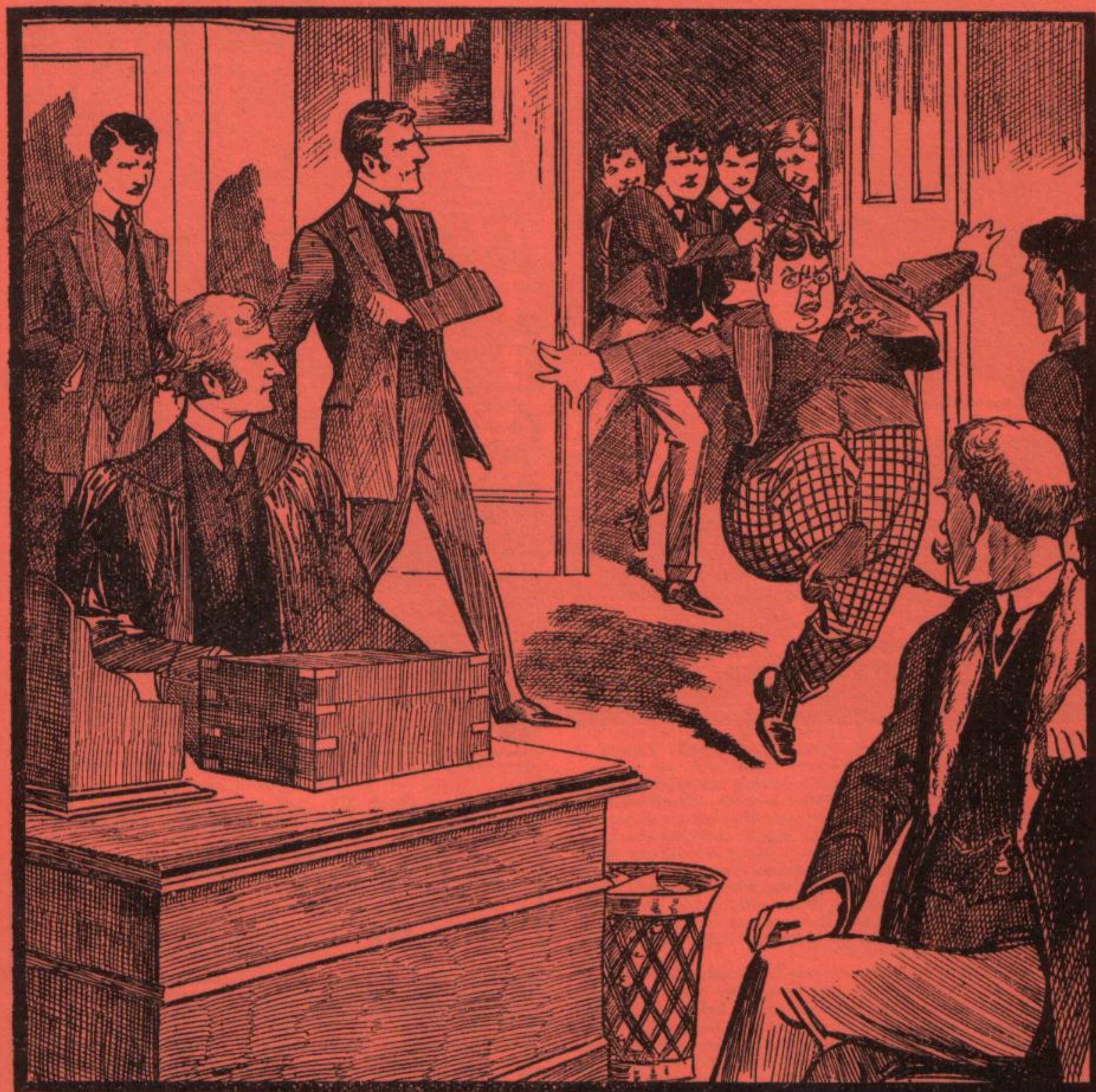


"A WORLD AT STAKE" & "CHANGED BY ADVERSITY."

TWO GRAND STORIES IN THIS ISSUE.



BUNTER COMES TO OWN UP!



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

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"THE GREYFRIARS SPY-HUNTERS!"

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

In our next grand, long, complete school tale, entitled as above, Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove Form take part in a most exciting adventure. A great deal of fun is caused by Herr Gans, the worthy German-master at Greyfriars, whose fear of being taken for a spy, and treated as such, is taken advantage of by Horace Coker of the Fifth Form. Later, however, matters assume a really serious aspect, and certain Removites take counsel together and organise a systematic watch. The result is startling, and exciting incidents are numerous. The net result is that a valuable service is rendered to the country by

"THE GREYFRIARS SPY-HUNTERS!"

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"A Girl Reader" (Holloway).—Very many thanks for your letter and appreciative remarks on the subject of the Invincible Trio. I am very sorry I cannot do as you suggest.

A. E. Quantrill.—Many thanks for your most interesting letter. I quite agree with your appreciative remarks concerning Frank Richards.

Alex. Greenaway (Bargoddie).—Many thanks for your kind wishes.

R. T. (Sydenham).—"The Taming of Harry" is now out of print.

J. E. J. (Camden Town, N.W.).—I will bear in mind what you say; but it is impossible to alter the style of the "Magnet" at present, and I do not see the advisability of so doing.

John Baker (Doncaster).—Greyfriars is situated in Kent, and St. Jim's in Sussex.

KEEP SMILING.

At the present time, when the shadow of war is hanging over our fair land, and gloom is pervading the minds of many who were hitherto bright and cheerful, there is one little duty which all my readers would do well to bear in mind. That is, to be of good courage in this crisis, and, instead of adding to the general depression, to go about their duties with calm confidence; to have unwavering faith in our brave soldiers and sailors, who even at this moment are fighting for King, Country, and Right in a manner which calls forth wonder and admiration from all quarters of the globe.

There have been many conflicting opinions expressed of late on this subject. Many people are of the opinion that, as far as possible, the regular routine of daily life should be pursued, in order that panic and consternation may be avoided. Others emphatically state that it is a disgrace to the nation to allow football matches and other forms of recreation and amusement to continue. There is something to be said for both sides. But of this I am certain: Long faces are not an attribute of victory; and there is, and will be, quite enough anxiety in our midst, without having it augmented by bitter words and surly looks.

It is distinctly gratifying to note what a splendid example the Boy Scouts are setting in this respect. Cheerful and strong, calm and courageous, they go about their duties in a manner which has won them the approval of many of our great naval and military leaders. Many of them have brothers at the front, but one would never guess this from their faces as they swing through the streets singing their marching-songs. They realise, brave youngsters that they are, where their duty lies, and the burdens of many anxious mothers and parents will be considerably lightened by their behaviour.

I feel sure, then, that I can rely upon my thousands of reader-chums—scouts, cadets, and others—to continue to set a glowing example by cheerfulness and industry in this, England's dark hour. And when the war clouds have dispersed—which we all hope may be soon—you will never regret having done your best to live up to the inspiring motto: "Keep smiling!"

The Editor



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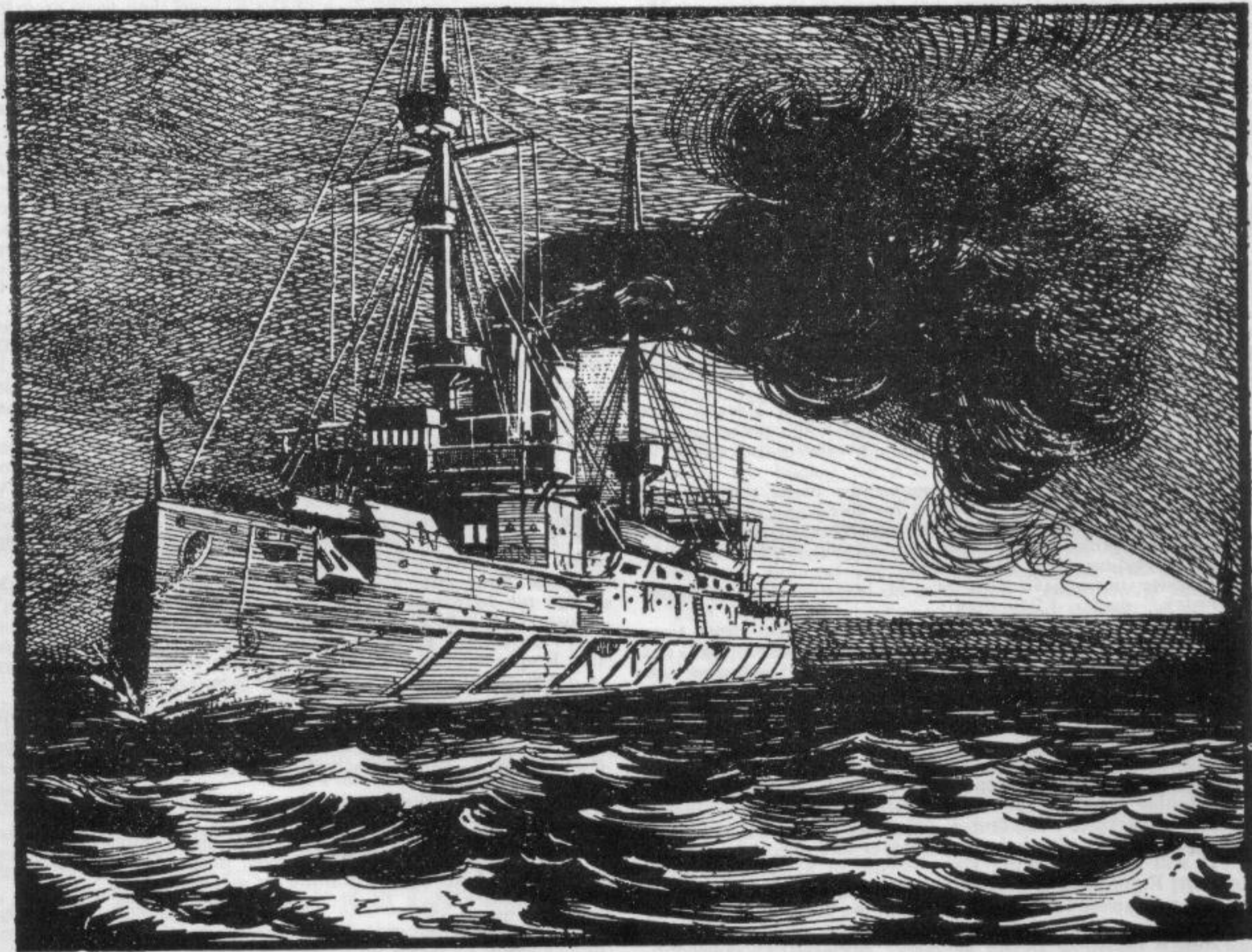
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A WORLD AT STAKE!

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 and his brother Dick construct a wonderful airship, which they offer to the British Government. Colonel Giraud and Major Seigner, the French and German attaches, each try to buy the airship, which is named the Falcon, for their respective Governments. Thornhill laughs at their offers, and Major Seigner threatens that he will get hold of the airship somehow.

Later, Thorpe takes Captain Horsham, an old school-friend, for a flight in the Falcon, leaving his brother at work on their new ship, the Night Hawk. It is while Thorpe is away that Major Seigner, with a large number of men at his back, attacks Seamew Island, where the airships are constructed, and steals the Night Hawk, after having killed the greater part of the plucky defenders. Dick himself is taken on board the ship, but has had time to warn the Falcon by wireless, and Thorpe Thornhill gives chase. Right into Switzerland pursuers and pursued go, and it is here that Seigner conceives the idea of dropping Dick in a deep valley, so that Thorpe will stop to pick him up. The ruse fails, however, and the chase continues. For the time being Seigner is lost in a fog, and the Falcon is compelled to

descend. It is while they are waiting here that a German comes to them, and offers to lead them to where Dick Thornhill is for £50, as he says that Dick is once more in the hands of the Germans. Believing the man, Thorpe walks into the trap prepared for him, and after an arduous journey returns, to find that the Falcon is just leaving earth, captured by the Germans. But a terrible storm suddenly breaks forth, and Thorpe, with a gasp of alarm, sees a flash of lightning darting straight for the Falcon.

(Now go on with the story.)

A Stern Chase!

For a moment the Falcon appeared transformed into a ball of fire; then she vanished; and although the horrified on-lookers strained their eyes to pierce the black pall of clouds which swept over the spot where they had last seen her, it was in vain. And yet it might have been fancy; but Thornhill was almost certain he caught a fleeting glimpse of her bright hull rising swiftly through the clouds.

It was with the greatest difficulty they again found the Night Hawk, but at last they stood, wet through, weary, and

disappointed, but not disheartened, on the spot where the Falcon had been lately at anchor.

"If Dick is within earshot of the signal gun he will be sure to make his way in this direction, Horsham," said Thornhill, after a few minutes' reflection. "If you will help Pat and Benson to put the Night Hawk a little shipshape, and prepare something to eat, I will make a cast round and try to find him before night falls."

"Be careful those German brutes have not left anyone behind to pick us off," suggested Horsham. "By the by, what's that glittering over there?"

Thorpe looked down, and a cry burst from his lips as he stooped and picked up from amongst the rank grass a plain gold signet-ring.

"It is Dick's! See, it is engraved with our crest!" he cried excitedly.

"They robbed him of it, then, ere lowering him to the earth," suggested Horsham.

"That's about it. Or, stop, I have it! Like the message the German brought, his being set at liberty was all a swindle. He was drawn up again, and, fearing we should waste time looking for him, has dropped this ring on the off chance of our finding it!" cried Thornhill.

"By Jove, I believe you're right! Now let's have some supper, and then to bed. I, for one, am dog-tired."

"There'll be no sleep for us to-night, Horsham," declared Thorpe firmly. "It is not likely Seigner will allow us to repair the Night Hawk at our leisure. We must work every moment until she is able to take flight once more. So, my lads, get to it!"

Willingly his assistants went to work, and throughout the night the forest rang with the sharp, quick blows of their hammers until, just when the first beams of the rising sun brightened the tops of the distant mountains, the Night Hawk rose slowly from her perch, and soared above the forest.

Even as they did so Horsham pointed to the north-east, in which direction Munich lay, saying:

"By Jove, Thornhill, delay would have been fatal! My soldier's eyes are greatly at fault if yonder is not a regiment of cavalry."

He was right. Coming along the road from Munich at a hand-canter was a regiment of Uhlans, who spread out as the vicinity of the hill was reached, evidently intending to surround it.

Presently Thorpe, who was regarding them through his field-glasses, saw an officer rein in his steed and point to the airship, and a shout of disappointment rose in the air from the German ranks as they saw the airship they had hoped to secure gliding away from them.

"Seigner must have sent one of his men for assistance yesterday," declared Horsham.

"Not he!" returned Thorpe, smiling for the first time for the last twenty-four hours. "The Falcon was not destroyed, as we thought, but escaped, to put the authorities at Munich on our track. Another hour, and we would have been immured in a German fortress for the rest of our lives."

"What's your programme, Thornhill?" asked Horsham, as they swept westward through the air.

"To keep on our present course at half-speed until night, then double back to the vicinity of Berlin, where in some forest or marsh I will find a safe hiding-place during the day, and at night search for my brother and the Falcon."

"It will be like looking for a needle in a haystack. The German Empire is a tremendous place, and doubtless ere this the Falcon is safely hidden in one of her many fortresses."

"She is either in Berlin or Kiel," declared Thorpe confidently. "However, wherever she is, there is my brother. I must rescue him. But first I will land you in Belgium, so that you may make the best of your way to England, and report on the misfortune that has befallen us."

Before the Emperor!

In the meantime, Dick had been carried northwards by the triumphant Seigner.

Chuckling to himself, Seigner had watched, from a friendly clump of alder-bushes not a hundred yards from where the Falcon lay at rest, the success of his scheme to draw Thornhill from the airship.

Then, having sent his spurious messenger to remove the cartridges, lest the Englishmen should seek to retrace their steps, he emerged from his hiding-place, and had gained the deck of the Falcon before Tom Evans was aware of his approach.

Eager to undo the result of his carelessness, the boy fired the signal-gun ere the Germans could prevent him; but the next moment he found himself lying on the deck, bound, but

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somewhat comforted to find himself by Dick Thornhill's side.

Bitter indeed were Dick Thornhill's thoughts as he saw his triumphant enemy treading the deck of the Falcon, and heard him give the order which sent the airship flying from her moorings.

That same evening Seigner arrived at Berlin, where he handed over the Falcon to his Government, receiving the command of it himself.

All this time Dick Thornhill and Tom Evans had been closely confined in a cabin, the windows of which were carefully barred, so that they had no idea where they were.

Two days later the door of their cabin was thrown open, and a man in the uniform of a sergeant of the German Army entered, and ordered them to follow him.

From the deck of the Falcon Dick looked round him in astonishment. On every side appeared dull, greystone walls, pierced with embrasures, from which grinned the muzzles of many cannon.

That he was in a fortress of some kind he knew, but where, or of what kind, he could not tell.

Descending from the deck of the Falcon, they were escorted through a long covered way to a large, dark room, in which a tall, handsome man, in undress uniform, was talking with a number of German officers.

It needed not the deference shown by all to the military-looking man in their midst to tell the young Englishmen that they were in the presence of the German Emperor.

As they entered the room Seigner approached his Sovereign.

"This is Herr Thornhill, your Majesty," he said.

The Emperor glanced searchingly at the Englishman. Dick returned the gaze with one as proud as his own.

"I regret that your first appearance before me, Herr Thornhill, should be as a prisoner; but it is the fortune of war. Major Seigner has represented you as being willing to sell your services to my Government," he said.

"Then Herr Seigner has taken much more for granted than he had any business to," returned Dick boldly. "To gain time, that I might attempt to recover the Night Hawk, I may have led him to suppose so, but now that further deception is useless, I utterly refuse, let the cost be what it may, to increase in any way my country's peril."

A growl of anger rose from the Germans, and one, with the Iron Cross at his throat, stepped forward with upraised hand, as though he would strike the young Englishman to the ground.

But the Emperor waved him imperiously aside.

"Then it is no use making the offer I intended to?" he said.

"No, your Majesty, not the slightest. Nothing could tempt me to prove a traitor to my King and native land," returned Dick firmly, but without disrespect.

"Very heroic, Herr Thornhill, but scarcely wise," returned the Emperor coldly. "When you are older, you will learn it is advisable to be always on the winning side."

"That's just what I am," Dick could not help saying.

"Pshaw, sir! Do you dare to bandy words with me!" cried the Emperor, his moustache bristling with rage. "Who is this child?" he added, turning to Seigner.

Seigner pushed Tom forward.

"No one of importance, sire. He was merely cabin-boy on board the Falcon."

The Emperor looked searchingly at the youngster.

"Would you care to be employed in the Royal household, boy?" he asked, after a minute or so's thought.

"I'd rather stick to Mr. Dick, your Empire Highness," returned Tom.

"Imperial Highness, you mean," whispered Dick.

"Oh, Empire Highness is good enough for such as he!" responded the boy, in a loud whisper, which probably the Emperor heard. But if so, he took no notice of the slighting allusion, but without another word left the room; whilst the boys, guarded on either side by a stalwart infantryman with fixed bayonet, were marched to the cell which was to be their home for many a weary month.

A Bid for Liberty!

It was a cold, bare, uninviting apartment, partly underground, for the small grated window which gave light to the "coal-hole," as Tom Evans immediately dubbed it, was on a level with the ground.

Two hard planks with wooden pillows served as their beds, and in one corner an iron washstand supporting a tin basin formed their sole furniture.

However, comfortless though the cell was, the boys would have put up with worse so long as they were not separated, and as soon as their guard had left them they commenced making the small apartment, which for aught they knew might be their home for many years, as tidy and clean as

possible, talking freely the while, all unconscious that they had been left together for this very end, and that at a second tiny grating let into the door Major Seigner was eagerly drinking in every word they said.

Dick Thornhill was not one to remain idle, so for want of other occupation commenced teaching his companion German, and was gratified by the ease with which the little street-arab picked up that difficult tongue.

Day and night a continual hammering, mingled with the roar of furnaces, resounded in their ears, and Dick felt convinced that the Germans were making a fleet of airships as quickly as they could.

Although they had much to desire in the way of comfort, their food was neither bad nor scarce; and, rather to Dick's astonishment, knives and forks of the ordinary kind were allowed them.

One afternoon their midday meal had just been removed, when Tom Evans, grinning until it seemed as though his face was cut in halves where his mouth should have been, produced with great pride from up his sleeve a strong steel knife.

"Bagged it at last, Master Dick!" cried Tom, gloating over the knife, for all previous attempts to gain possession of a weapon had been frustrated. "Now, if they don't take it from us, them there bars will soon be out of that there window."

"If they give us time, Tom!" replied Dick. "You can't chip iron off as you could wood. Give me the knife!"

Tom obeyed, and, listening until the sentry's steps on the pavement of the landing without grew faint in the distance, Dick commenced hacking on the iron washstand with his knife until its blade was notched and dented into a rough resemblance of a saw.

Then, choosing a bar in the centre of the window, he commenced operations, sawing on it with the jagged knife whenever the receding footsteps of the sentry told he had passed out of earshot.

But it was slow work, and many days had passed ere, resting and working alternately, now and again alarmed by the unexpected entrance of a gaoler, they had cut through the bottom half of the bar.

But still it was too thick to be bent sufficiently to allow them to crawl through, and the whole dreary process had to be gone through again from the top.

They worked principally during the night, plastering the cut made by the jagged steel in the iron with pieces of bread mixed with the filings each morning.

At last there came a time when, trying the partly severed bar, Dick believed that they could pull it on one side. A few hours' more work, and they would dare to venture upon their bid for liberty.

It was night. Worn out, his hands blistered and bleeding, Dick relinquished the knife, now worn almost to a stump, to Tom Evans, who continued the task, whilst Dick lay on his hard plank, trying to snatch an hour's sleep ere his companion should call him back to the continual saw, saw, saw, once more.

From where he lay he could see the little grating in the door, and as, half asleep and half awake, he fixed his eyes unconsciously upon it, a cold shiver of apprehension chilled his heart, for from out the darkness beyond the door appeared two bright sparks of light, evidently the eyes of some watching spy.

"Cave, Tom; we are watched!" he cried, in a hoarse, strained whisper, turning for a moment to his companion, who, slipping the knife into his pocket, flung himself noiselessly on to his plank-bed.

Dick again looked towards the grating, but the eyes had gone; so, slipping from his bed and raising himself on the iron hinges of the door, he peered through.

There was no one there, and save for the further end, where a blue-coated sentry stood, the landing was plunged in darkness.

Returning to his plank bed, he lay down, doubtful whether the gleaming eyes had been anything more tangible than a vision conjured up by his excited brain.

Morning broke, and Dick awoke from an uneasy slumber with a more than usually heavy weight bearing down his spirits; but as he realised that, had they been detected the previous night they would long ere this have heard of it, his heart grew lighter, and, rousing Tom by pouring a few drops of water down his wide-open mouth, they set about tidying up their cell.

"Now, Tom, how are your teeth? Ready for German black bread? For, list! Breakfast approacheth!" cried Dick laughingly, as the heavy thud of iron-shod boots reached their ears from without.

The next moment his heart almost stood still, for intermingled with the footsteps was the clanking of a sword-scabbard on stone and the jingling of spur-chains.

"By jingo! We were seen last night!" he muttered.

The next moment his worst fears received confirmation, as the door was flung open, and, instead of the unarmed orderly who usually brought their meals, Major Seigner strode into

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the cell, whilst from the passage door came a clatter of accoutrements, as a numerous guard without grounded arms.

"Morning, major! To what may I attribute the pleasure of this visit? Sorry I can't offer you a whisky-and-soda, but it's rather early for liquor, is it not?" cried Dick, bowing with exaggerated politeness.

Seigner vouchsafed no answer to the query, but, striding directly to the grating, examined it attentively.

"Ah, it is as I thought. The rats have been trying to burrow out of their hole. Remove them!" he cried.

In obedience to his command, two German infantrymen sprang forward, and the next moment the boys were marched from out of the cell, their hearts like lead within their bosoms; for now they knew the almost unceasing labour which had blistered their hands and cramped their fingers until they could scarcely move them had been thrown away.

However, instead of being conducted to another cell, they were taken to the guard-room, from the window of which Dick watched with indescribable feelings of rage and despair a row of stocks, on which the hulls of six airships were rapidly assuming shape under the skilful hands of an innumerable army of artificers.

It was a beautiful morning, and the majority of the soldiers were seated on a bench without the room; but close to them, evidently on guard, was a man bearing on his arms the chevrons of a sergeant.

"D'you think that bloke speaks English, Master Dick?" asked Tom; with a glance at the sergeant.

"I don't know, but I'll soon find out," returned Dick, in the same low voice. Then, raising his tones, and regarding the sergeant out of the corner of his eye, he continued: "Look what a nose that German pig has! It must have taken untold gallons of beer to have coloured it such a glorious ruby!"

Not a quiver of the eyelid, not even a frown appeared on the stolid face of the German; and, turning to his companion, Dick announced that the man could not understand English, for no one could have heard such an insulting reference to his personal appearance and understood it without giving some signs that he knew what was said.

"I'm a-thinking, Master Dick, that it would be worth kicking the bucket for if we could only let the toffs at the War Office know what's going on here!" said Tom Evans earnestly.

"You're right, Tom. Don't talk a great deal now, but devour with your eyes every detail of the work going on before us; then, if you or I can escape, we will be able to describe exactly what we have seen," commanded Dick.

Tom nodded. He required no second intimation of what was wanted; and it is doubtful if even Dick, trained builder of airships though he was, assimilated more information than the ignorant, uneducated street-arab by his side, who, taught in the hard school of the streets, had learned to judge not only things, but men, with astonishing accuracy.

They could have watched the busy scene for hours, but this was denied them; for some half-hour after their entrance to the guard-room they were placed between a file of infantrymen, and marched back to their prison, thrust inside, and the door slammed upon them.

"That game is busted, Master Dick!" cried Tom, jerking his thumb towards the grated window. "They ain't lost no time, neither?"

Disappointment prevented Dick from speaking. He could only nod his head as he gazed at the newly-cemented brickwork round the aperture.

"What muffs them Germans are!" went on Tom, who could not keep silence long at a time. "If they had only searched us they would have found this 'ere neat little home-made saw," he added, holding up the stump of the knife which had seen such yeoman service in their hands. "Never be beaten, ses I. Let's at it again, sir. Faint heart never cuts chunks out of an iron bar."

It was impossible to be low-spirited long where Tom Evans was, and, as he listened to the lad's never-ceasing chatter, Dick felt his courage returning, and his heart growing lighter.

"Another fortnight's work here, Tom," he said, approaching the window. "We'll start on the same bar just here."

He pressed his thumbnail against the iron, and, despite the need of caution, a loud shout of joy burst from his lips.

"The jugginses! They've left our bar in, Tom!" he cried. "The idiots strengthened the brickwork, and forgot to examine the iron!"

"Not they, master! You're a-dreaming, surely!" cried Tom, darting forward and examining the iron himself.

The next moment, with a whoop of joy, he turned a complete somersault, then ran round the room on his hands, chapping his heels together in his joy; after which acrobatic

exhibition the two boys entwined arms and danced a can-can. Great was their joy; but correspondingly great would have been their dismay could they have but seen the evil face of Major Seigner, who, crouching beneath the peephole in the door, was listening to every word they said, rubbing his hands with the air of one well satisfied.

Why Tom Did Not Return!

How the two boys passed the rest of the day they never knew. They could eat little, and could scarcely remain in the same position two minutes; and the pleasure in their faces was so evident that the stalwart orderly who brought their meals smiled in sympathy.

Night came. Trembling to such an extent that he could scarcely work the saw, Dick once more attacked the iron bar. Half an hour's work sufficed to render it sufficiently weak to allow their joint efforts to pull it on one side.

"I'll creep through, and if all is still, Tom, call you," whispered Dick.

Grasping the bars on either side of the opening, he remained for a moment to still the quick beating of his heart; then, raising himself up, thrust his head through the aperture, but only to find that, wriggle as he might, he could not squeeze his shoulders through. In vain he struggled. It was no use; and, with a bitter sigh, he allowed himself to drop once more on to the floor of his cell.

"It's no good, Tom—I can't get through! You go, my boy, and Heaven preserve you!" he cried, in despairing tones.

"What, without you, Master Dick? Not much!" declared Tom Evans determinedly. "If you can't squeeze through, I'm jolly sure I can't—or, at least, won't!"

"Nonsense, Tom! What's the good of us both being kept prisoners here? Besides, remember it is England we are working for now. There is no time to cut through another bar, and we could never bend the iron back again, so that it would pass muster by daylight."

"Don't know nothing about that, Master Dick. I aren't a-going without you," declared Tom obstinately. Then he brightened up. "But I tell yer what I can do, sir. Them there workmen are sure to have left a lot of tools about. Perhaps I can find a file amongst 'em, or, still better, a jack to force the bars apart."

Dick sprang forward and clasped the other's hand.

"Tom, you're a brick! Make haste! It won't be much good our getting out of the cell unless we can find a way out of the fort before morning."

Without another word the little Arab mounted on Dick's shoulders, and, with some difficulty, for it was a tight fit even for him, small though he was, passed through the opening.

"Good-bye, Master Dick! Keep up your pecker! I won't be long!" Dick heard him whisper. And the next moment he was swallowed up in the darkness.

Eagerly Dick Thornhill awaited his little companion's return. But hour succeeded hour, and no white-faced form emerged from the darkness, until at last, when the first streaks of light illuminated the black-and-gold flag floating over the citadel, he crept to his plank bed, and, throwing himself on the hard board, gave way to despair and bitter disappointment.

Despite his protestations, despite his oft-repeated oaths of devotion, Tom Evans had deserted him without even trying to obtain the tools which would give him his liberty. The boy's ingratitude cut him to the heart even more than the knowledge that now he must continue in his prison for weeks—it might be years.

But Dick was doing the youngster a grave injustice. From the moment Tom Evans emerged through the grating sharp eyes had been upon him, and dark, gliding forms had followed his every movement.

The workmen were still busy in another part of the fort, for Tom could hear the constant banging and clanging of their hammers on iron rivets; but immediately in front of where he now was he saw a long, narrow shed, fitted up as a turning-shop, and dimly lighted by infrequent gas-jets.

Peering anxiously about him for possible dangers, Tom passed down the shed, looking to right and left for any tool that would answer his purpose.

At the further end of the workshop he saw an open door, from which a bright light shone upon a blacksmith's bench and forge, littered with a varied assortment of files, drills, and other tools.

Here was luck! The tools were the very ones he wanted, for on the bench was a small jack. He could pick and choose his files, and then, with the jack, hasten back to his comrade.

Creeping forward, he looked in, and with difficulty repressed a cry of delight when he found the place was empty. Then, gliding through the door, he approached the bench.

But barely had he raised a file from its rack ere a slight

noise behind him caused him to look round. At the same moment the door was shoved hastily to, and he found himself confronted by Major Seigner and half a dozen grinning soldiers.

The boy staggered back against the bench, clutching its rough edge to keep himself from falling.

"Very nicely done indeed, Mr. Thomas Evans," sneered Seigner. "You have walked into our trap like a fly into a spider's web."

"Fine trap, I must say!" retorted Tom, who was rapidly recovering his composure. "Bah! It's just like you underhand German beggars! If you wanted me why didn't you come into the cell and lug me out?"

"Because then, my young friend, Master Richard Thornhill would have been constantly on the look-out to escape. Now we will take care that he shall think you have escaped scot-free. He will believe that you will warn the British Government of what we are doing here, and then will be more amenable to reason."

"What! Will you let him think that I got out and hooked it, leaving a pal in the lurch?" cried Tom, in dismay.

"Bah! What is he to you? Only a master!" retorted Seigner contemptuously. "But come, my lad, others beside myself have a hand in your fate. If you are wise, the day the Falcon was captured will prove the luckiest in your life. Bring him along, men!"

Without another word, Seigner turned on his heels and led the way towards the barracks. Crossing a large parade-ground, they entered a building which Tom at first took to be a prison, so sombre, black, and dull did it look.

Passing through a doorway, on either side of which a sentry presented arms to Seigner, Tom was led down a stone-paved passage. Then a door was thrown open, and he found himself in a well-furnished room, at the head of a table in which sat the general with the Iron Cross whom he had seen with the Kaiser.

"I have brought you the boy, Tom Evans, Herr General," said Seigner, saluting.

"You arranged everything as I suggested?" asked the officer.

"Yes, sir. His companion has no idea but that he has escaped."

"Good! Now, my lad, speak up! Which is it to be—a dozen rifles and your back against a wall at sunrise, or freedom and what will make you a rich man for life?" he said, turning abruptly to Tom.

"Don't know as I've much to live for, sir," replied Tom, looking the other straight in the face; "still, I don't want to die just yet. But I suppose you ain't going to give me my liberty just 'cos I'm so 'andsome?"

The general frowned at the tone of the lad's reply; then a grim smile crossed his lips.

"You are right, boy; but I should advise you to keep your tongue within bounds," he said. "I suppose you would not object to a pension, paid by the German Government, of twenty pounds a month for it?"

"It's a lot o' money; but, then, it might happen that when you had done with me I should not live long to enjoy it," replied Tom sagely.

"Thunder and lightning, dog! Do you think we Germans are murderers?" roared the general, springing to his feet. "Besides, what would a miserable twenty pounds a month be, when we shall have the revenue of England to pay it out of?"

"There's something in that, sir," returned Tom, noways abashed; though, truth to tell, his heart was beating faster than he cared about, and his hair had a tendency to stand on end. "But wouldn't it be as well if you said what you wanted me to do?"

"True. There is no reason why I should not; for if you refuse, the fate I have already hinted at will be yours. We want Thorpe Thornhill in our power. Go to England, lure him to a spot I will name hereafter, by telling him his brother has escaped and is awaiting him there, and not only the twenty pounds a month, but a permanent situation under the German Government will be yours."

Tom's brain was busy. He would have given much to have told the German general what he thought of him and his villainous proposition; but he realised that such a course would be disastrous to himself, without in any way helping his master or his brother; whilst by pretending to agree to the infamous proposition he would at least be able to put Thornhill on his guard. But it would not do to appear too willing. Slowly he shook his head, then ruffled up his hair with both hands, and began sobbing quietly.

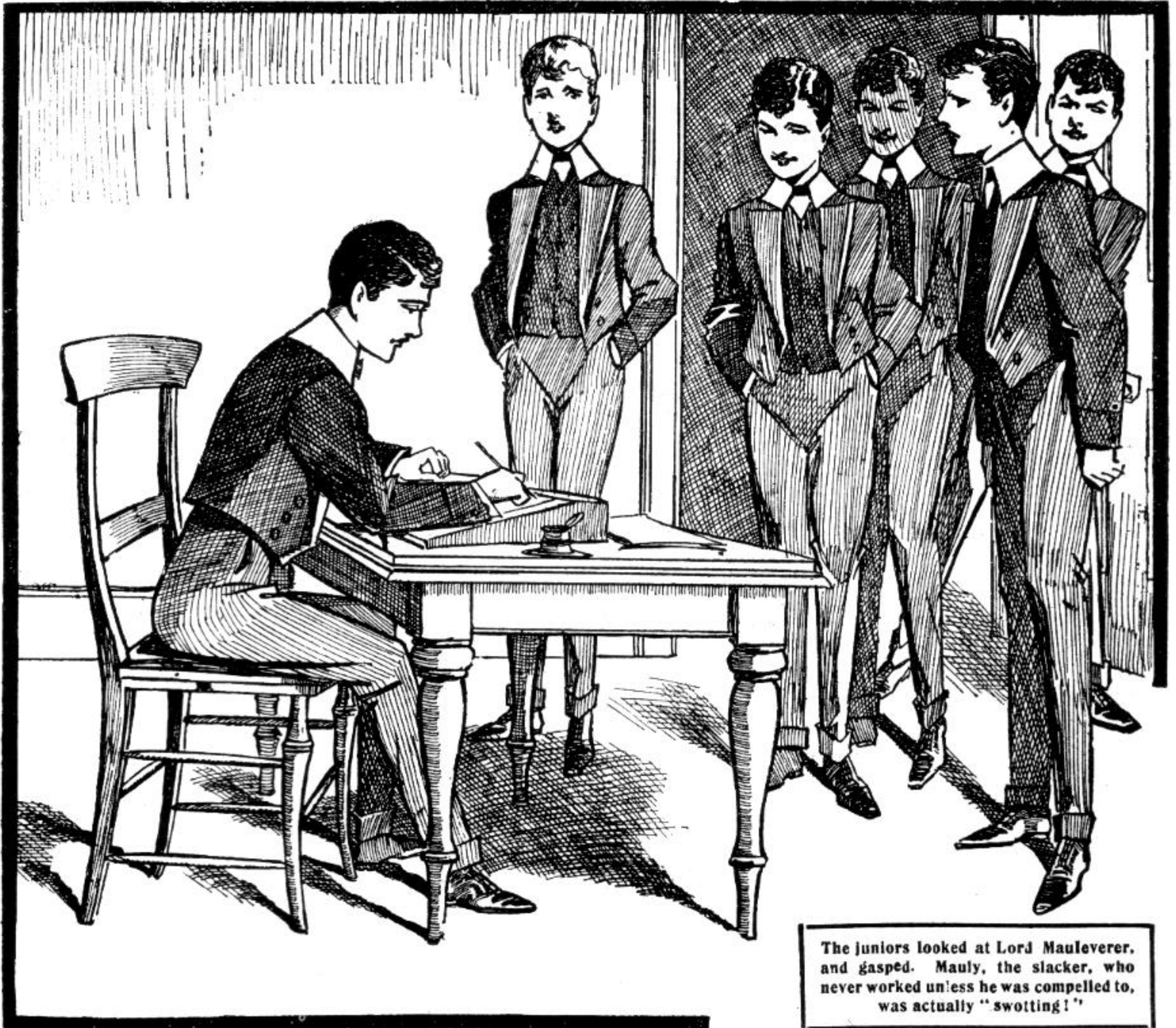
"Now, boy, speak! I have no time to waste. If you refuse, there are others!" cried the general impatiently.

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

CHANGED BY ADVERSITY.

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton
& Co. and Lord Mauleverer of Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



The juniors looked at Lord Mauleverer, and gasped. Mauly, the slacker, who never worked unless he was compelled to, was actually "swotting!"

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Not Having Any!

BOB CHERRY and Frank Nugent, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, stood on the steps of the School House, and looked out across the murky Close towards Little Side. They were in footer togs, and Bob Cherry had a ball under his arm.

"Footer practice—in this drizzle!" grunted Bob. "Lovely!"

"Well, it's no good grumbling," said Nugent. "We've got to go through it. Once we get started we sha'n't notice it so much."

"You chaps ready?" asked Johnny Bull, coming out of the School House.

"No!" said Bob Cherry. "It's too rotten for footer! I vote we chuck it up and play leap-frog in the common-room, or something!"

"Dry up, you ass," said Johnny Bull. "You'll make us

all dissatisfied. We've got to put in a couple of hours at practice, and it's no use grumbling."

Harry Wharton suddenly appeared.

"Hallo! What are you chaps doing here?" he asked.

"Waiting for you, ass," replied Bob Cherry.

"Well, there's no need to hang about here," said Wharton. "Buzz on to the ground, and get ready for business. I'll be there in a jiffy."

"Why can't you come now?" asked Nugent.

"I'm looking for that ass Mauleverer. Got a letter for him. As soon as I've found him I'll join you."

"A game of chess—" began Bob Cherry.

"Eh?"

"A game of chess wouldn't be bad just now," said Bob reflectively. "Just think of sitting in the study, nice and comfy. Footer's all right in its place, but—"

Harry Wharton grinned.

"None of that bizney, my son," he interrupted. "We've got to practise this afternoon, rain or no rain. There'll be

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heaps of time for chess afterwards; and we shall enjoy it a lot more."

And the captain of the Remove went back into the House. His chums looked at one another, and Bob Cherry made a wry grimace.

"Unreasonable chap, Wharton," he said, looking up at the frowning sky. "Well, I suppose we've got to get a move on."

And the juniors went out in a body.

Harry Wharton was anxious to get out, and he walked through the passages, with an impatient expression upon his face.

"The duffer isn't in his room," he murmured; "and he doesn't seem to be about the House. He can't be out cycling, or walking in this drizzle. I say, Brown."

Tom Brown, the New Zealander, looked round.

"What's the trouble?" he asked.

"Have you seen Mauly anywhere about?" asked Wharton.

"Yes, I spotted him in the passage five minutes ago," said Tom Brown. "He'd got a book under his arm, so I suppose he's slacking somewhere, as usual."

"Thanks!"

Harry went downstairs. But a thorough search of the common-room did not reveal the elegant figure of Lord Mauleverer, of the Remove. Harry Wharton gave it up.

"I sha'n't waste any more time!" he muttered. "I'll give him this letter at tea-time. I don't suppose it's anything important, anyhow."

The letter had been given to Wharton by the postman, whom the junior had met at the entrance-gates. He had not placed it in the rack because he thought that the schoolboy earl was about the House.

Harry walked briskly to the football-ground.

He passed Snoop, the sneak of the Remove, who was leaning against one of the old elms, where it was practically dry, for the leaves were still thick upon the branches, watching the Third Form match.

"Seen Mauleverer knocking about?" asked Wharton.

"No," said Snoop. "Why?"

"I wanted him, that's all," said Harry; and he walked on.

Snoop looked after him, and grinned.

"Silly ass, playing footer in this rain!" he muttered. "I'll bet he wanted Mauly to practise. Mauly playing footer! Oh, my hat!"

He chuckled at the very thought. And it certainly was humorous, for Lord Mauleverer was the prize slacker of the Remove. The schoolboy millionaire was one of the best fellows breathing—generous to a degree, and sunny-tempered. But there was no denying that he disliked work exceedingly. Anything that required exertion was not in Mauleverer's line at all.

Even in the very cold weather, when snow was on the ground, and when brisk exercise would have warmed him up, Mauleverer preferred to remain in his own luxurious study before a blazing fire.

Snoop moved after a few minutes, and lounged across the Close. He was feeling thirsty, and was looking for someone who would stand him a bottle of ginger-beer.

There was quite a little crowd round Mrs. Mible's tuckshop, under the awning, but Snoop saw nobody who would be likely to "treat" him. Hovering about the shop door was the fat figure of Billy Bunter, and Snoop grinned.

"Wonder how much longer that porpoise is going to stay there?" he murmured. "He's been dodging about the tuckshop ever since dinner, and he hasn't had even a currant out of a bath-bun!"

But Billy Bunter knew that he wouldn't stand an earthly if he went away. He was in his customary state of impecuniosity, and he wanted some tuck badly. The only hope lay in hovering near the school shop on the chance that some generous soul would offer to pay for his refreshments. It was rather a forlorn hope, but Bunter was nothing if not persistent.

Snoop didn't approach the tuckshop, but suddenly started running towards the gymnasium. He had just spotted Trevor of the Remove. And in less than two minutes Snoop had succeeded in borrowing a shilling, Trevor happening to be in funds.

"Good biz!" said Snoop. "Pay you back on Saturday."

"Right-ho!" said Trevor.

And he went off towards the playing-fields, where the occasional thud of the leather could be heard intermingled with the juniors' shouts.

Snoop made a bee-line for the tuckshop. As he crossed the Close in the slow drizzle he saw a figure in a mackintosh just turning into the Cloisters. The Close was otherwise deserted.

And Snoop recognised the figure as that of Lord Mauleverer. He grinned to himself and stopped.

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"Mauly!" he shouted. "Hi, Mauly!"

Lord Mauleverer stopped, and looked round.

"Did anyone call me?" he asked listlessly.

"Yes, I did!" shouted Snoop. "Come over here, old man!"

"Begad, it's too much fag," replied the dandy of the Remove. "If you want to speak to me, come here."

Snoop approached.

"I don't want to speak to you," he began.

"Good!"

"I mean, I only want to give you a tip," said Snoop.

"My dear fellow, I don't want it!" exclaimed Mauleverer, in a tired voice. "I've got heaps of money of my own!"

"You ass! I don't mean that kind of tip!"

"Begad, I thought you didn't, somehow!"

"It's a word of advice," went on Snoop. "If I were you, I should steer clear of the playing-fields. Wharton's looking for you!"

"Looking for me?" said his lordship. "What the deuce for?"

Snoop grinned.

"He wants you to play footer for him," he said. "He and those other duffers are practising in this rotten rain, and they want you as well. They want you to keep goal!"

"Begad!"

Snoop's word of advice wasn't exactly truthful, for he didn't know what Harry Wharton had wanted Mauleverer for—it was only guesswork on Snoop's part. But Lord Mauleverer wasn't to know that, and he looked at Snoop in dismay.

"Begad, is—is Wharton looking for me now?" he asked.

"Yes, and Bob Cherry as well," answered Snoop untruthfully; he was enjoying the effect of his words upon Mauleverer's aristocratic face. "If I were you, I'd make myself scarce—I'd lock myself up somewhere."

"Yaas."

Lord Mauleverer looked up and down anxiously.

"Awfully good of you to give me the tip, my dear fellow," he said. "I'll bunk indoors and lock myself in my bally study!"

And the dismayed slacker proceeded to "bunk" indoors. Probably he didn't know the literal meaning of the word "bunk," in the sense he had used it, for his progress to the School House was a languid stroll. Even the dire fear of being forced to work did not make Mauleverer hurry himself.

But he arrived at his study without adventure, and turned the key in the lock with a sigh of relief. Then he took off his mackintosh, and lowered himself into a luxurious lounge before the fireplace.

"Footer, in this weather!" he murmured, with closed eyes. "What silly asses, begad! Thank goodness they didn't collar me. I shall be undisturbed—"

Lord Mauleverer paused, and opened his eyes as a brisk footstep sounded in the passage. Next moment the sounds ceased—outside his study door!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Peter Todd's Little Request!

Lord MAULEVERER held his breath.

"Begad, it's Wharton, come to lug me out!" he murmured, in dismay.

Tap!

Somebody knocked, and tried the door-handle.

"Hallo, locked!" the visitor exclaimed. "The awful slacker's locked himself in! Mauly, you lazy bounder!"

The last three words were shouted loudly, and the schoolboy earl recognised the voice as that of Peter Todd of the Remove. But Peter Todd was a friend of Wharton's, and it was quite on the cards that Peter had come along to haul him out.

The schoolboy earl remained still.

Peter Todd knocked again—with his boot.

"Are you in there, Mauly?" he shouted, with his mouth to the keyhole. "It's no good, you awful slacker, I know you're inside. I saw you come into the House just now. If you don't answer I'll bust the giddy door down!"

"Begad!"

Peter Todd, outside, grinned.

"Oh, you're inside, right enough!" he exclaimed. "Are you going to open this door?"

"Yaas."

"Good! Look sharp about it!"

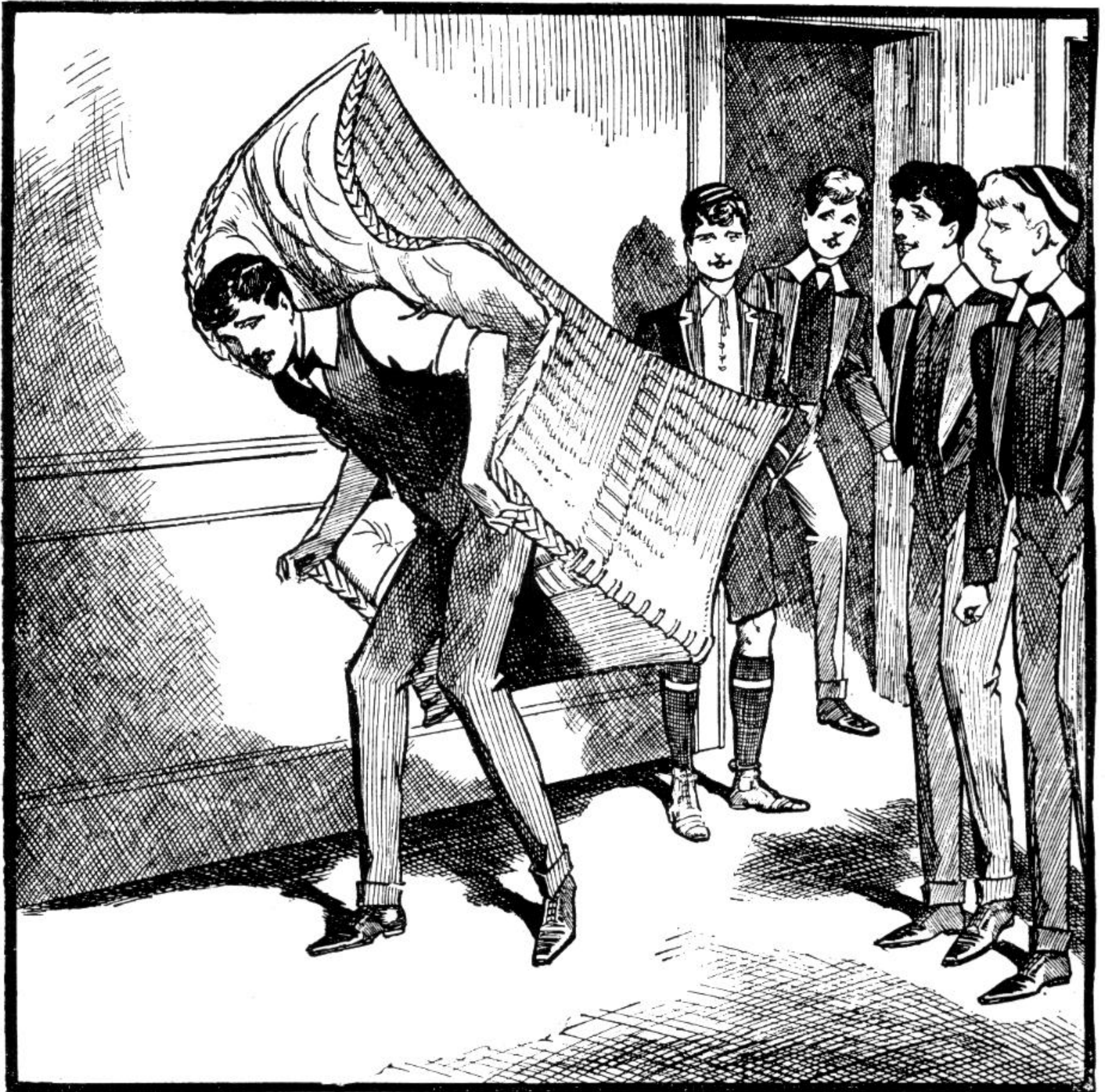
Peter stood in the passage and waited; but there was no movement inside the study. Todd banged on the door again.

"Mauly!" he roared.

"Yaas?"

"I thought you said you were going to open the door, you blighter?"

"Yaas, so I am!"



Lord Mauleverer was in his shirtsleeves, and his face was moist with perspiration as he came out of his study. On his back was an easy chair, with which he was staggering up the passage. The juniors stared, almost awed. "Hold me up, somebody!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I shall faint! This is too much all at once!" (See Chapter 6.)

"Then open it, ass! I want to come in, fathead!" said Peter politely.

"Sorry, I can't open it now, my dear fellow," drawled Lord Mauleverer. "I meant I would open it when I came out!"

"You—you frabjous josser!" shouted Todd. "I want to speak to you!"

"You are speaking, my dear fellow!"

"You—you—I want to come in!" roared Todd.

"Sorry!"

"Are you going to open this door?"

"Yaas."

"When?"

"At tea-time, my dear fellow!" said Mauleverer languidly.

"I wish you'd go away! You're disturbing me!"

Peter Todd breathed hard.

"My hat, I'll disturb you in a minute!" he exclaimed.

"If you don't open this door immediately, I'll pulverise you when I catch you outside!"

"I'll risk it, old chap!"

"But what's the idea?" shouted Todd. "What the dickens

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have you bolted yourself up for? Do you think I shall commit murder if you let me in?"

"Yaas—I mean, no—but it's too wet!"

"Too wet?" ejaculated Peter.

"Yaas."

"Too wet for what, you thundering jabberwock?"

"Football!"

"Football?"

"Yaas."

"Who's talking about football!" roared Todd, in exasperation.

"Begad, I wish you wouldn't shout!" said Lord Mauleverer plaintively. "You might let a chap get some rest! It's no good, Toddy—I'm not going to open the giddy door. It's too wet for footer, and I'm not going to let you lug me out!"

Peter Todd stared at the closed door as he heard Mauleverer sigh after that lengthy utterance.

"Footer—lug you out!" ejaculated Todd. "I'm blessed if I know what you're talking about, Mauly. Did you think I came to make you play footer?"

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"Yaas. Wharton sent you!"

"Well, I'm blessed!"

"I was warned, you see, my dear fellow," yawned Mauleverer. "So I've locked myself in. Please go away; I'm beastly tired. All this talking has made me quite weak!"

"But—but you silly ass—you fatheaded cuckoo—I haven't seen Wharton!" roared Peter Todd. "I haven't come here to make you play football! I want to borrow some tin off you!"

"Begad!"

"So open the door, and don't be an hour about it!"

"Haven't you come from Wharton—really?"

"Of course I haven't!" shouted Peter.

"And you don't want me to play?"

"No!"

"Honour bright?"

"Yes, you chump! Honour bright!" exclaimed Todd sulphurously. "Now will you open the door?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Mauleverer mildly

"What do you mean?"

"How can I open the door?" asked his lordship wearily.

"I'm on the lounge before the fireplace, and I can't reach the door from here, my dear fellow!"

Peter Todd glared at the door panels with a concentration of expression that ought to have bored a hole in the wood.

"Can't you get up?" he bellowed.

"No!"

"Why not?"

"Tired!"

"I'll give you one more chance, Mauly," said Peter thickly.

"If you don't open this door in one minute, I'll get a hammer and bust the lock! After that I'll haul you out, drag you across the Close, and duck you in the fountain!"

"Begad!"

"You've got five seconds left!"

"Begad, those fifty-five seconds have gone quickly!" said Mauleverer. "All right, I'll open the door! It's a beastly nuisance, though. Why can't you let a fellow rest in comfort?"

The key turned in the lock, and Todd grasped the handle and stamped into the schoolboy earl's luxurious study. He faced Mauleverer and gazed at him with an almost homicidal glare.

"You lazy, slacking bounder!" he said wrathfully. "I've a jolly good mind to chuck you out in the passage with all your furniture on top of you! That would give you a bit of work to do!"

"Work!" gasped Mauleverer. "Begad!"

"Yes, work!" growled Todd. "You could work all right if you set your mind to it. You're a decent sort in the main—one of the best—but you're the laziest slacker in Greyfriars! You want waking up, my son!"

"My dear fellow, you haven't let me sleep yet!" complained his lordship.

"You ass, you're asleep all the time! You want a couple of dynamite bombs shoved under your giddy waistcoat! Perhaps they'd make you move a bit."

Peter Todd wiped his brow, for his little vocal exercise in the passage had made him quite breathless.

"Now then, my son, I want to borrow ten bob, please," he said, holding out his hand. "Study No. 7 is hard up at the moment, and we've got nothing in for tea. Dutton's stony, and Bunter spent his last halfpenny before dinner. So I've come to you to help us over the giddy stile."

Lord Mauleverer nodded and yawned.

"Right-ho, my dear fellow! I'll lend you ten bob with pleasure—"

"Good biz!"

"I'll make it a quid if you like—"

"Better still," said Peter genially. "In spite of your faults, you're not a bad sort, Mauly."

"Yaas; but—"

"Hand out the tin!"

"I'm sorry—"

"Eh?"

"But I haven't got any cash at present," said Lord Mauleverer. "You wouldn't let me tell you. I've only got one-and-a-tanner."

Peter Todd stared at the slacker of the Remove.

"Only got one-and-a-tanner!" he repeated blankly. "And you've kept me messing about here all this time to tell me that? You—you—"

Mauleverer looked distressed.

"I'm awfully sorry, Toddy, but it's not my fault!" he said. "You see, I'm expecting a letter from my uncle, Sir Reginald Brooke, and it ought to have come this morning. It's bound to be here before tea—perhaps it's in the rack now. Directly it comes I'll lend you as much as you want."

Todd calmed down again.

"Right-ho! Then I'll look you up later on," he said.

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moving towards the door. "And look here, if you refuse to let me in again I'll yank you out, skin you by inches, and boil you in oil!"

And with that dire threat the chief of Study No. 7 walked out, and left Lord Mauleverer in peace and quiet.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Hot Time for Mauly!

PETER TODD was thoughtful as he walked down the Remove passage. He was wondering how he could make Lord Mauleverer rouse himself out of his accustomed apathy. It was a pretty stiff task to contemplate. Bob Cherry had made the attempt on more than one occasion, but Mauly had never profited by it. Perhaps Bob's methods had been a little too drastic.

Peter strolled out into the Close, and made for the playing-fields. The rain had stopped now, but the autumn air was still damp and chilly. Todd was thinking of Mauleverer still.

"I want to get hold of some subtle scheme," he murmured—"something that'll make Mauly jump out of his skin, so to speak, and show what he can do."

Todd paused to look at the Removites practising. Harry Wharton had the ball, and he sent it spinning into the net with a well-directed kick.

"Goal!" said Temple of the Upper Fourth.

"Rats!" said Peter. "It's only practice, you ass!"

"Well, the goalie was beaten, anyhow."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney, of the Fourth.

Harry Wharton came off presently. He was warm, in spite of the dull weather.

"Phew! I'm off for a drink of ginger-pop at Mrs. Mible's!" he said. "Hallo, Toddy, what are you looking so thoughtful about?"

"Oh, I was only thinking of Mauly," said Peter.

"Do you know where he is, then?"

"Yes; in his study, locked in," replied Peter Todd.

"Locked in? What on earth for?" asked Harry.

"He thinks you're after him," chuckled Todd. "I went there just now, and had a terrific job to get in. He thinks you're going to haul him out here to practise. Have you been on the giddy warpath?"

"No; I haven't seen Mauly since dinner," replied Wharton.

"That rotter, Snoop, has been stuffing him up. I told Snoop I wanted Mauleverer, and I expect Snoop has spun a yarn that I wanted him for footer practice."

"Yes, Snoopy isn't particular about sticking to the truth."

"Well, I'll have my ginger-pop, and then go and explain things to Mauly," said Harry Wharton.

And he went off to Mrs. Mible's little shop in the corner of the Close. Having regaled himself on ginger-beer, he entered the School House and went to Lord Mauleverer's study in the Remove passage.

Before knocking on the door, he took Mauly's letter from his pocket.

"From his uncle," he murmured, recognising the handwriting. "A giddy remittance, I expect. If I wasn't in funds I'd ask Mauly for a loan for causing me all this blessed trouble."

He tapped on the door, and tried the handle; but it was still locked.

"Mauly!" he shouted.

"Eh? Hallo! Who's that—what?" came a drowsy voice from within.

"It's me, you ass!" exclaimed Harry ungrammatically.

"Oh, my hat! It's Wharton, begad!"

"Yes; open the door, you lazy bounder!"

"Yaas—I mean, no fear!" exclaimed Mauleverer hastily.

"You can't come in, my dear fellow. I was warned, you see, and I've made myself safe. Go away, there's a good chap. I—I'm tired!"

Harry Wharton grinned.

"It's all right, you chump! I'm not going to hurt you!" he said. "I've got a letter for you from your uncle."

"Oh, good!"

"Well, open the door!" said Harry impatiently. "I can't stand out here all the afternoon! Todd tells me you've been playing the same trick on him, and kept him waiting ages."

"I—I can't open the door—I really can't, my dear fellow!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer. "Push the letter under the door, will you?"

"No, I jolly well won't!" exclaimed Wharton. "Come and open the door, you lazy, slow-moving tortoise! You needn't think I've come to haul you out to footer practice. That was only Snoop's tommy-rot."

"Oh!"

Just that one exclamation, but no sound of movement. Harry Wharton's eyes began to gleam, and he thumped hard on the door.

Bang! Thump! Bang!

"Look here, Mauly, if you don't—"

"Oh, you are a bother, Wharton!" interrupted Mauleverer plaintively. "I'm trying to get a nap, you know! Do go away!"

Harry Wharton breathed hard.

"I tell you I'm not going to touch you," he said. "I've got a letter for you, and I'm not going to shove it under the giddy door. If you're too lazy to unlock it, I'll take your rotten letter away again!"

"Oh, good!"

"Ain't you going to let me in?" asked Wharton.

"No."

"Why not?"

"Too much fag."

Harry Wharton gazed at the door wrathfully for a moment, then his expression changed, and he chuckled under his breath.

It was obviously impossible to get into Mauleverer's study by the door, but there were other means of entrance, and Wharton decided to teach Lord Mauleverer a lesson.

Without wasting any more time, he hurried out into the Close, and made his way to the football ground. Bob Cherry and Nugent were in the pavilion watching the practice, and Johnny Bull was just coming in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You look as if you're on the war-path!" said Bob Cherry.

"So I am," replied Harry grimly. "I've just been up to Mauleverer's study, and the frightful bounder's actually too lazy to get up off the couch and unlock the door! I vote we teach him a lesson!"

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Might as well teach a lesson to my giddy footer boots," he said. "We've done everything that's humanly possible for Mauly, but he's passed all earthly aid."

"Well, I'm going to shove Gosling's ladder up against the window, get in, and haul Mauly out," said Wharton firmly. "I suppose you chaps'll join in?"

"Rather!"

"Anything to oblige!"

"You can count me among the number," said Peter Todd, who was standing near by. "I've had trouble with Mauly this afternoon, too, and I should like to see the bounder shoved through the mill!"

"Right-ho! Follow your uncle!" said Wharton cheerfully.

And the five juniors set off in search of Gosling's ladder. They found it leaning against the wood-shed, and, without any waste of time, proceeded to carry it across the Close.

"Hi, young gents!"

"Oh, that's Gossy!" growled Nugent.

Gosling stood at the door of his lodge, wiping his mouth, having evidently left his work for the moment to imbibe liquid refreshment.

"Now then, young gents, wot are you a-doin' with that there ladder?" he shouted.

"Oh, we're just carting it round the Close to get ourselves warm!" said Bob Cherry breathlessly. "Must do something this cold weather, you know, Gossy!"

"I don't want none o' your sarcasm, Master Cherry!" growled Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Oh, rats!" interrupted Harry Wharton. "We're not going to hurt your blessed old ladder! We'll bring it back in ten minutes; don't you worry!"

"That's all werry well, but wot I says—"

But Gosling's voice died away in the distance as the juniors disappeared round the corner of the School House. And the porter didn't feel inclined to walk across the Close to make further remarks; he knew by experience that they would fall upon deaf ears. So he turned into his lodge again, making some reference to "young ribs."

The young ribs halted beneath the window of Lord Mauleverer's study. The ladder was quickly hoisted, and Harry Wharton set his foot upon it.

"I'll go first, and you two had better follow," he said, indicating Peter Todd and Bob Cherry. "You other chaps cart the ladder back, and then lend a hand with Mauly after we've hauled the bounder out!"

"Good enough!" said Bob Cherry. "Lead on, Macduff!" Wharton mounted the ladder nimbly, and Todd and Bob Cherry followed close behind.

They stepped into the study, and looked round. Lord Mauleverer was reclining gracefully on the luxurious lounge, sleeping peacefully. Bob Cherry grinned.

"Now for the giddy surprise!" he muttered. "I vote we all take a running jump at him, and land on his chest! I should think that would wake him up!"

"Well, it ought to!" grinned Peter Todd.

But Mauleverer awoke before any such drastic measures could be taken. He had only been dozing, and the low voices aroused him. He opened his eyes, blinked at the invaders, and sat up with a start.

"Begad!" he gasped.

He gazed round in alarm, and saw that the door was still

locked. The three Removites regarded him with fixed, concentrated stares.

"Begad! How—how the deuce did you fellows get in?" his lordship ejaculated. "The door's locked, and— By Jove, the window!"

"Yes, we got in by the window, my son," said Bob Cherry sternly. "We've come to teach you a lesson—to show you the error of your ways. Ten minutes ago you refused to open the door to Wharton, because it was too much fag. We will now proceed to sit on you, bump you, and commit slaughter generally!"

Lord Mauleverer lay back and gasped.

"Now, don't be silly asses!" he exclaimed. "I'd have opened the door to Wharton in a moment if I hadn't been so beastly tired!"

"Well, you'll get up now," said Harry Wharton grimly. "And by the time we've finished with you, you may have adequate cause to feel tired. We're going to run you out to the footer-field!"

"Begad!"

"And make you perspire from every pore!" said Peter Todd.

"Poor old Mauly!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, my dear fellows, you're not serious?" asked Mauleverer faintly.

"We are!" said Bob. "We is!"

"Yaas; but—"

"No 'buts' about it," said Harry Wharton briskly. "Collar him, chaps!"

"Begad! Now, don't act the giddy— Ow! I say, I—I'll go quietly!" gasped his lordship, as he was yanked off the lounge. "I'll walk quietly, without trying to escape, you know!"

"No good, my son—you've got to run!" said Bob Cherry. "That's the object of this visit. We're going to make you hot!"

"But I am hot already!" howled Mauleverer, who was perspiring with alarm.

"Cold to what you will be!" said Todd cheerfully.

"Begad!"

Lord Mauleverer was bundled out of his study into the passage. He was looking somewhat alarmed, but he made no attempt to free himself. In the first place, it would have required too much exertion, and in the second place he knew that the effort would be useless. So he allowed himself to be propelled downstairs at a dizzy speed.

In the entrance-hall Nugent and Johnny Bull stood waiting, grinning broadly.

"You've dug the bounder out, then?" said Nugent.

"Rather!" panted Bob Cherry. "If you come with us to the playing-fields, you'll have the pleasure of seeing murder done!"

"Begad!" gasped Mauleverer. "I say, you fellows, have pity on a chap! Rescue me!"

Johnny Bull grinned.

"Yes, we'll rescue you, Mauly, but not to-day," he said cheerfully. "We're going to see the fun!"

"Fun!" howled his lordship.

"Exactly," chuckled Bull. "It may not be funny from your point of view, but from ours it's downright humorous!" Mauleverer had no time to answer, for he was shot through the doorway with unceremonious haste. At breakneck speed he was hustled across the Close. For once in a while the schoolboy earl was exerting himself, and the change wasn't to his liking at all. But it was Hobson's choice—he simply had to run!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

No Remittance!

"THERE, I think you'll do now, Mauly!" said Harry Wharton breathlessly.

"Begad, I'm done up!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

"Yes, 'nuff's as good as a feast!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I'm beginning to feel somewhat fagged myself, so it's quite time we put the giddy brake on. You can buzz indoors now, Mauly—if you've got enough energy left!"

The Removites had almost exhausted themselves in giving Mauleverer his lesson.

At top speed they had rushed his lordship up and down the football-field. Times innumerable Mauly had fallen flat in the wet grass, to receive the Famous Five on top of him. But again and again they had forced him to get up and run again, until now he was a sorry spectacle.

Utterly spent, Lord Mauleverer leaned against a post, regaining his breath. The perspiration was running from his cheeks, and his face was red with exertion. His elegant

clothes were muddy from top to bottom, his collar was hanging down his back, and his necktie had disappeared completely.

"Ow! Begad, I'm finished!" he groaned. "Yaas, my dear fellows, I'm finished. I—I think I shall go to bed—what?"

"If you do we'll come and haul you out again," said Harry Wharton grimly. "You're too lazy to live! Go indoors and clean yourself, and then spend the evening as usual—or else in gymnastic exercises. If you like, I'll have a round or two with the gloves after tea—"

"Begad, no!" ejaculated Mauly, in alarm. "I don't feel up to it to-day—I don't really, my dear fellow!"

And his lordship hurried away at quite a smart pace, in spite of his exhausted condition. But Wharton called him back, and gave him his letter—which had been the cause of all the trouble.

Mauleverer wasn't at all cross with the Famous Five for handling him so roughly.

He was altogether too spent to be cross with anybody, and his one thought was to get changed as quickly as possible, and then lie down in his study.

The Removites watched him disappear into the School House with amused smiles. They had exerted themselves on his account, but they did not mind that.

"He ought to be treated that way every day for a month," said Bob Cherry. "Then, perhaps, he'd pull himself together!"

"A month of it would finish him!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "The poor chap would be ready to lie down and perish!"

"The perishfulness would be terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who had taken an active part in the ragging.

"Rats!" exclaimed Peter Todd firmly. "Mauly can be as energetic as any of us if he only chooses!"

"No fear!" said Nugent. "He isn't built that way!"

"Well, I'll bet anybody a quid—"

"Show us your money!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Well, threepence, then," amended Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Some drop, as Fishy would say!" chuckled Bull.

"Oh, don't be funny!" went on Peter. "I'm serious. I believe that if Mauly liked, he could work like a giddy Trojan! We ought to think of some plan to make him!"

"All right, think of it; we sha'n't stop you," said Wharton cheerfully. "But it'll give your brain a pretty twisting, Toddy. Mauly isn't made to work, and it's my belief he'll remain a confirmed slacker until his dying day."

"Well, he's got it in him to work if he wants to," declared Peter Todd. "It only wants bringing out—that's all."

"And a blessed big all, too!" said Nugent. "Well, I want to talk about something else. Blow Mauly!"

"The blowfulness of the esteemed Mauly is terrific," murmured Hurree Singh.

"It was terrific when we'd finished with him, anyhow!" grinned Bob Cherry. "He was blowing like a giddy grampus!"

Peter Todd suddenly remembered that it was nearly tea-time, and that he had to obtain a loan from Mauleverer. So the leader of No. 7 Study hastened indoors.

"That letter was from his uncle," murmured Todd.

"There's sure to be a remittance enclosed; two or three fivers, I expect. He can easily spare a quid for little me."

Peter found Lord Mauleverer in the Remove dormitory alone. He had washed, and looked vastly better for it. When Todd entered, his lordship was sitting on his bed, half-dressed, reading the letter from his uncle.

"How do you feel, old chap?" asked Todd cheerfully.

Mauleverer looked up languidly.

"Rotten!" he said.

"Sort of achy and tired?"

"Yaas."

"You'll soon be all right," grinned Peter. "Of course, you know what I've come for, don't you?"

"Yaas—I mean, no. What have you come for?"

"Didn't you promise to lend me a quid?"

"Begad! So I did!"

"What is it this time—ten or twenty?" asked Peter.

"Begad! I—I'm awfully sorry, my dear fellow!" exclaimed Mauly. "I can't—"

"Can't what?"

"Well, you see, there's no remittance," said Mauleverer, in a tired voice.

Peter Todd jumped.

"No remittance!" he shouted.

"No. It's beastly awkward, isn't it?" complained his lordship. "I haven't got any tin to speak of, and I shall be in a frightful hole until nunky—"

"But how about my quid?" shouted Todd.

Lord Mauleverer looked surprised.

"My dear fellow, you can't have it!" he said lazily. "I

can't make quids, can I? I'm frightfully sorry, you know; but nunky says that he's fearfully worried over business matters, or something, and can't bother to send me any money—or something like that."

Peter Todd glared.

"Is this a wheeze to get out of lending—"

"Begad, what a thought!" interrupted Mauly, in a hurt voice. "Read the letter, my dear fellow, and see for yourself."

Peter Todd, looking indignant, took the letter. It was only short, and had obviously been written in a hurry. It ran:

"My Dear Nephew,—Your letter reaches me while I am greatly worried over important business matters. Surely you do not want more money just yet? I am sure it is not urgent; and as I have no cash at hand I cannot do as you wish. I will probably send a cheque within a few days.

"UNCLE REGINALD."

Todd handed the letter back.

"I don't like the look of that 'probably,'" he remarked.

"Oh, it's all right, my dear fellow!" said Mauly. "Nunky is worried, and he's put it like that because he knows he might forget all about it. It's a beastly nuisance, all the same!"

"But—but I thought you were a giddy millionaire?" said Todd.

Mauleverer yawned.

"Yaas, I believe I am—something of the sort," he replied.

"And yet you can't have money when you want it!" exclaimed Peter. "I thought you had charge of your own giddy tin, Mauly? You haven't got to ask your uncle for every penny you want, have you?"

Mauleverer lay back on the bed.

"You don't understand, my dear fellow," he said sleepily.

"I'm bothered if I understand myself exactly. But just at the present time the lawyer johnnies who have control of my money are away, or ill, or— I'm blessed if I know where they are! Anyhow, for a few weeks nunky is looking after me. That's how matters stand—or, at least, I believe they do. Nunky wrote and explained it all to me, but I forgot it in ten minutes."

Peter Todd regarded Mauleverer as though he were some zoological specimen.

"Well, I'm blessed if you don't take the giddy pancake!" he exclaimed in exasperation. "What's the good of having an uncle if he won't let you have tin when you want it? It's not his tin either!"

Mauly yawned.

"I know that," he said; "but he's got charge of it. Perhaps nunky's worried more than we know—"

"Perhaps he's been speculating with your fortune, old man," grinned Peter, "and has lost it all! Then you'd have to work for a living!"

Todd looked thoughtful after he had said that, and a sudden gleam came into his eyes. But Lord Mauleverer didn't notice it; he was lying back on the bed, with closed eyes.

"Oh, don't be a silly ass, Toddy!" he said wearily. "I'm awfully sorry about disappointing you. But it can't be helped, can it? It's not my fault, you know. Can't you borrow a quid off some other chap—Vernon-Smith or Wharton?"

Todd moved towards the door.

"I'll try," he said absently. "I expect I shall be able to raise a few bobs if I can get on the right sight of somebody."

And Peter left the dormitory, much to Mauleverer's satisfaction, for the schoolboy-earl wasn't feeling much like conversation just then.

As Todd sauntered downstairs the thoughtful expression still remained upon his face, but it was intermingled with a sly, mischievous smile. He had thought of some scheme, evidently, and was mightily pleased with it.

"My hat!" he murmured. "It'll be the wheeze of the year! And it'll be a test for Mauly, too. We'll see if he comes up to the scratch in times of stress and tribulation! It'll need careful handling; but I don't think there's another chap at Greyfriars who could manage it better than P. T."

And with that modest thought Peter went off in search of some kind person who could be prevailed upon to part with half-a-sovereign—or more.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Terrible Shock!

VERNON-SMITH, being flush, as usual, readily forked out a sovereign upon being approached by Todd; and Peter went off to the tuckshop in high good-humour, telling himself that in some ways the Bounder was a thundering good sort.

Peter was thoughtful during tea, and Billy Bunter's usual

chatter fell upon deaf ears, for to-night Todd, as well as Tom Dutton, was extremely hard of hearing. At least, he heard, but Bunter's talk went in one ear and came out of the other.

For Peter was still thinking of his scheme.

"Yes, it's best to be on the safe side," he murmured into his teacup. "I'll pop along and see Coker minor."

"Eh?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Oh, nothing!" said Todd. "I wasn't talking to you, nose!"

"Oh, really, Todd! I say, is there some wheeze on?" asked Bunter eagerly. "You've been looking thoughtful all through tea, and now you've started muttering to yourself. Is it a wheeze?"

"A wheeze?" said Peter carelessly. "Don't be an ass!"

"I say, you know, it's not fair to keep me from it," complained Bunter. "I'm a member of the study, and we oughtn't to have secrets. I promise I won't tell a soul—"

"Yes, I've heard that yarn before!" interrupted Peter. "It's as old as the giddy hills, Bunter, and has got grey whiskers on it! Even if I had a wheeze on I shouldn't say a word to you—unless, of course, I wanted it all over Greyfriars in half an hour!"

"Oh, really, Todd, I'm a splendid chap for keeping secrets—"

"There isn't a secret, you fat-headed chump!" growled Peter Todd. "Can't I look thoughtful without you thinking I've got a thousand secrets on my mind? Dry up, or I'll empty the teapot over your fat head!"

Even that dire threat had no effect; so Peter gulped down his tea, and left the study.

"Never knew such a chap as Bunter!" he growled to himself. "Whenever I think of some jape or other he always sees there's something on. I shall have to be jolly careful he doesn't get wind of this, or it would be properly mucked up! The whole success of it lies in absolute secrecy!"

He walked off briskly to the Sixth-Form passage, and sought out the youngest brother of Coker of the Fifth. Reggie Coker was in the Sixth, a fact which Horace Coker greatly disapproved of. The great and mighty Coker considered it infra dig to have a minor in a higher Form than himself, and it was rather a sore point with him. But what Coker lacked in brains—and that, according to most Removites, was a very considerable amount—he made up in muscle and sinew. Reggie Coker was a quiet boy, studious and modest.

Peter Todd would have felt rather nervous had he been interviewing some other member of the lordly Sixth; but Coker minor was different; he was more like a junior than a senior.

Reggie was at home, and listened attentively as Peter Todd outlined his wonderful scheme. At first he was inclined to demur, but Peter was a wonderful chap when he got arguing, and at last Coker minor gave in.

"All the same," he said doubtfully, "it's rather—well, it's a bit thick, Todd. I don't say that it's forgery—"

Peter Todd grinned.

"My dear chap, there's nothing wrong in the wheeze whatever," he said easily. "If I had written and signed the letter it would have been forgery. But your name's Reginald, so what's to prevent you writing to Mauly, and advising him to do certain things? If he chooses to think the letter's from his uncle, that's his funeral! It's settled, then—you'll sign it?"

"Well, yes, if you think it's all right," said Coker minor.

"Of course it is!" said Peter. "The letter will want careful writing, but I'll do that. I'll go and draft it out now, and pop down to Friardale and have it typed. Then I'll bring it to you to sign."

Reggie Coker smiled.

"I say, it's rather a rich jape," he said. "Mauleverer will go off his dot when he reads the letter!"

"That's the idea of it!" chuckled Peter. "It'll prove whether I was right or not in saying that Mauly could work if he wanted to. This'll be a giddy test. I suppose I shall find you here in about an hour's time?"

"Yes, I shall be here!"

"Good!"

And Peter hurried out, mightily pleased with himself. To his great relief, No. 7 Study was empty; he wanted to be quiet for the next ten minutes. He sat down at the table, and thoughtfully nibbled a pencil.

Fifteen minutes later he crossed the Close, and got out his bicycle. The rain had stopped now, and the autumn sky was fairly clear. Todd whizzed down to Friardale, and stopped at a stationer's shop, where he knew the proprietor owned a typewriter. The job was not a long one, and Peter was on his way back within twenty minutes.

As he entered the School House, flushed from his ride, he met the Famous Five. They paused to look at him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Toddy looks mightily pleased with himself!" said Bob Cherry. "What makest thou so joyful, O noble Todd?"

"Some jape on, I expect!" said Nugent.

Peter shrugged his shoulders carelessly.

"Jape?" he echoed. "Rats! I've borrowed a quid this evening, and it's made me light-headed!"

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EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

And he passed on, leaving the Famous Five satisfied. But Peter straightened his face as he walked up the Sixth-Form passage.

"I mustn't let the others see that there's anything on," he told himself. "After this letter's signed, and I've posted it, I'll stroll down to the common-room, and mix with the chaps."

He found Coker minor in his study. The youthful Sixth-Former read the typewritten concoction of Peter's and regarded it critically.

"Yes, that's all right," he said. "There's nothing in it to say that it comes from Sir Reginald Brooke. If Mauleverer takes it for granted that it is from his uncle—well, it's nothing to do with me, is it?"

"Nothing at all!" grinned Todd. "Simply sign it 'Reginald.' Mauly's a careless sort of ass, and he'll never notice that the 'Uncle' is missing. Better make a copy of it on a piece of scrap-paper first. Might as well make it look a bit like nunky's own fist!"

"Yes, but that's forgery—"

"Rot!" said Todd. "Can't you write your name as you like? I remember distinctly how Sir Reginald signed his name. Long, slanting letters, with a thick pen, and the 'R' had a funny twist in it."

Coker minor made one or two attempts.

"That's it!" exclaimed Peter Todd. "Ripping! Sign your name on the letter just like that last attempt. My hat, that's simply terrific! Old Mauly will never guess the truth!"

"I hope there won't be any trouble over this, Todd," said Reggie Coker. "If it came out that I signed the letter—"

"Well, what of it?" asked Peter. "There's nothing in it. You don't make any statement—you only advise Mauly to do certain things—things that the Head would heartily agree with. Besides, there's no question of trouble about it. It's only a harmless little joke."

And Peter Todd went away, leaving Coker minor satisfied that he had done nothing wrong in signing the letter—as, indeed, he hadn't.

Todd hastened down to Friardale on his bicycle, and posted his precious missive. He arrived back only just in time, for Gosling was in the act of closing the gates. There was the difficulty of the Friardale postmark to contend with, but Todd had already formed a plan.

Next morning he took care to have Lord Mauleverer up in good time. It was fine and sunny, and Todd made this an excuse to invite Mauly to a stroll round the Close. His lordship objected at first, but Todd had his way after a little persuasion.

"It's O K," he thought; "the postman hasn't come yet—By jingo," he added, aloud, "here he is!"

"Eh?" said Mauleverer. "Did you speak, my dear fellow?"

"Only said the postman was here," replied Todd easily. "Let's see if he's got anything for us."

They intercepted the postman as he made for the School House.

"Anything for us?" asked Peter. "I'm expecting a few hundred quids!"

"Nothing for you, Master Todd," said the postman, looking through his letters. "There's one for his lordship, though!"

"One for me?" said Mauleverer languidly. "Begad, I wonder who it can be from?"

"Your uncle, perhaps," suggested Peter. "Yes, it's type-written; and you've often had 'em typed from nunky. Shall I open it?"

He held out the letter for Mauleverer's inspection, and carelessly laid his thumb over the postmark. If Mauly saw that it came from Friardale he would know at once that it was not from Sir Reginald.

"Yaas, my dear chap, open it!" said the schoolboy earl. "It's from my uncle, by the look of it. Begad, perhaps he's sent a remittance."

Peter Todd tore the envelope open, and handed the contents over, absently screwing up the envelope, and dropping it into his pocket. Mauleverer was looking at the letter, and did not see the action.

"Begad, there's no cash!" said Mauleverer. "Yaas, it's from nunky right enough. I wonder—Great Scott!"

His lordship stood rooted to the spot, and he stared at the letter with a bewildered expression on his face. All the colour had left it, and he was pale and drawn. He looked round, and saw that Todd had strolled off, and was talking to Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry.

"Begad!" gasped Mauleverer faintly. "Oh, begad!"

He realised that he was looking bowled over, and Billy Bunter was just rolling across the Close towards him. So Mauly crushed the letter in his hand, and hurried into the House.

Once in his study he dropped into a luxurious arm-chair

and straightened out the letter. He stared at it as though he could not believe his eyes; as though it were all some horrible nightmare.

"My dear, dear boy," it ran, "what will you say if I have to impart some terrible news to you? You must take it calmly and without panic. I cannot explain fully in this letter as you will readily understand. But you would be dumbfounded if I told you that, instead of being a millionaire, you were practically a pauper. I cannot state it in cold, bald type; it would be too cruel. Later on, perhaps, you will realise the truth of it. You must work, my boy—work very, very hard. Strenuous labour is the only way to prepare a boy for a life of constant struggle. Live frugally and without luxury. I understand there is a scholarship at Greyfriars about to be entered for by a number of juniors—the Holton Scholarship. It provides free tuition and board at Greyfriars for a year. You must win it, lad, and prove that you are able to work as well as your schoolfellows. Say nothing of this to a soul,

but just make up your mind to do as I suggest. I cannot say more at the moment, but you will understand. I am quite sure that you will be willing to do anything in your power to please your uncle.

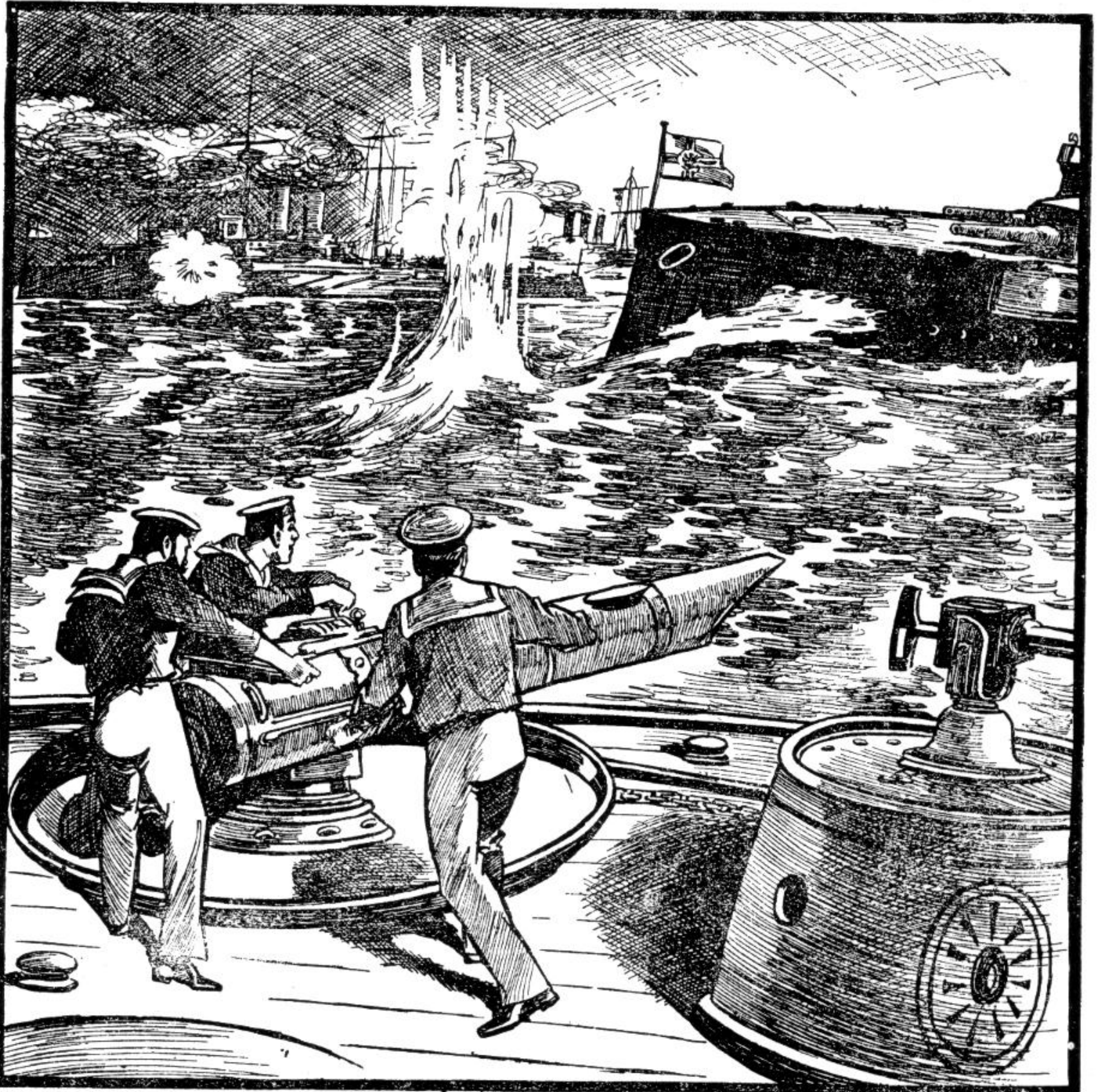
"REGINALD."

Peter Todd was proud of that literary effort. He had ended the letter in such a way that it almost looked as though it were signed "Uncle Reginald." Yet, read with the full knowledge of the facts, it could be seen that it was only signed with the bare Christian name.

Reggie Coker, as a matter of fact, was certainly quite sure that Mauly would have done anything to please his uncle. And there was not a single definite statement in the letter; it merely suggested that Mauleverer would be astounded if he found himself a pauper instead of a millionaire; as, indeed, Mauly would.

But the precious concoction was so worded that, to Lord Mauleverer, it seemed absolutely positive that he had lost

SPECIAL WAR PICTURE!



This splendid illustration shows a torpedo about to be fired from a British ship at a German battleship. When these deadly projectiles strike home they cause fearful havoc. The torpedo-tubes can be pointed in any direction, as they swing round on the turn-table so clearly shown in the picture.

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OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE GEM" LIBRARY, "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," 1d. Every Wednesday. Every Friday. Every Saturday, 2



Wharton mounted the ladder nimbly, and Todd and Bob Cherry followed close behind. They stepped into the study, and looked round. Lord Mauleverer was reclining gracefully on the luxurious lounge, sleeping peacefully. "Now for the giddy surprise," murmured Bob Cherry. "I vote we all take a running jump at him, and land on his chest. That ought to wake him up!" (See Chapter 3.)

his fortune and was penniless. Never for a moment did he suspect the truth. Todd had done his work well, and the result was everything that could be desired. Mauleverer swallowed the letter whole, as it were.

He sat in his easy chair, breathing hard, his eyes staring into nothingness.

"A pauper!" he murmured thickly. "Begad! A life of struggle! Good heavens! It's too awful for words! I—I can't do it—I can't work— The Holton Scholarship! Oh, begad, it's impossible!"

He got up, and paced the study, his feet sinking deep into the expensive carpet. His attention became riveted upon the luxurious furniture.

"I couldn't live without all this!" he told himself frantically. "What the deuce shall I do without money? Oh, begad, it's too rotten! I can't possibly stay at Greyfriars after this. I'll clear out to-morrow, and go to sea, or something. Yaas, that's what I'll do! I simply can't face the chaps!"

He sat down again, and his eyes grew serious.

"Could I work?" he asked himself doubtfully. "Begad, I've never really tried! Swotting's all right for those who have to do it—"

He caught his breath.

"I'm one of those who have to do it, now," he thought. "The fellows all think I'm a silly ass. I know it well enough, but I've never bothered about resenting it. But

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am I a silly ass? I've got as much brains as most chaps, and if I use 'em—well, begad, I might do something big! But it'll mean staying at Greyfriars without any tin. I shall have to have tea in Hall. It'll mean— Begad, I can't realise what it really will mean!"

Mauleverer thought it all out, and there was a lump in his throat that felt as big as a hen's egg. His heart was beating fast, and when he looked at himself in the mirror he hardly recognised his own features—they were so pale and drawn.

One thing was certain. It was impossible to remain at Greyfriars; it was impossible to do as the letter suggested. How could he work? How could he swot away at lessons? Above all, how could he enter for the Holton, when he knew he wouldn't have an earthly? It was preposterous!

"Yaas, begad, it's absolutely out of the question," murmured Mauleverer. "I shall have to leave the old school. If I stayed life would be too rotten to live. I'm not a funk, goodness knows—"

Then he paused, and started. When he came to think of it, wouldn't it be cowardly to leave Greyfriars? Wouldn't it prove that he funk'd altering his method of living in front of the fellows? Even if he left Greyfriars he would have to dispense with luxury for all time. By going away it would prove that he was afraid to face the blow openly; it would prove that he was a funk and weakling. And the fellows would take it for granted that he was a born slacker, and utterly incapable of working like his schoolfellows.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE GREYFRIARS SPY-HUNTERS!"

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

Mauleverer's blood ran hot and cold at the thought of it. He seemed to hear future Greyfriars boys sneering and laughing when his name cropped up. If he went away now his name would for ever onwards be scorned. But, on the other hand, if he stayed and faced the blow like a man, he would be respected by all.

That is how Lord Mauleverer looked upon the matter; and as he read the letter again a firm, determined expression came into his eyes. No longer were they listless and sleepy. The Removites would have stared in amazement could they have seen the schoolboy earl at that moment.

He rose to his feet, and stood erect. He had come to a decision, and somehow he grew calm. A smile almost appeared on his lips, although the firm look in his eyes remained unaltered; it was almost grim.

"I'll stay!" he murmured softly. "I'll remain at Greyfriars, and prove that I can work as good as any chap here. I know I can do it; begad, I can feel it in my bones! I'll live frugally and dispense with all this rotten luxury. I'll enter for the Holton Scholarship, and swot like the very dickens; and, begad, if I don't win it, it won't be for the want of trying."

And this from Lord Mauleverer, the slacker of the Remove, the champion lazybones of all Greyfriars! And Mauly meant it—every single word.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
Absolutely Astounding!

“WHAT'S up with Mauly?" Everybody was asking the question. For some unaccountable reason the schoolboy earl was totally different this morning. The sleepy look seemed to have left his eyes, and he went about briskly. Fellows had spoken to him, but had received only a short, curt reply. Lord Mauleverer was a changed being.

"I'm blessed if I can understand it," said Bob Cherry. "Just now Mauly came up to me and asked me to lend him a French grammar. Now, what in the name of all that's queer can Mauly want with a French grammar?"

"Perhaps he wants to use it?" suggested Peter Todd, who could see that his plot was working smoothly, according to his calculations.

"Use it?" asked Harry Wharton. "What for?"

"Light the fire with, perhaps," suggested Nugent. "My hat, if Mauly uses my French grammar to light the fire with I'll bump him till he can't sit down," said Bob Cherry wrathfully. "But there's something else. Mauly seems more alert, and there's a determined sort of expression in his eyes."

"It's strange," said Johnny Bull thoughtfully. And Hurreo Singh added that the strangeness was terrific.

During morning lessons Mr. Quelch gave Mauleverer several keen glances. Mauly looked pale still, and his face was set and rigid.

"Are you unwell, Mauleverer?" asked Mr. Quelch at last.

"Unwell, sir?" repeated the schoolboy earl absently.

"Yes; you are pale, and—"

"Oh, yaas, sir, I believe I'm a bit pale!" said Mauleverer, with recollections of his reflection in the mirror. "It's all right, sir."

"You do not feel unwell, then?"

"No, sir."

All eyes were fixed upon Mauleverer, who, strangely enough, seemed to have no inclination to drop off to sleep as usual. Instead, he had been poring over his books with keen determination.

In fact, so keenly did he work that Mr. Quelch grew suspicious. He suspected that Mauly was writing a letter, or something else apart from the lesson. Certainly he had never been so intent on his work before.

Mr. Quelch suddenly left his desk, and walked across the room.

"Let me see your work, Mauleverer," he said curtly.

Mauleverer looked up with a start.

"Eh? Oh, yaas, sir! I'm afraid it's full of mistakes."

Mr. Quelch took the work and examined it; whilst the rest of the Remove grinned to one another. They, too, suspected that Mauly had been doing something on his own. But they received a surprise. So did Mr. Quelch.

He looked at Mauleverer keenly.

"This is very good, Mauleverer," he said. "I admit that I am surprised. I never thought that you were capable of it. You seem much more alive this morning than usual."

"Yaas, sir."

"Is there any reason for it?"

"Reason for it, sir?" said Mauly hesitatingly. "I—I—I— I've come to a decision, sir," he added quietly.

"Indeed, Mauleverer!"

"Yaas, sir."

"And what is that decision?"

"I'm going to work hard, sir," said the slacker of the Remove firmly. "I've been thinking what a lazy bouncer I've been, so I'm going to work harder than all the other chaps now, to make up."

"He, he, he!" tittered Billy Bunter; and the whole Remove chuckled.

Mr. Quelch glared round.

"Silence!" he rapped out. "Take fifty lines, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter's grin vanished like magic.

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Another word, Bunter, and I shall cane you!"

Bunter relapsed into growling silence, and Mr. Quelch turned to Mauleverer again.

"I am very pleased to hear of your decision, Mauleverer," he said kindly. "I sincerely trust that you mean what you say, and that you won't forget all about this to-morrow."

Mauleverer smiled quietly.

"I sha'n't forget it, sir," he said. "I mean it."

"Perhaps!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Who spoke?" asked Mr. Quelch, who had extra-keen ears.

"I did, sir," said Bob meekly.

"And what did you say, Cherry?"

"I only said 'perhaps,' sir."

"Then perhaps you will enjoy writing 'perhaps' two hundred times," said Mr. Quelch tartly. "Perhaps that will make you realise that you must not talk in class."

"Yes, sir," said Bob sorrowfully.

Mr. Quelch went back to his desk looking rather puzzled. Frankly, he was very surprised at the change in Lord Mauleverer, and he determined to help the dandy of the Remove all he could.

"I understand, Mauleverer," he said, "that you are anxious to make up for lost time."

"Yaas, sir."

"You really mean it?"

"Oh, rather, sir!" said Mauly firmly. "Yaas, begad!"

"Then, if you come to my study every evening after preparation, I will give you an hour," said the Remove master generously.

"Thank you, sir!" said Mauleverer eagerly. "It's awfully good of you!"

The Remove gazed at the schoolboy millionaire in astonishment. What had come over him? With one exception they were completely mystified by Mauleverer's amazing behaviour. And the exception—Peter Todd—chuckled under his breath and hugged himself.

"It's worked!" he murmured. "Old Mauly's showing his grit. He's proving that he's not hopeless after all. Good old Mauly!"

During the rest of morning lessons Lord Mauleverer continued to study with almost painful perseverance. And when the bell rang for dismissal he was surrounded by a crowd of juniors in the passage. But they couldn't get a word out of him, except that he was a slacker no more, and that he wanted to be quiet.

So, finding all arguments useless, the juniors left Mauly in peace. The thing was so extraordinary that little knots of juniors gathered in the Close, discussing the problem.

Many and varied were the expressions of opinion. Some thought that Mauly had gone "off his rocker," others that the change wouldn't last two days. Coker of the Fifth—who knew nothing of the jape—declared that the most likely explanation was that Mauly had received a letter from his uncle threatening to take him away from Greyfriars unless he bucked up.

In the midst of the discussion Tom Brown of the Remove came dashing out of the School House, looking excited.

"I say, you fellows!" he bawled.

The knots of juniors gathered together in one big clump, and regarded Tom Brown with interest.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Have you gone dotty too?"

"It's Mauly!" gasped Tom Brown breathlessly.

"Well, we know he's off his rocker!"

"He's in the Remove passage," panted Brown, "clearing out his study—"

"Eh?"

"Clearing all the furniture out of his study," went on the New Zealand junior. "He's taken up the carpet, shifted the easy-chairs and lounges, and is carting them all into one of the box-rooms!"

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"Oh, he's mad!" said Nugent. "Clean off his chump, poor chap!"

"He's sweating like a nigger, and wouldn't let me help him," said Tom Brown. "Said that he'd rather do the hard work himself."

"Well, I'm jiggered!"

"And he's in his shirt-sleeves!"

"Shirt-sleeves!"

"Mauly in his shirt-sleeves, moving furniture!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Oh, it can't be true! It sounds like a giddy fairy-tale!"

"But I've just seen him!" shouted Brown.

"I'm going to see for myself!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "This is something too good to miss, you chaps! Mauly in his shirt-sleeves! Oh crumbs! The world must be coming to an end!"

Bob rushed towards the School House, and the rest of the juniors streamed after him, half suspecting that Tom Brown had been pulling their leg. But when they arrived at Mauleverer's study in the Remove passage they beheld a strange sight.

His lordship was just emerging from his study. True enough, he was in his shirt-sleeves, and his face was moist with perspiration and grimy with dust. And on his back was a heavy easy-chair, with which he was staggering up the passage.

The Removites fell back, almost awed. It was astounding, and they rubbed their eyes as though they were deceiving them. Mauleverer disappeared with the easy-chair in the direction of the box-rooms, and the juniors gazed at one another speechlessly.

"Hold me up, somebody!" gasped Bob Cherry at last. "I shall faint! This is too much all at once!"

"Look in the study!" shouted Bulstrode. "It's nearly empty!"

"Great Scott! So it is!"

"What's the meaning of it?" exclaimed Wharton amazedly. "What on earth can have come over him, Toddy?"

Peter Todd looked as astonished as the rest.

"How the dickens should I know?" he said; but he was chuckling to himself with huge enjoyment. This was rich. It was simply terrific. Mauleverer was proving his worth with a vengeance.

"If he's not off his rocker we shall have to make him explain," said Nugent.

"Rather! But he is off his rocker. He must be!"

"Oh, no doubt about it!"

"Here he is!"

Mauleverer appeared, and looked at the crowd of juniors uncertainly.

"Collar him!" shouted Bob Cherry; and the crowd of Removites dashed forward.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Limit!

THE collarfulness was terrific, as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked, for Mauleverer was simply swept off his feet by the excited juniors. He scrambled to his feet, gasping.

"Begad, go easy, my dear fellows!" he ejaculated. "What the dooce is up?"

"Explain, Mauly—explain!" shouted the Removites.

"What's come over you since yesterday, when we bumped you for slacking?" asked Harry Wharton. "What's the meaning of all this?"

"All which, my dear fellow?"

"This—this activity," said Wharton. "What on earth are you clearing your study for? It's the first time I've ever seen you exert yourself, and it's made me feel quite bad!"

Mauleverer smiled.

"I'm all right," he said shortly.

"Yes; but what's the reason for it?"

"The reason, my dear chap?" repeated Mauly. "Oh, nothing much, you know! I thought it was about time I got a move on. I'm going to work in future—no more slacking for me."

"My hat!"

"He's mad!" said Bulstrode flatly.

Lord Mauleverer waved his hand towards the study.

"I've been living too luxuriously," he said quietly, "so I'm clearing all this rubbish out and stowing it away. In future I'm only going to have a chair and a table in there—a deal table and a kitchen chair."

"Oh, my only sainted aunt!"

"Great pip!"

"My only topper!"

The Removites gasped with astonishment, and stared at Mauleverer as though he were some dangerous lunatic. But his lordship looked quite cool—in fact, there was a quiet, determined look about him.

Mauly had thought it all out, and had decided that it would be wise to dispense with luxury. The letter said that he must live frugally, as befitting a fellow who has a life of struggle to look forward to. The schoolboy earl was a trusting, easy-going youngster, or he would surely have realised that there was something fishy about the letter. But Mauleverer had taken it all in, and never seemed to think of doubting its genuineness. He remembered the warning not to say a word to his schoolfellows, and he kept his lips well under control.

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"Look here, Mauly, you'd better come and see the Head," said Harry Wharton, grasping Mauleverer's arm. "Dr. Locke will send for old Pills—"

His lordship frowned.

"Begad! Don't be an ass, Wharton!" he exclaimed. "There's nothing wrong with me. I think you might leave a fellow alone when he's working. I want to get the study cleared before the dinner-bell rings."

"But you're not well, Mauly—"

"I tell you I'm as right as fain!" persisted Mauleverer. "Begad, I ought to know, oughtn't I?"

"Yes, but— Look here, Mauly, what's the meaning of this change? Something's happened that we don't know about. What is it?"

"Begad! I wish you'd let me get on!"

"But—"

"Please don't ask questions, my dear fellow," said Mauleverer quietly. "It's only waste of time."

"Then you won't tell us why you've gone dotty?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I can't, my dear chap."

"Then you admit you're dotty?" grinned Bob.

"Yaas—I mean, I wish you wouldn't bother!"

"But we're your pals, Mauly," said Johnny Bull. "We don't like to see you like this—it's not natural. There must be something fearfully wrong."

"Yaas."

"Is there something wrong?" asked Nugent.

"Yaas."

"What is it?"

"I want to get on with my work, and you won't let me!"

"You—you ass!" said Wharton. "Now look here, Mauly—"

But Mauleverer refused to say a word in explanation of his amazing conduct. The juniors pressed him, but he remained calm and firm. He would say nothing that was in the nature of an explanation.

"Well, you're a mystery!" said Harry Wharton, at last. "That's all I can say!"

"Good! I'm glad you can't say anything more, begad!"

"As you won't tell us anything, perhaps you'd like a hand with this furniture?" suggested Bulstrode. "We've delayed you, and it's only right that we should help."

"That's it," said Bob Cherry. "If the silly ass wants his study cleared, let's do it for him. Personally, I consider that a chap who prefers a deal table and a kitchen chair to luxurious lounges and Oriental rugs is a fit and proper candidate for Colney Hatch!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Well, it's Mauly's business," said Wharton. "Come on, lend a hand!"

"I'd rather you didn't, my dear fellows."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Rather we didn't?"

"Yaas. I'd much prefer to do the work myself," said Mauleverer. "Thanks all the same, you know. But I want to get used to work—I—I mean, it won't do me any harm, begad!"

"But you can't lift that heavy lounge!"

"Yaas, I can—I've tried it!"

"Oh, you're balmy!" said Bob Cherry. "Absolutely a hopeless case! Come on, you chaps, let's leave him. He'll get dangerous soon!"

And the Removites dispersed, more astounded than ever. But a few still lounged about the passage, watching Lord Mauleverer work. The spectacle was so novel that it was quite an entertainment.

Temple, Dabney & Co., suddenly meeting Mauly with a heavy mahogany table on his back, nearly fainted away. And Coker of the Fifth, who came along soon after, was actually seen to turn pale and gasp for breath at the sight. At least, that is what Trevor of the Remove said.

During afternoon lessons, Mauleverer applied himself seriously to work, and Mr. Quelch looked quite pleased with himself. After having regarded Mauly as hopeless for so long, it was refreshing to find such a vast difference.

Tea-time came, and Vernon-Smith, meeting Mauleverer in the passage, stopped.

"Having tea alone to-day, Mauly?" he asked affably.

"No," said the dandy of the Remove.

"Oh, all right! I was only going to invite you into my study," said Vernon-Smith. "I've got a ripping spread. Steak-and-kidney pie, chicken, sardines—"

Mauleverer's mouth watered, but he set his teeth firm.

"Thanks all the same, Smithy," he said quietly, "but I'm going to have tea in Hall!"

Vernon-Smith gasped.

"In—in H-hall?" he repeated blankly.

"Yaas," said Mauly, who had determined to start right away at self-denial. He had no money to provide tea for himself, and he could not borrow any. And he swore to himself that he was not going to sponge on other fellows for tea. Besides, tea in Hall—bread-and-butter and weak tea—would befit him for a life of struggle and adversity.

"You're joking!" gasped Vernon-Smith.
"I'm not, my dear fellow. I'm going to have tea in Hall always now."

And Mauleverer walked away, leaving the Bouncer leaning against the wall for support.

The latest piece of news soon got about, and there was some talk of going to the Head and informing him of Mauleverer's madness. But Harry Wharton stopped it, saying that there was no necessity to go to the Head until Mauly became violent.

That evening, when the fellows were in the junior common-room—most of them discussing his lordship—Peter Todd walked in with a broad grin on his face. It was a satisfied grin, and he looked immensely pleased with himself. Mauleverer was with Mr. Quelch, and Todd had just seen something in the entrance-hall that had caused him great amusement and pleasure.

"I say, you fellows," he said carelessly. "There's a new name down on the notice-board—a new entrant for the Holton Scholarship."

"Who is it?" asked Hazeldene.
"Mauleverer!" chuckled Todd. "It's just about the limit—what?"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. Bunter's Find!

"MAULEVERER!"
"Down for the Holton!"
"Rot!"
"Piffle!"

"Rats!"
"Impossible!"
"Don't be funny, Toddy!"
Peter Todd grinned calmly.

"It's a fact," he said. "I've just seen Mauly's name on the notice-board! He's entered for the Holton Scholarship!"

"Look here, Todd; humour's all very well in its place!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "But if you think you're going to stuff us up with that giddy yarn, you're jolly well mistaken!"

"Rather!"
"We don't believe you, Todd!"
"All right, do the other thing," said Todd easily. "I don't mind! But there's the notice-board, and there's nothing to prevent you going and have a squint for yourselves! Mauly's name—"

The door burst open, and Mark Linley entered with a look of excitement in his usually quiet eyes.

"I say, have you chaps seen it?" he asked. "Mauly's entered for the Holton! His name's on the board in Wingate's fist! I nearly had a fit when I saw it!"

Peter Todd waved his hand, and chuckled.
"Perhaps Linley's trying to be funny, too?" he said, looking round.

The juniors gazed at Mark Linley in amazement; then, with one accord, they rushed out of the common-room. The Famous Five were to the fore, and when they reached the entrance-hall they found Temple, Dabney & Co., and Coker and Potter standing in front of the notice-board, yelling with laughter.

"Oh, my hat, it's too funny!" gasped Temple.
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dabney and Fry.

Harry Wharton & Co. pressed round. Yes, plainly written in Wingate's well-known handwriting, Lord Mauleverer's name was down as an entrant for the scholarship! It was astounding, and after one breathless gasp, the Removites gazed at one another and grinned. The grins changed to chuckles, the chuckles to laughs, the laughs to roars, and the roars to yells.

Mauleverer, the slacker of the Remove, down for the Holton Scholarship—which was supposed to be for poor boys—and Mauly was a millionaire! It was too funny for words, and the Remove screamed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I shall die!" moaned Bob Cherry, holding his sides. "Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The uproar was terrific, and nobody noticed a door slam up the passage. A moment later a heavy tread sounded.

"Boys!"
The word was rapped out in the hard, metallic tones of Mr. Quelch; and the yells of laughter died away as if by magic. Mr. Quelch glared round him angrily.

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"What is the meaning of this disgraceful uproar?" he demanded.

"We were only laughing at something, sir," said Harry Wharton meekly, with a glance at the notice-board.

Mr. Quelch saw the glance, and his eyes glared round like gimlets.

"I think I understand," he said sourly. "You are amused because you see Mauleverer's name down on the board? You regard it as a huge joke, his entering for the Holton Scholarship? Personally, I cannot see anything humorous in it!"

"But it can't be true, sir?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"It can be true, Cherry, and it is true!" snapped the Remove-master. "And if I hear any boy laughing again in such an insane manner, I shall cane him severely! One moment! Mauleverer is in his study, hard at work, and I forbid any boy to disturb him. For two hours he is to be left in peace!"

And Mr. Quelch strode majestically away, leaving the Removites almost dumbfounded. They gazed at one another as though it were all some grotesque dream. Then it was actually true! Oh, there was no doubt about it now—Mauleverer had gone mad!

The juniors went back to the common-room; and Mauly's ears should have been burning painfully, for he was being talked about by scores of mouths. The juniors could talk of nothing else, in fact. It was the most amazing thing that had happened at Greyfriars since the school was founded!

"Mauly's a mystery!" declared Bob Cherry.
"He's a liar, too!" said Billy Bunter. "He—Ow-yow! What did you bash my head for, Todd, you beast?"

"I don't allow a worm like you to call Mauly a liar!" said Peter Todd calmly.

"Well, he is. He told me an awful fib this evening," said Bunter indignantly.

"Dry up, Bunter!"
"Before you get hurt," added Todd warningly.

"Oh, really, you fellows!" protested Bunter. "I'm telling the truth! I always tell the truth, you all know that! This evening I asked Mauleverer to lend me five bob."

"And he had sense enough not to lend it?" suggested Bob Cherry.

"No; he said that he only had a few coppers!" exclaimed Bunter sneeringly. "Mauly, with only a few coppers! We all know that he's rolling in money. Of course, he was lying!"

"You're lying, you rotter!" growled Bob.
"I'm not! I'm—Ow! Yooooop!"

Bunter sprawled on the floor as Peter Todd tripped him up.
"You're lying now, right enough!" said Peter calmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Billy Bunter scrambled to his feet.

"Look here—"

But half a dozen forms strode towards the Owl of the Remove, and he rolled hurriedly to the door and disappeared with surprising alacrity.

"Beasts!" he murmured, as he walked up the passage. "Turned me out of the common-room! My hat, I know what I'll do! I'll go up into that box-room and have an easy time on Mauly's lounge!"

The corridors were all quiet, for most of the juniors were in the common-room. Bunter made his way to the box-room without being observed, and found the door unlocked. He slipped in and lit the gas. Mauleverer's furniture was piled round the little room in hopeless disorder, and Bunter looked round inquisitively.

"The silly ass!" he murmured. "Fancy preferring a rotten hard chair to these ripping cushioned ones! No wonder the chaps say he's dotty. I've a jolly good mind to cart some of the things down to Study No. 7. They'd be more use there than stuck up here."

But Bunter realised that Peter Todd would put his foot down on such a thing. In all probability Todd would put his foot forcibly upon a portion of Bunter's anatomy. So the Owl of the Remove contented himself with looking round. Suddenly he started.

"My hat, Mauly's a fearfully careless chap!" he muttered excitedly. "Ten to one there's some money in that giddy mahogany desk! He used to let quids roll about like buttons, and it's quite on the cards that there's a stray one or two in the drawers."

Bunter commenced to search the expensive roll-top desk, which Mauleverer, with his usual thoughtlessness, had left unlocked. Bunter did not hesitate to pry into the drawers, and he would not hesitate to stick to any money he found—if he found it. In Bunter's opinion it wouldn't be thieving at all; but Bunter had very queer views on such subjects.

He went through the drawers carefully, with high hopes at first. As the search went on, however, his spirits were dampened, for he found nothing. But at last, as he was



Lord Mauleverer suddenly felt his arm grasped as he was entering the train, and he started, and stared up. "Uncle!" he exclaimed blankly. "Good gracious, what in the world are you doing here, my boy?" asked Sir Reginald. "What are you getting into the train for?" (See Chapter 12.)

examining the last drawer, he pushed a bundle of papers aside, and revealed a shining coin.

For one tense second Billy Bunter thought that it was a sovereign; then, as he picked it up, he found, to his regret, that it was only a shilling. Still, in Bunter's way of reckoning, it represented twelve penny tarts, and that was better than nothing.

As he bent over the drawer, hoping to find more coins, his attention became riveted upon a letter which had become separated from the rest of the papers. Bunter had no scruples about reading other people's letters, and the more private they were the better he liked them. This one, he could see, was from Mauleverer's uncle, and he picked it up and walked over to the gaslight.

He began reading it hurriedly, and without much interest. Then he gave a sudden gasp as his sluggish brain took in the sense of the text. His face went red with excitement, and his round spectacles nearly fell off.

"My only hat!" he gasped. "Mauly a pauper! Mauly ruined! That's why he's entered for the Holton Scholarship—so that he can stay at Greyfriars for nothing! Oh, crumbs, won't the chaps stare when I show 'em this!"

And Billy Bunter, fairly quivering with excitement, turned out the gas and left the box-room, the precious letter fluttering in his fat hand.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE GREYFRIARS SPY-HUNTERS!"

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

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Finds Something Else!

BULLY BUNTER burst into the common-room like a whirlwind, and cannoned violently into Bulstrode and Fisher T. Fish, who stood just inside the door. Bulstrode staggered back, and Fish collapsed on to the floor in a heap.

"You fat idiot!" roared Bulstrode.

Fisher T. Fish scrambled up, red with wrath.

"You slab-sided mugwump!" he shouted. "You lopped jay! I guess you're nosing around for trouble! Galoots like you ain't fit to live! I guess we'd rope you to the nearest tree in the Yewnited States—just a few!"

"Sorry, Fishy—"

"Yep; that's all very well—"

"I've got news of Mauleverer!" shouted Bunter excitedly. "I know why he's entered for the Holton! I know why he's changed so much!"

Peter Todd looked up quickly. He knew Bunter's inquisitive habits, and guessed that he had been prying. An anxious look came into Peter's eyes, for he didn't want the jape spoilt just yet.

"Shut up, you rotter!" he exclaimed. "You don't know anything!"

"Oh, yes, I do!" said Billy Bunter triumphantly. "Up

till now I haven't objected to being one of Mauly's best friends. You all know how pally we were. But now that he's a rotten pauper—"

"What!"

"Dry up, Bunter!" roared Todd.

"Now that he's a rotten pauper I can't possibly be on intimate terms with him," went on Bunter loftily. "Of course, I shall cut him completely—bar him absolutely. I'm not a particular chap, but it wouldn't do to be pally with a pauper."

"This madness seems to be catching," remarked Bob Cherry. "Bunter's gone off his rocker now. We all know that Mauly's a millionaire—"

"He used to be," chuckled Bunter gleefully, "but he isn't now! He's lost all his tin. That's why he's changed—that's why he's entered for the Holton!"

There was a moment's silence.

Harry Wharton looked thoughtful, and he regarded Bunter contemptuously.

"Been nosing again, I suppose?" he said. "Where did you get this yarn from? Who's been stuffing you up with fairy-tales?"

"It's the truth!" shouted Bunter.

"You're a member of my study, Bunter," said Peter Todd grimly, grasping Bunter's fat arm, "and if you say another word I'll make your life a misery! I don't allow you to come here with tom-fool yarns like this! Outside—quick!"

Once outside, Todd meant to worm the truth from Bunter. He meant to ascertain exactly how much Bunter knew, and then threaten instant slaughter if he breathed another word.

But Billy Bunter had no intention of leaving the common-room until he had shown the letter round. He wriggled in Todd's grasp, and squealed with pain.

"Let go, Todd, you beast!" he roared. "Oh, really—"

"Outside!" hissed Peter Todd.

But Bunter felt in his pocket hurriedly, and flung the letter into the air.

"There you are, you fellows! Read that!" he gasped triumphantly. "It's from Mauly's uncle!"

Peter Todd made a dash for the letter, but Snoop, Stott, and Bolsover major had got it, and were reading it eagerly.

"My only topper, listen to this!" shouted Bolsover excitedly. "Bunter's right! Mauly has lost all his giddy tin, and his uncle tells him to enter for the Holton Scholarship! Oh, my hat! Fancy Mauly coming up to the scratch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Stott and Snoop.

The Famous Five rushed forward and grabbed the letter.

"You rotters!" exclaimed Harry Wharton hotly. "If Mauly's lost his fortune it's nothing to laugh at."

"Read the letter out," said Peter Todd. "We might as well know the real facts. If we don't read it ourselves these rotters will spread a false yarn round the school."

Harry Wharton realised that Todd was right, and that the only way to help Mauleverer was to read the letter and learn the exact truth. Wharton read it aloud, amid gasps of wonderment. When he had done, Peter Todd took the letter.

"We'll return this to Mauly," he said. "He'll have to know that Bunter took it."

Todd hoped that nobody would guess that the letter wasn't genuine, and the less Harry Wharton looked at it the less likelihood of his guessing the truth.

"There, didn't I tell you Mauly was a pauper?" grinned Billy Bunter. "I found that letter in Mauly's desk."

"Yes, and you'll find something else!" interrupted Harry Wharton angrily. "You prying toad, we'll teach you a lesson!"

"Bump the cad!"

"Slaughter him!"

"Chuck him outside!"

"Duck him in the fountain!"

Billy Bunter backed away in alarm.

"I—I say, you fellows," he gasped, "I—I didn't find that letter in Mauly's desk! It was in the passage—"

"Don't make it worse by telling lies!"

"Mauly gave it to me!" panted Bunter. "He told me to read it out to you—"

But Bunter was not allowed to say another word. The indignant juniors piled upon him like an avalanche, and he disappeared amid a cloud of dust. When he had been bumped until he ached in every limb, and the floor had nearly collapsed under the strain, they let him go. He crawled away, too exhausted and too sore to utter a word.

"Now, you chaps, it's up to us to give this letter back to Mauly and explain things!" panted Peter Todd. "The letter says that he wasn't to say a word to anybody—that's why he's been so secret."

"Poor old Mauly!" said Harry Wharton seriously. "No wonder he looks pale! No wonder he's changed!"

"I never thought that he had it in him," said Bob Cherry.

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"My hat, he's come up to the scratch like a brick! He's proved that, when the necessity arises, he can work as well as anybody. He's got grit—sterling grit! Good old Mauly!"

"The goodfulness of the esteemed Mauly is terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "He is full of the ludicrous pluckfulness!"

"I always said that he could work if he liked," said Peter Todd. "This proves that I was right. Poor old chap, it must have been a terrific shock to him. And think of the determination with which he has applied himself to work. It's wonderful, you chaps."

"Yep, I guess Mauleverer's got a whole heap of sand," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Let's go up to him and explain things," said Harry Wharton. "Now we know the truth, there must be no more chipping, you chaps. Mauly's got to be left in peace and quietness. Anybody found ragging him, or talking sneeringly of him, will be bumped."

"Hear, hear!"

"Mauly's a splendid chap!"

"Rather!"

And the Removites crowded out of the common-room, and went to Lord Mauleverer's study. But there was no noise; there were no more laughs because he had entered for the Holton Scholarship. The juniors understood now, and there was nothing humorous said of Mauleverer's changed habits. It was something to be admired.

They invaded Mauleverer's study like a flood, and he looked up from his books in surprise and alarm.

"Begad, don't bother me now, my dear fellows!"

"Sha'n't keep you a minute, Mauly, old man," said Harry Wharton quietly. "That howling rotter, Bunter, took a letter from your desk—hand it over, Toddy—and we know all about your troubles!"

"Oh, begad, the dooce you do!" ejaculated Mauleverer blankly.

He looked alarmed for a moment; then, as Wharton explained, his expression changed.

"It's grand of you, Mauly," finished up Wharton. "We never thought you had enough 'go' in you. But you've placed your shoulder to the wheel like a man, and we'll all help you in any way we can."

"Rather!"

"We're proud of you, Mauly."

"Say the word, and we'll do anything you like."

Lord Mauleverer smiled faintly; he felt a big lump in his throat, and vainly tried to swallow it.

"You're jolly decent, my dear fellows," he said quietly; "but there's nothing you can do except leave me alone, so that I can work in peace. I'm altered now, you know. I've got no money, so it won't do to slack my time away. I've got to work hard."

"Right-ho, we'll clear," said Bob Cherry. "All the same, if you want any help, you've only got to ask, and there'll be a dozen chaps ready and willing. I'd call for three cheers for Mauly, you chaps," he added. "but old Quelchy would be roused out of his den in a jiffy. Still, you can take the cheers for granted, Mauly."

And the Removites went quietly away, leaving Lord Mauleverer staring before him with dim eyes. There was some compensation for working hard, after all. As a slacker he had been popular, but as a worker he was respected as well.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Letter for Wingate!

LORD MAULEVERER strolled slowly across the Close in the dusk of the evening. It was the day following Bunter's discovery, and the schoolboy earl had worked harder that day than ever he had worked before. And he had not finished yet. He meant to put in another hour or so before bedtime.

He had come out now because he had a bit of a headache; the cool, evening air would probably do him good. There were several other juniors about. The Famous Five were standing near the gym, talking. Bulstrode was having an argument with Mark Linley and Peter Todd. Billy Bunter, as usual, was hanging round the tuckshop.

But nobody disturbed Mauleverer. It was generally thought that he had come out to think of his work in the cool air, and he was not bothered. But Mauly was not thinking of his work at the moment; he was thinking of his troubles.

"Begad, I can't realise it even yet!" he told himself, as he strolled towards the gates. "I expected a letter from uncle explaining more fully, but he hasn't written. Still, I wrote last night, so I ought to get a reply to-morrow."

He might possibly get a letter by the evening's post, although it was not probable. It was, as a rule, only local

letters that came at night. He walked out of the Close into the lane, and looked down towards Friardale.

"The postman's coming now, begad!" he murmured.

He waited, somewhat anxiously, for he badly wanted some news. But when he asked the postman if there was a letter for him, the man shook his head.

"Only one for Master Wingate," he said. "If you're goin' indoors, young sir, perhaps you wouldn't mind putting it in the rack for me? There ain't no other letters at all."

"That's all right," said Mauleverer. "I'll take it."

"Thank you, sir."

And the postman went on his way.

Mauleverer looked at the letter absently; he was thinking of other things. He turned, and walked thoughtfully back into the Close. He was still thinking deeply when he entered the School House, and walked upstairs unconscious of Wingate's letter in his hand.

In the Remove passage he passed Billy Bunter and paused.

"I want a Latin grammar, Bunter—" he began.

Bunter sniffed.

"I'm rather particular who I talk to!" he said loftily.

"You may be a lord, but you're a rotten pauper!"

Lord Mauleverer coloured.

"You cad!" he exclaimed hotly.

His fist shot out, and Billy Bunter went down with a howl of pain. The blow had caught him fairly upon his little round nose, and he hit the floor with a terrific bump. Bunter had never known Mauleverer to use his fists so promptly before, and he was taken by surprise.

"Ow—yow!" he howled. "You rotter! You—"

"Want some more?" asked Mauly quietly.

Bunter floundered to his feet, and scurried down the passage. A study door opened, and Vernon-Smith put his head out.

"Hallo, it's you, Mauly!" he said. "What was that terrific bump just now?"

"Bunter. He hit the floor rather suddenly," answered his lordship.

Vernon-Smith stared.

"Did you knock him down, then?" he asked.

"Yaas, my dear fellow. The cad called me a pauper to my face, and I don't allow that sort of thing from Bunter."

"Good old Mauly," said the Bounder approvingly. "I caught Snoop sneering at you a little while ago, and I sent the young sweep off with a pair of fat ears. But it seems that you're well able to look after yourself. We shall make a fighting man of you before long."

Mauleverer smiled, and went to his study. Wingate's letter was still in his hand. By this time Mauleverer had completely forgotten its existence, and he laid it unconsciously on the edge of the table. If he thought of it at all he must have regarded it as something of his own. But it is doubtful if he did think of it, for he was wondering who he could borrow a Latin grammar from. His mind was entirely occupied with his work.

"I'd better go round to Smithy," he thought. "He'll lend me his Latin grammar, if he's got one."

And he left the study.

The door was left a little ajar, and a moment after he had disappeared round the bend of the corridor, the fat form of Billy Bunter rolled into view. He was rubbing his nose tenderly.

"The beast!" he muttered viciously. "I'll never speak to Mauly again!"

He glared at the study door.

"I expect he's in there. My hat, the door's ajar!" he exclaimed, peering forward through his big spectacles.

A scowl came over his face.

"I've a jolly good mind to go in and pour ink all over his rotten books and papers!" he muttered. "I'll have a squint in, anyhow!"

And Bunter, after a glance up and down the passage, inserted his head into Mauleverer's study. His bulky person followed his head, and he stood beside the table, looking at the papers strewn thereon.

"Latin and French—ugh!" he exclaimed. "What a blithering ass Mauly is! Hallo! A letter! I wonder— My hat, it's addressed to Wingate!"

Bunter stared at the letter.

"What the dickens is it doing in here?" he thought. "Oh, I expect the postman gave it to Mauleverer, and Mauly is going to take it to Wingate. I wonder what's inside it?"

Bunter's curiosity was incapable of being satisfied, and he turned the letter over inquisitively.

"My only aunt, it's not stuck down very well!" he murmured. "I could get that flap up in two ticks! I've opened harder letters than this before now! Still, I don't think I'd better risk it!"

Billy Bunter's fingers had been at work, however, and the letter was open. When his curiosity had got the upper hand of him he forgot all else except the immediate satisfying of his desire. He never looked ahead or considered the risks. Consequently, he was frequently caught in the very act of prying into other people's affairs.

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He inserted his fat fingers into the envelope and removed the contents.

"Doesn't look like a letter—"

Bunter paused and started.

A heavy tread sounded in the passage, coming nearer. Suppose it were Mauleverer! Bunter dropped the letter and rolled hurriedly to the door.

Perhaps it was Wingate himself!

Bunter gave a gasp of alarm. His watchchain caught against the door-handle, but he pulled it free and fled.

And on Lord Mauleverer's table Wingate's letter lay—opened!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Mauly in Trouble!

THE Owl of the Remove only just got out of sight in time.

Courtney of the Sixth appeared round the corner and halted in front of Mauleverer's study. He tapped on the door and entered.

"About those books you asked for, Mauleverer," he began. "If you come— Why, the young ass isn't here!"

He looked round the study and grinned. The last time he had entered it had been fitted up with more luxury than any Sixth Form study at Greyfriars. Now it was carpetless and bare.

"Wonder where Mauleverer can be?" thought Courtney, looking at the table. "He seems to be getting along all right. I'm blessed if I know how he'll shape in the Holton exams—"

Courtney paused. Right before his eyes was an envelope, and it was addressed to "George Wingate, Captain of Greyfriars." What on earth could it be doing in Mauleverer's study?

The prefect picked it up, and then started.

"Great Scott! It's from the Courtfield printer!" he ejaculated.

The envelope was empty, and he looked hastily on the table. A moment later he uttered a gasp of astonishment, and his face became grave. For on Mauly's table beside the envelope he had found the printed answers to the questions in the Holton Scholarship examinations!

Courtney was greatly startled.

"They must have come by to-night's post!" he muttered. "Lord, this is mighty serious! Mauleverer must have taken the letter and opened it! Perhaps he's copied the answers, and has popped out now to borrow some gum so that he can stick the envelope up again."

The prefect's face was quite pale with alarm.

"I never thought this of Mauleverer!" he muttered anxiously. "Yet what else can I think? Here are the papers on his desk! Nobody else could have put the things here, that's certain."

He hesitated, then hurried out of the study.

He burst into Wingate's room, and found the skipper of Greyfriars lounging in an armchair, reading.

"Hallo! What the dickens— Oh, it's you Courtney!" exclaimed Wingate. "What's the idea? You look startled, old man!"

"I am startled," said Courtney gravely. "Look here, Wingate, something jolly serious has happened!"

Wingate rose to his feet and stared at Courtney.

"Do you know anything about the Holton exam papers?" asked the latter.

"I expected them by to-night's post," said Wingate. "But they haven't come; I looked in the rack ten minutes ago."

"They have come!" said Courtney.

"Oh, good! I can look over—"

"I found them in Mauleverer's study," went on Courtney. "They had been taken from the envelope, and were lying on his table. Mauleverer wasn't there when I made the discovery."

Wingate stared incredulously.

"You're joking!" he exclaimed. "You don't seriously mean to say that you found the printed papers on Mauleverer's table!"

"I did!"

Courtney laid them on the table, and Wingate glanced through them. Then he looked at the prefect seriously.

"This is terrible, Courtney!" he said. "I always thought that Mauleverer was as straight as a die, whatever his other faults. Yet if you found these papers on his desk there's only one conclusion to come to—he opened the letter for the purpose of cribbing!"

Courtney nodded.

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"THE GREYFRIARS SPY-HUNTERS!" A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"It's as plain as possible," he said. "Of course, you've heard the yarns the juniors are saying—that Mauleverer has lost all his money? Well, he's entered for the Holton, so that he can remain at Greyfriars. Jolly plucky of him, I thought. But if he's trying to win by foul means he deserves to be hounded out of Greyfriars."

"I'll go and see him," said Wingate briskly. "No sense in delaying matters. We'll hear what he has to say, and then take him to the Head. Come on."

And the two prefects left. When they arrived at Mauly's study the door was closed. They entered without knocking, and found his lordship seated at the table poring over Vernon-Smith's Latin grammar.

Mauleverer looked up in surprise.

"Begad, you startled me, my dear fellows!" he said. "I suppose you've come about those books I asked for?"

"No; we've come about something quite different," said Wingate grimly. "Do you know anything about a letter, addressed to me, that came by to-night's post?"

Lord Mauleverer started, and the prefects exchanged glances.

"A letter? Oh, yaas, there was one!" said Mauleverer. "Awfully sorry, Wingate! The postman gave it to me at the gates. Didn't I put it in the rack?"

"No. Courtney found it on your table," said Wingate quietly.

"Begad! Then I must have brought it up here unconsciously!"

"And I suppose you opened it unconsciously?" suggested Wingate sharply.

"Opened it!" repeated Mauly blankly.

"Look here, it's no good pretending, Mauleverer!" said Wingate sternly. "The letter was found on your table, opened. It contained the answers to the Holton exams, as you know. It will be better if you own up straight away!"

"Own up!" gasped the dandy of the Remove. "Begad!"

"You're found out, Mauleverer, so it's no use bluffing! We've got all the evidence we want. The exam papers were found on your table; and if you've made a copy of them you'd better hand them over to me at once; then we'll go to the Head!"

"The Head!" ejaculated Mauleverer dazedly.

Wingate uttered an exclamation of impatience.

"You young idiot!" he exclaimed angrily. "Can't you see that you're found out? Can't you see—"

Mauleverer grasped the meaning of it all at last.

"But—but it's not true!" he exclaimed, in alarm. "I took the letter off the postman, Wingate, and I suppose I brought it into my study. I was thinking deeply, and hardly remember what I did. But I know that I didn't open it. Begad, you don't think I'm a rotten cheat, do you?"

"We've got the proof!" said Courtney roughly.

"I—I don't know what you mean!" said Mauly quickly. "I didn't open the letter! I didn't know what it contained even. How should I? Begad, you can't be serious, my dear fellows!"

"That'll do, Mauleverer!" said Wingate. "I don't like to think this of you, but the facts are as clear as daylight! You'll have to come to the Head's study with me. No, don't say any more!"

Mauleverer stared at the two prefects as though in a dream.

He followed them out into the passage, his mind in a whirl. He was trying to think what he had done with the letter—wondering if he had, indeed, opened it, unconscious of his action.

But, after a moment's thought, he was positive that he had simply laid the letter down. Somebody must have entered his study during his absence and opened it. But who would do such a thing? Mauleverer gave it up.

They arrived at the Head's study, and Dr. Locke listened gravely as Wingate related the facts. When the captain of Greyfriars had done, the Head remained for a moment in silence; then he looked at Lord Mauleverer.

"Is this true, Mauleverer?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"You deny Wingate's accusation, then?"

"Yaas, absolutely, sir."

"Be careful what you say, Mauleverer," warned the Head. "The proofs are very, very convincing, and I cannot see how you can possibly prove your innocence. Why not own up, my boy? You will make matters no better by inventing lies!"

Mauleverer coloured.

"I've never told a lie yet, sir," he said quickly. "Begad, I shouldn't begin now! I admit I took the letter from the postman, but I didn't open it!"

"Did you have anyone else in your study with you?"

"No, sir."

"You were quite alone all the time?"

"Yaas, sir. After I brought the letter in I must have

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laid it on the table, where Courtney found it. Then I went out to Vernon-Smith's study to borrow a book. When I came back I started work, without a thought of Wingate's letter. I can only suggest that somebody entered my study while I was with Vernon-Smith, and opened it."

The Head pursed his lips.

"That is absurd!" he said sharply. "It is inconceivable to imagine anyone going into your study for the sole purpose of opening a letter which was addressed to Wingate, and which, moreover, nobody but yourself knew was there. You had a reason for opening it—a very good reason. If Courtney had not happened to enter, you would probably have stuck the envelope up again, and placed it in the rack!"

"But—"

"Nobody would have been the wiser, and you would have won the Holton Scholarship. The plan miscarried by a sheer piece of mischance. It was a disgraceful plan, Mauleverer, and I am deeply grieved to find that you have such a dishonourable trait in your character!"

Mauly looked distressed.

"But it's not true, sir!" he exclaimed. "Begad, it's all a wretched mistake! Don't you see, sir, that I couldn't know that the letter contained the exam papers? How should I know? And it would be absurd to suppose that I opened it on the offchance!"

The Head elevated his eyebrows.

"That is a point, certainly——" he began.

"One moment, sir!" put in Wingate. "Most boys at Greyfriars know where these things are printed, and the printer's name was on the envelope. Mauleverer must have known that the papers were expected about this time!"

"Dear me, yes!" said the Head gravely.

"I don't say that he premeditated the act," went on Wingate. "In my opinion, Mauleverer had no idea of such a thing until the postman gave him my letter. Then, seeing that it was from the printers, the temptation was too great for him, and he decided to avail himself of the opportunity which chance had placed in his hands. But for Courtney's lucky visit to his study, we should have known nothing about it!"

The Head nodded slowly.

"I believe you are right, Wingate," he said. "Now, Mauleverer, surely you can see that denial is useless? If you own up now, at once, I will let you off with a public thrashing. But if you still persist in your innocence—which we know to be impossible—I am afraid that expulsion——"

Mauleverer went like chalk, and he swayed.

"Expulsion!" he muttered thickly. "Oh, begad!"

"Yes, expulsion!" exclaimed Dr. Locke sternly. "You deserve it thoroughly, you wretched boy! I am disposed to deal with you leniently, but——"

"Oh, sir, it's not true—it's not true!"

The Head's eyes flashed.

"Do you still deny the charge, Mauleverer?" he demanded.

Lord Mauleverer raised his head, and his eyes flashed, too.

"Yaas, sir," he said huskily. "I'm innocent!"

Something in Mauleverer's manner caused the Head's anger to die down. Somehow, Mauleverer did not look like a boy who was guilty of a very serious charge. And, too, he bore a splendid character at Greyfriars. It was amazing that he should have done such a thing as this, and, but for the conclusive evidence, the Head would have hesitated before believing him guilty.

As it was, there was nothing else to do. Nevertheless, Dr. Locke did not mean to act with unnecessary haste.

"Go to your room, Mauleverer, and think this out carefully," he said quietly. "I am sure you will realise how impossible it is for you to persist in your innocence. In the morning I will send for you again, and if you have not altered I shall be compelled, very reluctantly, to expel you publicly!"

"I would rather be expelled, sir, than own up to something which I never did!" said Mauleverer stoutly. "I'm innocent, and I shall say the same in the morning!"

"You may go, Mauleverer!"

"Thank you, sir!"

And Lord Mauleverer went, leaving the Head to discuss the matter with Wingate and Courtney. There could be no two ways of thinking about the matter, they decided; the evidence was absolutely conclusive.

And so it seemed. Billy Bunter's curiosity had landed Mauleverer into a fix which seemed likely to result in his ruin.

ANSWERS

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Mauleverer's Decision!

PETER TODD came along the Remove passage, whistling cheerfully. Turning the corner, he came face to face with Lord Mauleverer. Todd had bumped into his lordship before he could stop.

"Ow! You fathead, you've busted my toe!" roared Peter.

"Sorry, my dear fellow. I—I didn't see you!"

Mauleverer's voice was husky, and Peter Todd forgot his toe, and looked into the schoolboy earl's face. It was pale and haggard.

"My hat! What's the matter, Mauly?" asked Todd concernedly.

Mauly almost sobbed.

"It's all up, Todd!" he muttered hoarsely. "I'm going to-morrow!"

"Going!"

"Yaas; the Head's going to expel me!"

"Expel you!" gasped Todd. "Have you gone dotty, old man?"

"It's true," said Mauleverer miserably, as Johnny Bull came up.

And he explained the facts to the two astounded Removites. They stared at his lordship in blank amazement when he had done.

"My only Sunday tile!" gasped Johnny Bull.

"But it's not true, Mauly?" asked Todd anxiously. "You didn't open the letter really, did you?"

"I thought you chaps knew me better than to ask such a thing!" exclaimed Mauly bitterly. "I'm innocent, my dear fellows, however strong the proofs may seem!"

"Of course you are, Mauly!" said Bull loyally. "I don't believe a word of it! Some horrible rotter opened that letter on purpose to get you into trouble!"

"But nobody knew it was there except me!" groaned Mauleverer. "That's the difficult part of it!"

Johnny Bull rushed down the passage, and entered the common-room. It was full of Removites, and in five minutes they had heard all. They were startled and astounded, and almost to a man they stood by Mauleverer's word.

Billy Bunter listened eagerly, and, although he felt somewhat alarmed that his action had landed Mauleverer into such a tight corner, he was relieved to know that he himself was safe.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry," protested Billy Bunter, "I think Mauleverer's a rotter, you know! It's all piffle to say he didn't open the letter! He must have opened it! He——"

"Dry up!" roared Bulstrode.

"I don't see why I should! Mauly's only a dirty cheat——"

Smack!

Bob Cherry's hand landed on Bunter's cheek with heavy force, and the Owl of the Remove uttered a wild howl.

"Ow! Yooooop! Ow-yow! You rotter, Cherry! You——"

The juniors were not in a humour to put up with Bunter's nonsense, and a dozen hands grasped him. The door was opened, and Bunter shot out into the passage, and cannoned against the opposite wall with a heavy thud that shook the building, and caused Bunter to yell with agony.

Then the door slammed, and the Removites went on discussing the latest sensation. There was not a laugh to be heard, not a smile to be seen. Everyone was serious and grave.

Mauleverer to be expelled!

It was appalling. Mauly was very popular in the Remove, and to have him leave the old school in such a way would be simply tragic.

Peter Todd was not in the common-room. He stood on the School House steps, staring out into the dim Close. A terrible thought was in his mind.

"Can it be possible that Mauly is guilty?" he asked himself again and again. "Good heavens, I've placed the poor chap in a terrible position! Whether he's guilty or not, it's all the same. I'm the cause of his trouble. If I hadn't worked that jape on him this would never have happened."

Todd was in a great way.

"What can I do?" he muttered frantically. "Even if I explain about that fake letter, it won't alter matters. Mauly will still be expelled. Great Scott, if Mauly goes, I'll go too! I couldn't stop at Greyfriars knowing that I had been the cause of his downfall."

He thought it all out until his brain was in a whirl.

"Mauleverer's innocent. I'm sure of it," he told himself at last. "He couldn't do such a thing. It's not in him. He's one of the straightest chaps I've ever met; and I believe in him thoroughly. It's up to me to prove that he's not guilty. Yes, the onus is on my shoulders."

Peter Todd walked into the House with a set expression on his face.

"By Jove, I've got it!" he muttered. "I've got Mauly!"

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into this fix, and it's up to me to get him out at all cost. If I can't find the real culprit, I'll go to the Head and say that I opened the letter myself. It's the only honourable thing to do. I can't possibly allow Mauly to be sacked."

And Todd went up to his study to think things out.

Lord Mauleverer, in his own room, paced up and down, trying to think what he should do. He was not a coward, but he was cut to the quick by the thought of the morrow. How could he stand in Big Hall before all the fellows, branded a cheat? How could he face the expulsion?

It was impossible!

Had he been guilty he would have faced it all, knowing that he thoroughly deserved his punishment.

But he was innocent! He could not face it under such circumstances. Wretched and miserable, Mauleverer paced his study.

Two days ago everything had been bright and sunny for him, now the world was dark and drear. He was penniless. He was dishonoured. Never in his life before had Mauleverer suffered with such terrible keenness.

"What can I do?" he asked himself. "Begad, I believe I shall go mad! I can't stand much more. I can't stand the expulsion to-morrow. It will——"

The school clock struck solemnly.

Mauleverer started, and glanced at his watch. A thought had just entered his mind. There was a train from Friardale—the last train from London. Why not rush down to the station and board that train? It mattered not where it was bound for; so long as he got away from Greyfriars it would do.

There was just time for him to catch it if he ran. But there was no time for hesitation, and Mauleverer made up his mind promptly.

"I'll go!" he muttered between his teeth. "Yaas, I'll slip out without a soul knowing, and leave Greyfriars for ever—for ever! Begad, I—I——"

His eyes were moist, and a lump came into his throat that nearly choked him. But he shook himself, and set his teeth more firmly.

Then he slipped out into the passage. Not a soul was about, and he could hear an excited chorus of voices proceeding from the common-room. Without making a sound, Mauleverer left the School House.

He crossed the Close at a trot, and made for the place where the juniors usually clambered over the wall when they broke bounds. He expected every moment to be stopped, but at last he stood in the lane, free.

"Begad, to think that I should leave Greyfriars like this!" he muttered bitterly.

He turned, with a choking cry in his throat, and ran down towards Friardale as fast as he could go. Going through the village he slowed up a little. His pale face and drawn looks caused a few people to stare after him, but Mauly didn't care.

He arrived at the station only just in time. The train was already rumbling in the distance. He rushed to the booking-office, and then remembered that he had only eightpence or ninepence on him. Still, a ticket for a place eight miles away would be better than nothing. To get away from Greyfriars—that was the great thing.

He got his ticket, and went on to the platform breathlessly.

The train steamed in, and stopped, hissing with impatience. Mauleverer walked up the train, looking for a compartment to himself. He didn't want to face strangers just then.

A door opened, and a gentleman alighted. Mauly saw that the compartment was empty, and he made for it. He did not even glance at the gentleman.

But his arm was suddenly grasped.

"Good gracious! What in the world are you doing here, my boy?" exclaimed a surprised voice. "What are you getting into the train for?"

Lord Mauleverer started, and stared up.

"Uncle!" he exclaimed blankly.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

As Rich as Ever!

SIR REGINALD BROOKE looked at his nephew in

astonishment as the train steamed out of the station.

Then, without a word, he marched Mauleverer outside.

They walked for a few moments in silence, then Sir Reginald took Mauly's arm.

"You look pale, young 'un," he said genially. "What's the trouble? I've come down from London especially to see you."

"Don't take me back to Greyfriars, nunky!" said Mauleverer anxiously.

"Don't take you back! Why, bless me—"

The old gentleman gazed at Mauly in astonishment.

"What is it? What is the matter, Mauleverer?" he asked. "Tell me all about it."

Mauleverer was full of the affair of Wingate's letter, and he explained everything—although he did not say why he had entered for the Holton Scholarship.

"I didn't open the letter, nunky!" he finished up earnestly. "I'm not a rotten cheat! Begad, you don't believe I opened it, do you?"

Sir Reginald Brooke laughed.

"Believe it?" he exclaimed. "Why, of course I don't! I know you well enough, my boy, and I know that you would never descend to such despicable methods to win a scholarship. When we get to the school we will thrash the matter out with the headmaster, and it will be all right. Don't you worry!"

"Begad, I feel another chap already!" said Mauleverer, whose cheeks now showed signs of colour. "Your coming has done me a world of good, nunks! I've been getting on all right. I've been working hard!"

"Which reminds me," said Sir Reginald. "What in the world made you enter for the Holton Scholarship?"

Mauleverer stared.

"Why, you told me to!" he ejaculated.

"I told you to?" Sir Reginald laughed. "Nonsense!"

"But you did, nunky! Begad, I've got your letter!"

"My letter! I haven't written to you— Oh, yes; when I said I couldn't send a cheque!" exclaimed the baronet. "I was very worried at the time—a trifling matter, it turned out. But I didn't tell you to enter for the Holton Scholarship!"

"I don't mean that letter, nunky. The one after it."

"But I haven't written since!"

"Yaas, you have," persisted Mauleverer. "Begad, you must remember! You told me that I was ruined, that I was a pauper, and that I should have to work for a living in future."

Sir Reginald gasped.

"A pauper!" he ejaculated. "Good gracious!"

"Yaas, I took it rather well, nunky," said Mauleverer. "I didn't give way, but just set to work as you told me. I've been having tea in Hall, and I've cleared my study of all that luxurious furniture, so that I shall get used to a life of struggle."

"A life of struggle!" gasped the baronet.

"Yaas!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Sir Reginald Brooke, stopping in the road and holding his sides. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Mauly stared in amazement.

"What's the matter, uncle?" he asked.

"Did you get a letter from me telling you all that?" asked the baronet breathlessly. "Did you follow all those instructions?"

"Yaas, every one, nunky. And as I'm poor now—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Begad, it's nothing to laugh at—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Sir Reginald. "Oh, Mauleverer, this is doing me a world of good! Bless my soul, it's the funniest thing I've heard for years! Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—but—"

"Where's the letter?" gasped Mauly's uncle.

"On my table, at Greyfriars," replied the amazed Mauleverer. "Do you want to see it?"

"Yes. I should love to see it!" ejaculated the baronet.

"You must show it to me when we get there! How on earth you mistook the writing for mine is more than I can imagine!"

A light began to dawn upon the slacker of the Remove.

"Isn't the letter yours, nunky?" he gasped.

"No! I've never seen it!" replied the old gentleman, with a chuckle. "Somebody has been playing a trick upon you, my boy! You're not a pauper; there was no need for you to enter for the Holton Scholarship!"

"Then—then—"

"You're still a millionaire!" said Sir Reginald. "In fact, I think you're richer to-day than you were a week ago. Your lawyers are back, and you will be able to use your cheque-book again. And I've brought you twenty pounds in cash to be going on with!"

"Begad!"

That was all Mauleverer could say at the moment. But he recovered his voice presently.

"I believe I know, begad!" he exclaimed thoughtfully.

"The fellows have often had discussions about me—most of them saying that I couldn't work, however urgent the necessity. It's a plot, nunky! They faked that letter so that I should be put on my mettle! Begad, what a relief!"

"But you've shown them that you can work, eh?" chuckled the baronet. "Bravo, Mauleverer! I admit that I had doubts myself! This has pleased me as much as it has them."

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You won't come to any harm through it—it's done you all the good in the world."

"Yaas; but there's this wretched bizney about Wingate's letter!"

"Oh, we'll soon set matters right!" said Sir Reginald confidently.

And they approached Greyfriars talking lightheartedly. Lord Mauleverer felt as though he was treading on air. His troubles, which had seemed insurmountable an hour ago, now faded away like dreams.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Owns Up!

PETER TODD put his head into Lord Mauleverer's study in the Remove passage.

"Empty!" murmured Peter. "Good biz!"

He had decided to investigate thoroughly before going to the Head and confessing that he had opened Wingate's letter. That would have been a terribly drastic course, but Todd would have done it to save Mauleverer.

He entered Mauly's study, and closed the door.

"Now, it's quite on the cards that there are some signs here of the chap who opened that giddy letter," thought Todd. "There are only two likely fellows to suspect. Bunter and Snoop. They're the blighters who go nosing into other people's affairs, and I've strong suspicions against Bunter. It's just the sort of thing he would do."

But a thorough search of the study revealed nothing. Todd became disheartened, and moved towards the door. Then he darted forward. Something shiny had caught his eye against the doorpost, and he picked it up.

Then a whoop of delighted triumph left his lips.

"The seal from Bunter's watch-chain!" he ejaculated. "It was that fat rotter, then! My hat, I'll go down to the common-room now, and make him confess!"

And Todd lost no time. He rushed pell-mell downstairs, and burst into the common-room. The Removites were gathered in clumps, talking animatedly. And almost everybody in the room declared that he believed Lord Mauleverer innocent.

Bunter had managed to slip in again, although he now took care to keep his tongue still. He was talking in a low voice with Snoop and Stott. Peter Todd stood in the middle of the room.

"Chaps!" he shouted. "Mauleverer's innocent!"

"We know that, ass!"

"Is it proved?"

"Has he been cleared?"

"Not yet, but he will be to-night!" said Peter calmly.

"Good egg!"

"All serene!"

"Half-a-tick!" said Harry Wharton. "How do you know he'll be cleared to-night, Toddy?"

"Because I'm going to clear him!" replied Peter.

"You are? How?"

"You'll see in a minute!"

Todd walked across to Billy Bunter carelessly, and held out the seal.

"This yours, Bunter?" asked Todd.

"Yes, you rotter!" exclaimed Bunter, grabbing it. "Where did you get it?"

"I found it. Where did you lose it?"

"Oh, I—I— Yes, I remember now," said Bunter, with a sudden look of alarm as he remembered his watch-chain catching on the door of Mauleverer's study. "I bumped against the door of the Form-room. It must have come off then."

"Liar!" said Peter Todd calmly.

"Oh, really, Todd—"

"Liar!" repeated Todd. "I found it in Mauleverer's study! It came off your chain when you went in there and opened that letter of Wingate's!"

There was an excited buzz.

"Own up, Bunter!"

"If you don't we'll boil you in oil!"

"I haven't been in Mauleverer's study!" shouted Bunter indignantly. "I wouldn't go in the rotter's study at any price!"

"Half-a-minute!" said Vernon-Smith. "I saw Mauly biff Bunter over, and three minutes later Mauly came to my study and stopped five minutes! I'll bet Bunter went into Mauly's room during that time, and he opened the letter so that Mauly would be blamed!"

"The rotter!"

"Own up, you cad!"

"Did you go into Mauleverer's study, Bunter?" asked Peter Todd.

"No, I didn't!" roared Bunter frantically. "I've never seen the rotten letter! I didn't mean Mauly to be blamed! I only wanted to se— I—I mean—"

"Only wanted to see what?" asked Todd calmly.
"Nothing!" shouted Billy Bunter nervously. "You're all down on me! What was the letter doing in Mauly's study, anyhow? He'd have opened it even if I hadn't—"

"You admit you opened it, then?"
"No!" howled Bunter, who hardly knew what he was saying in his nervousness. "I didn't go to Mauly's room at all! I only popped in for a tick—"

Peter Todd grinned.
"You've admitted it three or four times, my son!" he said. "Come on, you're coming to the Head with me and Wharton!"

"I'm not! I'm—"
But Bunter was grasped by firm hands.
"I'm not going!" he howled frantically. "I'm not going!"

But he went, all the same. He couldn't help himself! The Famous Five and Todd rushed the yelling Bunter along the passages to the Head's study. They burst in like an avalanche, and Bunter sat on the Head's floor with a bump.

Mauleverer was in the study with his uncle. Wingate was there, too, and Mr. Quelch. The Head sprang to his feet.
"Good gracious, what is the meaning of this disgraceful—"

"It's all right, sir!" panted Harry Wharton. "We've brought Bunter here!"

"Wharton, how dare you?"
"Bunter opened that letter of Wingate's, sir," exclaimed Peter Todd. "He's admitted it!"

"I haven't!" roared Bunter.
Wingate strode forward, a black frown on his brow. He yanked Billy Bunter to his feet with a jerk.

"No lies, Bunter!" he said sharply. "Did you open that letter?"
"I—I—"

"Did you open it?" thundered Wingate.
"Y-e-ees, Wingate!" gasped Bunter weakly. "I didn't see anything, though! I thought—I only undid the flap and took something out! Then Courtney came along!"

Dr. Locke sprang forward.
"What is that?" he exclaimed. "You admit that you opened the letter, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir!"
"And Courtney came along the next moment?"
"Yes, sir!" said Bunter faintly.

"Then Mauleverer couldn't possibly have seen the exam papers," said Wingate. "By Jove, I'm glad! So you were telling the truth all along, Mauleverer! I'm awfully sorry I doubted you!"

"Begad, that's all right, Wingate!" said Mauly easily, as lighthearted as a sandboy now that his troubles had disappeared. "The evidence was black against me. It was all my fault, though, begad, for forgetting to give you the letter!"

AND HE WAS.

"Smart Boy Wanted."
Such was the notice hung outside a busy City warehouse. It hadn't been there long before a little fellow, red-headed and freckled, calmly lifted it down, and went inside briskly.

"Did you hang this outside, sir?" he asked the manager.
"Yes!" was the stern reply. "And what did you pull it down for?"

The boy looked at him for a few moments. Pity for the man's ignorance was plainly expressed in his face.

Then he spoke, and his reply was short, but to the point.
"Why?" he said. "Why, becorse I'm 'im!"

NOT AT ALL.

John and Mary had been sharing one chair all the evening. John sat on the chair, and Mary sat on John.

After about three hours of this, Mary suddenly exclaimed:
"Oh, John, aren't you tired?"

John smiled a brave, patient smile.
"Not now," he said gently. "No, not now. I was about an hour ago, but now I'm only paralysed!"

A "DOT-TY" STORY.

The guile of the British schoolboy is proverbial. Leave him alone, and he'll get his own back on the master.

It was a very hot day, and the teacher was vainly endeavouring to teach his unappreciative class the rudiments of geometry.

"With the point as centre," he began, placing one leg of the compasses on that point. Then he turned to the boys to make some remark, inadvertently letting the compasses slip.

Immediately the black sheep of the flock raised his hand and waved it wildly.

"Yes, Johnson?" asked the master.
"Please, sir," came the prompt reply, "you're off your dot!"

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NEXT MONDAY—**"THE GREYFRIARS SPY-HUNTERS!"** A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

EVERY MONDAY, **The "Magnet" LIBRARY.** ONE PENNY.

"I'm glad, Mauleverer," said the Head quietly. "You may go as soon as you like, and I must deal with Bunter as he deserves."

Bunter shivered.
"I shall give him a sound thrashing, which, I trust, will make him think carefully before he opens other people's letters another time," said the Head grimly.

"Begad, you're a good 'un, Toddy," exclaimed Mauleverer. "These chaps are all good 'uns, nunky! They've saved me!"

They left the Head's study, and soon a series of anguished howls arose. They were quite audible where the Famous Five, Todd, Mauleverer, and his uncle were standing.

"Did I tell you, my dear fellows," asked Lord Mauleverer, "I'm not a pauper after all, you know? That was all some silly jape!"

Peter Todd grinned—he guessed that the truth was out.
"And I think I can lay hands on the culprit," chuckled Sir Reginald Brooke.

"Yes; I wrote that letter, Mauly," said Todd easily. "At least, I had it typed. And Reggie Coker signed it, so that it was all above board. We didn't say that you were a pauper, you know—we only said that it would be awful if you did find yourself to be one!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Begad, I feel so relieved that I forgive you, Toddy!" drawled Mauleverer.

"I've proved my contention, anyhow," said Todd. "You can work when you like, Mauly—so when we want anything done in a hurry, we'll come to you!"

"Begad!"
Lord Mauleverer felt himself again with twenty pounds in his pocket. His furniture was restored to its original place the very next day, and Mauly took care that he didn't do the work himself.

Without any delay he had resumed his old place as slacker of the Remove. And the rest of the juniors rather liked him better in that capacity. He seemed more like the old Mauly.

And that night his lordship stood a magnificent feed to a select circle of friends; and Billy Bunter had the nerve to seek an invitation. Needless to say, he was barred.

Mauleverer had had enough of Bunter to last him quite a long time.

THE END.

(Another long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Monday, entitled "The Greyfriars Spy Hunters!" Order early. Price One Penny.)

OH, WAIT TILL HE RETURNS!

"Why, my dear," exclaimed the good friend, on finding Mrs. Newed in floods of tears, "what is the matter?"

The young wife wiped her eyes, and tried to compose herself and be inhumanly calm.

"Well," she began, with folded hands, "you know John is away for a week?"

"Yes, dear," helped the lady friend.

"Well, he writes to me regularly, and in his—his last letter he tells me he gets my photo out and kisses it every day."

"But that is nothing for you to cry about!" exclaimed the good friend.

"Yes, it is!" cried Mrs. Newed, bursting into tears afresh.

"Be-because I took my picture out of his ba-bag be-before he started, ju-just for a jo-joke, and put one of mo-mo-mother's in its place!"

HARD FACTS.

It was a thrilling moment. The tub orator's voice was getting hoarse, but his ardour remained undiminished.

"Gentlemen," he yelled, with more politeness than veracity, "the hattitude of the Gover'ment is hintollerable! Their promises remind me of the teacher 'oo was tryin' to show 'is boys wot faith was."

"'If I told yer,' says 'e, 'as I 'ad a shillin' in me pocket, and you couldn't see it, but believed me, that 'ud be faith. Now, wot is faith?"

"'Please, sir,' says a lad, 'it's a shillin' in your pocket!' (Applause.)

"Well, gents, wot we wants is facts, not promises. Give me somethink real, somethink I kin grasp, somethink—"

"Right-ho, matey!" yelled a voice from the crowd.

"There's one!"

And an elderly egg hurtled through the air, struck the orator's left optic, and decorated him in an æsthetic manner.

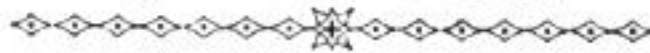
Then the crowd followed the egg's example, and broke up. The Government was saved once again!

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. Barry's attempts are not in vain, and Ferrers Lord, who, with his men, is delighted at the prospect of once more seeing their friends and the Unconquerable, watches the little machine that gives them the position of the signallers. But the needle whizzes madly for a moment, and then swings back to its former position. It has broken. Hal Honour, however, succeeds in making another instrument, and by it they ascertain the whereabouts of the Unconquerable. Meanwhile, Mike Kennedy, Ching Lung's secretary, who is aboard the prince's yacht, runs down a small sailing-vessel, which is found to contain the bound and gagged form of Jeff Sanday, who has just succeeded in obtaining the insurance money of his vessel, which ran ashore at the time the Unconquerable was stolen. He informs Kennedy that every penny of his money has been stolen from him, and that the vessel which they collided with was full of dynamite.

"What an escape!" said Kennedy. "Let's have your yarn."

(Now go on with the story.)

In which Jeff Sanday Relates a Thrilling Story of Adventure, and the Police Take Possession of Ching-Lung's Yacht.

"All serene, mate; don't 'urry me," grunted Big Jeff. "That telegram of yours scared me this afternoon, so I quitted, as you know. I didn't leave my diggings till dark. Then I cut away to find my pal Mynheer Schenk on his eel-tank. The first bit of news I 'ear from the three beauties aboard is that Schenk's locked up. Went ashore, got on the jamboree, fought a policeman, used a knife, and there you are—no bail allowed!"

"Knowin' what the old man could do when he'd shipped a cargo of gin, I wasn't surprised. Anyhow, they were sailin', and it didn't matter to me, so as I got clear and they were willin' to take me. Schenk was bound to go to the Assizes, or whatever they are, and they didn't mean waitin'. By gum, I didn't like the look of his pals much, but I'm a rough 'un myself. Anyhow, I was mighty thankful when the old tub got on the move."

Big Jeff beckoned for more brandy, and was promptly supplied. Kennedy smoked silently.

"Later on we missed the breeze, and ran into a patch of fog," Sanday continued. "Some big vessel drifted past us, and by-and-by somebody 'ailed and a boat pulled alongside. It wasn't my business, so I winked the other eye as I seed the stuff comin' aboard. Smugglin' is done even to-day, you know, and I've been doin' a bit of it all my life. By gum, but didn't they 'andle it gingerly!"

"Dynamite, or something of the sort?"

"You've got it, Mike. I didn't tumble to that till later," nodded Big Jeff. "The rest ain't very clear. The boat

sheered off, and I'd been celebratin' my luck with champagne, and whisky on top o' that, and felt a bit muddled and drowsy. I s'pose I went to sleep, and I s'pose I had a bad nightmare. Anyhow, when I did wake up the three of 'em was a-top of me with no chance of a fight. Arter a bit I managed to roll over on my chest, and the fust thing I spotted was a great grey coil of stuff spittin' and squibbin' out fire and snuffy smoke right under my very nose."

"Phe-e-ow!" whistled Kennedy. "Pretty pleasant. They'd gone—eh?"

"They'd sense, squire," answered Sanday coolly. "I didn't 'ave a lot of time for thinkin', but if my 'air ain't blue, 'it ought to be. It always was white, so it couldn't turn colour. You try lyin' 'elpless on your chest watchin' a splutterin' fuse eatin' its way down to five or six 'undred-weight of explosive, and you'll enjoy yourself. Theatres ain't in it. By gum, I— Oh, I'll have some more brandy, Chow-Chow; I need it."

"Ol' ri', ol' ri', ol' ri'!" crooned Chan-song-Pu.

"And the rest, Jeff?"

"The rest was quick, Mike. There was a big crash, and just when I was expectin' to bump my 'ead against the moon in a full blaze of fireworks, I struck cold water instead. I'm a rare swimmer, but you can't keep it up with your legs and 'ands tied and a gag in your mouth. I give the old river best. Jolly good luck to you, Mike, for fishin' me out and swindlin' the brute of a river!"

Kennedy leaned forward, and grasped Sanday's hand.

"Jeff," he said, "our ideas aren't the same on a good many points, but, by Jove, you're a man, and you've come through it like a man. I'm just beginning to see through the fog. We've both been watched. You know too much to please somebody, and that same somebody did not want the Fatality to leave the Thames. How it was worked, I don't profess to know, but there was big money behind it, and big brains, too. One of the Paul Guthrey boats started out about an hour before we did."

A look of intelligence crept into Sanday's dull eyes.

"Yes, yes! She was lyin' down in the pool—the Barataria." He threw back the blankets, and swung his muscular legs out of the bunk. "By gum, Mike, let's piece this thing together. Can the madman know I split on 'im? Does he know I told Ferrers Lord? I did tell him, and why not? I made no promise, and was never axed to make any. Me and Martin Arkland did the work, and it was a job arter my own 'art. I didn't think it stealin' or piracy. It's just my nature. When I was a kid I couldn't find no fun in robbin' the orchards if I hadn't to dodge the farmer or his bulldog. It was the danger that was the fun. An hour or two ago I was a rich man, and now I'm broke to the world!"

"Go on!" said Kennedy, knocking the ashes out of his pipe. "What else?"

"Only this," said Big Jeff. "I'm a bad 'un to go back on, that's all. There's three men I want to find, and I shall find them. If Paul Guthrey has his finger in this pie, he'll be sorry. And when it comes to be axed questions by the police, you can wager I don't give nothing away."

"That's just what I wanted, Jeff. Stick to that, and I shall stick to you. Now have a good sleep if you can."

The men were still working the pumps. The yacht was safely berthed. A tall, clean-shaven man stepped aboard and held a whispered conversation with the other clean-shaven man. Kennedy shrugged his shoulders. The newcomer walked up to him and raised his bowler hat.

"Captain Kennedy, I believe," he said. "I am Detective Colbourne. I have received certain information concerning this yacht, and I must therefore take possession of it. She is stated to carry explosives, and it has also been suggested that you do not hold a master's certificate."

"Perhaps you will tell me your informant?" said Kennedy, biting his lip. "Remember, we sail under the Chinese flag, and that the yacht is the property of Prince Ching-Lung. I intend to sail the moment I have completed my repairs."

"I hope you will be able to do so, sir. You had better communicate with the Chinese Embassy at once. At the moment I am unable to give you the source of information. May I examine your papers?"

A refusal was out of the question. Kennedy smiled sourly. One thing was plain enough. Someone was moving heaven and earth to keep Ching-Lung's yacht from putting to sea. And that somebody could only be Paul Guthrey, millionaire.

Sending Up a Message—The Slackened Rope—The Horror Once More — "We're Afloat!" — Martin Arkland's Treachery.

Job Sanday was a sick and sorrowful man when he awoke some hours later. He had only a hazy idea of what had

(Continued on page lii of cover.)

happened. Prout brought him a cup of tea. Sanday growled out a few questions, and got his answer.

"I must 'ave been mad drunk," he groaned, "else I wouldn't ha' done it. Durn me if I can remember. You ain't a bad sort, Prout. I'm sorry enough, if that's any good to you—right down sorry, for I deserved all I got. Don't keep it up against me. I feel bad enough to roll over and die."

His shoulder was terribly inflamed. Prout bathed and dressed it silently, and Job muttered a few words of thanks. For a couple of hours after that, the steersman and Barry struggled with the machinery under Martin Arkland's directions. Unluckily, they were not engineers, and the pumping-engines stubbornly refused to empty the tanks.

"Every man to his trade," said Prout at last, "and this isn't ours. By honey! I don't know whether it's day or night; but I've got an idea."

"Pwhat's that, ould son?"

"Why, we'll send up a couple of barrels," said Prout. "I dare say we can find enough rope to 'old 'em. We'll put a lamp on one in case it's dark, d'ye see? and we'll paint a message on both that we're down 'ere. Simple, ain't it? What's about the depth, by the way?"

"Sixty-two fathoms," said Martin Arkland. "It is useless. We have not a hundred feet of rope, much less seven or eight hundred feet."

A hasty search proved his words to be true, and Prout's brilliant idea came to nothing. All the chronometers had stopped. They were not even sure of the date or the day of the week. Their greatest fear was that the electric-light would fail them, leaving them in utter darkness. While it still lasted, they wisely explored the vessel from end to end. The discovery of half a dozen boxes of wax candles and a drum of petroleum cheered them up. They had no lamp in which to burn the petroleum, but Arkland found a soldering-iron in the carpenter's chest. He was very unwell, but he soon manufactured a couple of lamps. Two empty bottles, neatly cut, made excellent chimneys.

"Faith, wid a coat of enamel, you'd never know they hadn't come out of a shop," said Barry. "Ye're a moighty useful man to have on hand, Arkland. And that's a moighty useful chest as well. Here's plenty of fish-hooks, Tommy bhoy, and a hank o' line. We'll foind bait of some sort outside. Make up the loine, and Oi'll set ut."

Both the lamps were lighted and hung in the conning-tower. They burned clearly enough, but they were a poor substitute for the brilliant electric-light. Prout fastened on the hooks, and then helped Barry O'Rooney into the diving-suit.

Again the bell clanged its call for aid through the water. Barry searched in vain for anything in the shape of bait. He returned in disgust.

"Whether ut's Froiday or Monday to-morrow, there'll be no fish caught," he said, "unless the varmint's'll boite at a bit o' fresh mutton."

"By honey, I believe I seed some tinned prawns in the galley!" said Prout. "I'll go and look!"

He returned with a tin, not of prawns, but of canned oysters. Barry went out again, and baited his line. The tide was dead slack. Job Sanday had left his bunk, mournful and repentant.

O'Rooney and the steersman had not lost hope. They had light, air, and fuel, and if their fishing prospered, there would be no lack of food. The freshwater-tank was almost full. As yet matters with them were far from being desperate.

"I suppose we'll have to give Job a holiday," said Prout, "being an invalid. We've got no rope, but, by honey, though I ain't an engineer, I'm a sailor, and we've got sheets and tablecloths. I'm still sweet on that barrel idea, so we'll get to work and make a rope."

It took them a good many hours. Arkland neatly painted the message on the keg, and varnished it over.

"Submarine Unconquerable below. Unable to raise her. Four men on board."

The keg was painted a bright red, and the lettering was in white. It floated upwards into the gloom, and Barry knotted the end of the rope to the rail. He wasted no time, for he did not know how much compressed air the cylinder held.

By the slackening of the rope, he knew the keg was afloat.

"Blowin' guns!" he thought, as he watched the swaying rope. "Bedad, that's our luck! Now, darlint, let's have a look at you. Is this luck better?"

He began to haul in the fishing-line. The catch consisted of three fine plaice, and a fair-sized skate. Barry was more than satisfied.

"By honey," said the steersman, "you've brought your dinner wi' you, Barry, I see! We ain't goin' to starve by long chalks. Did you send the balloon up?"

"Oi did," answered Barry; "and there's a gale on, accordin' to the way she's jumpin' and tossin'. Troth, ut isn't loikely they'll soight her. She's fast to the rail just outside the conning-tower, so av anythin' comes along from above, ye'll see ut widout havin' to go out."

They put Job Sanday on watch. Although he was very weak and sick, Martin Arkland refused to give in. With a bloodstained bandage on his head and red circles round his

little, blinking eyes, he haunted the engine-room. He could find no defect. He crawled in and out, carrying a guttering candle.

Prout and Barry let him alone. They were not afraid of Martin Arkland. To all intents and purposes the machinery was sound. He entered the saloon smothered in grease and dirty oil.

"I'm beaten," he almost whined—"beaten!"

"Bit off more than you could swaller, eh, Martin?" said Prout. "By honey, try again! I'd almost love you if you'd get us out of it!"

Arkland could not rest. He nibbled a biscuit, gulped down a glass of water, and went off once more, candlestick in hand.

"Bedad, Tommy," said Barry, "Oi've a koind of respect for Martin! He went the whole hog when he did go, and he's sthilla goer. To look at the spalpeen, ye wouldn't think he'd say 'Bo!' to a goose on a common. Oi must wroite a poem about him, somethin' loike this:

"Blink and blink, my little Martin,
You'll get nabbed, Oi'm purty sartin.
Then you'll wish you'd never seen
This delightful submarine!"

"Swate, isn't ut? Come, Imp, me dear ould laddie!"

Barry took the short cut to the conning-tower by way of the mirror. Job Sanday was asleep, and snoring. The Irishman peered out.

"Broke loose!" he cried. "Oh, murther the luck! Say, Tom, ye're a rotten ropemaker. She's snapped loike a bit o' frowsy cotton!"

The rope was streaming away aft in the tide level with the rail. The keg was no longer attached to it.

"By honey, some craft must have fouled it!" said the steersman. "It was a splendid bit o' stuff. They've ridden over it and fouled it."

"Oi shouldn't wonder," answered Barry, resignedly. "Ut only depends how much has been carried away. We'll ornament another keg, and thry wance more. Niver say doie! Av there isn't enough left, we must sploice another piece on."

They had used up their paint, but Prout was equal to the emergency. He found several sticks of red sealing-wax in Ferrers Lord's writing-desk. He ground them up and dissolved the powder in methylated spirits, making a quick-drying and brilliant red varnish.

"Looks loike a small pillar-box," said Barry. "We're nayther of us artists, Tom, so we'll let ould Arkland do the rest."

The keg was carried into the diving-chamber, and fastened there until Barry O'Rooney was ready. To secure the rope he had to climb on deck. Without unfastening the rope, he seized it and went down again.

"Troth, the toide's runnin' shar-pp!" thought the Irishman, as he hauled away and measured off the fathoms roughly. "There's quoute a pull on ut. For-rtty-two, for-rtty-three, forty-six, and four makes fifty. Not a great deal lost, anyway. Phwat's that tuggin', Oi wondher? Surely the keg didn't fill and sink!"

He had hung up his lamp. He could not have much more to pull in. That there was something attached to the rope he was certain, on account of the resistance.

It could only be the keg that some vessel had driven over and stove in. Barry thrust out his foot and pushed the great steel door wide open. He gave a last pull on the reluctant rope and uttered a shriek of horror.

Daft Black Harry had come back again!

Barry O'Rooney shivered in his lead-soled boots as he gazed at the eerie object. Some queer trick of the tide had twisted the rope round it. Barry's hand shook as he cleared it, he pushed the thing out, and stood shuddering. He could feel a cold perspiration running down his face into his beard.

It was a long time before he succeeded in fixing the rope to the keg, for his fingers were numbed. He cut the cord and pulled the keg out. The rope rose coil after coil, and Barry closed the door and pressed his trembling thumb on the bell-push. Once inside he almost collapsed.

"For the sake of marcy, some brandy, Tom!" he panted hoarsely. "Oi'm a haunted man. Oi've seen Black Harry again. He came back on the ind of the rope, and the soight of ut has made a coward of me. Troth, a million pounds wouldn't have tempted me out there av Oi'd knowed! That's twice. Av he comes back a thir-rd toime—Get me a livener, Tom, for Oi fale loike doin' a dead faint!"

Prout brought the brandy. He was inclined to be a little superstitious himself, so he made no comment. Such a grisly vision was enough to try the nerves of any man. He advised Barry to go and lie down for an hour, but Barry shook his head gloomily, and then jumped up with a start.

"She's working!" he yelled. "Arkland's done it!"

They rushed to the bridge that spanned the engine-room. True enough, the giant machinery had come back to life.

"To the wheel—to the wheel!" shouted Arkland. "Turn on the lamps!"

The electric light glowed out, and flashed on the shining engines. They heard the rush of the outgoing water, and cheered. The Unconquerable was rising. Prout raced to the conning-tower, where Job Sanday still slept.

Prout howled aloud as a white-topped wave rolled against the glass dome, and seethed and hissed astern. For high overhead the misty stars were winking down. Then the engines stopped, and Sanday awoke.

"We're afloat—we're afloat! Don't you hear, by honey? We're afloat, Job!" roared the steersman. "Afloat I tell you!"

Barry gave a mighty "Hooroo!" and Job Sanday rubbed his eyes. Imp barked to signify his gladness, and Tom Prout and Barry O'Rooney shook hands.

"Bedad, Oi'm poining for a taste of the salt air!" said Barry. "But there's no chance of openin' the dure in this say. Good luck to Arkland! Sure, Oi'm almost sorry he'll have to face the music. Consider yourself undher arrest, Job. Give us your parole, and we'll not toig you up. Och, ut's the loight hear-rt that's on my chest, so loight that Oi could sit down and write a poem:

"Twinkle, twinkle, little sthar,
Twinkle, twinkle, twink.
A soight for toired oies ye are, so
Winkle, winkle, wunk."

"Swish! Howld aisy, Tom! Oi must cut that keg adrift, or we'll be afther having a tangle. Here comes a long wave! Now's the chance, darlint!"

Barry slipped out, slashed the rope through, and was back just in time to escape the following wave.

"What's our best move now, by honey?" asked Prout.

"Whoy, to make for home; pwhat ilse, Tom? You can navigate the sardine-tin. Steer west, and we'll soon pick up some beacon that'll tell us where we are. We'll make Arkland chafe engineer. Home ut must be, and west's the only direction."

Sunday was a plucky and reckless adventurer, but where Martin Arkland was concerned it was a different matter. He was playing the spy as well as the thief, and had engineered the whole plot.

Job might go scot-free, being only a tool, but they both felt that they were answerable to their chief and employer for the master mind of the conspiracy.

"Then it's home, boys, home, and it's home we ought to be," sang the steersman, grasping the wheel. "Now, Arkland, down there, we'll have half-speed."

He pulled over the indicator, and the Unconquerable forged slowly ahead.

"The ould propeller rubs a bit," said Barry, listening. "Och, av she'll only kape on groinding, that's a mere thrifle! Faith, the luck has turned! Job, Oi'll smoke a poipe of pace wid ye, and let bygones be bygones. Pwhat, you've got no 'baccy? Naythur have Oi, so Oi'll fetch some."

Barry tried to pull back the slide that covered the secret ladder to the saloon, but he could not move it.

"Wants oiling," he said. "That drop of spray that came in has made ut stick. Oi'll bring ye some tay, Tommy, at the same toime."

Barry put the kettle on the range, and placed the cups and saucers in readiness. Then he went for his tobacco. The mirror refused to budge an inch.

"There's something gone wrong wid the works!" said the Irishman. "Bedad, pwhat's that?"

He heard a click behind him, and sprang to the door in sudden apprehension. It was locked, and the key was on the outside. He snatched up the heavy silver candlestick that had done such yeoman service, and hammered it against the mirror.

The glass flew away in a shower of gleaming splinters, and the base of the candlestick buckled up. The back of the mirror was steel.

"Threasion—threasion, Tom!" he yelled, hurling himself bodily at the door. "Look out—look out! Arkland! Threasion! I'm locked in! Threasion! Och and bedad, the mad fools we've been! Look out, Tom—look out!"

Prout heard nothing owing to the noise of the engines. He was humming a tune to himself, and felt very happy.

"Hands up, sir—hands up!" hissed a voice behind him. "I'm not beaten yet."

The head and shoulders of Martin Arkland alone were visible. A bayoneted rifle was at his shoulder, his face was blackened with grease, and the dirty bandage still encircled his head. For once his red-rimmed eyes did not blink, but flashed with triumph.

"Sanday!" he shouted. "Bring a cord! Hands up, Prout—hands up! A life like yours is a trifle to me; so, if you value it yourself, hands up!"

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