daylight?" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "He couldn't have got into the house without passing us. I suppose he couldn't have got into a window with the Close full of fellows watching him?"

"It seems impossible."

"It is impossible!" said Frank Nugent.

"Only Sylvester's gone," said Harry. "It beats me; but he's gone, and he didn't go out of the house by himself. That much we can be certain of, at least. Mr. Quelch has said that anybody who remembers anything of Sylvester's movements is to tell him, I think we'd better go to the Head."

"Right-ho!"

And the Famous Five proceeded to the Head's study.

They found Mr. Quelch and Mr. Blane with the Head, the three masters engaged in deep and troubled discussion. The Head had been using the telephone. He had rung up the police-stations in Courtfield and Friardale, asking for information, without much hope of getting any, and he had not received any. The police had undertaken to search for the missing fag, that was all.

Dr. Locke gave the juniors a worried look of inquiry.

"What is it—what is it?" he asked.

"About Sylvester, sir," said Wharton.

"You have discovered something—"

"No, sir; but we think we ought to tell you what we know about the matter. We know that Sylvester did not go out of the school after he was detained by Mr. Blane."

"How can you know that?" asked the Head sharply.

"My impression is that Sylvester slipped out of the Form-room, notwithstanding the orders of Mr. Blane, and went out of gates, and that something has happened to him outside the school. That appears to me to be certain. If, however, you can tell me any circumstance—"

"Pray tell us anything you know, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Very well, sir. Mr. Blane may remember seeing us in the passage after he had taken young Sylvester to the Form-room."

"I remember," said Mr. Blane.

"Well, sir, we did not leave the passage, excepting to look out of the doorway for the postman. Sylvester could not possibly have left the house without our seeing him."

"He might have left the Form-room by the window," observed Mr. Quelch.

"Coker of the Fifth was under the window all the time, sir, and he didn't see him."

"Indeed! That is very strange," said the Head. "You are quite certain that you were in the passage all the time, after Mr. Blane left Sylvester to his detention?"

"Quite certain, sir."

"And you would have seen the boy if he had come out of the room?"

"Yes, sir—at least, if he had come our way. And he couldn't have got out of the house without coming past us."

"But he was not missed until calling-over," said Mr. Quelch sharply. "You were not in the passage all that time, and Coker certainly could not have been outside the window until calling-over."

"He was missed ten minutes after Mr. Blane had left

him, sir," said Harry. "That's what we wanted to tell you, sir."

"Who missed him?"

"We did, sir, and we were puzzled; but we did not think that anything could have happened. The postman brought a parcel for Sylvester, and we told him to take it to him in the Form-room. That was about ten minutes after Mr. Blane had left Sylvester there. We had been in the passage all the time. We—we were playing leap-frog, sir."

"Did the postman see Sylvester there? We can question him—"

"No, sir. He came out again, and asked us where he was. He found the room empty."

"Indeed!"

"Then we went in and looked, and Sylvester wasn't there, sir. I looked out of the window, and spoke to Coker. He was sure that the kid hadn't got out of the window."

"This is very, very strange," said the Head. "You are quite certain of what you say, Wharton?"

"Quite certain, sir. So are the other fellows who were with me."

"Quite so, sir," said Bob Cherry.

"The quietfulness is terrific, sir!"

"But—but—" Dr. Locke passed his hand over his brow.

"My dear boys, if your evidence is to be relied upon, the conclusion is that Sylvester did not leave the Form-room at all; yet he has certainly disappeared."

"I can't understand it, sir," said Harry; "but I know that Sylvester never broke bounds after Mr. Blane had detained him. That I'm quite certain of. And he had disappeared ten minutes after Mr. Blane left him. I've asked a crowd of fellows, and nobody has seen him since. I thought we ought to tell you this, sir, as you believed that Sylvester was not missed until calling-over."

"Quite so—quite so. You have done very right to come to me," said the Head. "Instead of throwing light upon the matter, however, this seems to make it only the darker. Sylvester cannot have vanished into thin air; he must, therefore, have left the Form-room some time between the moment when Mr. Blane left him and the moment when the postman arrived."

"But that reduces the time we have to consider," observed Mr. Quelch. "We supposed that Sylvester might have gone at any time between five and seven. It now appears that he disappeared somewhere between five and ten minutes past five."

"Yes, that is something," said the Head.

"After you found that Sylvester was gone, what did you do, Wharton?" asked the Remove master.

"We went and had tea, sir," said Harry. "We didn't think about the matter again till he was missed at calling-over. I was puzzled, but I couldn't think that anything had happened to him inside the school. It is impossible that he could have been taken away without our seeing it."

"Yet he was taken away!"

"Ye-e-es. I—I mean, it seemed impossible, sir. I can't understand how it was done now. It's a mystery."

"Did anyone come to see Sylvester in that time? Did anyone go into the Form-room?"

"No, sir."

"Any acquaintance of the boy?" asked Mr. Blane. "I have heard that there is an old gentleman living near Pegg who sends him cakes."

"Yes, sir; a Mr. Vincent. But he has not been here. Nobody at all went into the Form-room. I am quite certain of that."

"But if that is certain, then Sylvester cannot have been taken away at all; he must have absented himself by his own will," said the Head.

Wharton was silent. The amazing mystery utterly baffled him, and he gave it up.

"You say you were playing leap-frog in the passage?" said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir."

"Between the Form-room door and the door of the house?"

"Yes."

"If Sylvester left the Form-room, and went in the opposite direction, you might not have noticed it?"

"I suppose it's possible, sir, but it's not likely. Besides, Sylvester couldn't have gone the whole length of the passage without being seen. You know there's a window-seat at the end of the passage, sir. Well, I've found out that Tubb and Paget of the Third were there, playing draughts, at the time. I've been inquiring about it, you see, sir. Tubb tells me that he was there before five o'clock, and he heard half-past five strike when he finished playing draughts with Paget. Sylvester couldn't have walked past right under their noses without being seen!"

"It is extraordinary!" said Mr. Quelch, utterly baffled.

"Extraordinary indeed!" said the Head. "I confess that it is too much for me. According to the evidence we have, Sylvester did not leave the Form-room at all, and yet when the postman looked in for him he was not there!"

"We went in with the postman, sir, and I noticed that the ink was not dry on the lines Sylvester had been writing."

"You are sure?"

"I smudged the last line with my finger, sir."

"Then he can only have been gone a minute at the most when the postman came in?"

"Not more than that, sir."

The Head pressed his hands to his brow. The puzzle made him feel as if his head were turning round.

"There is only one thing to be done, Mr. Quelch," the Head said at last. "We must have expert advice upon the subject. I will telephone to Ferrers Locke."

"An excellent idea, sir. If he is disengaged now——"

"I am sure he will come if he can," said the Head. "He is a distant relative of mine, and I am certain that he will oblige me if possible. I will ring him up at once. Thank you for coming to me, my boys. You may go!"

The Famous Five left the study.

"Ferrers Locke!" said Bob Cherry, as they went down the passage. "That's the detective! Good idea of the Head to get him here!"

"Jolly good! I should like to see him," said Wharton. "I've heard that he has a great reputation, but it seems to me that a puzzle like this will beat him!"

And the Co. agreed that it was most likely.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Harry Wharton Takes a Hand!

"HALLO!"

"Hallo! Is that Ferrers Locke?"

"Yes."

Dr. Locke drew a breath of relief. The celebrated detective, Ferrers Locke, was a relative of the Head of Greyfriars, and although, owing to their extremely different ways of life, they seldom met, they were on the most cordial terms.

In the perplexity caused by the amazing disappearance of Bertie Sylvester, the Head had thought at once of the great detective. But he knew that Ferrers Locke was a busy man, and that the chances were that he would not be able to come at once to Greyfriars. And it was necessary for him to come at once if he came at all.

"I am glad to find you at home, Locke. Are you very busy now?"

"For the moment, no," came the reply from the detective, far away in his quarters in London. "If there is anything I can do for you, Dr. Locke——"

"There is indeed!"

"Then I am at your service. To-morrow I have to leave London on an important case, and I was taking a rest this evening in my den. But if there is anything that can be done at once——"

"I am afraid that even you, Locke, could hardly deal with the matter so quickly as that," said the Head, with a sigh. "But at least you can give me some advice."

"With all my heart. What is the matter?"

"A boy has disappeared from the school—disappeared in the most extraordinary manner, without leaving a trace behind."

"Indeed! That sounds interesting, at all events." Faint as the detective's voice was at the distance, there was a note in it that told that Ferrers Locke was interested, too. "Who is the boy?"

"His name is Sylvester. You have probably heard of Abraham Sylvester, the Californian millionaire?"

"Certainly!"

"This boy is his son."

"One moment! Is this the lad who was kidnapped in San Francisco a few months ago, and held to ransom by a gang of kidnappers, headed by a criminal known as Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith?"

"The same."

"And he has disappeared from the school?"

"Yes, without a trace being left to show in what way he departed."

"I read in the papers of the attempt made by the kidnapper when the boy arrived in England," came back Ferrers Locke's voice. "There is not much doubt that this is the work of the same hand."

"It seems probable," said the Head. "But it is quite certain that the man did not enter the school, and it seems equally certain that Sylvester did not go out. The whole affair is utterly puzzling."

"When did the boy disappear?"

"Between five o'clock and ten minutes past five this afternoon."

"You have the time so close as that?"

"Yes; but unfortunately his disappearance was not known to the masters until nearly seven o'clock."

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EVERY
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

"Nothing has been heard of him since?"

"Nothing."

"You have, of course, made inquiries through the school?"

"Most exhaustive inquiries."

"Hold on a moment," said Ferrers Locke.

There was a pause. Then, after a couple of minutes, the detective's voice came again:

"I have ten minutes in which to catch the express for Courtfield. I have ordered my car for the station, and shall just catch it. Send some vehicle to the station to meet me at Courtfield, and I will be with you this evening."

"You are very, very good, Locke, to take this trouble. I don't know how to thank you!"

"Not at all. I shall be glad to come. Good-bye for the present!"

The detective rang off.

Dr. Locke hung up the receiver, and turned away from the telephone with a deep sigh of relief.

"Ferrers Locke is coming," he said. "He is catching the next express. Perhaps you will tell Harness to get the car out, Mr. Quelch, and meet the train at Courtfield Station."

"Certainly, sir."

And Mr. Quelch quitted the Head's study at once.

A crowd of fellows saw the Head's car start for the station, and, from the circumstance, Harry Wharton & Co. guessed that Ferrers Locke was coming.

They waited eagerly for the arrival of the famous detective.

"Late hours for us to-night," said Bob Cherry. "Ferrers Locke will want to ask us questions, and he can't be here much before our bedtime."

"He will want to speak to Jackson, too," Harry Wharton remarked thoughtfully. "The postman ought to be here!"

"By Jove, yes! The Head hasn't thought of that," said Bob. "Takes a fellow in the Remove to think of things—ahem! Not that Jackson can tell Mr. Locke anything that we can't tell him. Still, he ought to be here!"

"I'll speak to Mr. Quelch."

Harry Wharton went to the Remove-master's study. He found him there with Mr. Blane and Mr. Prout, talking over the puzzling mystery of Bertie Sylvester's disappearance.

"What is it, Wharton?" the Remove-master asked.

"If you'll excuse me, sir, it's occurred to me that when Mr. Locke comes, he might like to see the postman, as it was really Jackson who first saw that Sylvester had disappeared," said Harry modestly.

"Quite so—quite so."

"If you wished, sir, I would run down on my bike, and tell him to come here."

"A very good idea," said Mr. Quelch approvingly. "Jackson, I am afraid, will not be able to throw any light on the matter; still, it is certainly possible that Mr. Locke may desire to see him. Do you know where he lives?"

"No, sir; and the post-office is closed now. But I know where Bogg, the old postman, lives, and he will be able to tell me where to find Jackson."

"Very good! Go at once, Wharton!"

"Yes, sir."

Harry Wharton wheeled his bike out, and pedalled away towards Friardale. He was glad to be doing something, however little, to aid in the task of finding Bertie Sylvester. He reached the little cottage, on the outskirts of Friardale, where Mr. Bogg dwelt. Mr. Bogg was smoking his evening pipe by the fireside when Wharton knocked at the door, and Mrs. Bogg admitted him.

Mr. Bogg, a somewhat crusty old fellow, troubled with rheumatism, turned from the fire, and took his pipe from his mouth as Wharton came in.

"Master Wharton!" he said, in surprise. "You out of school at this hour?"

"I'm on business for Mr. Quelch, not breaking bounds," said Harry, with a smile. "Something has happened up at the school, Mr. Bogg. Sylvester of the Second has disappeared, and it was Jackson who first found that he was gone when he took in a parcel to him. Jackson is wanted to see the detective when he comes."

A peculiar change came over Mr. Bogg's face. There was no reason, so far as Wharton could see, why that information should trouble him, but it evidently did trouble the old postman.

"So Jackson's wanted, is he?" said Mr. Bogg slowly.

"Yes. I suppose you can tell me where to find him, as you know him," said Wharton, somewhat astonished by Mr. Bogg's worried look.

"I don't know as I can," said Mr. Bogg, knocking the ashes out of his pipe with a nervous hand.

"But you know where he lives, surely?" asked Harry.

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"I knowed," said Mr. Bogg. "He lived in that there little cottage on the Pegg Road—Lilac Cottage it's called!"

"Lived!" repeated Harry. "Doesn't he live there now?"

"Which I think not," said Mr. Bogg slowly. "You can go and ask. There's a deaf old 'oman there wot he lodged with, and p'r'aps you can get her to tell you. But she's as deaf as a stone. Mrs. Harris it is. But—"

"But isn't Jackson there?"

"Which I think not," said Mr. Bogg doggedly. "The fact s, Master Wharton, I was goin' to take up my dooties as postman agin to-morrow, bein' as Jackson has been called away. He brought my bag 'ere this evening, about a hower ago, and he says, says he, that his father is wery ill in London, and he's got to go at once, and he went by the evening train—leastways, he told me he was going by the evening train, and I s'pose he did."

Wharton looked astonished.

"But does the post-office allow him to clear off like this without notice?" he exclaimed.

"Which it don't, and I wouldn't neither, if I could 'ave stopped 'im," said Mr. Bogg viciously. "Of course, he was only a tempery postman. Me being so bad with the rheumatics, and 'im being 'ere, and willing to take on the job, and looking a wery respectable young man, I reckermended him to the postmaster for a tempery postman. Which I didn't see any harm in it, neither."

"But you knew him?"

"Yes, I knew him in a manner of speakin'," said Mr. Bogg. "I met him at the Red Cow, and a wery agreeable young man he was. Course, the postmaster didn't exactly know, p'r'aps, that I 'adn't knowed him longer than that." Mr. Bogg broke off sharply, as if he feared that he had said too much. "But there's no 'arm done, I s'pose?"

"Not by Jackson, certainly," said Harry. "But he's wanted up at the school. The detective is coming, and he will want to see him. It's very odd that he should be gone away just this evening."

"Which I was ratty with 'im; but he said his father was ill, and there was nothin' more to be said about it," said Mr. Bogg. "Not that I'll trust him agin. Let him come back and talk to me about bein' tempery postman, that's all!" said the old man savagely. "I'll talk to him! Now, if there's any trouble, I s'pose it will all come out. You—you see, young Jackson warn't an ordinary postman. He was down 'ere for 'is 'ealth, and he said as 'ow he was lookin' for a houtdoor job, being troubled with a complaint in the chest. It wasn't to be a permanency, you see; only while my rheumatics was so bad. And—and he said that he'd go 'arves in the screw, and I didn't see no reason why it shouldn't be done. So I reckermended 'im—and I wish now that I 'adn't! There'll be trouble for me with the postmaster, if so be as Jackson is wanted for something, and ain't to be found."

"You know where he lives in London?"

"Which he never told me."

Wharton knitted his brows. It was certain that Ferrers Locke would want to see the man who had first discovered that Sylvester was missing, and it was exasperating that Jackson should be missing too.

"Well, I'll run along to Lilac Cottage," said Harry, after a moment's thought. "He may not have left yet."

And he quitted the postman's cottage and remounted his bicycle.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Ferrers Locke Arrives!

HARRY WHARTON lost no time in getting to Lilac Cottage. It was a little place on the Pegg road, within sight of Rock Bungalow, the residence of the old invalid, Mr. Vincent. The cottage was dark when Harry Wharton rode up to it and jumped off his machine. Mrs. Harris evidently kept early hours.

Wharton knocked loudly at the door.

For several minutes he knocked in vain, receiving no reply save the hollow echo of the knocking from within the cottage. But at last an upper window opened, and a nightcapped head was put out. An extremely cross face looked down on the junior.

"Go away, drat you!" shrieked a shrill voice. "Go away, you young raskil! Wot do you mean, disturbing a respectable body at this time of night?"

"Sorry, Mrs. Harris," said Harry, raising his cap. "I've come for Mr. Jackson, the postman, you know. He lives here."

"Eh?"

"Is Jackson here?" bawled Harry. He remembered that Mr. Bogg had told him that the old lady was very deaf.

"I can't 'ear what you say. Go away, and don't worrit."

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And the bed-room window slammed down.

Harry Wharton recommenced hammering at the door. Five minutes elapsed, and then the window was jerked up again, and the shrill voice shrieked:

"Go away, you young raskil! I'll call for the perlice if you knock at my door!"

"Is Jackson there?" yelled Harry.

"Eh? Jackson?"

"Yes!" roared Harry, with the full force of his lungs. "I've come for Jackson! He's wanted!"

"He ain't 'ere!"

"Where has he gone?"

"To Lunnon, I s'pose."

"When did he go?"

"Eh?"

"What time did he go?" roared Wharton.

"Two hours ago."

"Is he coming back?"

"No, he ain't coming back," said Mrs. Harris.

"Is he coming back at all?" shrieked Wharton.

"He's coming back next week, so he said," replied the old dame. "Which he's paid his rent for next week, and so I s'pose he'll come back. And if you want to see 'im, you can come and see 'im then. So go away, and don't worrit!"

Slam!

The window was closed down again, and Wharton turned back to his bicycle. There was evidently nothing more to be done. He remounted his machine, and rode back towards the school. The man Jackson was evidently out of reach, and Ferrers Locke would not be able to see him when he arrived at Greyfriars.

Not that it was a matter of importance, for Wharton could tell him all that the new postman could have told him. Still, it was exasperating that the man should be gone just when he was wanted.

As Harry Wharton reached the gates of Greyfriars the lights of a motor-car appeared in sight, coming from the direction of Courtfield.

The car stopped at the school gates.

Wharton had just tugged at the bell, and Gosling came down and opened the gates, and the car turned into the drive.

In the car Wharton caught a glimpse of a man with clear-cut features and penetrating eyes, as it rolled away towards the house.

He guessed that it was the detective.

Ferrers Locke had arrived.

Wharton put up his machine in the bike-shed, and came back to the School House. His chums met him at the doorway.

"He's come," said Bob Cherry.

"Ferrers Locke?"

"Yes."

"Trotter's just shown him into the Head's study," said Johnny Bull.

Quite a crowd of juniors had gathered to see the famous detective pass in; all Greyfriars knowing by this time that Ferrers Locke was coming.

"I guess your wonderful detective will get left!" remarked Fisher T. Fish disdainfully. "I kinder' guess he's not up to the form of Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith. You watch out. I guess Mr. Ferrers Locke will go home like a lost dog, sir, and confess that a 'Frisco crook is a little too much for him."

"Rot!" said Squiff cheerfully. "If the kid's to be found, Ferrers Locke will find him, though I'm blessed if I can see where he will dig up a clue!"

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

"Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith ain't the man to leave clues lying around, I reckon," he remarked. "He's too cute for that, my sons. You watch out."

Harry Wharton went to Mr. Quelch's study to report his ill-success. The Remove-master listened with a frowning brow.

"It is unfortunate," he said. "However, the man could have told nothing that is not already known. Thank you for going, Wharton."

And Mr. Quelch, who had just received a message from the Head, went to Dr. Locke's study.

It was getting near bedtime for the juniors, but no one was thinking of sleep. The disappearance of Sylvester and the arrival of the famous detective excited them too much for that.

Quite a crowd of juniors had gathered to see the famous detective when he came out of the Head's study. But he did not come out soon. Evidently he was in deep discussion with the Head, and learning the details of the matter so far as Dr. Locke could impart them. Mr. Blane was seen to go to the Head's study, and the door closed behind him.

Then Trotter was rung for, and many pairs of eyes watched

the page as he went to the Head's room and came away again.

"Which the 'Ead says that Master Wharton is to stay down till Mr. Locke has seen him," said Trotter, as he came up to the juniors. "Likewise Masters Cherry and Nugent and Bull and 'Urree Singh. Likewise Masters Tubb and Paget. Likewise Master Coker."

"Our evidence is wanted," grinned Tubb of the Third, excited and elated at the idea of an interview with the famous detective. "We've got to tell him that we didn't see young Sylvester go out, Paget, my boy."

"Same with us," said Johnny Bull; "and Coker too!"

"Well, I didn't see him get out of the Form-room window," remarked Coker. "I can prove that right enough; and so can Botty and Greene. But I'm blessed if I know what Ferrers Locke will make of it. All our giddy evidence taken together proves that young Sylvester never left the Second Form-room at all—and we jolly well know he did, or he'd be there now."

"Well, if he did leave, how did he do it without our seeing him?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Well, if he didn't, where is he now?" said Coker of the Fifth.

"He ain't in the Form-room, for a cert," said Gatty. "We've just done our prep there. The kid ain't there, so he must have gone out."

"It seems that he did, and he didn't," observed Squiff. "He couldn't have, and yet he must have. If Ferrers Locke gets to the bottom of a mystery like that, he beats Sherlock Holmes and Vidocq hollow."

"He do—he does!" grinned Bob Cherry.

It was a question very exciting to the Greyfriars fellows, whether the famous detective would be able to see light, where, to them, all was dark. There did not seem to be a single clue of any kind—and the fag had vanished as mysteriously and completely as if he had melted into thin air.

Certainly he had not melted into thin air. But if he had not, what had become of him—how had he quitted the Form-room without being seen?

It was a puzzle that might have perplexed any brain; and if Ferrers Locke could deal with it, it proved that his reputation was well deserved.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Detective on the Case!

FERRERS LOCKE sat in the Head's study.

The calm, clear-cut face of the famous detective wore a look of quiet attention as he listened to the Head's explanation of the happening, so far as he could explain it.

The Head's explanation only presented the matter as an impenetrable mystery.

Mr. Blane added what he knew. Then there was a silence for some minutes, Ferrers Locke evidently thinking hard. The three masters watched his face, wondering what was passing in his mind. It seemed impossible that he could discern any rift in the darkness that enveloped the matter—any opening that was not perceptible to themselves.

The detective's eyes were on the carpet; he seemed to be studying the pattern very intently. He raised his eyes at last.

"A very mysterious occurrence," said he.

"Impenetrable, to my mind," said the Head. "If you can elucidate it, my dear Ferrers, you are a wonderful man."

"I have dealt with more than one case of a mysterious disappearance," said Ferrers Locke. "But assuredly nothing quite like this. It is certain that this boy, Sylvester, was in the Form-room at five o'clock?"

"About five—within a few minutes, at all events," said Mr. Blane. "I myself took him there, and left him at his imposition."

"No one entered the room after that?"

"So the juniors declare."

"Yet he vanished."

"Completely."

"There is one point that seems tolerably certain," said Ferrers Locke. "It is, of course, the work of the kidnapper—the rascal who has made previous attempts upon the boy's liberty."

"So I concluded," said the Head. "But there is no evidence whatever that the man is in the neighbourhood, or indeed in the country, and certainly he did not enter the school, to-day or any other day."

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"As the boy has evidently been taken away, sir, it seems tolerably assured that the kidnapper did enter the school."

"But without being seen—"

"Evidently."

"But observe, Mr. Locke, that quite a number of persons were on the spot, and they did not see him enter."

"Unless he was invisible, it seems to me impossible," remarked Mr. Quelch.

The detective smiled again.

"He was probably invisible," he replied.

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EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

"Mr. Locke!"

"I am not joking," said Ferrers Locke. "He was undoubtedly invisible—that is to say, invisible in the sense that he could not be seen. However, let us proceed to the room from which this lad so mysteriously vanished. You say that his exercise was left unfinished."

"Yes, that is so."

"I gave instructions for it to be left on his desk, so that you could see exactly how matters stood," said the Head. "The Second Form have done their preparation in the Form-room since, but—"

"Sylvester's desk has been left undisturbed," said Mr. Blane. "I have taken every care of that."

"Very good." Ferrers Locke rose. "Let us go, then, and please send in all the boys who know anything of this affair."

"Certainly."

There was a buzz from the crowd of fellows at the end of the passage, as Ferrers Locke appeared with the Head and the two Form-masters. But the juniors did not have the pleasure of watching the detective at work. The prefects were shepherding them off to the dormitories, with the exception of the boys who were required to give information. Those lucky ones remained downstairs until Ferrers Locke wanted them.

Mr. Blane turned on the electric light in the Second-Form room. He pointed out Bertie Sylvester's desk, and Ferrers Locke glanced at the half-written imposition lying there. The pen was still sticking in the ink-well as Sylvester had left it.

A glance at the desk seemed enough for Ferrers Locke. He turned to the Head.

"May I see the boys now?"

"I will call them in."

The Famous Five were called into the Form-room, with Tubb and Paget of the Second, and Coker of the Fifth; Ferrers Locke looked at them intently. Dr. Locke briefly explained "which was which" of the boys.

"Master Coker," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "You, it appears, were standing under the window of this room, this afternoon, when Wharton asked you whether you had seen Sylvester?"

"Yes, Mr. Locke," said Coker.

"You had been there some time?"

"Quite ten minutes, sir. I was talking to Potter and Greene about the footer," said Coker, reflectively. "Very likely twenty minutes—but more than ten, anyway. Potter said it seemed like hours to him, but that's all rot."

Ferrers Locke smiled slightly.

"You are certain that Sylvester did not get out of the window?"

"Quite certain, sir."

"That will do!"

Coker retired. Ferrers Locke signed to Paget and Tubb to come forward. The two fags advanced a little nervously.

"You two boys were playing draughts, in the window-seat at the end of the passage, and you did not see Sylvester pass you?" he asked.

"That is so, sir," said Tubb.

"Quite so, Mr. Locke," said Paget.

"You were there before five o'clock, and stayed for some time?"

"Yes, sir—more than half an hour."

"You are certain you would have seen Sylvester had he passed?"

"He would have to pass right under our noses, sir. He couldn't possibly have gone by without our seeing him," said Tubb, positively.

"Physical impossibility, sir," said Paget.

"Thank you."

The two Second-Formers left the Form-room. Only the Famous Five remained to be questioned.

They realised that they were last, but not least; their evidence had been left till the last because it was the most important. Ferrers Locke signed to Wharton.

"You, it appears, were in the passage, near the School House door, after Mr. Blane left Sylvester in this room," he said.

"Yes, sir," said Harry, "we saw Mr. Blane leave him here, and saw him go to his study afterwards. Then we played leap-frog in the passage while we were waiting for the postman."

"You met the postman when he came?"

"Yes, sir, at the door."

"Then you were not in the passage—not near the door of this room at all events—for some minutes?"

"No, sir, but we should have seen Sylvester if he had come out. He couldn't have gone the other way, because Paget and Tubb—"

"Exactly. Then you came into the room to look for him—"

"The postman came in first, sir," said Wharton. "He had a cake for Sylvester, and we told him to take it in."

Ferrers Locke raised his eyebrows.

"Is it a custom for a cake to be delivered to a junior boy in the Form-room while he is under detention?" he asked.

Wharton coloured.

"No, sir, I—I—I suppose it isn't! But we were sorry for the kid, being detained, and—and we saw no harm in it."

"I am sure your Form-master will not take note of anything you may have done contrary to the rules, under the circumstances," said Ferrers Locke.

"Of course," said Mr. Quelch. "You may speak out quite frankly, my boys, without any fear of consequences."

"Thank you, sir," said Wharton. "I suppose we shouldn't have told Jackson to take the cake in—he was rather doubtful about doing it, himself, I remember. But young Sylvester was a good little chap, and—"

"I suppose the postman is a well-known character here?" asked Ferrers Locke, glancing at the Head. "A man of old standing in the place, probably?"

"I believe so," said the Head. "a very respectable old man named Bogg, who has been a non-commissioned officer."

"It wasn't Bogg, sir," said Wharton. "It was the new postman, Jackson."

"Ah! so there was a new postman here?" said Ferrers Locke, "named Jackson? Is anything known about the man here?"

"Not that I am aware of," said the Head. "I remember now seeing a new postman, now I think of it. I paid him no special attention, of course."

"He looked a very respectable man," said Mr. Quelch. "I have seen him several times."

"He wore a beard," asked Ferrers Locke.

"Yes, certainly; though I really do not see how you know—"

"And glasses, perhaps?" said the detective.

"Yes," said Mr. Quelch, more and more surprised. "But how—"

"I am glad he wore a beard and glasses," said Ferrers Locke tranquilly. "It makes the case much easier. Now, Wharton, it appears that the postman took this cake into the Form-room, and found that Master Sylvester was not here."

"Yes, sir, he told us he wasn't here, and then we came in and looked for him. He wasn't here right enough, and we were very much surprised. We didn't think then that anything had happened, though. We didn't see how it could have."

"Naturally. Then the postman departed?"

"Yes; he was in a hurry to go on his round."

"He had his bag with him?"

"His bag! Yes, he always had his bag with him, sir."

"Quite so. It appears, from what Dr. Locke tells me, that you noticed that the ink of Sylvester's exercise was still wet?"

"Quite wet, sir. You can see where I smudged the last line with my finger."

"Which would imply that he had been in the Form-room right up to the moment when the postman entered. Ink does not take long to dry; and there must have been a lapse of some moments while the postman was telling you the boy was gone, and you were coming to look for him."

"Yes, sir. It really looks as if Sylvester was here right up to the moment Jackson came in," said Harry. "Only—only he wasn't, you see."

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"You say that the postman was bringing a cake for Master Sylvester? I understand that the boy comes from San Francisco, in California, and has no relations in England. Who, then, was sending him a cake? Is that known?"

"Very well-known, sir. It was a Mr. Vincent, who lives at a bungalow near Pegg, an old invalid gentleman. He knew Sylvester's father in San Francisco."

"Has he ever been here to see Sylvester?"

"No; he is laid up most of the time with the gout."

"He spoke to the boy once on Sunday," said Mr. Blane, "in my presence. It was simply to ask him how he was, and to express his regret that he could not ask him to pay him a visit. I saw no objection to his sending the lad little presents."

"He was in the habit of doing so?"

"It seems so," said Mr. Blane. "The rule is for such things to be taken to the housekeeper's room for the boys; but in some cases the rule is relaxed. Leniency does no harm unless it is abused. Of course, I should not have permitted the cake to be taken to the boy while under detention, if I had known. But at other times there was no great harm in the postman delivering a cake occasionally directly into the lad's hands."

"Quite so," said the Head. "You seem to attach some importance, my dear Ferrers, to this incident of the cake."

"Naturally," said Ferrers Locke.

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"Why naturally?"

"Because the whole case hangs upon that incident," said the detective calmly.

"My dear sir!"

"However, let us get on," said Ferrers Locke. "You are probably aware, Wharton, whether this Mr. Vincent sent many little presents to Sylvester?"

"Nearly every day the postman brought something, sir."

"And generally delivered the things to Sylvester himself?"

"Generally, sir, I think."

"Then they must generally have come by the late afternoon post, when the lad was free from lessons?"

"Always, I think, sir," said Harry, inwardly wondering whether these questions were leading.

"And wherever Master Sylvester happened to be, the postman probably went to him and delivered his little parcel?"

"Yes, sir. It came to be quite a joke in the Second—another cake for Sylvester."

"But Sylvester, I suppose, generally had some companions with him when the little parcel was delivered?"

"As a rule, I suppose, sir. Sometimes he waited for the postman with the other fags, and sometimes he was in the Form-room with some of them."

"However, if a sufficient number of parcels were delivered to Sylvester in succession, it was pretty certain that, sooner or later, the postman would find him alone when he delivered one?"

"I—I suppose so, sir," said Harry, astonished by the question.

"To-day, probably, was the first day that the postman had found the boy alone, when he delivered a parcel to him?"

"I don't know, sir; but it was very likely. Sylvester was usually with some of the fags, but he was alone to-day, being under detention."

"Precisely."

Ferrers Locke was silent for a few moments. Wharton waited. He could not discern the drift of the detective's questions, and he wondered greatly what was in Ferrers Locke's mind. There was utter mystification in the faces of the masters present. Indeed, Mr. Blane was betraying a slight impatience, as if he fancied that Ferrers Locke was talking at random. The detective's face was very grave when he spoke again, and his eyes were fixed upon Wharton's face with an intent look.

"Now, I am going to ask you the most serious question of all, Wharton," he said. "Please reflect before you answer, and your companions also."

"Yes, sir," said Harry in wonder.

"When you came in here to look for Sylvester, did you notice anything unusual?"

"Only that he was gone, sir."

"Nothing else?"

"Not that I remember."

"No smell—no strange smell in the atmosphere?"

Wharton jumped.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "You remember, Harry."

"Yes, I remember," said Wharton. "I hadn't mentioned that, sir, and I'm blessed if I know what's put it into your mind. But I did notice a queer smell, and mentioned it; and the other fellows remarked on it, too. A queer sort of chemical smell—rather sickly."

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"You did not think that important enough to mention?" he asked.

"Well, no, sir. I don't see what it has to do—"

"But you are sure of the fact?"

"Quite certain, sir."

"And the others?" asked Ferrers Locke, looking at the chums of the Remove.

"Quite certain, sir," said the juniors together, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh added that the certainfulness was quite-factly terrific, a remark that made Ferrers Locke smile.

"Did the postman notice it, do you know?" asked the detective.

"He said he didn't, sir."

"Excellent," said Ferrers Locke. "I think I have finished asking questions now."

"Is there, to your mind, any light now upon this extraordinary case?" asked the Head.

"I am glad to say, yes."

"And I am glad to hear you say so, Ferrers, though I cannot see what you have discovered that is not apparent to me."

"I should like to question that new postman, Jackson," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "As he has disappeared, however, that is impossible."

Wharton could not restrain an exclamation of amazement.

"Oh, Mr. Locke! How did you know he had disappeared?"

"I concluded so," said Ferrers Locke, smiling. "But do you know it for a fact, my lad?"

"Yes, sir." Harry Wharton explained the circumstances of his search for Jackson, and his ill-success. Ferrers Locke listened attentively.

"Exactly," he said. "I am not disappointed, as I knew he had disappeared."

"But my dear Ferrers," exclaimed the Head, "it is evident that you know it; but how could you have known, since you never heard of the man's existence until you came here this evening?"

"I will explain that later, sir. At present, there is not a moment to be lost. Sylvester must be saved before the rascals have time to remove him from the neighbourhood," said Ferrers Locke. "Will you lend me your car?"

"My—my car! It is entirely at your service, of course. But—but why—where are you going?"

"I am going to find Sylvester, I hope, and to bring him back to Greyfriars in your car," said Ferrers Locke.

"What!"

"I think it very improbable that he has been removed from the neighbourhood yet. They could hardly act so quickly. As I know where he has been taken, I shall call for Inspector Grimes, and go there at once, and have very little doubt that we shall find him. But there is not a moment to be lost. The car—at once. Come, my dear sir!"

Ferrers Locke left the Form-room with the dazed headmaster.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER. The Detective's Triumph!

"WELL, my only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Did you hear that?"

"Great Scott!"

"He—he must be dreaming!" Mr. Blane was muttering. "How can he possibly know where Sylvester is! How—how?"

"It is extraordinary," said Mr. Quelch. "However, Ferrers Locke has a great reputation, and he has evidently seen something in this matter which has escaped us."

"But what—what?"

"That I cannot say." Mr. Quelch turned to the Famous Five. "My boys, you may go to your dormitory now. Mr. Locke will not require you any longer."

"I—I say!" said Wharton. "Oh, sir, can't we stay up a bit to see whether Mr. Locke brings Sylvester back, sir? We're very anxious about him, and—and we couldn't sleep, sir."

"Ahem! I think——"

"Please, sir, we're so excited about it, we couldn't possibly sleep," said Nugent. "If you would let us, sir——"

The juniors were, in fact, almost trembling with excitement. That they would not sleep, if they went to their dormitory, was quite certain. Mr. Quelch's face relaxed. He was a very punctilious master, but he could be kind, and he knew when to stretch a point.

"Well, as you have stayed up so long, my boys, perhaps there is no great harm in your staying up a little longer," he said. "If Mr. Locke is not very late, you may await his return."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" chorused the juniors gratefully.

"Go to the common-room, then, and wait there quietly," said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir."

The Famous Five proceeded to the junior common-room. They had the room to themselves, all the rest of the Lower School being in bed. They were quiet enough—they hoped that Mr. Quelch would forget all about them, so that they could stay up till Ferrers Locke's return, however late he might be.

The Head's car had buzzed out of the school gates, with Ferrers Locke in it. According to what the detective had said, he was going to pick up Inspector Grimes at Court-field, who had already taken charge of the case officially—and with the inspector, he was to proceed to the place where young Sylvester had been taken by the kidnappers. How Ferrers Locke could possibly know where Sylvester had been taken was a tremendous mystery. He certainly knew nothing of the mysterious happenings at Greyfriars that was not already known to the Head, the masters, and the boys. Yet from those mysterious circumstances, which utterly puzzled all the others, Ferrers Locke had apparently deduced an accurate knowledge of the case—including a knowledge of where the kidnapped boy had been taken.

It was amazing!

The reputation of the famous detective was so great, that it seemed extremely unlikely that he was "talking out of his neck," as the juniors expressed it.

He must have had reason for his amazing statement. But how—why? The Famous Five discussed the matter, and cogitated over it, looking at it in all its bearings, as they sat waiting in the common-room. But the clue that Ferrers Locke had discovered was hidden from them. Look at the matter how they might, they could see no light in the darkness.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"HARD UP!"

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ONE
PENNY.

Yet Ferrers Locke had found a clue, and was gone to follow it up!

"It beats the giddy band," said Bob Cherry, rubbing his nose thoughtfully. "If Ferrers Locke finds that kid to-night, he is a wonder! How is he going to do it? My dear infants, I am awfully afraid that he was talking out of his hat."

"The proof of the puddingfulness is in the eatfulness," remarked Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh. "If the esteemed Locke brings back the kidnapped Sylvester, it will provefully show that his rightfulness was terrific. But——"

"When is that blessed car coming?" muttered Wharton, looking from the window into the dark shadows of the Close.

The minutes passed on leaden wings.

Dr. Locke and the masters were in the Head's study waiting anxiously for news. As the evening grew older, the lights went out one by one in the windows of Greyfriars. By half-past ten most of the seniors were in bed—at eleven, the only ones remaining up were the masters, in the Head's study, and the Famous Five in the junior common-room. Probably Mr. Quelch had forgotten them.

Half-past eleven!

"No sign of him yet!" growled Johnny Bull, looking out of the window.

Dr. Locke had come out of his study now, and was pacing the hall with slow nervous steps. The other masters were with him there, occasionally looking out of the big doorway into the darkness of the Close.

Moments seemed hours to them as they waited, but they did not think of bed. When would Ferrers Locke return—and what news would he bring?

The Head sank wearily into the old oak settee in the hall. The strain was telling upon him—his face was pale and lined.

The chums of the Remove were rubbing their eyes now. In spite of their keenness to see Ferrers Locke when he returned, they were growing very sleepy. But they never thought of going to the dormitory. Unless Mr. Quelch came and "shooed" them off to bed, they were going to see what happened that night.

The hoot of a motor-horn came through the silence at last, and the juniors rushed to the window.

In the direction of the gates appeared two gleaming lights, like the great eyes of some animal in the darkness.

"The car!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"He's come back!"

"Now we shall see!"

They heard the car grinding up the drive. They ran out of the common-room into the passage, and towards the door of the School House. The door was wide open, and the Head was there, with the other masters, watching the car eagerly as it glided up to the house. The chauffeur brought it to a halt at the bottom of the steps.

Ferrers Locke alighted.

"Locke!" exclaimed the Head, "Locke! What success—tell me——"

"The best!" said the detective.

"You have not found him?" shouted Mr. Quelch.

"Yes!"

"Then he—he——"

"He is here!" said Ferrers Locke, quietly.

He lifted a little figure, wrapped in a coat, from the motor-car, and carried it up the steps into the house. Every eye was upon it. There was a general gasp of amazement, as the olive face of little Sylvester of the Second was seen—pale and unconscious—but unmistakable.

"Sylvester!" gasped Mr. Blane.

"What is the matter with him—what is he——"

"He has been drugged," said the detective, calmly. "But he will sleep it off—there is no harm done. Let him be put to bed—I will carry him there now—and he will sleep off the effects. I have already taken him to the doctor in Friardale, and Dr. Pillbury will call early in the morning to see him again. He is not hurt."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

Sylvester was carried up to the Second-Form dormitory in the strong arms of the detective, and left in the care of Mrs. Kebble, the housekeeper. Ferrers Locke descended the stairs, with a smile on his lips.

The utter amazement in every face brought the smile there. Dr. Locke looked dazed. That the detective had succeeded was evident—but how he had done it remained a mystery.

"Locke—I am astounded—almost unnerved! This is utterly amazing! The boy was then kidnapped?"

"Certainly."

"And the kidnapper?"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton
& Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Safe under lock and key now—and he will give no more trouble for the next five years," said Ferrers Locke.

"Who was it?"

"A notorious American criminal, known as Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith."

"He is arrested?" gasped the Head

"Yes—and his accomplice too. I left them with the handcuffs on, in charge of Inspector Grimes and his men. The law will deal with them as they deserve." The detective glanced at his watch. "I shall have to trouble your hospitality for to-night, my dear sir, and catch the first train in the morning."

"But—but—but you will tell us how you have done this?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"If it will interest you, certainly."

"Interest us! I should say so!" exclaimed the Head. "But—what are these juniors doing downstairs at this hour?"

"I gave them permission to remain up till Mr. Locke returned, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "I fear I forgot them afterwards. Wharton, you had better go—"

The Famous Five fixed their eyes beseechingly on Ferrers Locke. The famous detective understood what they could not very well ask—and he gave them a good-natured nod and a smile.

"As the boys have stayed up so long, sir, perhaps they might remain a few minutes longer," he suggested. "I can see that they are dying with curiosity to hear what has been done. I think they deserve it, as I owe the success of the case largely to them."

"Certainly, certainly," said the Head. "You may remain, my lads. Now, my dear Ferrers—"

"Oh, thank you, sir," murmured Bob Cherry.

And the Famous Five, deeply grateful to Ferrers Locke for the kindness and consideration he had shown, prepared to listen with all their ears to the detective's explanation.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

FERRERS LOCKE seated himself on the oak settee, and lighted a cigar.

The exciting events of the evening did not seem to have any disturbing effects on the detective's nerves. He was as composed and tranquil as when he had arrived at Greyfriars.

Dr. Locke sat with an almost dazed expression on his face. It seemed to him that the detective had worked a miracle. Ferrers Locke's deductions, whatever they might have been, had evidently been correct, for he had succeeded in recovering the kidnapped fag, and in arresting the kidnappers—but what had his deductions been—where was the clue which had been hidden from all eyes but his?

"It seems like a miracle to me," the Head observed, passing his hand over his brow. "Nothing less than a miracle. Nothing less!"

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"It is simply a question of training," he replied. "It is

my business to deal with such a mystery—which was not a mystery to me, after I had heard all the details of the affair. The matter then is still dark to you?"

"Utterly dark!"

"Yet by a simple process of reasoning, it was possible to arrive at the facts. Consider, the boy was in the Form-room alone! All the evidence proves that he was there up to the moment the postman entered to deliver the parcel. Then he vanished. By the process of exclusion, it was possible to deduce precisely what had happened."

"The process of exclusion?" murmured Mr. Quelch.

"Exactly—the process of excluding what could not possibly have happened, and therefore arriving at what must have happened. The boy was there—that is certain! He did not receive any visitor there—no one entered the room. Therefore he was not taken away. That is excluded. Master Coker was close to the window—there were boys at both ends of the passage outside the room—therefore he did not leave. Yet he did not vanish into thin air—nor did he remain in the Form-room. From those facts, what is evident to your mind?"

"Only blank mystery!" said the Head.

Ferrers Locke smiled again.

"But observe," he said. "The boy did not leave the Form-room, and he was not taken away from the Form-room before the postman arrived. Therefore, it is evident that he was there when the postman arrived."

"What! But the postman positively declared—"

"Exactly. He declared that the boy was not there; but as we know that the boy must have been there, it is evident that he lied."

The Head started.

"He lied! Why should he lie?"

"That was what I had to discover. The boy was there; I was certain of that. As it was impossible for him not to be there, he was there! He was in the room, seated at his desk, when the postman entered. A minute or two later, the postman calls these juniors into the room to point out that the boy was not there. Well, in that minute or two only one thing can possibly have happened—the postman has got rid of the boy!"

Dr. Locke passed his hand over his brow dazedly. Ferrers Locke was explaining, but his explanation only seemed to thicken the mystery. Harry Wharton & Co. gazed spell-bound at the detective. They could not comprehend.

"But, sir," Wharton broke out, "we were with the postman all the time. We didn't lose sight of him. He hadn't got Sylvester with him, or we should have seen him, surely, sir."

"He had Sylvester with him, my boy, but you did not see him. The facts speak for themselves. The boy was there when the postman came, then he vanished. Therefore, it was the postman who caused him to vanish. How? There was only one possible way. When the postman left the Form-room he carried Sylvester with him."

"Carried him!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Yes, my boy."

The juniors were very nearly convinced by this time that Ferrers Locke was wandering in his mind. The detective understood their looks, and he laughed outright.

"You did not see him carrying Sylvester?" he asked.

"No, sir. And we are quite sure he wasn't—"

"Did you look into his sack?"

"His—his sack?" stammered Wharton.

"Yes."

"Of—of course not!"

"Naturally. You never thought of anything of the kind," assented Ferrers Locke. "But if you had looked into the postman's sack, my lad, you would have seen little Sylvester."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the Head.

"You must remember that the boy was of small size, and light to carry," said Ferrers Locke, "and the postman had probably provided himself with a larger bag than usual. He could do that quite easily. I know it is an astounding idea; but by the process of exclusion we come to that as the only thing that could possibly have happened under the circumstances."

"But Sylvester would have struggled, kicked, yelled!" gasped Wharton.

"Not if he was drugged."

"Drugged!"

"You remember I asked you if you noticed a peculiar smell near Sylvester's desk. Of course the boy could not have been taken away in that manner, unless he was insensible. So, naturally, I thought of chloroform at once, and asked you the question. You had noticed the smell—it was the smell of chloroform. What happened was this. Immediately on entering the Form-room, the postman went up to Sylvester as if to deliver the parcel, suddenly seized him,


(Continued on page III of cover.)

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and pressed a chloroform wad over his mouth. He is a powerful man. The little fellow succumbed at once, and the postman calmly shoved him into his letter-sack. With the drugged lad in the sack, he came out of the Form-room to tell you that the boy was not there."

"Great Scott!"

"He—he—he was in the sack all the time!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Oh, if we'd only known!"

"You could not have known," said Ferrers Locke. "Naturally you had no suspicion of so harmless and ordinary a person as a postman."

"That is what is amazing to me," said the Head. "I suppose it must be as you say, Mr. Locke. But why should an ordinary postman lend himself to such a plot?"

"Why, indeed? That question led me to the inevitable conclusion that he was not an ordinary postman," said Ferrers Locke.

"Oh!"

"It proved clearly enough to my mind that, so far from being an ordinary postman, he was a cool and desperate rascal, who had assumed the character of a postman for the purpose of carrying out his scheme of kidnapping the millionaire's son. I was quite prepared to hear that he was a new postman, also that he wore a beard and glasses—as a beard and glasses are a most effectual disguise to a man who habitually wears neither—like Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith."

"Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith! You suppose that he and Jackson, the postman, were one and the same?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"I know it now, and I suspected it then. I knew that Jackson was either Smith or his accomplice, and the coolness of the whole scheme seemed to point to the hand of the master-rascal himself. He had somehow or other obtained the post, and from what Master Wharton found out this evening, we know how he did it—by making friends with the foolish and unsuspecting old man Bogg, and making it worth his while to recommend him to the village postmaster as a temporary postman."

"It all seems clear, now that you explain it," said the Head. "But—but it is not at all clear how you knew where to look for the boy. You knew that the postman had kidnapped him, you guessed that the postman was that desperate rascal Smith; but how could you possibly guess where he had taken him?"

"That is not yet clear to you?"

"I am quite in the dark."

"Consider. The rascal had obtained this place, as temporary postman, to carry out his purpose of kidnapping Sylvester. But a schoolboy in a crowded school was not easy to find alone, and a postman could not wander about the school looking for a chance of collaring him, evidently. It was necessary for Jackson to have a good reason for seeing Sylvester every time he came, and on almost every occasion he would find Sylvester in company with other boys, and it would be impossible to touch him. Sooner or later, however, he was certain to find the boy alone, provided that he had a succession of articles to deliver personally to Sylvester. Well, it was necessary to his plans that a succession of little presents should be sent to Sylvester, and a kindly old gentleman in the neighbourhood proceeded to send that succession of presents. That this was simply a coincidence would be too much to believe—it was evidently a part of the scheme."

"Mr. Vincent sent a present nearly every day, thus giving Jackson an excuse for seeking Sylvester personally nearly every day at a time when he was free from lessons. Therefore, it was evident to me that Vincent and Jackson were acting in collusion. Without Mr. Vincent and his succession of parcels, Jackson could not have carried out his scheme. And surely one could not believe that such a thing was a mere coincidence?"

"I—I suppose not!"

"My opinion, therefore, was that Jackson was here to do the work, and Mr. Vincent to provide him with the opportunity. They were either accomplices or the same man."

"The—the same man!"

"Why not? Jackson lived in a lonely cottage, with a deaf old woman, close by Mr. Vincent's bungalow. Mr. Vincent posed as an invalid—out of sight, supposed to be laid up with the gout nearly all his time. He was very careful, while posing as a friend of Sylvester's, not to visit him here or to ask the boy to his house, simply because there would have been suspicion at once in that case. You would have inquired very strictly into the bona-fides of a man who had asked Sylvester to visit him."

"Undoubtedly."

"Mr. Vincent could hardly have faced such an inquiry. He probably knew, too, that the boy was not allowed outside the school unwatched. Therefore he did not adopt so simple a scheme by asking the boy to visit him, simply because it would have been a failure. But by posing as a benevolent old gentleman who had known the boy's father, and doing nothing but send him little presents, he avoided arousing suspicion, and at the same time provided Jackson with the

required opportunity for sooner or later finding the boy alone and seizing him."

"I—I see now," said the Head. "He went up to the bungalow with Sylvester, and left him there?"

"Exactly! Then it was time for the new postman, Jackson, to disappear. But in order to blind possible suspicion, he was careful to disappear in a natural manner. He invented a sick father in London, made excuses to Mr. Bogg, and told his landlady that he intended to return the following week. Then he went, I presume, to Rock Bungalow, ceased to be Jackson at all, and became Smith once more."

"But—but Mr. Vincent was not alone at the bungalow," said Mr. Blane. "He had a nurse—a man nurse—"

"His accomplice—the same man who stopped the trap when Smith seized young Sylvester on the day of his arrival at the school," said Ferrers Locke. "There were only two men in the plot then, and only two now—Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith having played alternately the parts of Jackson the postman and Mr. Vincent the invalid. You see, therefore, that when I left here I knew that Sylvester must have been taken to the bungalow, and was there still unless the rascals had had time to remove him. I took Inspector Grimes and a couple of constables in the car, and made good speed to the bungalow. We were admitted by the man nurse, and demanded to see Mr. Vincent."

"Mr. Vincent played his part well, but as I was sure of my case, I took the liberty of plucking him by the beard, which came off and revealed the face of Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith. The rascal attempted to draw a revolver then, but we were too quick for him. He spoiled the ceiling of his handsome sitting-room with a bullet, that was all; but it will add a couple of years to his sentence, and keep him out of mischief all the longer. With the two rascals in handcuffs, we searched the bungalow, and found Sylvester unconscious in a bed. He had been drugged a second time to keep him quiet. In the same room there was a large trunk, pierced with holes for air, in which the rascals had intended to remove the boy. Sylvester, insensible and silent, would have travelled in the trunk by the first train in the morning to whatever destination the rascals fixed for keeping him in security. Naturally, they did not intend to keep him a prisoner so close to Greyfriars."

Dr. Locke grasped the detective's hand.

"I don't know how to thank you for what you have done," said the Head. "To you, I suppose, all this seems simple; to me it is nearly miraculous. My dear Ferrers, I can only say that—that you are the greatest detective of the age, and I shall never forget my obligations to you!"

"Not at all; but I am glad you telephoned me," smiled Ferrers Locke. "It has been an interesting case—very interesting indeed. And it is a great satisfaction that an English detective has been the man to lay Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith by the heels. And as I shall certainly receive that sum—five hundred dollars—from the United States, I think I am very well paid for an evening's pleasant occupation. And now, my dear boys, the sooner you are in bed the better," he added, with a smile to the chums of the Remove.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, as the juniors went up to their dormitory, "I must say that Ferrers Locke is a corker—simply a corker!"

And the Co. agreed that Ferrers Locke was a "corker" indeed.

Greyfriars woke up in the morning to find that Sylvester of the Second was back in the school safe and sound.

Ferrers Locke was gone.

But he had left his name on every lip. It was a nine-days wonder at Greyfriars. When little Sylvester had recovered from his rough experience, he told of the happening in the Form-room, when the ruffian had seized and chloroformed him, precisely as Ferrers Locke had mapped it out.

Five-Hundred-Dollar Smith and his confederate went to penal servitude, and for seven years to come the astute rascal was not likely to give anyone any further trouble. From him, at all events, little Sylvester was safe so long as he remained at Greyfriars.

Fisher T. Fish was triumphant. He reminded everyone who would listen to him that he had had his suspicions of Mr. Vincent, that white-haired and benevolent gentleman. Indeed, in the course of a few days, Fisher T. Fish airily assumed that he, in fact, had practically suspected the whole "bizney," and he assured the grinning Removites that had not Ferrers Locke chipped in where he really was not required, he—F. T. Fish—would infallibly have found young Sylvester and restored him to the arms of the Second Form. Fisher T. Fish was quite sure of that; but he was quite alone in his opinion, everyone else agreeing that only Ferrers Locke could have solved the mystery of that amazing disappearance.

THE END.

(Another splendid long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. next Monday, entitled "Hard Up," by Frank Richards. Order early.)

Our Grand New Ferrers Lord Serial Story.



THE UNCONQUERABLE.

A Magnificent Story of Thrilling Adventure.

By SIDNEY DREW.

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord and his old companions, Rupert Thurston, Ching-Lung, the Chinese prince, Gan-Waga, the Esquimo, with Hal Honour, Prout, Maddock & Co., are once more on board the submarine, the Lord of the Deep. This time they are in chase of Lord's wonderful machine, named the Unconquerable, which is a marvellous combination of submarine and airship. The Unconquerable has been stolen by the millionaire's enemies, but a temporary fouling of the propellers enable Prout and Barry O'Rooney to get aboard. They overpower the men aboard. Barry, donning his diving-dress, leaves the ship to try and attract the Lord of the Deep with the peculiar bell which Ferrers Lord invented—which can be heard for miles by any submarine fixed with a "receiver" constructed by the millionaire. Prout is left behind to help Barry off with his diving-suit when he comes back; but even as the bell rings announcing that Barry is waiting to be let into the diving-chamber, Prout discovers that Job Sanday, one of his prisoners, has got free. He is half intoxicated, and demands the key of the wine cabin, and, by way of persuading Prout, produces one of Rupert Thurston's razors!

(Now go on with the story.)

The Secret Way!

"I ain't got the key; O'Rooney's got it," said Prout. He was weaponless, and he cursed himself for his folly. "Wait till he comes, and I'll give you enough drink to swim in. By honey, stand back a minute, like a good chap! That's him ringin'. You can have forty bottles if you want 'em."

Tr-r-r-ring! Tr-r-r-ring! clattered the insistent bell.

It was the blow on the head that had made the spirits take such a quick effect, for Job Sanday was a seasoned toper.

"No, no," he grinned cunningly. "I know your dog of a pal. Let him wait, and durn him. Let him drown if he likes. Where's that key, Prout? I can 'andle you, if I can't 'andle that dirty Irisher. Give it up, or I'll slash you to the bone!"

He waved the razor murderously. Prout did not lose his head even then. He was stiff, weak, unarmed. If he flung himself at the brute he might receive a wound that might render him unconscious. In his present condition Job Sanday would not scruple to leave him lying there to bleed to death. It was only the thought of Barry that restrained him. If he were killed, what would be the fate of Barry? And behind the murder-drunk hound, gleaming at him in cruel mockery, lay Ferrers Lord's little revolver.

"If I had the key, I'd give it you," said Prout steadily. "Let's see, did O'Rooney take it? Of course, he didn't. What were I dreaming about? Move out of the way, Job, and I'll get it for you."

If ever a lie was pardonable, that lie was. The ruse failed.

"You won't, you durn well won't!" snarled Job. "Ha, ha! I ain't a silly fool! I'll get for myself. Where is it?"

"Why, hanging up with the rest behind the galley door," said Prout. "Where else would it be?"

"You liar!" Sanday's eyes turned red. "You've got it, and I'll durn well cut it out of you. Look out! I feel like butchery. Look out, you bald hound!"

He came with a rush, his massive, close-cropped head down. Prout grasped the wrist that held the razor. They staggered and swayed, and rolled against the bulkhead. Had the steersman been himself, it would have been a brief battle, but Prout was lame and weak. He was forced to his knees, but he rose again, and fought for a hold on Sanday's throat.

"Imp, Imp, Imp!" he roared, forgetting that the dog was locked in the saloon. "Imp, Imp!"

Prout was down, and Job Sanday's knee was on his chest. Still Prout held his wrist with every ounce of strength that was left to him.

"Imp!"

It was his last despairing cry. Sanday freed his other arm, and caught Prout below the elbow, forcing the razor down towards his throat.

Then came a miracle. There was a flash of tawny yellow and white, a shriek of agony, and Imp's teeth were buried in Job Sanday's shoulder. Prout reeled to his feet, picked up the razor and flung it away. Sanday had rolled over on to his back. Imp's paws were on his chest, and with lolling tongue the splendid animal was looking at Prout for his orders.

"Call him off—call him off!" moaned Sanday, sober enough now from sheer pain and terror. "He'll have my throat! Drag him off!"

"Tr-r-r-ring! Tr-r-r-ring!"

The sound of the bell brought Prout back to himself. He patted the dog with a great hand, that shook as if with fever.

"Keep him down, Imp!" he said hoarsely. "By honey, how you got here, goodness only knows! Keep him where he is, old boy!"

Barry heaved a sigh of heartfelt relief. At last the water was receding. Prout called the dog away, and, seizing Sanday by the ankles, dragged him back.

A gesture made Imp resume his guard. Prout caught Barry's dripping hand to help him in. Barry leaned against the bulkhead, and peered in wonder through the misty eyepieces of his ugly helmet at the strange scene.

And when Job Sanday lay groaning in bed with a cauterised shoulder that burned like molten steel, and a head that ached like a thousand torments, Barry O'Rooney and Thomas Prout sat staring in awed wonder at the slumbering dog.

They had found the door of the saloon safely locked. Martin Arkland could not explain the mystery. He had been sleeping, he said, and had heard the dog bark once or twice, or fancied he had.

"Bedad, ut sames almost supernatural, Tom!" whispered Barry. "Phwat made ye call him, at all, at all?"

"By honey, I don't know!" answered Prout, in the same low tone. "Somethin' made me do it. By honey, Barry, I'll go out and call him again!"

"Imp—Imp—Imp!" came the faint cry a few moments later.

The dog pricked up his ears, and bounded to the door. He ran back and put his paw on Barry's knee. Barry pretended to snore.

"Imp—Imp! Where are you, boy?" shouted the steersman. "Imp!"

The Newfoundland leapt across the room, and, rising on his hind-legs, pawed at the frame of the mirror. The mirror slid back, revealing Ferrers Lord's secret way to the conning-tower of the Unconquerable, and with it the mystery that had set Imp at liberty and saved Prout from death.

The Bell—Lost!

"I hear them—I hear them! The bell, Lord—the bell! Come—come! It's the bell, I tell you—the bell! Listen! It's the bell!"

At last Hal Honour, the man of silence, had been thawed into speech. He more than spoke, he shouted, as he lifted the cap from his head.

Ferrers Lord leapt from the table and took the cap. Yes, it was the bell, faint, far away, and muffled, as if tolling a requiem for the dead.

"Stop the engines!" cried the millionaire quietly.

The submarine glided on. Ferrers Lord raised his hand, and gently pushed down the pointer on the dial before him. All eyes were fixed on the compass. The finger had been pointing to the magnetic north. It suddenly began to spin madly, and then, after several spasmodic jerks, it went back to the magnetic north, and remained there.

"Do you still hear them?" asked Ching-Lung breathlessly.

"Take the cap yourself, Ching. The sound is plain enough," said Ferrers Lord. "Keep out of my way a moment. You hear it?"

"I hear it."

"Listen again. Do you hear it now?" A gesture answered the question.

"Yes, but it seems fainter."

The compass whizzed madly, and came back to its old position.

"Is it still ringing?" asked Ferrers Lord. "Yes, or no?"

"No."

There was a pause. The millionaire's quick white fingers were at work on the instrument. His lips twitched as he turned to Ching-Lung. The prince shook his head dismally. The call for aid had died into silence, lost in the dark caverns of the sea. All was as still as the tomb.

(Another Grand, Thrilling Instalment Next Week.)

