

"THE CRUISE OF THE FAMOUS FIVE!"

Grand Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. in This Issue.



TACKLING THE TREACHEROUS GERMAN!

(A thrilling incident in our magnificent new long complete school tale in this issue.)



My Readers' Page

WHOM TO WRITE TO:
EDITOR,
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY.
 THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
 PARADISE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE GEM" LIBRARY.
 PUBLISHED WEDNESDAY
"THE PENNY POPULAR"
 EVERY FRIDAY.

The Editor is always pleased to hear from his Chums, at home or abroad.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

W. J. Berry (Balham).—I regret that your suggestion with regard to a stamp contest is at the moment impracticable. Best wishes for the success of your League.

J. Hunter (North Shields).—The journal you mention is a companion paper.

"A London Reader".—I regret I cannot give you the name and address of a cadet corps in your district.

Henry Sarjeant (Camberwell).—Your copy of the picture of Billy Bunter is decidedly good for one of your age. I shall always be pleased to hear from you.

C. R. Oakley (Newquay).—The characters you refer to are fictitious. Greyfriars is situated in Kent.

L. B. and B. W.—If Tom Dutton were supplied with a writing-pad, much very amusing dialogue would be missed.

N. A. Merton (Chelsea).—You will see that your suggestion has now been complied with. Many thanks for your loyalty.

"West Londoner" (Brentford).—Glad to get your letter extolling our Christmas Number. Your idea was ripping, but came in too late to be acted upon. Best wishes.

"A Loyal Canadian Chum".—I was most pleased to receive your cheery letter, and hope to hear from you again when you feel inclined to write. Best wishes to you and your chums.

Miss Lily Bowers (London).—Your suggestion is quite good, but I am afraid our artist, who is already working at extra pressure, would scarcely find time to produce such a feature. I will bear the suggestion in mind, however.

A. T. (Twifell Park).—I am rather surprised that you should become so indignant simply because your harassed Editor was compelled to hold over a promised feature for a week or so. However, now that the story in question has duly appeared, I trust I am established once more in your good graces.

James Kelly (Glasgow).—Sorry I cannot help you in respect of back numbers.

William Moorcroft (Blyth).—A list of "Magnet" Leagues will be published on this page in due course. So far as I am aware, there is no such organisation in your town at present.

M. C. W. (Rothsay).—The back numbers you mention are unobtainable, being out of print. Sorry I cannot help you.

J. A. Higgins (Dublin).—Harry Wharton's early schooldays are described in the "Dreadnought," now on sale.

W. J. B.—Wingate is seventeen years of age. The Famous Five are each of practically the same height.

Albert Shipley (Long Eaton).—The "Magnets" you mention would cost about half-a-crown to have bound. I notice you deplore the fact that the old characters are seldom in the limelight these days. This shall be remedied where possible, but we must have new blood, you know.

F. W. (Victoria).—Bob Cherry is the finest boxer in the Remove.

A. H. (Leigh).—Both the books you mention are on sale at almost every newsagent's. I hope your worthy ambition will be realised.

So many communications have I received of late on various subjects that it would be absolutely impossible for me to attempt to reply to my chums at any length. Nevertheless, their valuable suggestions and tidings of good cheer were extremely gratifying, and I take this opportunity of thanking them, one and all, for their loyalty to the good old "Magnet" Library. I particularly desire to thank the following readers, whose good wishes I heartily reciprocate.

G. Guinness, B.I., "A Constant Reader" (Oswaldtwistle).
 W. E. and L. M. (Merthyr), George Burke, A. Berry, H. Worboys, H. Frisby, J. Hemmings, F.L. (Eastleigh), S. Hennessy, J. R. Rayment, A.B.O. W.I.C. (Northampton), Miss F. Wilton, "Ten Newport Chums," A. Solomons, J. Hebron (Hurlford), B. R. Faithfull, Ernest Cave, R. C. H. (Barnsley), "A Constant Reader from Leeds," "A Loyal Girl Reader" (Ontario), E. B. (Leytonstone), Charles Carter, James D., G. B. Davies, S. E. Samuels, "An Old Reader" (Northampton), E. J. W. (Chiswick), "A Supporter of Bunter," H. W. Turner, and the "Magnet" Club (Hastings).

W. E. R.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"SURPRISING THE SCHOOL!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

In our next splendid, long, complete tale of the chums of famous Greyfriars School, Billy Bunter, the prize purveyor of the Remove, is very much to the fore, both as a lady-killer and an exponent of chivalry. The arrival of Mr. Quetch's young niece brings out surprisingly good qualities in Bunter, amazing the Removeites, who had always considered that the fat junior's soul never rose above eating and drinking. A few of the ungentlemanly set at Greyfriars pass ill-timed remarks on the subject of Miss Quetch, and Billy Bunter surprises everyone—himself included—by displaying hitherto unheard-of prowess in fistic encounters. The way in which he champions his Form-master's niece is really noble, and William George Bunter, the fat, unwieldy Owl of the Remove, certainly succeeds beyond all question in completely

"SURPRISING THE SCHOOL!"

STILL GOING STRONG!

Our latest companion paper, the "Dreadnought," is flourishing apace. It has leapt into popularity with surprising suddenness, but the reason for this is not far to seek. Never yet was a Harry Wharton story written which did not claim its full complement of admirers, and I was fully aware, when I commissioned Mr. Frank Richards to write of Harry Wharton's early schooldays, that my chums would not be long in rallying round.

Only a few weeks have elapsed since Gerald K., of Southsea, voiced an earnest appeal that this important step should be taken, and I replied in these pages that I should need the co-operation of hundreds of readers before I could see my way clear to grant his request. I need not have wasted time in saying this, however, for no sooner was my Southsea chum's letter published in the "Magnet" than I was inundated with letters from all parts of the kingdom endorsing Gerald K.'s idea to a man. I then realised that something must be done in the matter, and that right quickly.

About this time, the management of that well-known boys' weekly, the "Dreadnought," was placed in my hands, and I was thus enabled to satisfy my reader chums at once.

The publishing day of our new companion paper is Thursday, and to avoid disappointment you will be forewarned, and find it a wise policy, to have a standing order with your newsagent. Apart from the Harry Wharton stories, which have made the name of Frank Richards a household word throughout the Empire, there are many attractive features in the "Dreadnought"—twenty-eight pages, in fact, of good, wholesome, and entertaining reading matter.

I might mention that the stories of Greyfriars School now running in our latest journal are, perhaps, not so lengthy as some would wish, but my chums will be glad to know that steps are being taken to remedy this failing, if such it can be called, and that Mr. Richards' yarns will soon be of a length which will give my readers the fullest value for their money.

I confidently look to my loyal vanguard of Magnetites to back me up in making this new venture a huge success, and you will be doing your hard-worked editor an inestimable favour by commending to all your boy and girl friends that magnificent journal.

THE DREADNOUGHT!

Our Magnificent Serial Story!Start To-day!

A WORLD AT STAKE!

A Stirring Story of the Supreme Struggle Between
the British Empire and Its Hated Foe.

READ THIS FIRST.

Thorpe and Dick Thornhill, brothers, and inventors of the airship *Night Hawk*, play a prominent part in the great war with Germany on land and sea. After many exciting adventures in connection with the capturing of a German gunboat, Dick receives a wireless message that his brother is being attacked by three hostile aircraft. He hastens to the rescue, and a terrific battle in the air results, in which a German airship is captured. This is re-named the *Avenger*, and Thorpe takes charge. He later decides to attempt the capture of the *Kaiser*, and for that purpose descends in Edinburgh. He is nearly successful, but at the last moment his ruse is discovered, and he is conveyed to a dungeon in Edinburgh Castle. A German whom Thorpe knew as a waiter before the war befriends him by smuggling into his cell a revolver and a chisel, and, on hearing someone tapping on the other side of his cell wall, Thorpe commences scraping away the brick with his chisel.

(Now go on with the story.)

Tom Prepares the Way.

During the imprisonment of Thorpe Thornhill, the sun has risen over a triumphal British camp.

It was by this time well known that the German invasion was approaching its end. The Firth of Forth, blockaded by the Mediterranean Fleet, a constantly increasing British force hemming them in on land, the foe lay at Lord Roberts's mercy.

But he hesitated to order a bombardment, for every shot fired would mean incalculable damage wrought to British property.

Well the German Emperor knew this, and had therefore withdrawn his advanced posts, until two hundred thousand German soldiers were cooped within the narrow precincts of "Auld Reekie."

But he had sworn never to make peace except on his own terms, and had determined to escape to Germany, there to gather together a fresh army, and attack England in a fresh place.

Not by airship would he flee, for, brave though he undoubtedly was, his first experience on board an aerial craft had rendered him unwilling to risk another disaster; but that evening, on board a fishing-lugger, manned by three Heligo-

landers and an English boy, he hoped to evade the blockading British Fleet, and return to his own capital.

It is said to have to admit that one of the four who had been induced, on payment of a tremendous bribe, to carry the German Emperor across the narrow seas, was English; but perhaps the reader will not judge him too harshly when we confess that this apparent traitor was none other than little Tom Evans.

Tom was no sailor, and his presence on board the fishing-vessel did not enhance the German Emperor's chance of escape.

It can not, of course, be taken for granted that the Kaiser would be recognised, but, as he expressed it, "he was taking no chances," and, clad in a rough fisherman's jacket reaching nearly to his knees, sea-boots a couple of sizes too big for him, and an enormous sun-visor, almost hiding both head and face from view, he acted as interpreter to the rough Heligolander who had been employed to carry the Kaiser from Scotland to his own betrayed country.

Tom had seen Thorpe Thornhill marched off to the dungeon between armed guards; then, without attracting undue attention, strolled backwards and forwards through the dark passages of the old castle, until he at last found the dungeon in which Thorpe Thornhill was confined. He also discovered that it had, at some distant period, possessed a second door leading on to a flight of steps, which apparently descended into the very bowels of the earth, for, whilst the rest of the castle was of brown stone, this portion was of brick.

Having seated himself on a step under the blocked-up doorway, he commenced kicking the brickwork, until, as we know, he at last attracted Thorpe Thornhill's attention.

Then, confident that his master would dig his way through the weak place in the dungeon he had indicated, he determined to discover whether the steps led.

It was nerve-trying work, creeping down those damp, moss-grown, time-worn steps, seemingly into a bottomless pit, for all before him was black, impenetrable darkness. Well he knew the dangers that menaced him. A broken step, and he might be plunged into unknown depths. But with dogged pluck he persevered, until he stopped, rather more suddenly than was exactly pleasant, having rammed his nose against a thick, iron-studded door.

For a few moments he remained perfectly still, listening for any sound which might betray the presence of a sentry on the other side of the door; then, stealthily drawing a box of matches from his pocket, he put a couple together and struck a light.

As the tiny spark illuminated for a moment the narrow passage, he found that the door against which he had run formed the end of the passage, and was securely fastened by rusty bolts and a large iron bar, held in its staples by a wooden peg.

"Sold again! Only another of them there blooming dungeons!" muttered Tom. "Howsomever, might as well see what kind o' place there is on the other side. It might be handy for Master Thorne to hide in, anyhow."

As he spoke he tried to thrust back one of the bolts, but it was not so easy a task as he had anticipated. It was rusted into the socket, and some minutes elapsed ere, by working it up and down, he was able to move it—in fact, by the time the last bolt had been thrust back, and the bar removed, his hands were almost raw, and bleeding from contact with the rough iron.

But as the door moved slowly on its hinges, and a breath of cool, invigorating air swept over his heated forehead, Tom could have shouted aloud for joy, for he now found himself in a shrubbery-filled moat, from whence he could easily reach the town.

But what part of Edinburgh? He must find that out ere he returned.

Looking about him with a clever assumption of a wondering sailor-boy enjoying a stroll on shore, Tom passed on through Prince's Gardens, finding, to his delight, that it would be easy to avoid the various camps with which the Germans had dotted Edinburgh's principal public park.

At first he chuckled silently; then, finding himself unobserved, sank beneath a shrub, and rolled on the ground, convulsed with suppressed laughter.

These internal gymnastics having been brought to a close, he rose and retraced his steps.

On his way he passed a field oven, which at that hour of the morning was practically deserted, for breakfast was over, and dinner was not yet being prepared; but there were several pots and pans scattered about, many smeared thick with grease.

Drawing a piece of bread from his pocket, Tom commenced eating it as though he had not tasted food for a fortnight. Presently he halted in the midst of the pangs; then, dipping his hand into the one nearest him, he scooped the fat out of it, which he pretended to put on his bread, but in reality pressed close in the hollow of his hand.

One or two Germans looked suspiciously at him; but, believing him to be some half-starved fisher-lad seeking a stolen meal, they did not interfere, and allowed Tom to get together a lump of grease about as big as a hen's egg.

With this he strolled away, until, apparently tired of walking, he lay down near the thicket into which the sallyport opened, and was soon, to all appearance, fast asleep.

Presently he moved uneasily and rolled over. A minute or two later he rolled over again, and then again, and then again, each revolution taking him deeper into the friendly shade of the shrubs, until at last he was hidden entirely from view, when he rose and made his way back to the door through which he had emerged half an hour before.

He next greased the bolts, bars, and hinges of the door until they moved noiselessly backward and forward.

Then, well content with his morning's work, he toiled painfully up the apparently never-ending flight of stairs.

On the brickwork which alone separated him from Thorpe Thornhill, he heard a distinct scraping, and certain now that the latter had understood his signal, and was working his way out of the prison, returned to the courtyard of the castle once more.

Here, as an English spy in the Emperor's pay, he was furnished with a plentiful supply of food for the asking.

How the boy ate! The German sutler who supplied him looked in amazement as meat and bread disappeared rapidly from the youngster's plate.

"Have you done at last?" he asked sarcastically, when Tom rose from the rough table at which he had been seated.

"Ja!" returned Tom, nodding and smiling as one well satisfied.

"Ja! I should say it is ja! You have eaten enough for two men!" growled the other. And Tom trotted off, well content, for, concerned about his clothes, in the event of Thorpe Thornhill and himself being unable to obtain food, was sufficient to last them during the night.

Throughout the day the German Emperor moved rapidly from regiment to regiment, now speaking a few cheerful words to the men holding the lines between Leith and Edinburgh, now superintending the placing of big guns from the fleet in position, until shortly before nine o'clock, when, having instructed his generals to meet him at six o'clock the following morning to hold a council of war, he retired to the apartments in the castle he had occupied since his arrival in Edinburgh.


Having thus lulled any suspicion of his intended departure from Scotland which might have got abroad, he prepared for flight. On his bed he found the rough homespun clothes in which he hoped to pass unnoticed through the streets of Edinburgh and Leith to where, half-way between the latter town and Portobello, the Heligoland vessel was anchored, which was to bear him away, a fugitive to his own kingdom.

An Exciting Escape.

Fortune, who had for the moment turned her back upon him, seemed now fighting once more on his side, for the only visitor he had during that day was the ex-waiter who brought his food, and who resolutely turned his head away from the heap of bricks and mortar dislodged from the wall, which Thorpe could not hide, for there was neither bed nor covering in that dark cell.

Hard though he worked, it was not until late in the evening that he at last felt his cold chisel pass through the wall, when he heard somebody approaching.

Scarce daring to breathe, he crouched against the opening, then a sigh of relief escaped his lips, as a well-known voice fell on his ears, crying:

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THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 363.

Read the Grand Complete Harry Wharton Story in 'The Dreadnought.' Now on Sale

"Well done, Master Thorpe! Tom Evans is on yer side, and don't yer forget it!"

"My brave little chap, was it you who gave me the signal to begin work here?" asked Thorpe, in a low voice.

"Well, it won't be the German Emperor, blow him!" replied Tom laconically. "However, we can talk by-and-by. Just move a few bricks, and take this parcel, will yer?"

Thorpe eagerly obeyed. It was an easy task now to remove the loosened bricks, and there was soon space enough for Tom Evans to thrust through a large parcel done up in a wrapper.

"The parcel," explained Tom, shoving his head through the hole, "is exactly like the kind his Imperial Majesty is a-goin' to wear to-night. There's a boat awaitin' him off Portobello. As soon as he gets abreast that there boat he'll strike three matches, one after the other, then himself and another German patriot will come to take him off. Don't forget, it's three matches his Imperial Majesty has got to strike."

"What on earth are you talking about, Tom?"

"I'm talking sense, Master Thorpe, and don't you forget it. The German Emperor is a-goin' to slip off and leave his men in the lurch. If he comes at a quarter to eleven we'll sail at once. Sabe?"

"Not quite, Tom, but I am beginning to have an inkling of what you mean. You want me to embark instead of the Emperor?"

"You've hit it, Master Thorpe," declared Tom. Then, in a few concise sentences, he explained how, after leaving the shrubbery, Thornhill must walk boldly through Prince's Gardens, and if interrupted give the password "Potatoes," with which, to allow him to pass backwards and forwards between the Heligolandiers and the castle, he had been entrusted.

A few minutes later Tom, for his presence there would only call attention to the hole in the wall Thorpe had made, stole away.

Left to himself, Thorpe Thornhill's spirits gradually fell as he realised how fearful were the obstacles he must encounter during his lonely walk from Edinburgh to Leith. However, he was not the man to be deterred by danger, and, having enlarged the hole so that he could creep through, he gained the dark flight of steps, and, descending, found himself in the shrubbery of which Tom had spoken, just as a distant clock struck the hour of nine.

Knowing well that he might meet with many delays on his journey, Thorpe Thornhill stepped boldly through the shrubs, and, making his way unchallenged from out the garden, reached the streets beyond.

Suddenly, as he turned into Leith Walk, he paused, and drew back into a doorway's friendly shade, for, coming towards him, looking suspiciously to right and left as he walked, was Karl Seigner.

Realising that most probably the German would see him, Thorpe deemed that the boldest course would be the safer, and, pulling his hat over his eyes, stepped into the roadway about half a dozen yards from the other.

Karl Seigner started, looked searchingly around him, then his heels clicked together as he raised his hand to his cap in military salute.

"Your Majesty is punctual," he said, in a low voice. "Will you kindly follow me?"

For some minutes the two men walked in silence towards Leith. Seigner all unsuspecting of who was following him, and Thorpe Thornhill perplexed by a score of conflicting thoughts.

Deeming it likely that Seigner's suspicious would be aroused if he maintained a longer silence, Thorpe asked, changing his voice as much as possible:

"Where is your airship, Major Seigner?"

"It is hovering over the lugger, as your Majesty commanded," returned the other, without turning round.

Thorpe's first impulse upon hearing this, was to turn down the first by-lane which presented itself, and seek safety in immediate flight, trusting to get out of Edinburgh in some other direction, for, after what he had just heard, it seemed as though, even did he succeed in getting on board the Heligolandiers' craft, with a hostile airship hovering overhead he would find it difficult, if not impossible, to escape recapture, or, what was far more probable, death.

However, he determined to take the course which presented the fewest dangers, and carry out Tom's programme at any risk.

But even that would be impossible if he could not get rid of Seigner.

Presently, just as the lights of Leith appeared close at hand, for, beyond the road practically deserted. Now was his opportunity. Changing his hand from the butt to the hilt of his revolver, he drew it cautiously from his pocket, then quickened his pace.

But ere he could get within striking distance of the German, Seigner said:

"Pardon, your Majesty, may I speak?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 365.

EVERY
MONDAY.

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

"Speak," assented Thorpe.

In his eagerness Seigner forgot the etiquette which demanded that he should not stop unless the disguised Emperor commanded, and habit so suddenly that Thorpe collided violently against him. His hat fell off, and the escaped prisoner was revealed.

Longer dignity was hopeless, for Seigner resigned his foe immediately. But ere he could so much as draw the sword which clattered at his side, Thorpe Thornhill's arms shot out, and his iron fingers closed round the villain's throat.

Too astounded to do more than gaze out feeble appeals for mercy, Seigner looked at his enemy with terror-stricken eyes; then, rapidly recovering his self-possession, he shook himself free with a sudden twist, shouting at the top of his voice:

"Help! To me, comrades! Help!"

He got no further, for, like a stone out of a catapult, Thornhill's clenched fist struck him full between the eyes, hurling him, dazed and confused, to the ground. Then Thorpe turned swiftly on his heels, and, with a loud shout of triumphant defiance, plunged down a by-lane, leading whither he knew not, whilst from the direction of both Leith and Edinburgh a mixed mob of German soldiers and military police hastened on the scene.

Fortunately, the foremost German paused by the side of the fallen man.

"After him, fool, idiot, pig!" gasped Seigner, struggling to his feet, and staggering from side to side, for the blow which had felled him to the ground had been delivered by no child's arm. "After him! Do you hear?" he continued, as the man—an officer of German cuirassiers—turned angrily upon him. "It is the Emperor's assassin!"

The cuirassier and those around him waited to hear no more, but started off in swift pursuit down the narrow lane, which ended in a small, bush-dotted, open space.

Turning as though making for Edinburgh, Thorpe sped along for about a hundred yards; then, pausing beneath a large tree, grasped an overhanging branch, and the next moment was stretched across one of its mighty limbs.

A minute later, with a jingling of swords and the quick beating of running feet, a dozen Germans—private soldiers, police, and officers—passed by.

Waiting until they had been swallowed up by the darkness beyond, Thorpe dropped to the ground, and ran as swiftly as his legs could carry him in the opposite direction.

Five minutes later he paused and listened. He could hear no sound of pursuit, so, changing his run into a swift walk, he rapidly approached the town of Portobello.

Here he again decreased his speed, for the streets were filled with German soldiers and sailors, until he reached the seaside on the opposite side of the town.

Eagerly he scanned the many lights floating on the Firth of Forth, and soon detected three in the form of a triangle, which, from Tom's description, he knew to be those carried by the lugger.

Looking cautiously around him, he took his matchbox from his pocket and struck three vestas in quick succession.

Five minutes later a boat grated on the shingle at his feet, and two men, jumping into the water, steadied her whilst they held out their hands to help their distinguished passenger on board.

Expecting every moment to hear the alarm raised behind him, Thorpe seated himself in the stern of the little craft, and was soon being pulled with lusty strokes over the sleeping waters of the Forth.

So far he had seen nothing of little Tom Evans, but on reaching the lugger that youngster's shrill tones were heard hallooing the boat.

"Shut up, you English brat!" cried one of the Heligolandiers roughly. "Do you want all the fleet to know who we have on board?"

And the man aimed a vicious blow at the boy—a blow that he repeated the next moment, for Tom dodged, and the marine's hand fell with no little force upon the hard bulwarks.

A minute later Thorpe Thornhill stood on board the lugger.

"Put out to sea at once! Lose no time!" he commanded; then strode towards the little cabin, the door of which Tom was holding open.

As he did so he saw a burly Heligolandier, evidently the lugger's skipper, sitting a lantern upwards. There was a sharp flash of white light from the sky in return, and Thorpe caught a momentary glimpse of a flying ship immediately above his head.

Then the fishing vessel's anchor was weighed, the sails cast loose, and, flying before a favouring breeze, she was soon bowling swiftly down the Forth.

Again and again, from patrol boat, torpedo craft, or war-

ship's deck, the lugger was challenged, but the magic word "Potsdam" cleared all obstacles from their path; and, within an hour of their setting sail, Tom Evans, creeping unperceived against the cabin window, whispered:

"We've diddled 'em! The last German ship has been left behind!"

But the information carried little comfort to Thorpe Thornhill's heart. So far, it is true, all had gone well; but, even though he and Tom Evans could overcome three stalwart Heligolanders, they would still have the airship to deal with.

Presently he deemed the beginning of the end was drawing nigh, for from above came a voice hailing the sailors.

"Below! Will the Herr Major come on board?" demanded the voice.

"What major? We have only one passenger here," was the reply.

And the beating of wings overhead sounded louder, showing that the airship had dropped nearer the surface of the waves.

"Surely the Emperor has not come on board alone? Our commander was to have accompanied him out to sea," declared the same voice.

Thorpe drew his pistol, for he knew that the next few minutes would see him fighting for his life against hopeless odds.

Suddenly an idea entered his head. They were still within sight of land, and immediately before them lay the dark, frowning hulls of the British fleet. To shoot down the Heligolanders was too much like cold-blooded murder; so, anxious to attract attention, much though he hated to waste bullets, he put his hand through the cabin window and fired four shots in quick succession into the sea.

Loose oaths and deep curses resounded from the deck of the fishing craft, intermixed with deep guttural German exclamations from the airship.

Then what Thorpe had hoped happened. From the British warships through which they were endeavouring to creep flashed innumerable searchlights, darting backwards and forwards over the waters, until their glare was concentrated upon the airship and the lugger.

But what he was more pleased to see than all was the low-lying hull of a four-turrelled torpedo-boat destroyer beating the water into white foam as she rushed towards the lugger.

In a moment all was confusion on board both the aerial and the sea craft.

"We have been fooled! This is not the German Emperor!" cried one of the sailors, looking at Thorpe's face, which was plainly revealed by the bright glare of the searchlights.

The whole crew rushed upon him; but in an instant Thorpe leaped over the bulwark into the sea.

"You have betrayed us!" cried a voice from the airship.

Saved From a Watery Grave.

The next moment a bright, glittering object hurtled from the well of the German aerial craft.

Even as Thorpe plunged beneath the waves, so did the aerial bomb strike the fishing-lugger. There was a blinding flash, a loud report, and a pillar of flame arose from the billows as the lugger and her crew were hurled to destruction.

Rising to the surface, Thorpe gave one quick glance around, then dived again, to escape not only the falling mass of wreckage hurtling around, but also the hail of bullets with which the furious Germans on board the airship assailed him.

Suddenly from out the darkness shot forth a spear of flame, and the next moment the German airship trembled, as a projectile from the Avenger struck her glistening hull, for Dick, not knowing to whose rescue he was hastening, had flown to the assistance of one threatened by their common foe. And now Thorpe, treading water, for the Germans had all they could do to defend themselves without wasting shot upon the swimming man, watched with bated breath a sight such as he had never seen before—a deadly conflict waged in mid-air.

Hitherto he had always been a participant in these encounters. It was a new sensation to watch as a spectator the two flying ships, each brightly illuminated by the other's searchlight, darting up and down, shooting forth spears of lurid flame, until suddenly the craft at the stern of which floated the German flag heeled over, its fans ceased working, and it dropped headlong into the sea some fifty feet from where he swam, throwing up the water to an immense height, and giving Thorpe as much as he could do to keep his head above the waves.

But the water soon subsided sufficiently to allow him to swim towards the destroyer. But barely had he swam a couple of strokes as a cry for help some twenty yards to his left, reached his ears.

The voice was that of Tom Evans. Without a moment's

hesitation, Thorpe flung himself on his side, and forced his way through the water as swiftly as his strong arms could propel him forward.

For a moment the searchlights from the destroyer and the Avenger had been shifted to a different part of the Forth, but now they returned to the scene of action, and Thorpe, uttering a cry of horror, redoubled his efforts as he saw one of the Heligolanders seated astride an overturned boat, trying to hold the struggling form of the brave little steved Arab from him with one hand, whilst in the other he raised aloft a jagged piece of wood. Another second, it would have descended upon the help-less youngster's head; but Thorpe, realising that in no other way could he be in time to save his young friend, grabbed the man by the leg, and, striking beneath the waves, pulled him down.

With a yell of terror, the Heligolander released his hold of Tom Evans, and turned fiercely upon his new and mysterious foe, until, not wishing to go to the bottom of the Forth with his prisoner, Thorpe released his hold, and tried to regain the surface.

But as he did so, the sailor seized him round the neck, and, struggling frantically, pulled him down again; then he wound his legs round his victim, and a terrible fight ensued beneath the waves—a fight which, it seemed, must end in the death of both, for already Thorpe felt the blood surging through his head, and his heart beat like the piston of a steam-engine.

He could not have held his breath another moment, when suddenly a breeze of fresh air swept across his brow, and he realised that their struggles had carried them once more to the surface. At the same moment his antagonist dealt him a vicious blow on the head, which forced him to release his hold. Then a hand grasped him by the throat, and he was thrust down once more, deeper and deeper into the waves, for the Heligolander had seen the face of his assailant, and a murderous hate filled his heart against the man who had duped him.

Dick Thornhill was manipulating the Avenger's searchlight from the bows of his craft. A minute before, Tom Evans, who had been picked up by the destroyer, had hailed him, saying that Master Thorpe was in the water, and he was searching for his brother, when his attention was directed to the struggling forms rising and disappearing and rising again on the surface of the waves. Then the cry of appeal in his brother's voice reached his ears. Without a moment's hesitation, he flung off his coat, and, unarmed though he was, save for the revolver in his holster at his belt, sprang overboard.

It was a great height from which he plunged into the sea; but Dick was a practised diver, and, knowing well that at such a height feet foremost was safer, maintained that position.

It was well for him that he did so. Had he dived head foremost he would undoubtedly have dashed, with fatal effect to himself, against the swimming Heligolander, who was holding Thorpe Thornhill down. As it was, his feet struck, with terrible force, the would-be murderer's shoulders.

For a moment he thought he had alighted on a piece of wreckage, but the agonised cry which burst from the ruffian's lips told him what had happened, and, though his legs tingled and ached, he swam swiftly round, looking on every side for his brother.

Presently he gave a shout, and almost sprang out of the water in his eagerness to reach the spot where, for a brief second, Thorpe Thornhill's white face appeared above the surface.

But short though the time, it sufficed to allow Dick to grasp the collar of his brother's coat, and the next moment, shouting lustily for help, he was dragging him in, the direction of a boat lowered by the torpedo-boat destroyer, on the low-lying deck of which Thorpe Thornhill opened his eyes, squeezed, and asked for Tom.

"He's all right, Thorpe, old man; but what of yourself? How do you feel?" cried Dick eagerly.

"A bit done up and somewhat fogged about the head, but otherwise as fit as a fiddle. Where's the Avenger?"

"There she is, old boy. Why?"

"Get me on board her as quick as you can. We must get back to Edinburgh Castle in a hurry. When the Kaiser finds the lugger has sailed without him, he may embark on Seignur's flying ship," explained Thorpe. "Think of it, Dick! The war's drawing to its close!" he added exultantly.

"So the German Emperor was trying to escape—eh?" asked the commander of the destroyer.

"Yes; but, thanks to little Tom Evans, I was able to take his place and escape instead," was the reply.

"Then as soon as you are safely off my hands I'll steam round, and put the admiral on the alert," declared the sailor.

"Right you are! He'll be a smart man if he gets through the fleet, and I think I can promise that my brother and I will see he does not escape in the air," assented Thorpe.

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The barge, rocking on the choppy waves, whirled round at once, with a sudden motion that made the Removees stagger. Ponsonby fell back in the boat, his knife dropping into the sea. "Hooray!" yelled Gadsby and Yavasour. "Good-bye, Greyfriars! See you again some day! Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 6.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Carries the Bag!

BILLY BUNTER stood on the steps of the School House at Greyfriars, with his little round eyes gleaming behind his big spectacles.

Billy Bunter was keeping watch.

There had been a heavy snow-fall, and the old Close of Greyfriars was covered with spotless white. Walls and roofs and the leafless branches of the trees glimmered with snow.

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A crowd of Fourth-Formers and Remove fellows were snow-balling one another in the Close, amid yells and shouts of laughter. But Billy Bunter was not watching the snow-fight. His eyes were fixed on the doorway, and his attitude was that of a cat watching a mouse-hole.

There was a tramping of feet within, and five juniors came into view in the big doorway of the School House. They were Harry Wharton & Co.—the Famous Five of the Remove. They had their overcoats and caps on, and Bob Cherry was carrying an enormous bag.

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Billy Bunter planted himself directly in their path. Evidently this little party was what he had been waiting for.

"I say, you fellows—"
Bob Cherry swung the big bag forward to clear the way, and Billy Bunter yelped and jumped back. Then there was a louder yelp as his foot slipped on the steps, and he rolled down and sat in the snow with a bump.

"Ow!"
"Bravo!" said Frank Nugent encouragingly. "Let's see you do that again, Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Ow! I'm hurt! I—I say, you might give a fellow a hand up!" roared Bunter, as the Famous Five, laughing, marched past him and left him sitting in the snow. "I say, you fellows—"

Harry Wharton & Co. tramped down the drive towards the gates, leaving deep footprints in the snow. Billy Bunter scrambled up, and trotted after them, and overtook them at the school gates. It was a half-holiday that afternoon at Greyfriars, and football being out of the question, the chums of the Remove had planned a little expedition. Billy Bunter's valuable company had not been requested. It was not desired, as a matter of fact, but a trifle like that did not worry Bunter. The fat junior was not sensitive.

"I say, you fellows," he panted, as he rolled out of the gates after them. "I'm coming along with you, you know. But look here, this is jolly rotten weather for a picnic! Why not have the feed indoors?"

"What feed?" demanded Wharton.

Bunter blinked at him.
"I know what you've got in that bag!" he snapped. "You can't take me in. I've been waiting for you to come out. I knew what was on. Look here, it's simply idiotic to have a picnic out of doors in this weather! There's a fire in the common-room—"

"Bow-wow!" said Bob.
"Well, of course, if you persist in playing the giddy ox, I'll come with you," said Bunter.

"Fathead!" said Bob Cherry. "It isn't a feed!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"This isn't picnic weather, ass!" said Nugent. "I don't think even you would like to eat what's in that bag."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You can't take me in," said Bunter firmly. "I know what I know. Ow! If you kick me again, Bull, I'll wipe up on your ground with you. I—I say, you fellows, what I really wanted was to offer to carry the bag for you."

The chums of the Remove grinned. Billy Bunter's thoughts generally ran upon feeding, and he could see no reason why five juniors should go out loaded with a big bag unless a feed was in prospect. And if he carried the bag, he could hardly be excluded from the feed—when it came off.

"You want to carry this bag?" demanded Bob.

"Yes, certainly! Anything to oblige an old pal!" said Bunter affably.

"It's heavy."

"Oh, I don't mind that."

The heavier the bag was the more Bunter would be pleased if it contained eatables.

"Well, if you insist—" said Bob.

"Oh, kick him out!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Yes, really, Bull, I'm going to carry this bag for my pal," said Bunter. "Hand it over, Bob, old man! My aunt! It is heavy!"

"I told you so," said Bob. "Give it to me and clear off, you silly owl!"

"Rats! I'm going to carry it!" said Bunter.

"Well, go ahead!"

The Famous Five tramped on, grinning, down the snowy lane, Billy Bunter labouring after them with the heavy bag.

The fat junior grunted spasmodically under his burden.

"I—I say, are you going far?" he gasped after a few minutes.

"Only as far as the cliffs," said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, my hat! Wait while I rest a bit."

"Rats!"

"Give me the bag, fathead!" said Bob.

"Yes, and you'll leave me behind!" growled Bunter. "I know you! I haven't got spindles-shanks like you fellows. You can't leave me behind while I've got the bag, anyway."

"Well, get a move on!"

Bunter laboured on again. The Famous Five had to slacken down for him. Billy Bunter's little fat legs were going like clockwork, but he could not keep pace with the strides of the juniors. Even without that heavy bag he could not have kept pace, and he knew it, and he clung to the bag determinedly. Without that he would have been dropped in the first quarter of a mile.

"Buck up!" rapped out Bob. "Look here, I'll have that bag—"

"No, you won't! 'Tain't really heavy! I'm bucking up!" gasped Bunter. "I can manage it all right! You leave it to me! Oh, dear!"

"What's the matter?"

"N-nothing! All right! I can manage!"

Bunter lumbered on, panting for breath. He was troubled with shortness of breath, owing to want of exercise and over-feeding and general slackness. But he was getting plenty of exercise now. At every offer to relieve him of the bag he bucked up desperately, fearful that it would be taken from him.

His fat face streamed with perspiration, and his spectacles slid down his fat little nose, and he gasped and panted, and panted and gasped, in a manner that flustered Jamset Ram Singh described as terrific.

Still he struggled on.

"I say, you fellows, there's the old barn!" he stuttered at last. "Why not stop there for the feed? There's snow on the beach, you know."

"I'll take the bag if you like," said Bob.

"No, you won't! It's all right. But—"

"Buck up!"

Bunter groaned, and laboured on. The Famous Five snickered cheerfully round the struggling fat junior. Bunter was streaming with perspiration now, and his breathing was in the form of spasmodic grunts. But he would not relinquish the bag. Nothing would induce him to part with his burden.

The Greyfriars party passed Cliff House School, and came out on the beach. The little fishing village of Pegg gleamed white with snow to the right, and away across the bay rolled the choppy waters of the North Sea. Bunter stumbled over the shingle, and dropped the bag at last in the powdery snow.

"Oh, crums! You ain't going any further, surely?" he groaned.

"No; this will do," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Thanks, awfully, for carrying the bag, Bunter. We were going to take it in turns, and it's awfully decent of you to carry it all the way for nothing."

"Look here, I'm staying!" said Bunter.

"Stay as long as you like, my fat tulip," said Bob.

"Oh, good! We can sit on the rocks there and have the feed," gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," said Bunter peevishly. "Haddin't you better open the bag, Wharton?"

"Certainly."

Harry Wharton opened the bag, and Billy Bunter looked on, his eyes glistening behind his spectacles. His appetite, always good, had been sharpened by that tramp through the keen frosty air.

But his expression changed as Harry Wharton drew out of the big bag a carefully-packed camera, and then a jointed and folded tripod. Bunter's jaw dropped.

"I—I—I say, Wharton, what's that?"

"My cinematograph camera," said Wharton calmly. "A New Year's present from my uncle. Just going to try it."

"But—but what about the feed?" howled Bunter.

"What feed?"

"You—you rotters! Do you mean to say that there isn't a feed?" shrieked Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter glared into the bag. Certainly there was nothing there in the shape of a feed—not even a sandwich.

The fat junior blinked at the Famous Five, his feelings almost too deep for words. Harry Wharton proceeded scintillatingly to set up the cinematograph machine.

"You—you—you spoiling beasts!" stuttered Bunter at last.

"What have you come out this afternoon for, then?"

"To take films, of course," said Harry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I've carried your beastly camera!" yelled Bunter.

"It was awfully good of you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you—you—you—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, you're not going, Bunter?" exclaimed Bob. "You can stay, you know. Stay as long as you like! Besides, there's the bag to be carried home, you know, when we've taken the films."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter, crimson with fury, shook a fat fist at the

ANSWERS

jelling juniors, and tramped wrathfully away through the snow. Harry Wharton & Co., chuckling, proceeded to take their films.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Cowardly Attack!

"GREYFRIARS cad!"

"Collar him!"

Billy Bunter halted in alarm. He was tramping back disconsolately towards Greyfriars, when he came suddenly upon four juniors in Highcliffe caps. He blinked in dismay at Ponsoby & Co., the heroes of Highcliffe School, and the deadly foes of the Greyfriars' Remove. Ponsoby and Gadsby and Vavasour and Mouson surrounded him at once. Billy Bunter was not a fighting man, and he seldom took part in the incessant "fags" between the rival juniors; but Ponsoby & Co. were not disposed to let an easy victim escape them.

"Well met!" said Ponsoby blandly. "Glad to see us, Tubby!"

"Oh! Oh, yes! Always jolly glad to see you, Ponsoby, old man," stammered Bunter. "I say, you fellows, lemme alone, you know. Chuck it! If you want to go for anybody, you can go for those beasts on the beach, you know. They're out there with a cinematograph camera, and I'd like you to jolly well smash it up."

"Oh, good," said Ponsoby, his eyes gleaming. "Thanks for the information. Where are they, and how many?"

"The Five of them—you know the beasts—and they're just round the corner," said Bunter eagerly. "I'd be jolly glad if you'd whop the cads. They've been playing a rotten trick on me. After promising me a feed, they—"

"Rotten!" said Ponsoby. "We must avenge Bunter's wrongs, you fellows."

"Absolutely," grinned Vavasour.

"Perhaps he's telling us lies to get rid of us, though," said Gadsby.

"Oh, really, Gadsby—"

"Buzz round the corner and see, Gadsby, while we attend to this cheerful porpoise," said Ponsoby.

"Right-ho!" Gadsby ran off, and the other three gathered round the alarmed Owl of the Remove.

"I—I say, you fellows," stammered Bunter. "I—I'm giving it to you straight, you know. I—ow—loggo my ear, Vavasour, you beast. If you kick me again, Mouson—you ow—ow! Look here, you go for those other beasts. I'd like you to jolly well smash 'em and smash their camera—"

"Bump him for giving away his pals," said Ponsoby.

Bump!

"Yow!"

"Bump him again for splitting his infinitives."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter rolled in the snow, gasping, as Gadsby came scudding back.

"It's all serene," said Gadsby. "They're there—taking films—anyway. Wharton is turning a handle or something. There's five of the beasts, but we can give 'em a volley at long range and knock the machine over, and—"

"And scrot!" said Mouson.

"Exactly."

"Roll that porpoise over into the ditch," said Ponsoby. "We haven't finished with him yet."

"Ow! Leggo! Yarcooh! Why, you beasts, this ain't playing the game—oh—grooogh!"

Billy Bunter's anguished voice was drowned suddenly. The deep ditch beside the lane was full of snow, and Bunter disappeared into five feet of it. The Highcliffe juniors yelled with laughter.

"Groooscoogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hic me out, you beasts!" spluttered Bunter. "Oh, dear. Ow! Ow! D-d-d-d-d go away and leave me here, you rotters— Oh, crumbs!"

Ponsoby & Co. walked away laughing. The fat junior groped for his glasses, and fortunately found them, and scrambled the best he could out of the snow in the ditch. He shook his fat after the Highcliffe fellows, and scrambled away in a great hurry towards Greyfriars.

The four High Cliffians proceeded to "stalk" the chums of the Remove, much elated by their easy victory over the hapless Bunter. To tackle the Famous Five at close quarters was not in Ponsoby's line. The Greyfriars fellows, certainly, would have been willing to let one of their number stand down, so as to have the contest on equal terms, but Ponsoby was not looking for a contest on equal terms. He liked to have the advantage on his side in a scrap.

Harry Wharton & Co. were very busy, and had no eyes open for the enemy. Ponsoby and his comrades carefully kept in cover of the rocks as they drew nearer to the Famous Five. They came within about fifteen yards unperceived, to

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the fast of the rocks, and then the open beach lay before them. Wharton was taking films of the village and the sea. Ponsoby chuckled softly.

"They haven't spotted us yet," he murmured. "Look here, we're going to smash that machine for them, kids. And—after a volley or two, we shall have to hook it, as they're five to four. What?"

"Absolutely!"

"You bet!" said Gadsby. "One volley won't hurt 'em much, though."

"It will if we put something solid in the snowballs," said Ponsoby coolly.

Gadsby hesitated.

"I say, Pon, that's rather thick, you know."

"Rot!" said Ponsoby. "We want to smash their machine, don't we?"

"But—but those things are jolly expensive," said Gadsby, who was not quite such a rascal as his leader. "I don't know about smashing it. Knock it over."

"Booh! We're going to smash it and them too! Get some pebbles."

"Well, if you say so, Pon—"

"Who's leading?" demanded Ponsoby, in a bullying tone.

"Oh, all right!"

"Serve 'em jolly well right," said Vavasour. "They spoiled my topper the other day with a snowball. Serve 'em right."

And the quartette proceeded to make up snowballs with heavy pebbles inside them.

It was a dangerous, as well as cowardly thing to do, but Ponsoby & Co. were not particular. And a rapid retreat would save them from unpleasant consequences, as they concluded that the Famous Five would not leave the camera on the beach to come in pursuit of them.

"Ready!" murmured Ponsoby.

"Absolutely," said Vavasour.

"Then up and at 'em!"

The four High Cliffians jumped up from their cover, and ran forward, volleys of snowballs.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Highcliffe cads!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Look out!"

"Whiz! Whiz! Whiz! Crash! Smash!"

Harry Wharton uttered an exclamation of wrath as the camera and tripod went crashing over. Bob Cherry yelled as a snowball caught him on the forehead, and a streak of red appeared where it struck. He reeled and fell on the snowy sands.

"Stones!" exclaimed Nugent. "Oh, you cads!"

"Whiz! Whiz! Whiz!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Yarcooh!"

Ponsoby & Co. turned and fled. They dashed away at top speed, suffocating with laughter.

Bob Cherry sat in the snow, holding his head. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was dabbing at his dusky nose with a handkerchief, where a sharp pebble had cut him. Wharton and Nugent and Johnny Bull had all been hit, but in less dangerous places. Wharton's brow was black with wrath.

"After them!" he shouted.

"But the camera—"

"Blow the camera!"

Wharton flew away in hot pursuit, and his chums ran after him. The great machine was left lying where it fell. Whatever might happen to that, Wharton did not care for the moment—all he cared for just then was reprisals on the High Cliffians.

The Famous Five were among the best runners in the Remove. They ran now as if they were on the cinder-path. Ponsoby looked back, and uttered an exclamation of alarm as he saw five furious juniors in full chase.

"My hat! They're after us! They've left the giddy camera!" he exclaimed. "Put it on!"

The High Cliffians "put it on" as hard as they could, considerably alarmed now. The red and furious faces of the Removees looked as if there would be bad trouble if they got to close quarters. The High Cliffians dashed down the lane breathlessly, fear lending them wings.

Ponsoby looked back again, his face going quite white.

"They're gaining, the beasts!"

"Oh, my hat! I—I can't keep this up much longer!" gasped Vavasour, whose staying power had been sapped away by continual cigarettes. "I—I can't keep on."

"I—can't, either," spluttered Mouson.

Ponsoby gazed desperately.

"We shall have to stop and scrap!" he gasped. "Get up here, and we can hold 'em off."

The lane ran round the steep side of the Black Pike. A narrow path ascended the hillside, which rose abruptly from the road. It was a spot that could be held easily against

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superior numbers, by a determined defence. The pursuers were only a dozen paces behind now, and in another couple of minutes the fugitives must have been run down. Ponsombly had chosen a favourable spot for the fight that was now inevitable.

The breathless Highcliffians turned from the road and scrambled up the steep path, which was almost too steep for climbing without the aid of the hands.

With desperate haste, the four young rascals clambered up the steep, and halted, breathless and gasping, a dozen yards above the road.

Harry Wharton & Co., coming on full tilt, had rushed past the spot before they could slacken down, but they halted quickly, and came rushing back, and started up the ascent without a moment's hesitation.

But the path, which wound among big rocks, was too narrow for more than two to proceed abreast. Wharton and Bob Cherry led the way; Bob with a streak of red running down his face.

Ponsombly & Co., knee-deep in snow, had plenty of ammunition close at hand. They grabbed up snowballs, and pelted the advancing enemy.

They were fighting like rats in a corner now, and they were desperate. The heavy volleys from above swept down on the Greyfriars juniors, and Bob Cherry lost his footing in the snow and rolled backwards. He caught hold of Wharton for support, but only succeeded in dragging him over, too. They bumped into their followers and there was a general roar as the whole party went rolling down the slope into the lane.

And Ponsombly & Co., safe above them, clattered with triumph.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. A Licking for Highcliff!

"Oh, crumbs!"
"Gerroff my neck!"
"Oh, dear!"

"The oh-dearfulness is terrific!" growled Hurree Singh. "May I respectfully ask you to get off my esteemed neck, Nugent!"

The Removites sorted themselves out, and picked themselves up. They were breathless and battered. But they were not beaten. They paused in the road to recover their breath, while snowballs from above whizzed down on them in showers.

"Come on!" yelled Ponsombly. "Try it again!"

"Absolutely!" chirped Vavasour.

The Highcliffians were full of confidence now. They had no doubt of being able to hold their position against double their number if needed. And they believed that the Famous Five were already beaten.

"Funks!" yelled Monson. "Why don't you come on! Yah!"

"Yah! Funks!"

Wharton panted wrathfully.

"We'll jolly soon show 'em whether we're funks or not," he said, between his teeth. "Get your second wind yet, you chaps!"

"I'm ready!" growled Bob.

"The readiness is—"

"Come on, then!"

Harry Wharton gallantly led the assault. He proceeded more cautiously this time, clambering up steadily instead of making a rush. After him went his chums. Ponsombly & Co. rained snowballs upon them, faster and faster.

Half blinded by the snow that burst and squashed in their faces, the Removites clambered on steadily, and came up closer and closer.

There was no stopping them, except by hand-to-hand combat. Vavasour drew back behind his comrades and tried to clamber further up the hill. Monson scrambled away desperately over the rocks. Ponsombly and Gadsby would have followed them, but the enemy were upon them now.

"Go for the ends!" panted Bob.

Bob grasped Ponsombly, and rolled in the snow with him, and Wharton collared Gadsby, and they rolled over together. The rest of the party scrambled on in pursuit of Monson and Vavasour, and quickly collared them.

"Got the rotters!" roared Johnny Bail. "Clear the way! I'm rolling this rad down!"

"Ow!" yelled Vavasour. "Leggo! I—I beg your pardon. I'm sorry. I really am—Oh! Help!"

Vavasour was rolling down the path, gathering snow as he rolled. He looked like a gigantic snowball by the time he reached the lane. He landed there, and lay nearly buried.

"Roll 'em down!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"The roll-fulness is terrific! Your turn, my esteemed and rotten Ponsombly!"

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Ponsombly went rolling down helplessly, and after him went Monson and Gadsby. They rolled over the unfortunate Vavasour in the lane.

The Famous Five followed them down, and surrounded them. The Highcliffians sat up in the snow, gasping for breath.

"Ow! Lamine alone! I give you best!" growled Vavasour.

Bob Cherry tapped his cut forehead.

"You've got to pay for this, you cowardly rotters!"

"Ow! It was Ponsombly's fault!"

"Was against using sticks," gasped Gadsby. "Pon't tell you so."

"Rotten funk!" growled Ponsombly.

"Well, you know I was—"

"So was I, absolutely!"

"You're not worth bickering," said Bob Cherry contemptuously. "Give the ends snowballs, you fellows. Stay where you are, you cads, till we've finished making snowballs, and then you can run for it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, I'm co-cold!" stammered Vavasour.

"You'll be warm enough presently, when you start running."

Ponsombly, gritting his teeth, sprang to his feet. Bob Cherry promptly knocked him down again. Gadsby jumped up, and Hurree Singh let out his right, and Gadsby dropped into the snow with a roar.

"Have some more!" asked Bob cheerfully. "There's lots more where that came from."

"Ow! Ow!"

"Stay where you are, then, till I say 'Go!'"

The Highcliffians, almost fuming with rage, stayed where they were. They had no choice about it. They remained sitting in the snow, with Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh keeping ward over them, while Wharton and Nugent and Bull piled up a heap of snowballs ready for use.

When the ammunition was ready, the Famous Five took an awful of snowballs each, and stood ready. The Highcliffians blinked at them apprehensively.

"Now you can run!" said Bob Cherry. "Go!"

The snowballs started, smashing on all sides of the unhappy Highcliffians. They leaped up, only to be bowled over again. They scrambled away through the snow, still pelted, and scrambled wildly to their feet and ran. After them rushed the Greyfriars juniors, still pelted.

Never had Ponsombly & Co. put on such a speed before. They ran as if for their lives. But the Greyfriars juniors did not stop the pursuit till their large supply of ammunition was exhausted.

Then they halted, panting. Ponsombly & Co. disappeared down the lane.

"Phew!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I think we had the best of that little bit—what?"

"The beatfulness was—"

"Terrific!" chuckled Bob.

"I think they've had a lesson this time!" gasped Wharton.

"But what price the esteemed camera?" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Someone may have discoveredly found it, and walkfully gone off with it."

"Oh, my hat! I forgot the cinema."

The Famous Five hurried back to the beach. They had a good way to go. When they arrived on the spot where they had left the machine, they found it being examined by a group of longshoremen and bergies. A stout bargeman was trying to see how it worked, and Wharton rescued it from his unskilful hands just in time.

"No more blessed pictures to-day," growled Wharton. "The light's gone. Those rotters from Highcliff have spoiled the bizney for us this time."

And the captain of the Removs packed up the camera.

"Never mind: we'll try again next half-holiday," said Bob Cherry. "If it's fine on Wednesday afternoon, we'll come out again. Never say die."

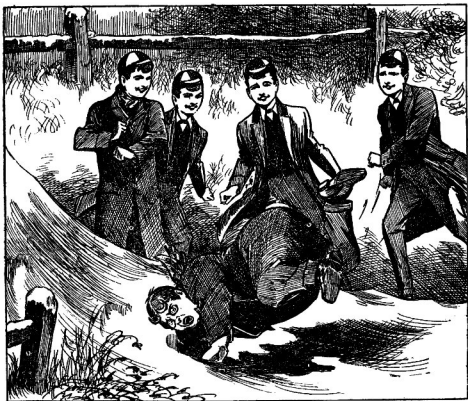
The Famous Five tramped back to Greyfriars, carrying the heavy bag in turn. Billy Bunter's services were not available now.

Hurree Wharton was exasperated; for the days were too short for pictures to be taken after school, and he had to wait for the next half-holiday. The only consolation was that the cads of Highcliff had had the time of their lives.

An hour later the Famous Five were at tea in No. 1 Study in the Removs passage. Funds were high in the study, and a feed of unusual plinkitude was on the table, and Squiff and Marley and Vernon-Smith had come in to tea. By the time they had started, the door opened again, and Billy Bunter blinked in.

"I say, you fellows—"

Bob Cherry packed up a cushion. Bunter prepared to dodge.



"Ow! Leggo! Yaroooh! This ain't playing the game—oh—grooogh!" Billy Bunter's anguished voice was drowned suddenly. The deep ditch beside the lane was full of snow, and Bunter disappeared into five feet of it. The Highcliffe juniors roared with laughter. (See Chapter 2.)

"I say, you know, don't be a beast, you know. I got awfully hungry carrying your camera for you, you know, and that beast Todd isn't standing any tea in No. 7 to-day. He actually had the cheek to ask me if I was standing any; as if I could stand a feed when my postal-order hasn't arrived. I say, you fellows, the least you can do is to ask me to tea after I've carried your camera for you."

"Because you thought it was a feed, you fat loafer!" growled Wharton.

"Ahem! That was only my little joke," explained Bunter. "I knew all the time, you know. Of course, you fellows can take a joke?"

"Why, you fat Ananias—"

"Anyway, I carried the bag," said Bunter, insinuating himself into the study, and keeping a wary eye on the cushion. "You can't deny that. Thanks, I'll try that cake! Of course, you know, I was only pulling your leg all the time—I knew it was a camera. Pass those tarts, Smithy."

Bob Cherry put down the cushion, and rose to his feet.

"Gentlemen, shall we let Bunter have tea for carrying the bag, or kick him out for telling whoppers?" he asked. "I suggest that we toss up for it. Lay hold!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, I say!" roared Bunter, nearly choking over the tart. "Wharrer you at? You can toss up for it if you like, but let me alone—grooogh—"

"We're going to toss you up," explained Nugent.

"Groooh! Oh, my hat! Leggo! I say, you fellows—"

"Up with him!" exclaimed Bob. "Now, we're going to THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 363.

tees you up, Bunter, and if you come down, we kick you out—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And if you stay up, then you can have tea. That's fair."

"Why, you silly ass—leggo!"

"Heave-ho!" sang out Bob. "My hat! What a weight! We want a steam derrick for this. Up goes Bunter!"

Billy Bunter, heavy-weight as he was, was swung up into the air in the grasp of the Removites. He wriggled and struggled spasmodically.

"Oh, my aunt! Oh, crumbs! Oh, grooogh—"

"You know the terms, Bunter! You're tossed up, and if you come down—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly asses!" shrieked Bunter. "I shall break my neck! Yaroooh! Help! Thieves! Fire! Murder!"

"Down with him!"

"Yowwwwwppp!"

Billy Bunter came down with a rush—till he was within a few inches of the floor, and then the humorous juniors allowed him to sink softly upon the carpet. Billy Bunter sat there blinking wildly, hardly aware whether he had broken any bones or not for the moment, so sudden had his descent been.

By the time he realised that he was not hurt, the grinning juniors were seated round the tea-table again. Bunter gasped.

"Oh, you beasts! You were only rotting, you rotters! Grooogh! Now gimme that cake! I—I can take a joke!"

And Billy Bunter started on the cake, quite ready to take the joke if he could take the cake too.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bolslover is Satisfied!

BOLDSLOVER MAJOR came up to the Famous Five in the passage, when the Remove guffied the Form-room after lesson on Wednesday morning. It was a fine, clear, cold day; the snow had disappeared, and Harry Wharton & Co. were looking forward to a little run in the afternoon with the cinematograph machine. The Remove eleven were backed to play the Fourth that afternoon; but the Famous Five did not consider their presence strictly necessary in the team. Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth, were not dangerous, and the chums considered that they could safely leave the Remove record in less able hands for that occasion.

Bolslover major was looking very truculent. He planted himself in Harry Wharton's way, as the captain of the Remove went towards the school notice-board, with a paper in his hand—evidently the list of the eleven for the afternoon.

"Hold on a minute!" growled Bolslover major.
"Hallo, hello, hallo!" said Bob Cherry affably. "Two minutes, if you like, my son. Wherefore that sweet smile?" Bolslover major was not smiling by any means.
"I want to speak to you about the match," he growled.
"I want to tell you my opinion. I think it's not fair play."
"What's biting you now?" asked Wharton mildly.
"Where do I come in?" demanded Bolslover. "You left me out of the matches for the Coker Cup—why?"
"Because there were better players to put in."
Bolslover major snorted.

"And now there's a match with the Fourth, with nothing special depending on it, you ought to give me a chance."

"Well, you see—"
"Oh, yes, I see!" growled Bolslover. "You've got lots of excuses. But you know very well that I ought to play for the Form. You fellows keep the whole game in your hands, and keep your own pals in the Form eleven all the time."

"Only when it's necessary to win," said Wharton gently.
"Rats! Look here, you're going to put me in goal this time."

Wharton shook his head.
"Bulstrode keeps goal!" he replied.

"Look here," roared Bolslover major, "I shall resign from the club. If I don't have a chance to play for the Form, I'll chuck it. I protest against that list you've got in your paw—I think you ought, in common decency, to tear it up, and make out a new one."

Harry Wharton laughed.
"But you haven't seen it yet," he said.

"Oh, I know what's in it," snorted Bolslover major, "and I protest! So does Skinner, don't you, Skinner?"

"Certainly," said Skinner. "Why shouldn't I have a look in?"

"But—"
"Oh, blow your buts!" snapped Skinner. "Put that rotten list in the fire, and make out a new one, and give the other chaps a chance."

"But I tell you—"
"Oh, don't talk to me!" said Bolslover. "Mind, I protest against that list being put up on the board at all."

"My dear chap—"
"You're not going to put it up?" roared Bolslover major, as Wharton walked round him and went to the notice-board.

"Certainly!"

"Then I'm going to resign from the Form club," said Bolslover major furiously. "Look here, all you fellows—"

"Let's look at the list first," suggested Mark Linley mildly.

"Oh, blow the list! I protest—"

Wharton pinned up the list, and the Removees gathered round to read it—excepting Bolslover major and Skinner, who weren't interested, being too full of their own special wrongs. There was a laugh from the juniors as they read the list.

"Yes, you can cackle," growled Bolslover, "but I don't think it's fair play. Why shouldn't I have a chance—what? I'll jolly well tear that list down!"

"Master's touch it," said Nugent, laughing. "Wharton's captain."

"Blow Wharton!"

"Why not read the list?" suggested Vernon-Smith.

"I don't want to read it!" snapped Bolslover. "I'm sick of this favoritism. I know the names already—Wharton, and Nugent, and Cherry, and Bull, and that niggar—"

"My esteemed Bolslover—" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, shut up!"

"But look at the list, fathead!" yelled Tom Brown.

"I won't look at it! I won't condescend to look at it!" snorted Bolslover major. "I protest against that list, and I don't recognise it. I decline to take any notice of it. I think it's rotten."

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded the burly Remove angrily.

"Well, it's good in parts," said Tom Brown, "but one of the backs is rather rotten, I admit that—and one of the halves I don't think much of."

"Oh, you're beginning to find fault with the high and mighty Wharton at last, are you?" sneered Bolslover major.

The New Zealand junior laughed.

"No, I'm not finding fault; only expressing an opinion."

"Well, I find fault," said Bolslover major, "and I think—"

Bob Cherry caught Bolslover major by the shoulders and swung him round, and rushed him up to the notice-board.

"Read it, you ass!" he said.

As Bolslover's nose was within an inch of the board, he could not help reading the list. It ran:

Bulstrode; Morgan, Bolslover; Brown, Todd, Skinner; Ogilvy, Desmond, Field, Penfold, Vernon-Smith.

Bolslover's jaw dropped.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I didn't know—ahem!"

"Of course, if you can give me any tip about improving the list, I'll listen to you with pleasure, Bolslover," said Harry Wharton blandly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolslover major looked very sheepish.

"Do you still want to put it in the fire, Bolslover?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ahem!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolslover major was crushed. The Famous Five walked away laughing.

While the newly-constituted eleven was preparing for the match after dinner, Harry Wharton packed his camera in the big bag. The Famous Five sallied out in high spirits. On this occasion Billy Hunter was not available to carry the bag.

Bolslover major met the chums of the Remove as they came out, and he looked considerably sheepish.

"I say," he stammered, "I—I take back those things I said, you know—it's all right. I—I was a little—ahem!—hasty!"

"All serene!" smiled Wharton. "Pile in and beat the Fourth, old chap!"

"Oh, well! beat 'em!" said Bolslover confidently.

The Famous Five walked off smiling. For once the grumbling of Bolslover major was silenced. The chums of the Remove kept one eye open for Ponsomby & Co. as they sauntered down to the sea. But the Higgincliffians were not to be seen. If they were in the vicinity, they were careful to give the Famous Five a wide berth.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Cut Adrift!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry stood on the rocks, and looked out over the bay. At some little distance from the shore a big barge was moored to a buoy, straining at the rope as the outgoing tide tugged at it.

"That barge'll be left high and dry when the tide's gone, if they don't look after it," said Bob. "There seems to be nobody in charge."

Wharton glanced towards the barge.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "I could take a splendid set of pictures from that—the village from the sea, and the cliffs behind. It would be ripping! Let's see if there's anybody on board. If there is, we'll ask permission—"

"And if there isn't—"

"Then we'll manage without. There's a dinghy there, on the shingle!"

"Good!" said Bob; and he put his hands to his mouth and hailed the barge in a voice worthy of the celebrated Stenter himself: "Ahoy, the barge! Ahoy-o-o-y!"

There was no reply from the barge. It was evident that it was deserted. The bargeman had doubtless gone to the Anchor for liquid refreshment, and perhaps had found the ale at the Anchor a little too strong for him. And his boy had deserted his post.

"Well, if there's nobody to give us leave, we can manage without," said Wharton. "We'll tip the barge a bob if he comes back while we're there."

The five juniors and the bag were embarked in the little dinghy, and they pushed out towards the barge. Wharton tied the painter, and they clambered aboard, taking the bag with them.

As they stepped on the barge, a head came up behind the rocks on the shore, and if they had looked back landward, they would have recognised Cecil Ponsomby, of the Fourth

Form at Highcliffe. Gadsby and Vavasour were in cover beside him.

"What are the rotters up to?" muttered Vavasour. "Look here, Pon. I don't want to have any more scrapping with them. I'm fed-up with it."

"Be-r-r!" said Ponsonby. "We've got to make them sit up or what they did to us the other day."

"But we're only three, and they're five," said Vavasour plaintively. "Wait till we can get a crowd on to the cads. Be reasonable, Pon."

"They're gone out on the barge," said Ponsonby, unheeding. "They're going below now—there's nobody there. My hat!" he ejaculated suddenly.

"Well!" said Gadsby.

"What price cutting the rope, and giving them a cruise?" said Ponsonby, his eyes glittering. "They'd be in a blue funk when they found themselves adrift—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The tide's going out, and they'd have a dooce of a job to get back, in this wind," said Ponsonby. "Might have to lie out there till the tide turned. They'd be late back for coal-o-ver, and get lines, and as having the fright of their lives."

The Highcliffians chuckled. "Good egg!" said Gadsby. "But— Can you manage it?"

"There are boats there," said Ponsonby. "It won't take a few minutes to get one out, and if they don't see us—"

"Let's chance it!"

"Come on!" said Ponsonby.

The three Highcliffians ran down to the beach, and hastily pushed out one of the fishermen's boats. Harry Wharton & Co. had gone down into the cabin. They were a little surprised to find the barge deserted, in a position that would be dangerous when the tide was a little further out. If the barge was aboard, and asleep, they kindly intended to wake him and warn him. The coast was clear for Ponsonby & Co. The tide was running strongly, and their boat, as soon as they shoved off, was whisked away towards the barge. Gadsby steered, and Vavasour took an oar, and Ponsonby stood up in the bows, with his pocket-knife open in his hand.

The boat was quickly near enough, and he bent over and cut the painter of the dinghy, and drew the little skiff away after the boat. The Greyfriars fellows were now stranded on the barge, unless they chose to swim ashore in the icy water.

"Back!" muttered Ponsonby. "Get back to the buoy, and they won't have a chance of jumping in on us."

Ponsonby caught the mooring-rope close to the buoy, and sawed at it with his knife.

There was a sudden shout from the barge. Bob Cherry had come on deck again, and he jumped as he saw the Highcliffians, and what they were doing.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Highcliffe cads!" shouted Bob.

Ponsonby sawed away desperately.

The Greyfriars juniors joined Bob in a twinkling. Harry Wharton waved his hand to the Highcliffe boat. It was too far away for the longer jump, and the Remorites had no chance of getting at it. Ponsonby sawed away at the rope for all he was worth, and strand after strand parted under the keen blade.

"What are you doing?" shouted Wharton. "You nazi! Do you want to send us adrift?"

Ponsonby did not reply; he sawed away without even looking round.

"Stop it, you idiot!" bawled Johnny Bull. "Here, get into the dinghy, you chaps! We shall drift out to sea if that idiot cuts the rope."

"The dinghy's gone!" exclaimed Nugent, looking over the side.

"Look! they've got it towed on their boat."

The Faunies' Fire glared helplessly at the Highcliffians. There was no way of reaching the boat save by swimming, and the water was icy cold. But they realised, much more clearly than did the reckless Highcliffians, the danger of drifting out on the tide with the barge. The wind was blowing off shore, and it would be a hard struggle to sail close to the wind with that clumsy vessel, if it was possible at all. Wharton began to tear off his jacket.

"We've got to stop them somehow!" he muttered.

Bob Cherry gave a gasp.

"Too late!"

The jerk of the barge on the rope, as the tide tugged at it, had caused the two strands to part suddenly. The barge, rocking on the choppy waves, whirled round at once, with a sudden motion that made the Remorites stagger.

Ponsonby fell back in the boat, his knife dropping into the sea.

"Hurray!" yelled Gadsby and Vavasour. "Goodbye, Greyfriars!"

Ponsonby scrambled up, grinning. He waved his cap to the disgraced juniors on the barge.

"Good bye!" he yelled. "Happy cruise! See you again some day! Ha, ha, ha!"

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NEXT MONDAY—

EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

"Look out, or we shall jolly well follow them!" muttered Gadsby.

The tide and the wind were driving the boat after the barge. The three Highcliffians grasped the oars, and pulled for the shore. But getting back was not quite so easy as getting out. They put all their strength into the oars, but they made slow progress against the tide.

"M-m-m-y hat!" gasped Ponsonby. "Pull, you beggars—pull! If we don't get in—"

"Oh dear!" gasped Vavasour.

"Oh, shut up, and pull!"

The Highcliffians tugged desperately at the oars. They did not even look at the barge now. The tide was running hard, and the wind leaved at them, as they rowed. When they looked over their shoulders at the shore it seemed as far off as ever. Never had the young rascals so deeply repented an ill-natured trick as Ponsonby & Co. did at that moment. They laboured at the oars, the perspiration running in streams down their faces, with an energy they could only have shown in a moment of danger. Fear gave them strength, and at last the boat grated on the shingle.

Panting and exhausted, the three juniors staggered ashore, and dragged the boat up on the beach, and then sat down on the gunwale, gasping for breath.

"My word!" panted Ponsonby. "That was a close thing! I wonder where that giddy barge is now?"

They looked seaward. The barge was far out on the bar, drifting in the open sea, and in the far distance they could see the Famous Five struggling with the clumsy mainsail.

Ponsonby caught his breath.

"I say, this is worse than I thought!" he muttered.

"They—they'll never get back against this wind, you chaps!"

"Let 'em have a night of it, then, hang 'em!" growled Gadsby.

"I—I hope it won't be any worse than that!"

"What do you mean?" said Vavasour, startled.

"Suppose suppose— You see how the sea's running, and they're drifting out of the bay. When they get into the open—"

Ponsonby's voice faltered.

"You—you don't think they'll capsize?"

"It's jolly likely!"

"My hat!"

The young rascals were pale now. They had intended to give their foes a fright, and a hard afternoon's work; but they realised now that what they had meant for a trick might easily turn into a tragedy. They looked at each other with scared eyes.

"I—I say, that that would be awful!" stammered Vavasour. "I—I— You were an idiot to think of it, Pon. I—I was against it all the time!"

"That's right— put it on me!" said Ponsonby bitterly.

"Let's get out of this!" said Gadsby uneasily. "Nobody's on the shore—we haven't been seen! No need to say a word about it! Let's scoot for it!"

"Yes; come on!"

But as the Highcliffians rose from the boat, a lurid barge came down the beach, with an unsavoury gait. He stared out to sea, and then blinked at the juniors.

"Where's that bally barge?" he demanded. "You young gent's own barge? You been playing tricks on my barge—what?"

"N-n-no!" stammered Ponsonby. "Some—some chaps from Greyfriars School went on it! I—I think they've gone for a cruise!"

The barge made hard remarks.

"They'll bring it back all right," said Gadsby.

"The young rips!" roared the barge. "They'll be drowned, and I shall lose my barge! Where's that boy I left with it? Gorn off! I'll warn 'im! Why, they'll be drowned as sure as hogs is hogs! Somebody'll 'ave to pay for that there barge! Who was they?"

"Fellows from Greyfriars School!" said Ponsonby. "We happened to see them as we were strolling along the beach. Come on, you fellows, it's time we got home."

Ponsonby & Co. walked away, leaving the barge still making remarks that were certainly not fit for their youthful ears. The man had evidently not seen the trick they had played. But though they were consoled to know that there was no evidence against them, they felt far from easy in their minds as they walked home to Highcliffe. The thought of what might happen to the juniors on the barge oppressed them.

"Mind, not a word about this!" said Ponsonby, as they reached the gates of Highcliffe. "I—I hope nothing will happen to them; but if anything does, we— we might be put in prison for all I know. Mum's the word!"

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

Gidley and Vavasour agreed that moom was the word, but they were in feeling very dispirited. But it was done now, and all they could do was to keep their wretched secret.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Blown Out to Sea!

"N.G.!" said Bob Cherry desperately.

The faces of the five Greyfriars juniors were very serious now.

The barge was fast drifting out to sea. Hurree Singh had taken charge of the old, clumsy tiller, but it was impossible to keep the barge's nose to the land. The waves were running high outside the bay, and it was only by keeping the barge steadily running that they avoided being swamped. The other four had struggled manfully to get the sail set, and they had succeeded.

The chums of the Remove were skilful sailormen, and their skill stood them in good stead now. But the barge was built for crawling along coast and river in favouring wind and tide. To get back into the bay it was necessary to sail within three points of the wind, and that was manifestly impossible.

All the juniors could do was to sail as close to the wind as possible, and the course they had to follow, instead of taking them back into the bay, was only likely to run them on the rocks of the Shoulder at the southern end of the bay.

"We can't get back!" said Wharton, looking savagely shoreward.

The houses of the fishing village had dwindled in the distance to mere specks.

"And it's no good trying," said Johnny Bull. "We're heading straight on the rocks now, kid. We shall have to run out to sea."

They hustled on the ropes in a black humour.

To keep on near the wind was simply to run on the rocks, and it was impossible to get closer. The only thing to be done to avoid a shipwreck was to go before the wind and give the rocks a wide berth. And that meant running out to sea.

"There's no help for it," said Wharton between his teeth; "we've got to face it. We've got to chance the open sea—in this tub!"

The barge was "wallowing" wildly in the choppy waves, and shades of salt sea came over the juniors, drenching them. But the clumsy craft ran more easily when they no longer struggled against the wind.

The village of Pegg vanished in the misty distance, and the great Shoulder towered over them on the right as they ran out to sea. They had changed their course only in time; the white foam of the breakers glimmered only a hundred yards to the starboard as the barge swept on to the open waters of the North Sea.

Behind them now the Shoulder sank into the mist.

"Well, this is a go!" said Bob Cherry at last.

"We shan't get back to-night!" said Wharton.

"The get-backfulness will not be easy," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, in his weird English, which did not make the juniors smile now. "We are booked for an esteemed cruise."

"Well, after all, there's no danger," said Bob, more cheerfully. "Unless a storm comes up, we shall be all serene. We know how to handle a sailing-raft."

"What price grub?" said Nugent.

"Phew! Perhaps there's some on board—"

"—we'll soon see."

Bob Cherry ran down into the stuffy little cabin.

He came back with a relieved look.

"Lots of grub," he said. "I expect the barge had laid in his supplies for getting back to London. Leaves and tins of sardines galore!"

"Oh, good!"

"We shan't starve, then, anyway," said Wharton.

"Well, we're in for this, and we'd better make the best of it. I don't see how the Head can be down on us when we tell him we were sent adrift. Can't be helped."

Bob Cherry rubbed his hands.

"It's a regular lark, when we come to think of it," he remarked. "We'll have a cruise down the coast, and come back to-morrow safe and sound."

"And if we can't get back to Pegg we'll drop in at Dover or somewhere," said Johnny Bull.

"Unless—if we get blown right out to sea—" he paused. "Any of

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you fellows know just about where that giddy mine-field is?"

"The—what?"

"The mine-field. There's a giddy mine-field out yonder!" said Johnny Bull.

"My hat!" said Bob, becoming grave. "We shan't be blown up by the Head; we shall be blown up by the giddy mines, if we get there—"

"The dangerousness is not terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "The esteemed barge does not draw enough water to touch the mines. They do not float on the surface, my esteemed chums."

Wharton drew a breath of relief.

"That's so," he remarked. "We shall be all right. I think, even if we drift over the mine-field. The Germans reckon they're going to get across the Channel in flat-bottomed boats, you know, that won't touch the mines in the way. Anyway, we can't jolly well help ourselves now!"

There was no doubt about that. The wind was blowing hard out to sea, and it was all they could do to keep the barge from being driven due east. By handling the sail carefully, however, they managed to keep a course south-east. Even so, the sea ran high on the port bow, and every now and then a flood of water came over the heavy gunwale. They edged off a little more to the east.

The early winter dusk was beginning to settle over the sea; already the coast was sinking from view in the mist. Away to the south-west a great light loomed through the dusk, which they guessed to be Dover lighthouse. And Wharton, remembering the sunken sands, edged off rather in the direction of the wind. He realised just then that the bothering geography lessons in the Remove Form-room were not without their value.

"Well, we're planted in this, and we may as well take it smiling," said Bob. "I suggest having tea. We shall have to raid the barge's supplies, but we can pay him for them when we get back. I hope he won't want to charge us by the hour for the use of his barge."

The juniors recovered their spirits. They had plenty of pluck, and they entered upon the cruise, since it could not be helped, in a spirit of adventure. After all, as Nugent remarked, it was a little bit more exciting than calling-over in Big Hall at Greyfriars.

Bob Cherry constituted himself cook, and took charge of the little cabin, where there was an oil-stove for cooking. He helped himself liberally from the food-locker, and soon had tea made, and sardines turned out, and rashers of bacon cooked.

The feed was brought out on the deck; the cabin was small and stuffy, and the amateur barges preferred the open air. And they preferred to keep an eye on their surroundings, too.

The wind was blowing hard—what a seaman would have called a gale—but it was nothing like a gale so far. That, as Bob Cherry encouragingly remarked, might come later.

The Famous Fire ate their tea with good appetites, sharpened by the penetrating sea breeze. Indeed, the sense of adventure was now so strong upon them that they ceased wishing to get within hitting distance of Posenby & Co.

Even in peace time their adventure would have been a thrilling experience. But with war raging it was doubly thrilling to be sailing out in the night upon wide waters haunted by foes. The British Fleet had sent the sea clear of hostile craft of any size; but they knew that torpedo-boats and submarines were to be met with, to say nothing of mine-layers, sinking under neutral flags to do their deadly work. Any vessel they sighted, whatever flag it carried, might be an enemy ship.

Harry had lighted the big lantern, and it glimmered a dozen yards or so over the dark waters, but it was not likely to be much use in avoiding a collision. The barge was not planned for the open sea. But they kept a careful look-out for lights. They were in the track of ships coming up to the Thames.

"We shall have to look out for lights, and dodge," remarked Frank Nugent.

"What about trying to get a tow from a steamer?"

"Might haul a blessed German by his tail," said Wharton doubtfully. "They sail under all flags, you know—they don't play the game. We don't want to get collared and sent into Germany, and we don't want the blessed large sunk either!"

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"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Nous sommes Anglais schoolboys, and nous avons come along to see how you Naval Johnnies are getting on, and if you want any help." The British officer stared at them in amazement! (See Chapter 15.)

They finished their tea, and, keeping the barge as near the wind as was safe, they kept on their course south-east. They watched the sea, over which the darkness of the winter night lay like a pall.

Save for the glimmer of the barge lantern, they could not see half a dozen yards from the barge, excepting for the glimmer of foam on the choppy waves.

Suddenly Wharton uttered an exclamation:

"Look out!"

A dim, heavy shadow loomed up in the darkness—a vessel without lights—aboard of them.

Wharton sprang to the tiller, and shoved it desperately. Bob Cherry and Johnny Hall leaped to the sheets instinctively and brought the sail round. The barge wallowed on, rocking, and almost grazed the dim shape that loomed above them.

A deep, hoarse voice came from the darkness.

"Wer da?"

The barge drove on, and the black shadow disappeared.

Wharton panted.

The hail had been in German, and they realised how close

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their peril had been. Frank Nugent "doused" the lantern instantly.

Darkness wrapped them as they drove on before the wind, and they looked back and listened, with palpitating hearts.

Against the blackness of the sky and the white froth of the waves the deep shadow loomed up astern, indistinct, spectre-like.

"They're after us!"

Wharton gritted his teeth.

"Yes; a cowardly name-layer, and they think we've spotted them. They're showing no lights. The rotters! They'll sink us as soon as look at us, if they can!"

"Crack, crack!"

Two bright flashes, two loud reports from the darkness astern.

But the rifle bullets splashed into the waves a dozen yards from the barge.

The little craft was unseen by the Germans, and it was evident that the enemy had no starlight.

The barge drove on fairly before the wind now. Speed

was what the juniors wanted, and they cared little whether they went, so long as they got away from their dangerous neighbour.

"They can't see us!" whispered Bob. "And, thank goodness, it's a sailing-ship. Some trawler, I suppose, and not a steam-trawler."

Crack!

Another flash, far to starboard. The juniors laughed silently. The pursuer was taking a course that would never lead him towards the barge. Judging their direction by the flash of the German rifle, they eased the sail again, putting another point on between them and the enemy.

The shadow had disappeared, and there were no more shots. The rascals in the unlighted trawler had evidently given it up as a bad job.

"The rotters!" said Bob. "Oh, the rotters! Sneaking along there in the dark, to drop mines that may blow up passenger ships, for all they care!"

"A lot they care!" growled Wharton. "After torpedoing a ship crammed with refugees, there isn't much they'd stop at. Don't I wish a gunboat would come along just now."

"We're well out of that!" said Nugent, with a deep breath. They were evidently out of it. The barge thrashed on through the choppy waters, and they did not light the deck lantern again. In the deep darkness of the winter night the Greyfriars juniors ran out to sea.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Not Plain English!

ONE by one the stars came out in the dark sky. The juniors, with some difficulty, had taken a reef in the heavy old patched sail, only leaving out enough canvas to keep the barge running easily. Otherwise, they would have been in danger of being swamped. The wind showed no sign of changing; and they realised, too, that when it changed they would lose their bearings. There was no compass on the barge, and the stars were too few to guide them.

"We can't stay awake all night," Bob Cherry remarked, as midnight drew near. "We shall have to set watches, kids. Who's for the first watch?"

"Two at a time," said Wharton, "and toss up for it."

"Right-ho!"

They settled the point with a penny, and the first watch fell to Bob and Wharton. Nugent and Johnny Bull went down into the cabin to sleep, and Inky rolled himself up in some oilskins belonging to the barge, and laid down on the deck. Wharton took the tiller, and Bob Cherry sat near him.

They kept a wary look-out. More than once, as the lights of a ship loomed up, they had to change their course to avoid a possible collision, and Inky woke up to help them with the sail.

The wind dropped a little before midnight, blowing in fitful gusts, but the sea was still heavy and choppy.

"I wonder what they're thinking at Greyfriars?" said Bob, after a silence.

"I wonder!" said Harry. "If the Highcliffe cads have told what's happened, they'll be rather alarmed about us. I should say."

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"But you they won't," he said. "Ponsonby won't tell about what he's done; he doesn't want to be hauled over the coals if there's an accident. The Head won't know what to make of it. They'll think we've gone off on a holiday of our own, or something."

"Quelchly will be ratty, if he thinks that," said Wharton, laughing. "But better that than for them to think we're drowned. We may be able to get ashore in the morning, somewhere where we can telegraph."

"I hope so," said Bob drowsily.

"Hallo! Time to change the watch," said Wharton. He shouted into the cabin, and Johnny Bull and Nugent came up sleepily. Wharton and Bob went down for their watch below.

The dawn was breaking when they were called. They yawned and came sleepily on deck. The grey light was stealing up, and it showed them their direction, at least. The wind had changed several points, and they were driving southward.

Wharton rubbed his eyes and scanned the sea in all directions. There was no land in sight. Dim in the distance he made out the smoke of a steamer. Save for that murky patch, they had the wide sea to themselves.

"I wonder where the dickens we are?" remarked Bob. "We must have travelled a good distance last night."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Goodness knows! We know our direction by the sun, anyway."

"Shows what education will do for a chap," chuckled Bob. "Now, if we didn't happen to know that the sun rises in the east—"

"Fathead! What about brekker?"

"Just what I was going to suggest," said Bob cheerfully.

"One gets jolly hungry on the salt water. Pity Bunier isn't with us."

"What on earth for?"

"Well, he's so jolly fat, and we may run out of grub, you know," said Bob. "I've heard of Arctic voyagers who lived three weeks on a porpoise—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No morning tub this morning," said Nugent. "I wonder what bargers do for a bath in the morning!"

"Do without it probably," said Harry. "You're cook, Bob."

"Right-ho! I'll have brekker ready in two jiffs."

The juniors were hungry, and they did full justice to the barge's provisions. The sun was high by the time they had finished breakfast. They watched the sea keenly as the barge ran on with the patched old sail shortened. Where they were they could hardly form an idea. They edged a little to the west, but whether their course would take them to the coast of Kent or towards the Channel, they had to leave to chance.

"A sail!" exclaimed Bob dramatically.

"By Jove, there's a sail at last!" said Harry. "It's a pity they don't keep binoculars on barges. If it's a British craft we might pick up from them where we are, but—"

The juniors watched the stranger, with doubtful faces. Bob Cherry had announced "A sail!" but it was, as a matter of fact, a small steamer. They could barely make her out, but the volume of smoke against the grey sky was clear enough. She was coming up from the south-east, from the direction of the Belgian coast. Her course would cross that of the barge if neither changed.

"Let's chance it," said Bob. "After all, those rotten mine-layers mostly sneak out in the dark, you know. If she's flying her colours we shall spot them before they see us. They won't see a barge easily in this sea."

"Right-ho!"

The barge thumped on through the water. The steamer became plainer to the view, and the juniors saw that she was flying her colours, and they made out the Dutch flag.

"A giddy Dutchman!" said Bob.

"Unless it's a false flag," said Wharton. "Anyway, we'll chance it. We want to know where we are."

"They're changing their course a bit," said Johnny Bull.

"They're bearing right down on us now."

The juniors kept the barge steadily on, but their faces were very grave. There was nothing for it but to "chance it." For the steamer, of course, could have run them down very quickly if they had tried to avoid the encounter. They were at the mercy of the wind; and besides, the steamer could have travelled at least six knots to their use. They were in for it if the stranger was an enemy, and the flag of Holland was not wholly reassuring. They knew that the German raiders patronised the Dutch flag more frequently than that of any other neutral country.

"There are no guns, at all events," said Bob, scanning the steamer, which was now close enough to be clearly visible.

"They'll have rifles, if they're Germans, though," said Harry. "Like that chap last night. We can't very well resist; can't fight a German ship with one boat-hook among the lot of us."

"Hardly!" agreed Bob. "But—"

Some signal was being made from the steamer, but the juniors did not understand it. The throbbing of the engines came closer, and a fat, blond face, with a spiky moustache, looked down on the barge. The two craft were so close that a hawser could have been tossed from one to the other.

The juniors' hearts sank at the sight of that blundering face and spiky moustache. They did not need telling that it was a German who was looking down on them.

The man surveyed them for a few moments, with hard, cold, pale-blue eyes, and then barked them in English.

"Dat barge! You! Engländer!"

"Yes," called back Wharton. "Who are you?"

"Dat you neffer mind. Take in dat sail and lay by."

The juniors exchanged glances. Two rifle-barrels glimmered over the side of the steamer, enforcing obedience. The juniors let the sail drop. The steamer kept alongside the drifting barge.

"Dat ist goot!" said the German. "Now you speak mit me. Vat are you?"

"This is a barge," said Bob Cherry, with great seriousness. The German frowned.

"I mean to say, were from you gum?"

"From the coast."

"We got adrift by accident," explained Wharton. "We're

trying to get back to the coast. We are non-combatants, of course, schoolboys."

"Sie sind Engländer!" grunted the German. "Now you tell me—it is not here shall be English cruisers in those waters? You tell me if there is English cruisers somewhere, nicht wahr?"

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

The German very naturally wanted that information, to know whether it would be safe for him to keep on, to carry out his rascally mission. The juniors understood now why he had taken the trouble to run down the barge.

"You speak not!" rapped out the German captain. "I ask you before, tat you tell me shall there be English sheeps here somewhere. Speak, denn?"

"Go and tat cock!" said Wharton.

"Nat you say denn?" exclaimed the German, apparently not understanding that somewhat slangy rejoinder. "Guke? Vat cocky. Vat is guke?"

"Mind how you talk to him, old scout," murmured Nugent. "Those two fellows with the rifles are simply itching to shoot—look at their eyes!"

"You tell me, isn't it?" exclaimed the German captain angrily. "I not understands tat you say before. Tell me in der plain English vat it is tat I shall ask, nicht war?"

"Leave him to me," murmured Bob. "I'll answer him in English as good as his own."

"Speak, denn, I command."

"First and after several before," said Bob Cherry.

"What?"

"Four in the morning and take away the number you first thought of," said Bob, with an owl-like gravity. "Then two and six make eleven and a quarter."

The German captain wrinkled his brows in a mental grapple with that answer. The juniors were looking as solemn as owls, and he could not suspect that Bob was pulling his leg. His own knowledge of English was not extensive. He could hear that Bob was speaking English, but he could not understand him, which was not surprising under the circumstances.

"I understand not!" he exclaimed. "Say tat again. Tell me plainly before."

"Count five and add ten," said Bob, "then four and six, while a stitch in time saves nine, and after before with two of the other, six o'clock in the evening."

The expression on the German's face was extraordinary. He listened acutely, trying to understand the answer, but he could not.

"I understand not!" he gasped. "I speak to English sehr gut, mein Herr, but I shall not to understand vat you say. I ask you tat you if you shall English sheeps here somewhere."

"I'm answering you in plain English," said Bob, in surprise. "Take four Dreadnoughts, and add them to two Dreadnoughts, first thought of, and take away the number you first thought of. Understand now?"

"Nein, nein! You say—Dreadnought!" The German evidently understood that word, for he clutched up a pair of binoculars, and swept the sea with them in nervous haste. Then he gave a gasp.

"Ach, ach!"

He disappeared suddenly from view, and a bell clanged, and the steamer leaped into motion like a thing of life. The juniors stared at it blankly.

"What the deuce—"

"What the thunder—"

"Look!" yelled Bob, pointing to the north.

A cloud of black smoke loomed up from the grey sea. The German had spotted it, and the steamer was in full flight on the instant. Every eye in the steamer had been fixed on the barge, and the look-out had failed—and the Germans were to pay dear for it. The barge was left rocking on the sea, and the steamer fled like a frightened bird—but not as she fled a shot rang out from her stern, and the juniors instinctively flung themselves face downwards on the deck of the barge. The bullet crashed into the cabin, and they felt the wind of it as it passed. Another shot, and the bullet smashed into the deck within a foot of where Wharton lay. The two riflemen had evidently not wished to be deprived of the pleasure of potting a hated Engländer, if possible, in spite of the sudden flight.

The juniors did not move for several minutes; they did not wish to offer targets for the German sharpshooters. But a loud, echoing "boom" thinking over the water made them spring to their feet.

The German steamer was already far away, and the Germans were thinking of anything but the barge just then. These two shots were their last kindly thought.

From the sea to the north came a steamer under full power, with a cloud of smoke curling away behind her from the heavy gun recently discharged. Bob Cherry gave a yell of delight.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! POUND the buggers! Hurrah!"

The German had been signalled to stop, and had refused, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 363.

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for excellent reasons. The Dutch flag was still flying, but the flight of the steamer was proof enough to the cruiser's men, of course, that she was an enemy.

Boom, boom!

The juniors cheered frantically. A spurt of flame had appeared on the German steamer, showing that the shots had taken effect.

But she kept on, and the big cruiser swept on after her, still firing. But the vessels disappeared in the mists to the south.

"My hut!" said Wharton, drawing a deep breath, "that was exciting, if you like! They'll have her, as sure as a gun! She's on fire, and they've got six or seven knots to the good in speed, I should say. They'll have the rotters!"

"Hurrah!"

"I'd have liked to see the finish," said Nugent regretfully. "Still, they'll have her. The rotters, to fire on us—rice boys as we are—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cheer shave for somebody," said Bob, pointing with his boot to the bullet-hole in the deck. "Never mind; they'll capture the rotters or sink them. And that giddy captain will be able to learn nice English soon, when he's shut up with barbed wire round him. He's had one lesson from me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors strained their eyes after the chase; but both the vessels had disappeared. Once more the barge was alone on the wide waters.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter is Sorry!

"NO news?" asked the Head.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, shook his head. He had just come in.

"None!" he said.

It had been a night of anxiety at Greyfriars.

When the Famous Five had failed to turn up for calling over, they had simply been marked down as absent. But when they did not appear at bedtime, there was alarm in the school.

The Remove went to their dormitory in a state of great wonder. And when they came down in the morning, to find that the Famous Five had not returned, their wonder increased, and they shared the alarm of the masters.

During the morning the Remove had been taken by a prefect, while Mr. Quelch was out making inquiries after the missing juniors.

It was known that they had gone out with Wharton's cinematograph machine to take film, but apart from that, nothing was known. Mr. Quelch inquired at Giff House School, and Marjorie Hazledean was able to tell him that she had seen the party going down to the beach, from a window in the school. But in Pegg nothing was known of their movements. They had not been seen there.

Apparently they had gone down to the beach, and then disappeared. Mr. Quelch returned in a state of great worry to Greyfriars. The local police had been informed of the disappearance, but they could learn nothing of the five juniors.

After morning lessons there was only one topic in the school—the extraordinary disappearance of the Famous Five.

Many were the conjectures on the subject. Billy Dunter ventured the opinion that they had run away to sea to become pirates. But that did not seem really probable.

The friends of the missing juniors—and their name was legion—were extremely worried. Squiff and Mark Linley and Penfold and Tom Brown looked troubled and depressed, and Bulbover junior seemed troubled. He wished he had not "slanged" Wharton quite so heartily the day before.

"But where the deuce can they be?" said Vernon-Smith, wrinkling his brows. "They can't have run away—that's not. They can't have been kidnapped. And there can't have been five fatal accidents all at one giddy fell swoop. And I suppose they haven't vanished into thin air. What the dickens has become of them?"

The Bouncer and several other fellows went down to the gates after dinner, to watch the road, in the hope of seeing the absent ones returning. They did not see their chums, but they spotted a rough and burly figure coming up the road, with a decidedly unsteady gait. It was a bargee from Pegg, and they were surprised when he stopped outside the gates and blinked at them.

"This 'ere Greyfriars' School?" he demanded.

"Yes," said Squiff. "Have you got news?"

"Noo! I want to see the 'Ead'!"

The Australian junior caught him by the arm.

"Do you know anything of the chaps that are missing?" he exclaimed eagerly.

The bargee grunted.

"I know as how my barge Polly is missin'," he said, "and I'm goin' to see that it's paid for. Them young rips 'ave took my barge, and gone out to sea, and they ain't come back this mornin'."

"Gone to sea—in a barge!" exclaimed Peter Todd. "My hat! The reckless asses! Then what's become of them?"

"Oh, they're drowned by this time," said the bargee cheerfully, "and I'm goin' to be paid for that there barge, or I'll know the reason why."

"Look here, are you sure it was some of our fellows?" exclaimed Tom Brown.

"This 'ere's Greyfriars, ain't it?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Well, some young gents took me as Greyfriars fellows had gone in my barge, and gone off in 'er yesterday afternoon," said the bargee.

"And you didn't say anything about it before?" exclaimed Squiff indignantly.

"I ain't a fellow to make trouble," said the bargee. "If they'd 'ave brought my barge back this mornin', I'd 'ave said nowt. But they ain't! They're been and gone and got themselves drowned, and that there barge 'ave got to be paid for."

It was evidently the fate of the barge, and not that of the unlucky juniors, that worried the honest bargeman. He tramped on surlily to the School House, and demanded to see the Head. He was looking more contented when he left a quarter of an hour later. Probably he had received an assurance that damages would be paid if the barge was not recovered. But he left the Head in a state of great distress.

Mr. Quelch was looking extremely downcast, too. The Remove master felt the blow.

"There is hope yet," said the Head, in a shaking voice. "Evidently they found that they could not return to land; but unless there should be bad weather, they may come ashore somewhere down the coast. We must set the telegraph to work at once."

Dr. Lowe did not lose time. But there was no news to be had. All along the coast it was the same—no barge had been seen ashore. If the juniors had landed safely, the Head knew that they would have telegraphed to him, to relieve his anxiety. But so long as there was no news of a wreck, he still hoped.

The day passed gloomily enough to the friends of the missing juniors. Even Skinner and Snopce and the rest who had not cared much for the famous Co. felt depressed. There was only one fellow in the Remove who bore the loss with fortitude. That was Billy Bunter. But Bunter was seen to be looking very thoughtful, and Squiff heard him exclaim to himself during the evening: "They're drowned! They must be!"

The Australian junior dropped his hand kindly on Bunter's shoulder. He was a little surprised to see the Owl of the Remove so concerned, and he thought the more of him for it, and gave him a word of comfort.

"There's a good chance yet, Bunty," he said. "They're good sailors, you know. They'll stick it out if anybody could. They'll come back all right."

Bunter shook his head.

"No they won't, Field. I feel certain they're done in."

"While there's life there's hope," said Squiff.

"There isn't any hope in this case," said Bunter resignedly. "We've got to make up our minds to it. They won't come back—that's a cert. They're drowned, right enough. Bob Cherry's father's at the front, too, isn't he?"

"Major Cherry—yes. Rotten news for him, if it turns out badly," said Squiff.

"Anyway, he wouldn't want Bob Cherry's bike," said Bunter thoughtfully.

"Eh?"

"And I don't think he's got any brothers—only sisters, so far as I know," said Bunter, still more thoughtfully. "It will be all right."

The Australian junior stared at him blankly. Bunter did not heed him; he rolled away to the stairs, and went up to the Remove passage. In No. 15 Stude, which Bob and Harroo Singh shared with Mark Linley and little Wun Lung, the Chinese, the two latter were sitting with dismal faces. Both of them were utterly east down by the danger of their chums—danger which might mean death by this time. They looked up eagerly as Billy Bunter came in.

"Any news?" asked Mark eagerly.

Bunter shook his head sadly.

"No fear," he said. "There won't be any news, Linley. They're drowned, you know—dead as door-nails by this time."

Mark eluded at him.

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"You don't seem much cut-up about it," he snapped.

"Get out!"

"Oh, I'm awfully cut-up!" said Bunter. "Bob Cherry owed me some money—"

"Oh, clear off!"

"Of course, I feel it," said Bunter. "Those fellows have treated me badly, but I don't bear any malice, under the circumstances. I forgive them," said the fat junior magnanimously.

"Will you get out, you fat cad?" growled Mark.

"Bunter vellee fat and lotten beatee!" said Wun Lung.

"If Bunter no goce, me chuckee poken at Bunter."

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Bunter, in surprise. "I didn't come here to quarrel with you. I should think you'd have more decency than to quarrel at a time like this, when we're all simply bowled over with grief. I'm feeling an awful lot of grief myself. I ain't the crying kind, you know, but I've got very tender feelings. But about Bob Cherry's bike—"

"Bob Cherry's bike?" repeated Mark, not comprehending.

"Yes, his bike. He won't want it any more now, poor chap; and I haven't got a bike, you know. His sisters won't want it, and his father couldn't want it; and, anyway, he's at the front, very likely dead by now, like Bob," said Bunter cheerfully. "And, as it happens, Bob practically promised me that bike. You know how pally we were. I suppose you chaps are not going to raise any objections to my having it?"

Mark stared at him, incapable of speech for the moment. That even Billy Bunter could talk like that was a surprise to him. Bunter did not understand his silence. He rattled on more confidently:

"I'm going to have it, you know. 'Tain't any use to the poor chap now, and he as good as promised it to me. He said I deserved it, for having been such a good pal to him. He told me that only yesterday. We were always chummy."

"You—you—" stuttered Mark Linley.

Wun Lung rose quietly from the armchair, with a glitter in his almond eyes. Billy Bunter blinked at them a little uneasily through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, you're not going to cut up rusty about it, I hope. You've got a bike of your own, Linley; and that heathen doesn't like, anyway. And I know my old pal Bob would like me to have it. Almost his last words were—"

"You horrible cad!" broke out Mark at last.

"Oh, really, Linley! Look here, I don't see what claim you've got on Bob Cherry's bike, simply because you're his study-mate," said Bunter warmly. "Still, I'm willing to do the fair thing. I'll stand you something in cash—I'm expecting a postal-order shortly—and I take the bike. That's fair." Billy Bunter broke off suddenly. "Here, I say, wharver you at! Leggo! Have you gone potty! Oh, crumbs! Yarooooop!"

Bunter was astounded. The Lancashire lad had suddenly collared him, and was punching him as if he mistook him for a punch-ball. Bunter roared and yelled and wriggled, but he could not escape. He had to go through it.

"You cad!" panted Mark. "You beast! Take that, you fat rotter—and that—and that! Now get out!"

"Yaroooo!"

Bunter, breathless, and "whopped" as he had never been whipped before, went flying through the doorway, and rolled along the passage. Mark, panting, slammed the door after him. Billy Bunter sat up and roared.

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" asked Squiff, coming along the passage, with a gleam in his eyes.

"Ow, ow, ow! That beast Linley, he thinks he's going to have my pal Bob's bike, and I'm jolly well going to have it! Whar—what—Leave off kicking me, you beast! You too! What the—Yaroooooh!"

Squiff did not leave off kicking. Billy Bunter scrambled up, and fled wildly down the passage, and the Australian junior followed, dividing Bunter down the passage as if he had been a very fat football. Bunter yelled and squirmed, and finally bolted into his study, and slammed the door and locked it. Squiff departed breathless, but a little relieved in his feelings.

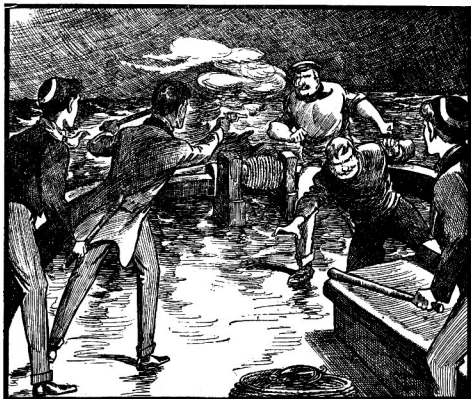
Bunter proceeded to retail the story of his wrongs to his study-mate, Peter Todd, but before he had finished there were sounds of anguish heard from the study. Apparently the Owl of the Remove was in trouble again.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Saving Foes!

"SAIL, HO!"

Bob Cherry chirruped out the words, and the crew of the barge Polly looked eagerly in the direction of his pointing finger. It was not a "sail," of course, but a steamer. It was coming up from the south-east, and



Crack! The German toppled over on the deck with a crash. Krantz was upon the scene when he fell, and the other German came running from the bows. Hurree Singh fired again, with deadly coolness, and Krantz fell upon his knees, shrieking. (See Chapter 14.)

the juniors made out the tricolour flying. They were not alarmed this time, for it was easy to make out that the vessel was a passenger boat.

"Looks like one of the French Channel steamers," said Nugent. "My hat, so it is! I believe that's the very Channel boat we crossed in when we went to Calais after Smithy, the time he bolted, you remember—"

"It's the same boat," said Wharton, with a nod. He had a keen eye for craft. "Rolling and pitching in the same old way, too. We'll speak her."

"Ninety-nine points to the larboard, helmsman, and take in a reef in the cook's galley," sang out Bob Cherry humorously. "Look alive, there! Hoist the main deck lumberboard! Tumble up!"

"Fathead!" said Wharton.

The steamer was coming up in the teeth of the wind, and it was easy for the juniors to bear down upon her. As they drew nearer to the Channel boat, they were seen from her, and they noted a crowd of faces looking over the rail. Crowded on board of them, most of them pale with sea-sickness.

"They're crowded," said Nugent. "Blessed if the whole deck isn't crisscrossed with them, packed like sardines!"

"Standing room only!" remarked Bob.

"It's a refugee ship," said Wharton. "They're French and Belgian refugees, from Calais or Dunkirk. We'll give them a hail."

"Ahoy!" roared Bob.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"SURPRISING THE SCHOOL!"

A man on the bridge of the steamer shouted through a megaphone, but the wind drove his hail back, and it did not reach the juniors. They waved their caps, and the crowd of refugees crisscrossed on the slanting deck of the steamer waved their hands in response. The megaphone roared again. This time the juniors made out the hail. It was in French.

"Qui êtes vous?"

"Anglais!" shouted Wharton.

"Nous sommes Anglais!" yelled Bob, in his best French. "Vive l'entente cordiale! A bas le Kaiser! Hurrah!"

Then the barge swept on before the wind, leaving the refugee ship plunging on to the north, towards England and safety, and the crowd on her decks waving their hats and cheering.

"I fancy the Froggies are a bit surprised to see us out here in a barge," said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "No chance of getting a tow home. We couldn't get near them in this sea; there would be a collision on the line. But we know where we are now—that steamer is making for Folkestone or Dover."

"If this dashed wind would give us a chance, we could run straight for the coast of Kent," said Wharton. "But we can't get this dashed old tub to do it. The wind's getting round to the east, too. Looks to me as if we're booked for Belgium or Holland."

"My only hat!" said Johnny Bail. "It would be more

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than a joke to run ashore among the Germans. They're still at Ostend, I believe."

"Well, we can choose our place for landing," said Harry; "and there are British cruisers off the Belgian coast, who will tell us where we are, if we get there. After all, it will be a ripping run, and we may be able to take some pictures of the battle-ground—what? We haven't taken the films yet. What are you blinking at, Inky?"

The dusky junior had his eyes fixed on the sea, to the east. His look was intent. He answered without taking his gaze from the object that had attracted his attention.

"I see something floatily moving on the water," he replied. "It looks to me like a raft, my esteemed chum."

"A raft! By gum!"

The juniors scanned the water. A dark object was bobbing up and down on the waves at a distance, and what appeared to be a rag was streaming in the wind above it, floating from a spar set upright. As they stared at it, the juniors made out moving objects on the raft—for a raft it evidently was.

"There's been a wreck," said Wharton, in a low voice. "There are men there—three or four, as far as I can make out."

"Shall I ease her off, and run them down?" asked Johnny Bull, who was at the tiller.

Wharton wrinkled his brows.

"We've got to be jolly careful," he said. "We can't leave shipwrecked men to drown, that's certain; but if they're Germans—"

"Phew!" said Bob.

"Let's get closer and see, anyway," said Frank Nugent.

"Yes; we can do that, at any rate."

The barge altered her course a little, and drew nearer to the raft. As it came closer, the Famous Five made out four men crouched on the rough construction. The rag of canvas that fluttered in the air was evidently a signal of distress. There was nothing to show the nationality of the shipwrecked men; but the juniors felt that they could not abandon them, whether friends or foes. They edged the barge nearer. The four men, drenched to the skin, and half frozen, rose with difficulty, and waved their frozen hands towards the barge, and shouted. The juniors could not catch their words distinctly, but they recognised the language—it was German.

They looked at one another very doubtfully.

"Germans!" said Wharton. "We—we can't leave 'em there. They look half-frozen. We can't abandon them. But—"

"Four grown-up men," said Nugent; "armed perhaps. If we take them aboard, suppose they take it into their heads to collar the barge. It would be too ungrateful; but—what they'd do if they could, rather than be made prisoners."

"If we leave them, they're dead men," said Wharton moodily.

"And if we save them—"

"They'll turn on us when we've got them aboard!" growled Bob Cherry. "What the thunder ought we to do?"

The juniors dropped the sail, and the barge moved on slowly towards the raft. The situation was a difficult one.

The four men were evidently in a state of exhaustion; the sea was breaking over the raft, drenching them afresh with ice-cold water every few minutes. There was no vessel in sight—there was no other chance of rescue for them. To abandon them meant leaving them to their death. The mere thought of that went against the grain. But to take four powerful-looking enemies on board the barge—if the Germans turned on them, what chance would five schoolboys have in such a struggle? And the men were doubtless armed, if they belonged to a vessel of war. To take them on board was to place the barge at their mercy.

The four German seamen waved their hands and shouted. One of them was shouting in French.

"A moi! A moi! Au secours! Au secours!"

"We—we can't leave 'em like that!" said Wharton at last. "We've got to chance it. If they're beasts enough to turn on us after we've saved them—"

"No blessed 'if' about it!" growled Johnny Bull. "They will, as safe as houses, if we give them the chance!"

"Well, what do you fellows say?" asked Wharton. "I know it's a big risk—an awful big risk. But leaving them there to drown—I can't make up my mind to that!"

"Chance it," said Bob. "If they've got weapons, we'll make 'em hand them over before they come on board. They're not in fighting trim just now, anyway, and we can search them as they come on."

"Done!" said Wharton.

The barge edged closer. The four Germans were all on their feet now, waving and yelling frantically.

"Aho!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Who are you?"

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"Help!" came back the reply in English. "Save our lives!"

The barge was close to the raft now. The four seamen held out their hands in sign of entreaty. It was impossible to resist that appeal. But the captain of the Remove did not mean to run risks—avoidable risks, at all events.

"You are Germans?" he demanded, looking down on the bobbing raft.

"Ja, ja!"

"How did you get there? What ship do you belong to?"

"We are to sink, on fire, in night," said the man, who spoke English. "It is you tat shall have seen tat sheep tat is our sheep."

Bob Cherry gave a sudden whistle of surprise.

"My hat! They belong to that steamer that hailed us!" he exclaimed. "It was sunk, of course, and these poor beggars got away on that raft. They know this barge."

"Perhaps the same beasts that fired on us!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"We can't desert the poor brutes," said Wharton.

"Help us!" went on the German seaman, appealingly. "Take us in your little sheep! We shall be dying of hunger and cold! Save our lives!"

"Are you willing to become prisoners?" asked Wharton.

"Ja, ja; anything tat you shall wish!"

"Very well. You can come one at a time," said Harry.

"We can't desert you; but if you try any tricks on us, you'll get hurt! Understand?"

"We shall be grateful to save our lives!"

"Good! You come first, and tell your friends they're to keep back till you are on board."

"Tat is good!"

The German spoke in his own language to the others. Then as the barge edged close to the raft, he made a jump on board. The other made a movement to follow at once, but the juniors promptly edged the barge off, leaving six or seven yards of choppy water between. They intended to deal with the Germans one at a time.

The man who had jumped on board rolled over on the deck, evidently exhausted. He sat up, shivering.

"Are you armed?" demanded Wharton.

The German shook his head.

"I haf nothing."

"Better go through him and see," said Johnny Bull.

"Pile in, then!"

Johnny Bull bent over the German, and searched his pockets. There were no weapons in his belt. The German appeared for a moment to be about to resist, but he thought the better of it.

The five juniors were quite able to deal with him without difficulty, and his comrades were a dozen yards away now on the raft, unable to help him. Johnny Bull gave an expressive grunt as he drew a revolver from the man's pocket.

"You were armed!" exclaimed Wharton sternly.

"Ach! I forget tat! It is tat I am cold and hungry! I tink tat I die!"

"Very convenient to have a bad memory sometimes!" said Johnny Bull. "He's got a packet of cartridges, too! Look here!"

And Johnny Bull took possession of the cartridges.

"Get down into the cabin!" said Wharton. "You'll find plenty of grub there, and you can eat as much as you like. What's your name?"

"Franz Schmidt, mein Herr."

"Well, go below, and eat."

"Ich danke Ihnen—I tank you!" said Schmidt.

And he disappeared promptly into the cabin of the barge.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Mutiny Aboard!

HARRY WHARTON took the German's revolver, and examined it. It was fully loaded, but it was wet from the sea. The captain of the Remove was frowning.

The fact that Franz Schmidt had attempted to conceal his possession of a deadly weapon was a bad augury; it looked as if he had already meditated treachery. It was very probable that the castaways, on sighting the barge, had immediately conceived the idea of getting on board by hook or by crook, and seizing the craft and making sail for their own coast.

To take four muscular enemies on board the Polly was risky in the extreme; but the juniors felt that they had no choice about the matter. They could not leave the helpless men to drown. The poor wretches were so frozen and exhausted that they could not have clung to the flimsy raft much longer. To take them on board, and keep on their guard against them—that was the only thing to be done.

The barge edged towards the raft again, where the three remaining seamen were watching and waiting eagerly.

Wharton held up one finger.

"One at a time!" he called out. "Nur ein!"

The Germans understood, and one of them came clambering on the barge, the other two holding back.

Johnny Bull promptly searched the new-comer, a young fellow with blonde hair and blue eyes, who did not look more than twenty. He was unarmed. He was sent down into the cabin, and then another was taken on board. He proved to have a big clasp-knife, which Johnny Bull promptly took possession of. Then the last of the castaways was taken on the barge. He had no weapon.

The four Germans crowded into the cabin, round the little stove, and ate ravenously. For the moment all their thoughts seemed to be bent on eating. The juniors remained on deck in a very thoughtful mood.

The barge glided on, and the raft went rocking out of sight.

Harry Wharton drew the cartridges from the revolver and tossed them into the sea, and carefully cleaned and dried the firearm. Then he reloaded it with new cartridges from the packet taken from Franz Schmidt.

"We shall be all right," he said. "Of course, we shall have to be careful. But if there is trouble we are armed now, and they are not."

Bob Cherry whistled softly.

"Would you have the nerve to pot 'em?" he asked.

Wharton knitted his brows.

"If they're ungrateful beasts enough to turn on us after we've saved their lives, certainly!" he answered. "If they're rotten enough for that they'd be rotten enough to chuck us overboard, and keep the barge themselves."

"My hat!"

"Looks to me as if we've landed ourselves!" growled Johnny Bull. "We shall have to watch 'em like cats!"

"The watchfulness will have to be terrific," said Hurree Singh seriously. "There are four of them, and they are bigger than we are. And I do not like the look of that esteemed rascal Schmidt."

"The others look decent enough; but that man does look rather a rascal," said Harry. "After a bit, I fancy they won't much like the idea of being prisoners to schoolboys, and they will cut up rusty. If they do, there will be trouble."

"Well, we've got the shooter," said Nugent. "And you are a good shot, Harry. I've seen you knock the bottles over, but you've never tried your hand on Germans yet. But they're bigger than the bottles, anyway, and easier to hit."

"And I'll keep the book handy," said Bob.

The juniors were in a troubled mood. At present the castaways were only too glad to have had their lives saved, and to get something to eat. But after a time they would think matters over, and realise their strength against mere schoolboys. It was necessary for the chums of Greyfriars to be very much on their guard.

The juniors kept a keen watch on the sea. Frequently enough the smoke of a steamer was seen in the distance, but no vessel came near them. There was no sign of land; but the wind was still driving them eastward, and they knew that somewhere ahead of them, behind the sea mists, was the coast of Belgium; but how far away it might be they could not guess.

A pale sun was glimmering down on a grey sea in the afternoon when the four Germans came up from the little cabin. Their clothes were dried now, and their hunger satisfied, and they were rested, and looked much better. And the expression on their faces was not reassessing to the juniors. They had been talking eagerly together in their own language; and Schmidt came at last towards the juniors, his comrades close behind him. There was a swaggering air about the burly leader of the castaways that warned the juniors at once that trouble was at hand.

"Feel better?" asked Bob Cherry affably.

"I thank you, yes," said Schmidt. "I think tat you haf mein pistol, is it not? I ask you tat you give me mein property."

"Prisoners are not allowed to carry weapons," said Wharton.

"I am, denn, a prisoner?" he asked.

"I told you you would be a prisoner if you came aboard!" snapped Wharton.

"I think tat I do not choose to be a prisoner!"

Wharton pointed to the grey water rolling past the barge.

"You can go back where you came from if you like," he said. "While you stay on this barge you are a prisoner."

"Ach! I think you talk loudly for a boy!" said Schmidt

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contemptuously. "Look you here, I wish not to hurt you, since tat you shall save our lives. But ve are men, and ve do not obey to orders of boys!"

"You will obey orders while you are here," said Wharton.

"Ach! Tat is enough said! Giff me mein pistol!"

"Rats!"

"I tell you tat you giff him to me!"

Wharton raised his hand.

"Go forward!" he said.

"Vat?"

"Get forward! Keep in the bows till I give you permission to leave! We don't want you too close!"

The German did not stir.

"I says vunce more tat you giff me tat pistol!" he exclaimed angrily. "And I tell you vun time tat I takes him if you giff not!"

"You are welcome to try," said Harry, putting his finger on the trigger of the revolver. "I warn you that I shall shoot you down if you do."

Bob Cherry's grip had closed on his book. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who was at the tiller, lashed it quickly and picked up a billet of wood which he had kept handy. Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull already had cudgels in their hands.

The determined aspect of the juniors made the four Germans hesitate. They could see that, at least, they were not likely to have matters all their own way.

There was a hurried babbling in German. The youngest of the four, the fair-haired lad of twenty, was urging Schmidt

to give up his idea of seizing the barge. The juniors understood so much of the talk. But it was clear that Schmidt held some position of authority among them; he was some kind of a petty officer.

In the midst of the argument he struck the German lad a savage blow in the face, and the young seaman reeled back and fell on the deck. He rose to his feet with a red mark on his cheek, without making any movement to resent the blow. The savage tyranny of German discipline had already done its work of turning the man into a machine.

Wharton's eyes blazed.

"You scoundrel!" he rapped out.

"If you do that again I'll have you tied up hand and foot!"

Schmidt stared at him savagely.

"I say vunce again I am do master here!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, shut up!"

The German made a sign to his followers and rushed forward. The three seamen followed him in the rush.

The chums of Greyfriars were "in for it" at last. Harry Wharton did not hesitate.

As the burly Schmidt rushed at him he flung up the revolver and fired.

Crack!

Schmidt uttered a fearful cry and pitched forward at his feet.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Black Treachery!

"GIVE 'em socks!" roared Bob Cherry.

His bookcase crashed down on a German skull as he shouted. The man dropped like a log. Johnny Bull and Nugent and Inky paled in instantly with their cudgels. The remaining two seamen were driven helter-skelter back under a shower of blows. One of them, dazed by blows as he was, sprang upon Nugent, closed with him, and bore him to the deck. But as he fell on the struggling junior Inky's cudgel crashed upon the back of his head, and he rolled over on the deck with a groan.

Only the youngest seaman remained on his feet now, and he dodged into the cabin. His attack had been only half hearted, as he was evidently against the enterprise, and he was glad to get out of it.

The juniors did not pursue him. They gathered round the fallen men on deck.

The fight had been short and sharp.

Two of the Germans lay groaning, half-stunned. Franz Schmidt was wriggling on the deck, with blood flowing from his shoulder.

Harry Wharton was very pale.

He had fired in self-defence, but the horrible thought that he might have killed a man was sickening.

He bent over the wounded German.

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Schmidt gave him a glare of rage and hatred. Unheeding, Wharton rose open his coat and looked at the wound.

The bullet had passed clean through the man's shoulder, and the blood was flowing freely.

"Ach!" groaned Schmidt. "Ach! You have keel me! Ach!"

"You asked for it," said Wharton. "I warned you, you scoundrel! But you are not badly hurt, so far as I can see. Keep still, you fool, while I bind it up!"

"Serve the brute right to clunk him overboard!" said Johnny Bull.

"He won't do any more damage now," said Harry.

As a Boy Scout, Wharton had learned something of First Aid. He bound up the German's wound as well as he could, Schmidt watching him silently, and gritting his teeth with the pain.

The other two seamen were sitting up dazedly, but they showed no desire to renew the attack.

But the juniors did not intend to give them the chance. Bob Cherry took a rope, and bound their hands tightly. They made a movement to resist, but a flourish of the boathook decided them to give in.

"Help me get this brute into the cabin," said Harry.

Schmidt was taken below and placed on the barge's bed. He groaned heavily as he was taken there. His wound was not serious in itself, but it was very painful.

"Now lie up that ark o' ship," said Harry, leveling his revolver at the young German in the cabin.

The young seaman submitted without a word.

The juniors returned to the deck, breathing hard.

Dusk was falling over the gray sea. The winter night was coming on.

"I'm jolly glad it's no worse," muttered Wharton, taking a deep breath. "I was afraid for a moment that that brute was finished."

"Serve him jolly well right if he had been!" said Johnny Bull.

"I know. But I'm glad he wasn't, all the same."

"Ungrateful brutes! After we've saved their lives!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"It would serve them right to pitch them into the sea. And only safe, too!"

"We're going to have a high old time with these rascals on board," said Bob Cherry suddenly. "They're safe enough for the present; but—"

"But we can't sleep to-night," said Nugent.

"No fear!"

"Hark how that fellow's groaning!" said Harry. "What a thumping row to make over it! He's not so badly hurt as all that."

Schmidt's groans could be heard from the cabin incessantly. The other three Germans, with their hands tied, were collected at the cabin door. Harry Wharton went down to look at the wounded man.

"Can I do anything for you?" he demanded.

Schmidt glared at him.

"Lead me to die," he said.

"Rubbish! You're wearing yourself out nothing," said Harry.

"I tell you your life isn't in danger."

"I ask to die!"

"Oh, rot," said Harry un sympathetically.

The German lay with his feet in the little bunk. Wharton returned to the deck, uneasy and troubled in his mind. The rascal had brought it on himself, but the thought of having a man's life on his hands distressed the junior terribly. It was possible that Schmidt was right, though to Wharton's eyes his wound had not looked serious. The junior's face was very gloomy.

"Don't worry," said Bob comfortingly. "He asked for it, you know."

Wharton nodded.

"I know; but I can't help worrying. Still, there was nothing else to be done. I wish he wouldn't keep on that horrible groaning."

The high spirits of the juniors had departed now. They watched the sea anxiously, feeling that they would have given anything for a sight of land. But neither land nor a vessel came in sight. Only the grim grey waters, rolling incessantly in the fish-boneing gloom of night.

The groans of the wounded German became fainter and fainter, and died into low moaning. Wharton, uneasy and distressed, went down to look at him again. He bandaged the wound once more; the flow of blood had ceased, and it was certain that no artery had been touched. Schmidt submitted sullenly. The other Germans sat about with their hands tied behind them, with sullen faces.

"Do you feel easier now?" asked Harry.

Schmidt moaned.

"Lead me to die."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders impatiently, and left him.

But he paced the deck of the barge, in the darkness, with THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 355.

a troubled brow. The night wore on; the clumsy old craft still thumped heavily through the waves eastward. The juniors did not think of sleep.

They ate their supper on the deck, and gave the Germans food; but without untying their hands. They did not feel inclined to trust them an inch again.

In the black sky overhead few stars glimmered. The wind was no longer blowing steadily from one direction, and all the crew of the Polly could do was to keep the barge before the wind, and trust to luck.

The sea was rolling more roughly now, in the choppy, gusty wind; but the Greysians juniors were good sailors, and they had not a trace of sea-sickness. They watched the dim sea keenly and anxiously for the lighthouse they expected to see when they drew nearer to the shore. But not a glimmer of light came through the winter gloom.

Schmidt was still moaning in the cabin. It was a late hour in the evening when he called out faintly.

"Gum to me! Giff me water."

Harry Wharton went quickly down the steps into the cabin. The state of the wounded German troubled him greatly, and he was willing to do anything he could. He looked anxiously at Schmidt as he came in. It was dark in the cabin, and he could but dimly make out the bunk and the German seaman lying in it. Dimly he made out the other three sitting with their hands behind them as they had been left.

Wharton's eyes were used to the dark, however, and he quickly filled a tin mug with water from the keg, and brought it to Schmidt.

The wounded German drank it lying on his side, drinking slowly.

"Danke," he said.

As if the word was a signal, Harry Wharton suddenly felt himself seized from behind. He dropped the mug on the bunk, starting violently. The three Germans had been left with their hands securely bound behind them, and the juniors had believed that Schmidt was too far gone to move. Instantly it flashed into Harry's mind, with terrible clearness, that he had been tricked.

His mouth was open to shout, but a hard and heavy hand was placed over it, stifling his intended cry.

He struggled desperately.

But there were three pairs of strong hands upon him, and he was forced down on the floor, almost without noise, the hard hand still gripped over his mouth.

Franz Schmidt was sitting up in the bunk now, grinning with savage glee as he watched. His wound was not troubling him now.

"Schnell, schnell!" he muttered hoarsely.

Wharton made a desperate effort. Out on the deck, his comrades had no suspicion of what was happening in the cabin, the darkness enveloping everything. One cry—even a stamp of his foot—would have been enough; but he was pinned down in the grip of three muscular men, and he was utterly helpless. He felt his hands drawn together, and a rope bound tightly round his wrists—his ankles were fastened with such tightness that the cord almost cut into his flesh.

"Schnell! Schnell!" Schmidt was whispering fiercely, for he feared every moment that the juniors on deck might take the alarm.

Wharton felt the hand move from his mouth, but his jaw was held in a savage grip while his own hand-to-hand thrust in—he could not even moan. Then he lay on the planks, breathing through his nose, gagged, bound, helpless. And the cunning trickster slid from the bunk, and ran his hands over the bound junior in search of the revolver. Wharton's heart turned almost to ice. It was all over now. Franz Schmidt drew the revolver from the breast pocket where the junior had placed it, and gripped it hard in his hand.

"Ach!" muttered the rascal. "Ach! Nun fudge mir."

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

In the Hands of the Fo!

HARRY WHARTON lay on the floor of the little cabin, a prey to misery and despair.

Only too clearly now he understood how he had been fooled.

The German had not been disabled by his wound, and his deep groaning had been only a cunning trick to make the juniors believe that he was incapacitated.

After dark, he had untied the hands of his companions, and they were all ready to deal with Wharton when he came in answer to the wounded man's call for water.

Wharton groaned uselessly as he thought of it.

If one of the other fellows had come down to look after the German, at least then Schmidt would not have obtained possession of the revolver. Now he was armed with the only

weapon on board. And that the wretch would not scruple to use the revolver was quite certain.

Wharton's heart ached with apprehension for his chums. He was filled with a fury of rage and hatred against the villain who had tricked him, whose life he had saved, and whom he had tended as his lay, as Wharton believed, wounded and disabled. If only he could have guessed this treachery, he would not have dealt so tenderly with the rascal. But it was too late now.

And now what was to happen? The Germans were preparing for a rush on deck, and Schmidt was armed, and would not hesitate to shoot. If the four juniors resisted, there would be a fearful tragedy. And they would have no chance—man to man against muscular seamen, one of them armed with a revolver. Wharton hoped that they would give in. The end must be the same, whether they resisted or not. The barge was in the power of the Germans now.

Schmidt's wound was evidently of little account. He was moving actively enough now, now that his trick had succeeded. He led the way to the deck, the revolver gripped in his hand.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry, thinking it was Wharton coming back. "Is he all right? Why—what—what—"

"Great Scott!"

"Surrender!" shouted Schmidt, leveling the revolver. "Take care! One moment, and I shoot you dead as to dog."

Bob had grasped the boat-hook, but he did not raise it. In the dim light from the few stars the levelled barrel of the revolver glimmered, bearing on the group of dismayed juniors.

There was no arguing with a levelled firearm, with a desperate finger on the trigger.

"My hat!" murmured Nugent.
"You will surrender!" said Schmidt, with a sneering laugh. "I do not wish to kill you, young fools to you are. But if you surrender now, I shoot you like to pigeons."

The juniors exchanged dismayed glances. There was no help for it; long before they could have got to close quarters with the Germans, Schmidt could have shot them down without mercy. Some lingering compunction, perhaps, made him willing to spare the lives of the boys who had risked so much to save him from the raft; but if they had made a movement to resist, he would have fired instantly.

"What have you done to Wharton?" muttered Bob.
"What have you done with our chum, you villain? If you've hurt him—"

"Ach! He is not hurt—he is a brisener," said the German, with a chuckle. "It is your turn to be briseners now."

"And this is your gratitude for having your lives saved?" said Bob bitterly.

"I shall not talk with you. Drop dem sticks at vunce, or I shoot you as you stand dere!" rapped out Schmidt. "Schnell!"

The juniors savagely let their useless weapons fall to the deck. They were white with rage, but they were at the German's mercy.

"Krantz," muttered Schmidt. "Schnell."

The man called Krantz ran forward, and picked up the cutguns the juniors had dropped. Schmidt added another order, and one of the Germans cut a rope into lengths, and tied the wrists of the juniors together.

They submitted with raging hearts, but without a word. Schmidt put the revolver into his belt, and stepped down into the cabin again. He jerked the gag from Wharton's mouth. It was not needed now.

Wharton looked up at him with glittering eyes. If looks could have killed, the treacherous rascal would have fallen dead on the planks at that moment.

"Ach! It is you tat shall be a brisener!" grinned Schmidt. "You Engländer dog, you do not beat a Cherman so easy!"

"Oh, you hoand!" muttered Wharton, between his teeth.

"You treacherous hoand! If I'd left you to drown on the raft—"

The German chuckled.

"And we saved your life, for this!" said Wharton, writhing in helpless rage in his bonds.

"It is because you save our lives tat I do not trow you into to sea now," said Schmidt coolly. "But now you do no harm. You keep tied up till I land you in Deutschland. To-morrow morning we got to Ostend, ain't it?"

"Oh, you scoundrel!"

The German laughed again and quitted the cabin. Apparently the German seamen were able to judge their direction, for they shifted the sail, and Schmidt, at the tiller, put the barge on a new course. The juniors knew that he was heading for the coast of Belgium, where the land was occupied by the German troops. There was despair in their hearts now.

Instead of landing within the British lines, as they had hoped, they were to be landed among the Germans—prisoners.

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As civilians and non-combatants, they were entitled to their liberty by all the rules of war; but they knew how little Germans respected the rules of war. It was most probable that they would be sent into Germany to be interned in a concentration camp. They thought of their friends with helpless misery. What would the fellows think had become of them—and their own people—their families? The war might last for years, and they would be prisoners in Germany!

The four Germans were grinning now with satisfaction. Masters of the barge, they were basking for what was liberty and safety to them—imprisonment and despair to their former rescuers. Only the young seaman sometimes cast glances of compassion towards the juniors, but he, too, was evidently glad of the turn events had taken. Schmidt gave him the tiller, and sat down, little troubled by his wound. The Germans talked to one another in gleeful tones. After a time, Schmidt came down into the cabin, muttering a curse as he stumbled over Wharton in the dark, and bestowing a savage kick on him.

He struck a match and fumbled about the cabin, and secured a bottle of spirits which was the property of the barge, and which the juniors, of course, had not touched. With the spirits and a pin near the rascal returned to the deck. The spirits were soon disposed of by the four Germans, Schmidt taking the lion's share. Wharton, lying crumpled on the floor of the cabin, heard them burst into song, in hoarse voices:

"Lieb Vaterland, angst ruhig sei!
Lieb Vaterland, angst ruhig sei!
Fest steht und treu die Wacht, die Wacht am Rhein!"

The barge plunged on through the night. The Germans were keeping the clumsy old craft as near the wind as it would go, to bear up towards the Belgian coast north of Ostend. The barge rolled heavily now, the little cabin Wharton rolled with the motion of the barge.

It was past midnight, but none of the juniors thought of sleep. Wharton's mind was working desperately. He was cudgelling his brains to think of some way out of their terrible pass. Bob Cherry called out to him from the deck.

"Harry, old chap!"

"Hallo, Bob!"

"Getting cramped?"

"Yes."

"Same here. Didn't you wish we'd left the boats on the raft?" said Bob dismissively.

"Yes, rather."

"The rutherfulness is terrific!" growled Hurree Singh.

"Hold your tongues, and you!" called out Schmidt, and he bestowed a kick upon Bob Cherry as a hint to keep quiet.

Bob panted with rage.

"Oh, if our turn should come again, you beast!" he murmured.

The Germans started the "Watch on the Rhine" again. The juniors lay in dismal silence, listening to thus, and to the wash of the sea round the barge.

Harry Wharton, as he rolled in the cabin whenever the barge pitched, came into rough contact with those articles that were jostling about the floor. He struck his head against the frying-pan, and bumped on to an overturned stool. The singing on deck died away, two of the Germans lying down to sleep. Krantz was at the tiller, and another man was keeping watch, while Schmidt and the fourth man slept.

Wharton groined in sheer anguish of spirit as the night wore on. While the Germans were sleeping—he could hear their deep and unmusical snores—there was a chance of turning the tables. If the juniors could only get free, the land stationed at the coast, that secured his escape, till the skin was almost lacerated, but he had been bound too carefully, and as his hands were tied behind him, he could not get at the rope with his teeth.

He gave up the effort at last.

With despair in his heart, he lay rolling helplessly to the motion of the rocking barge, as it plunged on through the night in the deep darkness that covered the North Sea.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Fight for Liberty!

HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH raised his head, and looked about him cautiously. Schmidt and his companion were snoring heavily on the deck. Krantz, at the tiller, was drowsily watching the sea. The lookout was in the bluff bows of the barge, and his back was to the juniors.

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

The dark eyes of the Indian junior glittered.

Like the others, he was rolling to the motion of the barge, as it plunged in the choppy waves. But the cunning Inky's rolling was not at all accidental. He rolled close to Bob Cherry, and whispered softly in his ear.

"Roll after me, my esteemed chum. I have an august idea. But keep mum!"

And as the barge plunged Inky rolled off again. Bob Cherry did not speak a word, but his eyes gleamed. He had been thinking hard, but no idea of deliverance had come into his head. But if Hurree Singh had any scheme, however desperate, Bob was ready to back him up.

Taking care to make no motion that could arouse the suspicions of the Germans, if they glanced at him, Bob allowed the rolling of the barge to take him after Inky. In ten minutes they were close to the side, in deep shadow. Inky wriggled nimbly, till he was behind Bob, and then Bob understood, as he felt warm breath on his hands. The keen, white teeth of the Indian had attacked the rope that bound his wrists.

Bob's heart thumped like a hammer. If the Germans should observe Inky's trick, it was all up, but the juniors had been lying on the deck for hours now, and their enemies had taken no notice of them. It was three in the morning now, and the two Germans who were still awake were drowsy.

It was not an easy task that Hurree Janset Ram Singh had set himself. The rope was thick and hard and wet, and it was bound several times about Bob's wrists and knotted securely.

Inky's lips were soon blistered and sore; but he had an Oriental imperviousness under pain. He kept on gnawing steadily like a very active rat. His teeth wore of the best.

Half an hour passed. The two juniors, lying in the deep shadow, rolling a little as the barge rolled, offered no suspicious sign to the Germans. The look-out in the bows came along to speak to Krantz, and as he did so Inky relinquished his task, and lay apparently asleep.

The Germans stumbled over him, and kicked him, and after a few minutes went back to his former station. Then, hidden in the darkness, Hurree Janset Ram Singh set to work again with his sharp teeth.

Bob's heart throbbled almost to suffocation as he felt the strands giving. He could hardly restrain a cry, when he felt the rope slacken away, and a sharp jerk tore his wrists loose.

Bob held himself well in hand. There was a struggle before the juniors, and Bob knew that it was not only for liberty, but for life. For if fortune went against them, the Germans were only too likely to rid themselves of further danger by pitching the juniors into the sea. Schmidt, at least, was capable of murder, and his companions were under his orders.

The Nabob of Bhanipur rolled away a little, and brought his head near Bob Cherry's, and whispered barely audibly: "There is a little penknife in my breast-pocket."

"I savvy!" murmured Bob. Moving with great care, he brought himself into a position to fumble in Inky's breast-pocket for the penknife. He found it and opened it, and saved at the rope round the nabob's wrists. In a few minutes Inky was free.

The two juniors, their hearts beating hard, peered along the deck. The man in the bows was barely visible in the darkness, and Krantz at the tiller was nodding. The other two were still snoring. Inky took the knife from Bob, and concealed it in his hands. Keeping his hands behind him, as if they were still bound, he allowed the motion of the barge to roll him back towards Nugent and Johnny Bull, who were lying close to the mast.

"Not a word, my esteemed chum!" whispered the nabob, "There is a chance for our noble selves, but manfully."

The two juniors peered at him, not understanding. But they understood that they were to keep silent. Nugent's heart bounded as he felt a blade glide between his wrists and saw at the rope.

In a couple of minutes his hands were free, but he did not move, and he kept his hands in the same position. Johnny Bull had watched, with gleaming eyes, barely able to make out what Inky was doing in the darkness.

His own turn came now, and in a few minutes more he was free. The four juniors lay on the deck now, still keeping up the appearance of being bound, but perfectly free to move when they chose.

To get at Wharton was impossible. He was lying in the cabin, and Hurree Singh could not have reached him without awakening suspicion or, at least, risking awakening suspicion. And it was very necessary to keep the Germans unsuspecting till the blow was struck.

"Follow me!" whispered Hurree Singh.

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As the barge pitched again, he rolled along the slanting deck, allowing the roll to take him as far as possible from the Germans. The other three rolled after him, still keeping their hands together behind them, as if bound.

"What now, Inky?" murmured Bob. "You're leader, you black rascal!"

"We're game for anything," muttered Johnny Bull between his teeth.

The nabob's eyes glittered in the dark. "We are fearful, and they are fearful," he murmured, in his purring voice. "But the esteemed Schmidt has a revolver. I watched the respected scoundrel put it in his pocket. I know the pocket. I am going to have that revolver, my worthy chum."

"But he'll wake," whispered Bob.

"He will not wake."

"But—but how—why—"

"Leave that to me, my worthy Bob," said the Indian junior, with a glitter in his eyes that made Bob shiver for a moment as he caught it. "You will be readyful. When I seize the esteemed scoundrel's revolver, you will jump up and pick up anything you can, and go for the other Devilishful boats on the spot."

"Yes, rather."

"But—" began Johnny Bull. "How—"

"That is all serene! Look about you," whispered Inky. "Spot something to 'pick up' as soon as I give the signal."

"I know where the best-book is," murmured Bob.

"And I've got my eye on a bucket," muttered Nugent.

"Keep quiet here till I give the esteemed signal by seizing the worthy villain Schmidt," whispered Inky. "Leave it to me, it will be serene."

Without waiting for a reply, the Indian junior took advantage of another wild pitch of the barge to roll away. The three juniors, lying still on the deck, looked after him with anxious eyes. What was in his mind they did not know, but they gave him the leadership cheerfully. Bob shivered a little as he remembered that deadly glare in the eyes of the nabob, and remembered that even old Inky, cheery schoolboy as he was, came from a land where life was held cheap. But it was no time for halt measures, and Bob did not shrink from what might happen. It was the Germans or themselves; and whatever the nabob might have in mind, his chums were prepared to back him up to the last gasp. After the black ingratitude and treachery of Schmidt and his companions, they deserved no mercy.

In the darkness, it was difficult for them to follow the nabob's movements, but they saw him rolling with apparent helplessness on the deck in the direction of the sleeping Germans. And Bob, whose eyes were exceptionally keen, saw too that the nabob was rolling a billet of wood along with him. It was one of the clumsy weapons the juniors had been deprived of by their captors, and it had been pitching about the rolling deck. Bob could see that Inky was coming cunningly to come into contact with it with every roll, so that when he came close to the sleeping Germans the heavy piece of wood was ready to his hand.

Bob felt a sickening feeling for a moment, but he did not blench. There was too much at stake for that.

The nabob was not in a hurry. Every movement he made was cold and deliberate. He raised his head a little, and the darkness was so thick that he could barely see the German at the tiller, and the look-out in the bows was quite hidden from sight. Inky shifted his position till the biller of wood was under his hand. He was within a couple of feet of Schmidt now, and the burly German was snoring heavily.

What followed next passed like a flash.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh seemed to come to life suddenly. With a sudden tiger-like spring he was on Schmidt, the heavy billet of wood grasped in his hand. A blow descended upon the German's head, and the snore was changed into a low moan, and he lay still. There was no danger of his moving after that blow. Hurree Singh's dusky hand glided into the pocket where he had seen the German place the revolver, and his nimble fingers closed upon it instantly and dragged it out.

Schmidt's companion had started up, and the man at the tiller was running forward. But it had taken Inky only a second to obtain possession of the revolver, and Schmidt did not move.

But Bob Cherry and Nugent and Johnny Bull were moving. The instant Inky had struck his blow they were on their feet, and they rushed to seize some kind of a weapon. Inky made a spring back, the revolver in his hand, as Schmidt's companion plunged towards him.

Crack!

The German toppled over on the deck with a crash.

Krantz was upon the scene when he fell, and the other German came running from the bows. Hurree Singh fired

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again with deadly coolness, and Krantz fell upon his knees, shrieking.

The look-out came rushing up, but he found four juniors ready to tackle him, one of them with a levelled revolver. He dropped the club he had caught up, and threw up his hands.

It was only just in time, too, for the trigger of the revolver was moving. Inky held his hand-just in time.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull collared the German, and pitched him on the deck, and his hands were quickly bound. Schmidt still lay like a leg, and the two wounded Germans were filling the air with their screams of pain. From the cabin came Harry Wharton's voice, shouting hoarsely. At the sound of the shooting, Wharton had thought that it was his friends who were the targets for the bullets, and he struggled madly with his bonds, shouting to them.

"All right," yelled Nugent. "All serene, Harry! Greyfriars wins!"

"Hurrah!" roared Bob. "The serenefulness is terrific!" called out Inky. And he dashed into the cabin and cut Wharton's bonds. "It is all right, my esteemed chum."

"Who was shooting?" panted Wharton. "My noble self!" grinned the nabob. "There, that is all rightful! It is an esteemed victory for our honourable selves."

Harry Wharton, cramped and panting, stumbled out on deck. Above the howl of the wind rang Bob Cherry's stentorian voice:

"Hurrah! Dip-pip, hurrah!"

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

All's Well That Ends Well!

HARRY WHARTON stared round him in bewilderment. He had seen nothing—heard nothing till the sudden shots had rung out, filling his heart with a terrible fear for his chums. But he could see that they were safe, and he panted with relief.

"It's all right," said Nugent. "Right as rain! We've turned the tables on the scoundrels—at least, Inky has! It was all Inky!"

"Good old Inky!" chuckled Bob.

The two wounded Germans had collapsed on the deck, groaning dimly. Schmidt had not made a movement. But the juniors, in the exuberance of their triumph, did not feel much concern about their treacherous enemies. Bob Cherry ran to the deserted tiller, and held the plunging barge before the wind. The juniors shifted the sail, and secured it, keeping now to the course they had been following before the Germans took command of the barge. For the moment, they had no time to bestow on their enemies. Wharton did not waste time asking questions till the barge was "all astern."

"But how did you manage it?" he exclaimed at last. "How, in the name of goodness—"

"It was Inky," chuckled Bob. "Good old Inky! The black tulip did it all!" And he explained.

Wharton thumped the Indian junior on the shoulder. "Good old Inky!" he said. "You've saved us all!"

The Nabob of Bhamipur showed his teeth in a wide, cheerful grin.

"The luckfulness was terrific!" he remarked. "I fearfully think that I have hurt the esteemed cocoon of the worthy and villainous Schmidt. But I had to hit him hard-fully to make sure that he would not struggle. You see, I had to get the revolver quick!"

Wharton shuddered a little, he bent over the insensible German. He was far from blaming Hurree Singh, fierce as his action had been. It had been the only way, and the Germans had deserved it. Hurree Jansett Ram Singh watched Wharton calmly as he examined Schmidt.

"Is he dead?" he asked. "Unless he has an exceedingly thick skull, I fearfully think that I must have busted it. But the life of the beast is not of large value, my esteemed chums."

"Oh, Inky!" murmured Bob.

"Thank goodness he isn't dead," said Harry, having ascertained that the ruffian was still breathing. "He is stunned, and I fancy it will be a long time before he comes to. But he isn't dead, thank goodness!"

The nabob shrugged his shoulders. "Better tie his hands ropefully, in case there is any more trickfulness from the esteemed beast!" he remarked.

"May as well," said Bob. "Can't be too careful with such a howling cad." And he secured the wrists of the insensible German.

Harry Wharton turned his attention to the two wounded men, who were groaning without cessation.

"They will not diefully expire," said Hurree Singh cheerfully. "I shot them in their esteemed legs, my worthy chum. I am a very goodful shot, and it was easy to bowl them over without taking their beastly lives. I was very thoughtful to spare your esteemed feelings, for off my own

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ONE
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but I should have shot them through their disgusting heads."

"You're a blessed murdering savage!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Poor old Schmidt will have a headache when he comes to, I am afraid. And serve him jolly well right."

The two wounded men began babbling in German, apparently under the impression that they were to be pitched into the sea. The juniors soon relieved their fears. They knelt up their wounds as well as they could, and took them into the cabin.

The two rascals were both disabled and helpless, and it was evident that there was nothing more to be feared from them.

"I will keepfully look after this esteemed revolver," Hurree Singh remarked. "If there is any more trouble, I will shootfully settle them."

Wharton jerked the revolver away.

"No, you jolly well won't!" he said. "There won't be any more trouble, Inky, and I'll keep the revolver, in case there is."

There was not likely to be any more trouble. Only one of the Germans was in a condition to give trouble, and he was securely bound hand and foot. The two wounded men in the cabin were unable to rise to their feet, and Schmidt was still insensible. There was no sleep for the juniors that night. It was now close on dawn. The grey light was rising in the east when Schmidt opened his eyes dully. He made a movement, and groaned heavily, and blinked dazedly at the juniors.

"Ach! Mein Gott! Mein Kopf!" he muttered thickly. "Ach! Vat is it, denn? Vat have you done, pig Englanders?"

"We've turned the tables on you, my pippin," said Bob Cherry, "and you can thank your lucky star that you're not chucked into the sea, as you deserve."

The German groaned.

"Ach! Mein Kopf!"

"Oh, your cocoon will get well in time!" said Bob. "If you'd had a little more sense in it, it could be all right now."

"Giff me vater!"

Harry Wharton brought the wretch water. Schmidt drank greedily.

"Ach! I am hurt—I suffer!" he muttered. "Untis my handen, denn. It is not tat I can hurt you now."

Wharton shook his head.

"We're not going to chance it," he said. "Once bit, twice shy, you know. You'll stay as you are, you rotter! You turned on us after we'd saved your life and you deserve to be thrown overboard."

Schmidt said no more. He groaned, and relapsed into silence.

As the dawn strengthened in the sky the juniors kept a keen look-out. Ahead of them, in the rising-light, they could make out land; and though they did not know where they were, they knew that it must be the Belgian coast. But whether it was the part of the coast held by the British, or the part in possession of the Germans, they could not say.

"Land, anyway," said Bob Cherry.

Wharton scanned the distant shore anxiously. It was a long, low coast, running north-east, south-west. As the mists of morning cleared away they made it out more distinctly. The barge pitched and rolled on, and they could make out a town in the distance. From further north there came a sudden heavy booming.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Naval guns!" Bob Cherry exclaimed. The juniors strained their eyes across the water, but the mists hid the vessels that were undoubtedly there. The heavy sound, once started, was almost incessant now, booming heavily across the sea. Big ships were evidently engaged in firing, but the mist hid them from sight, and by the sound the juniors judged that they were a dozen miles away at least.

"It's pretty certain what that is," said Harry, after a pause. "It's our ships bombarding the Germans on the coast. They've been at it for weeks."

"More power to their giddy elbow!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"But that's a guide to us," said Harry. "So long as we keep well south of our Fleet, we shall get to friendly territory, French or Belgian; it doesn't matter which to us. That town yonder isn't Calais; we know what Calais looks like. I shouldn't wonder if it's Dunkirk."

"Tommy Atkins is in Dunkirk," said Nugent joyfully. "Blessed if I wouldn't give the whole giddy barge to see a man in khaki again."

"What ho!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's somebody coming to ask our business," said Bob, as a steam-launch came dashing out of the harbour. The juniors shortened sail, and the launch came swooping down on them, a handsome Naval officer

NEXT
MONDAY—

"SURPRISING THE SCHOOL!"

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

standing up and scanning them as he came. And the juniors gave almost a shout of relief as they recognised the British uniforms. The lieutenant shouted to them in French.

"Que va?"

Bob Cherry chuckled, and replied in the same language—with variations.

"Hullo, hullo, hullo! Nous sommes Anglais schoolboys, and nous avons come along to see how you Naval johnnies are getting on, and if you want any help."

The officer started at him.

"Oh, you're English!" he said.

"British," corrected Bob.

"The Britishfulness is terrific, esteemed sahib," said Hurree Singh.

"And what the deuce are you doin' here in that coal-warehouse?" demanded the lieutenant.

"Got adrift, and couldn't help ourselves," said Wharton.

"By gad! Well, you can come ashore and give an account of yourselves. You don't look like mulelayers, but—"

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob. "I say, we've got some prisoners for you—four Germans—a little damaged, but one of them as good as new."

"By gad! said the astonished Naval man. "Here, I'm coming aboard." The launch ranged up to the barge, and the lieutenant jumped lightly aboard the Polly. "Now, you young scamps, tell me what you are and what you've been doing."

The juniors explained cheerfully. The lieutenant stared at them, and whistled as he listened.

"Well, by gad," he said at last, "this takes the only bun! And what do you think you're going to do when you land in Dunkirk? That's Dunkirk you mean."

"Take some pictures, if it's aboard," said Wharton promptly. "I've got my cinematograph machine with me."

The lieutenant burst into a laugh.

"And I'd like to see if my paper is in this quarter of the world," said Bob. "Have you heard anything of Major Cherry, of the Buffs?"

"Major Cherry is in Dunkirk, and I breakfasted with him this mornin'," said the Naval officer, with a stare. "Are you the young cub he was telling me about?"

"I think I must be," chuckled Bob. "I say, you chaps, it will be splendid to see the pater. He'll get us permission to take some pictures, too. And you may be able to see your chaps from Bhanipur, luky."

Hurree Singh's eyes glistened.

"My respected sahib, have you any news of the Bhanipur Lancers?" he asked. "I have the esteemed honour to be the Nabob of Bhanipur."

"By gad! I don't think you'll get permission to visit them," smiled the lieutenant. "They're right on the front, and the last I heard of them they were cutting up the Germans. They have some wounded in Dunkirk though; you can see them, if you like. I'll run this coal-bucket in for you and land you, and take you to Major Cherry's quarters."

"Many thanks!" said Harry, and the nabob added that the thankfulness was terrific.

The surprise of Major Cherry when he beheld his hopeful son was what Hurree Janset Ram Singh described as the Nabob.

But he was very pleased to see Bob and his companions; though he put his military foot down very heavily on the juniors' idea of killing home in the barge as soon as the wind was favourable.

"You'll do nothing of the kind, you young rascals!" said the major sternly. "You'll get home in the next steamer. There's one going to-morrow with refugees, and I'll see that you're safe aboard."

"But what price the barge?" said Bob. "It belongs to a man in Pegg, and he'll want us to pay for it."

"You can leave that here," said the major. "I fancy it will be useful. And I'll see that the owner is paid for it. Now, if Hurree Singh wants to see the men from Bhanipur, I'll send a man to take you round the hospital. And, mind, you're to stay in his charge. Anything else you want?"

Wharton pointed to his camera.

"I want to take some pictures in the firing-line, please."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The major grinned.

"I'll see that you don't go anywhere near the firing-line."

he remarked. "But I can get you leave to take some pictures about the town—boys, in khaki on the march, convoys, and captured guns being brought in. How will that suit you?"

"Hurrah!"

And the juniors spent a very exciting and happy day. They visited the hospital, and chatted with the wounded soldiers, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh talked to dinky troopers from his native land, in a language that Bob Cherry said was like cracking nuts. After that, Wharton had an opportunity of using his cinema machine, and he used all the films he had.

The schoolboys slept soundly enough that night in the major's quarters, and the next morning Major Cherry was very careful to see that they took their places on the outgoing steamer.

The barge remained behind for military use on the canals; and Schmidt and his companions had been handed over as prisoners of war. Harry Wharton & Co. saw nothing more of them.

"Well, good-bye!" said the major, shaking hands round with the Famous Five. "I hope you'll find your head-master in a good temper. I telegraphed to him yesterday, explaining that it wasn't your fault. I hope I kept within the truth. Good-bye, my lads!"

"Good-bye, sir, and good luck!"

The steamer throbbed out into the misty sea. The passage was long, but the juniors landed in Dover at last, and took the train for Courtfield. From Courtfield they walked to Greyfriars. They were tired, but they were very cheerful. It was Sunday, and the countryside was quiet and peaceful. There had been another fall of snow, and the fields and hedges were white.

"Hullo, hullo, hullo!" exclaimed Bob suddenly. "Ponsonby & Co."

Four Highcliffe juniors, evidently out on a Sunday walk, were coming along the road towards them. They were looking dispirited. The fate of the juniors whom they had sent adrift in the barge was weighing upon the minds of Ponsonby & Co. But their expressions changed suddenly as they caught sight of the Famous Five.

"Here we are again!" said Harry Wharton, laughing as the Highcliffians stared at them, their mouths agape with astonishment. "And if it wasn't Sunday, we'd give you the hiding of your lives for the dirty trick you played us!"

"B-b-by Jove!" stuttered Ponsonby. "Then—then you ain't drowned!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'm blowed!" said Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" stuttered Vavasour.

"Let's give them some esteemed lickfulness, anyway," suggested Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

But Ponsonby & Co. did not wait for any "lickfulness." They cut off, and the Famous Five, laughing, continued on their way to Greyfriars.

"I expect we've rather relieved those rotters' minds," remarked Bob Cherry. "They can't have been feeling comfy the last few days. Hullo, hullo, hullo! There's Greyfriars! Seems as if we've been away a century."

There was a shout as the juniors entered the Close. Fellows swarmed round them on all sides, thumping them on the back and shaking their hands. The Head himself came out to meet them, and shook them warmly by the hand. Major Cherry's telegram had informed all Greyfriars of their safety. For days there had been deep anxiety at the school, till the telegram came to relieve it. And the Head, in his great relief, did not ask any close questions about the way they had got adrift; he accepted their assurance that they had drifted out to sea against their will, and they were not under the necessity of giving Ponsonby & Co. away.

The return of the Famous Five was celebrated with due rejoicings. Billy Bunter was noticed to be looking a little glum. Perhaps he was thinking of Bob Cherry's bike. But he cheered up when he found that he was admitted to the feast in the Rag which celebrated the home-coming of the chums of the Remove.

And a few days later there was a great cinematograph exhibition in the Rag, which the Head honoured with his presence, and where Wharton showed on the screen the pictures he had taken so near to the seat of war. And the amateur cinematographers were called upon to show those pictures again and again, for a long time after the happy ending of the cruise of the Famous Five.



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THE UNCONQUERABLE.

A Magnificent Story of Thrilling Adventure

By SIDNEY DREW.

The Banquet—Martin Arkland Appears.

All at once a black hand reached across and seized a champagne-bottle. It returned again and secured a glass. There was a slight crash, and both Schwartz and the Chinaman started.

"O! ri, ol' ri!" said Chan-Song-Pu. "I tink I go sleep a bit."

"Dunder! I tink I do not also," said Herr Schwartz. "Haf some more goffee, yes?"

Chan shook his head. He did not want to take anything that would keep him awake. Presently he was snoring again, this time in the chair.

There was a soft patter of naked feet, a gurgling cry, and then the cook's legs shot into the air and overturned the table. "Arr-r-r-r!" he shrieked.

He fancied he was dreaming.

A hand pressed over his mouth stopped his cries. A coal-black, herculean negro knelt on his chest and grinned at him. Sleuts rang from below, but he was quickly silenced. The negro spun the cook over, forcing the little man's nose against the deck, and then rolled him unceremoniously into the scuppers beside Chan-Song-Pu, with his arms and legs tied.

"I guess yo' bettah not do yo' yellin', yo' two boys," said the negro warningly; "o' ef yo' do, I jes' drop yo' ovah in de bay, and dat afoah yo' kin wink."

"O! long, ol' long—ol' jelly topsidee long!" growled Chan-Song-Pu. "Atchoo! Atchoo! A-a-atchoo!"

Chan's nostrils were filled with pepper. Luckily he was asleep when the table went down, and so his eyes had escaped. He sneezed and sneezed.

One by one the Chinamen were brought on deck—each securely bound, and guarded by two armed negroes.

Herr Schwartz could hear the thug-thug of oars as the boats took the prisoners away. The big negro righted the table, and robbed the sea-pail of a bottle of champagne, which he deftly uncorked. All the glasses had been broken, but the negro unstrapped his revolver-case, filled it with wine, grinned, and drank down the contents.

"Say, got room fo' dese two skunks in de lars' boat?" he called out. "Ef dat de case, jes' heave 'em in Sam!"

The man spoken to looked over the side, but the boat had gone, and he did not hail it.

"They kin wait fo' de nex' trip," he answered. "What dat stuff yo' pourin' down yo' neck? Gih dis dry nigger hol' oh it. Yah! Dat grand!"

"Arr-r-r! Tiefs! Pirates! Togs!" shouted Herr Schwartz. "You get hang py der necks for dis! Ach, plack agrounds! How you tare, is id? Led dot vine alone, und untie me at vouse! I command you! I order you! Dunder! You hang op like pigs for dis, yes?"

The two negroes laughed, and helped themselves to cigars. A boat returned from the shore. Protesting, struggling, bellowing dreadful threats, Herr Schwartz was lifted, and passed over the side.

"O! long, ol' long—ol' velly topsidee long!" sighed Chan-Song-Pu, as he followed. "But I glad I havee dinnel fisteet. Deally, deally me!"

Senor Diaz Paravaltá took a cup of finely-cut tobacco and paper from his waistcoat pocket, and rolled a cigarette.

"A pig-headed fool—yes, my dear Arkland," he said, shrugging his shoulders; "but a useful fool—to me. And is he such a fool? Was it all luck that made Paul Guthrey a king of commerce? Caramba! We are man to man. We have brains—you and I. I helped Paul to grow rich, and I have brain him generous. True, he holds a few little secrets

that would hang me; but he has seldom threatened to disclose them. What then?"

"We are all mad, Diaz," answered Martin Arkland, "and Paul Guthrey is the maddest. Now that I have taken the plunge, I must either swim the torrent or drown. I did my best. All I have gained is a mere promise."

"Tush! You have only half-failed," said the Brazilian. "Paul will pay you, have no fear of that. If he does not, you can quietly disappear, and thank your luck that it is no worse. Sometimes I wish I could do the same. Paul has me by the throat. That he should risk so much to win this foolish race may seem the act of a maniac, but there is more behind it, Arkland, than we know, or ever may know. What would you have, then? We are not children—you and I. The luck is with us, and Paul Guthrey must pay for the future Caramba! Did I say luck? Senor, it is miracles!"

"Good information, rather," said Martin Arkland. "It is only Ferrers Lord who accomplishes the miraculous." "It is only Paravaltá spread out his hands."

"Si, si! But Ferrers Lord is only mortal, Senor Martino. This new vessel of his must not sail, that is all. We cannot play the old trick again, it is true; but he is a poor cheat who can only cheat in one way. And we have made a gallant haul, senor."

He blew a dozen rings of smoke towards the ceiling, and gave his mousetrap a twist.

Arkland rubbed his hand across his forehead. "We have not taken Ferrers Lord or Harold Honour," he said, "and the vessel will be finished, and it will sail. How can you stop it? Holding these men as hostages will do no good. Ferrers Lord will not be put off by threats. He is a man of iron, Senor Paravaltá."

"Caramba! We can only try it. We are not pressed for time, yet. A torpedo steered into the cavern might prove more effectual—eh?"

"He has guarded against that by now. The torpedo-nets are down, and the place is patrolled night and day. That plan is impossible."

"Well, well, we shall have to use our brains. Antonio is signalling, I see. So our guests are about to arrive. Do they know you?"

"Thurston has seen me once or twice," replied Arkland, "but he will hardly recognise me. Yes, they are coming straight for the spider's web like a couple of silly flies. May they enjoy this dinner. Ha, ha, ha! Do not let them overtake themselves, senor."

Antonio, the butler bowed Thurston and Captain Kennedy into the hall.

"Your Excellencies are exactly in time," he said. "They await you in the dining-hall. Follow me, senors, I beg of you."

He threw open a door, and the two men went in. Diaz Paravaltá was seated at the head of the table. Thurston and Kennedy stopped in amazement, not unmingled with disgust. With the exception of Paravaltá, all the men sitting at the table in swallow-tail coats and glossy shirt-fronts were full-blooded negroes. It was not their fault that they revolted, but their instinct. Could it be a jest, or an insult? Surely the Brazilian never imagined that they would dine in such company? And where was Ching-Lung? They waited for an explanation.

"Welcome, senors," said Diaz Paravaltá, rising. "I am delighted—more than delighted. Antonio, place chairs beside me for the senors."

"Thank you, pray do not take the trouble," said Rupert, the hot blood crimsoning his cheeks. "The senors do not choose to dine."

"Caramba! You will not dine?" cried the Brazilian. "Gentlemen, do you hear that? They object to your colour."

There was a roar of laughter. The door was shut. Thurston shot a meaning glance at Kennedy, as he seized the handle. There was more behind this than a jest or a premeditated insult. They had no weapons of any kind, and they felt they were in peril. Kennedy seized the butler by the arm.

"Knock that door," he said, "or I'll hammer a way through it with my head!"

"Come, come," laughed Paravaltá. "Why should you miss an excellent dinner for a mere prejudice, senors? You Englishmen spent your blood and your money in freeing the blacks, and now you are too proud to take a meal with one of them. Your friends did exactly the same thing. It is not logical. With the exception of the prince, they are all common sailors, and one expects such things from uneducated men. But from you, senors, from you."

"Senor Paravaltá," said Kennedy grimly, "will you kindly order your servant to open the door? I do not wish to disturb you or your guests at dinner, but you will favour me greatly if you will meet me on your lawn afterwards, where I shall be glad to hear your explanations."

"Pistols for two, and coffee for one!" sneered the Brazilian. "Ah, senor capitano, I can clip the milling off a sovereign

(Continued on page 14 of cover.)

at thirty paces, and you are slightly larger than a sovereign. Death of my life, heavey is the very wine of life. Drink to the brave capitano, gentlemen! Viva!"

"Viva!" shouted the guests, and drained their glasses. Kennedy flung the bottle aside, and strode across the room. The guests put down their knives and forks, and there was a sudden hush.

"As you refuse to open the door, señor," said the big man, "we shall leave by the window, and you shall open it for us."

"You astound me," said Paravalt. "Caramba! I am not a footman, señor capitano. No, no, I cannot do that."

"You shall," hissed Kennedy, whose blood was up, "for I'll fling you through it, you dog!"

The chair tumbled backwards, and Kennedy wrapped his powerful arms round the Brazilian. He gave the chair a flying kick that sent it clattering through the glass.

"Run, Thurston, run!" he shouted. "There's black treason here! Arm your men, and bring them! Quick! Out of the window, lad!"

A fist blow on the temple made Rupert totter, and his chance was gone. Kennedy, looming at the mouth, was dragged away and held. Paravalt wiped the blood from his face. His coat had been torn from his back in the brief struggle, and he had lost his collar. He asked pantingly for some brandy.

"Caramba!" he said fiercely. "You shall have your wish now, Captain Kennedy! Antonio, bring the pistols!"

"No, no!" cried several voices.

"Yes, yes!" said Kennedy. "It is a long time since I shot any vermin. Bring the pistols, Antonio."

Antonio brought two pairs of handcuffs instead, and several straps and a silk handkerchief. He said something in Spanish that evoked a scream of mirth.

"Sensors, said the Brazilian, 'Antonio is right. With us, hospitality is a sacred thing. I humbly apologise for this trifling misunderstanding. I am grieved to the heart. Senors, I entreat you to dine with us. You shall, you must, I insist, senors. Caramba! You cannot refuse. A chair, Antonio!'

Kennedy's vast strength did not avail him. He was forced into the heavy mahogany chair, and strapped there tightly. Then came Rupert's turn. They were carried to the table. Antonio, grinning hideously, gagged them with the silk handkerchiefs, and quickly put the room to rights. They could hear easily enough. Presently Diaz Paravalt returned in a new dress suit.

"To our guests," he said, with a mocking bow. "Death of my life, it is a pleasant sight to see them with us, the brave capitano, and his gallant friend."

Glasses were filled and drained amid more merriment. Antonio and the other dusky waiters placed the various courses before the prisoners.

"Alas! they have poor appetites," said the Brazilian. "Offer them the wine, Antonio. What! They will not drink wine? On what do they live?"

The others did not share the wine, and each of Paravalt's allies caused shrieks of merriment. Rupert looked steadily at him, and he was thinking hard. It was obvious that Ching-Lung and the others were, like themselves, prisoners. Who were their captors? Who were these black-faced pirates, and who was the handsome rascal who led them? Forgetting his bonds, he tried to spring to his feet as a little, round-shouldered man crept in through the broken window—Martin Aikland.

"We've taken the yacht, Paravalt," he said, "and I'm ready for further orders."

Hendrick Escapes—In the Guarded House.

Hendrick, the fisherman and wild-fowler, imagining that there was a busy night in store, had turned in for a few hours' rest in his hammock. The cries of the startled Chinamen roused him. He sprang down, and looked out. The sight of a dozen armed blacks sent him back again hastily. The shouts ceased. Hendrick was a big man, but he lay down flat, close to the bulkhead, behind two lockers placed one on the other. The negroes rushed in, and turned on the light. The Chinese held his breath, and did not stir.

"All right," shouted a voice. "Nobody here! Hi! Stop that Chinese! Drop him or stop him! Catch the bound!"

They dashed away in pursuit of the flying Chinaman, and Hendrick breathed again. He could not understand it, and he was afraid to leave his hiding-place. At last all became quiet. The fisherman crept out, and stole up the companion. Four men were sitting at the table under the awning playing cards.

There was a good deal of money on the table, and the gamblers were deeply interested in the luck of the game. One of them laughed triumphantly, as he flung down a winning card, and swept the pile of coins away. Hendrick crawled nearer.

"I'll play no more," said one of the men, with an oath. "I'm cleaned out of every stiver. Well, one more hand

for my watch and chain. It's worth eighty dollars. Put up your eighty dollars each, and deal. Ah, this looks better. Who holds the ace of clubs? Curse you, Simpson, you've done me again!"

Hendrick nodded forward an inch at a time, and found shelter behind a ventilator.

"Any oh yo' boys know de plans?" asked Simpson, as he pocketed his gains.

"The howl maroon 'em, I suppose? Ef there's a thunderin' great row, it don't matter to us. I only hope I ain't going to be left to look arter 'em on this ugly rock, though it'll only be for a matter of a few weeks. Here, I won't give in, yet. What's this pin worth? I'll go for thirty dollars."

The fisherman could not understand yet with any clearness. His comrades had been trapped, and imprisoned for some mysterious cause, and it was intended to keep them prisoners on Granden. But why? Hendrick began to think that China had gone to war with some dusky race. A dozen nations might be at war without the news of it reaching this lonely island. If they were Ching-Lung's foes, they were Hendrick's foes, that was plain. How could he help? He stole aft. The dinghy was swinging there. He unfastened it, and dropped overboard as noiselessly as he could. Then he swam after the drifting boat, and let himself drift with it until he thought it was safe to climb in. He rowed quietly, but strongly, and landed in a tiny cove on the southern side of the island.

Hendrick was a Finlander, and Russian oppression had driven him into exile. The good-natured, slow-thinking giant made the boat secure. Even in the gloom, the beelling cliffs had no terrors for him. Most men would have shuddered at the thought of attempting to scale them in broad daylight, but Hendrick was as surefooted as a mountain goat.

It was a long and perilous climb, and he was panting when he reached the summit. He could see lights gleaming in the windows of the distant house.

"Huh!" he grunted.

The two yachts had left the bay, and were heading north under easy steam. They circled round, and headed south. The fisherman quickly made up his mind. The weather promised to continue fine. He would first discover whether the prisoners had been left on the island or taken away. If they had been removed, he must attempt the hazardous voyage to the mainland in the dinghy. If they were there—well, he would think what to do.

He tramped through the heather till he came to the garden. Then he crawled under a laurel, and watched.

"Huh!" he grunted again, as a negro, with a bayoneted rifle on his shoulder, walked slowly past. "They're here!"

Hendrick backed into the shadow, and went round the house. He counted five sentries. The Finn scratched his head in perplexity. If he only had Hans, Pedersen, and Olaf here with him, with their rifles and fowling-piece! But Pedersen, Olaf, Hans, and the others were five-and-thirty long miles away. He could row that distance in eight hours, perhaps, and bring them to the rescue. If he could only let the prisoners know of his presence and of his plans.

The negro he was watching struck a match to light his pipe, and the flame lighted up his black face. Hendrick shook his fist at the fellow savagely. The sentry walked on. Hendrick waited, and then dashed forward. He tried the window, under which the man had been standing, and raised the sash. The next moment Hendrick was in the house, and the window was closed.

"Huh! What now?" muttered the Finn.

It was very dark, and Hendrick could smell bacon and cheese. He stretched out his arms, and felt his way carefully, until he came to a door. Beyond this were stone steps. Gaining the top, he saw a narrow passage, with a small light, and another open door, through which he caught a glimpse of plates and shining dish-covers. The room was the kitchen, and he could hear the clock ticking. He peeped in, and hastily retreated, for a negro was sitting asleep near the stove. A sound behind him made his heart thump. Hendrick looked round, his hand grasping his knife.

"Gan-Waga!" he gasped.

"Hendricks!"

The Eskimo's head was patched with sticking plaster, and he was creeping along on all-fours, his dog with him.

"How yo' get away, hunk? Comes back into de darks! Dis alls bad stuffs. Why yo' hores, hunk?"

Hendrick quietly explained.

"Yo' plucky chaps," said Gan-Waga. "I got a swipes on de heads, and I pretends dat I very ill. Dey watch Chingy and Prouts and Ruperts, and dey gotten de Chinamens in de billiards-room. How many yo' see outides, hunk?"

"Five," whispered the Finlander.

"And whats yo' tink yo' do, hunk?"

"I tink dot I row to Scarran and bring back der boys."

Gan-Waga's eye sparkled in the gloom with sudden hope. (*Interlude finished. In this grand serial next Monday. Order your copy now.*)

