



THE GREYFRIARS "DERBY"!

(See this week's special supplement.)



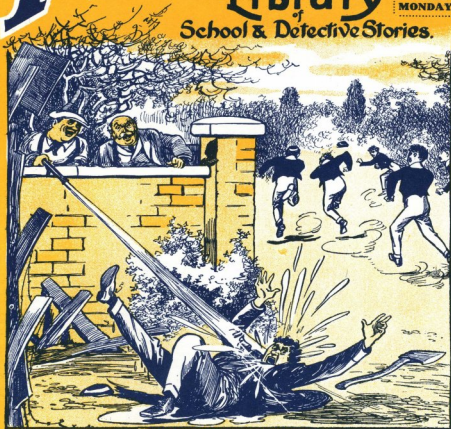
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# The Magnet 2<sup>o</sup>

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COOLING COOKER'S ARDOUR!

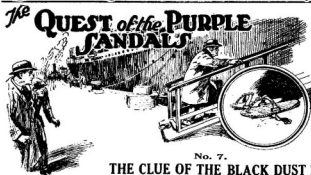
## MAJOR THRESHER REPELS "BOARDERS"!

(A diverting incident in this week's grand extra-long story of the chums of Greyfriars inside.)

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No. 7.

## THE CLUE OF THE BLACK DUST!

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

## The Mysterious Message!

**I**NSPECTOR PYECROFT, of Scotland Yard, was fed-up—very fed-up. Wearing plain clothes and unrecognized, he walked along Hastings Street, the principal thoroughfare of Vancouver, British Columbia, his brows knitted with worry. Still deeply wrapped in thought, he crossed the road to enter Granville Street, when a man alighting from one of the electric trolley-cars bumped heavily into him.

"Be careful where you're going!" growled Pycroft angrily.

The man, who was dressed in greasy overalls to which a quantity of sawdust adhered, touched a cap which was pulled down over his eyes, and turned his begrimed face towards the Scotland Yard man.

"All right, guv'nor," he said; "keep yer wool on! No 'arm doin'."

Pycroft's countenance lightened somewhat.

"Hi! You're from the Old Country, eh, my man?" he said. "It's a treat to hear the old Cockney accent again."

"Yus," answered the man. "I only got here from England a week or so back. Got the makings?"

"Got the what?" said Pycroft, gazing at the millman in astonishment. "What are they, for goodness' sake?"

"The makings," replied the other. "O' course, I forgot, you're a Britisher yourself, and maybe ain't been out here even as long as wot I 'ave. The makings is simply some rice-pap and a bit o' baecy for making of a cigarette."

"Oh, I see!" murmured Pycroft. "I am sorry, my man, I've nothing of the sort on me."

The man leaned forward and put his face close to Pycroft's ear.

"But what's that there you've got in your hip-pocket?" he muttered, with a chuckle. "Only a revolver, eh? Dangerous thing to carry about with you. Much better have the makings—Inspector Pycroft."

The burly Scotland Yard man started as though shot.

"Hang it!" he said. "Who—who the dickens are you—?"

The other laughed softly and changed his tone.

"Bless me! Don't you know an old friend, Pycroft?"

Immediately the Scotland Yard man burst into a grin of chuckle.

"Ferrals! Locke!" he exclaimed. "Pon my word, you caught me napping that time. What's the news?"

"'Sh!sh! Not so loud!" muttered Locke. "My address is Room No. 23, Brand's Rooming House, Conzola Street. If you've nothing particular to do, follow me, and we'll have a chat. I've news for you."

With that Ferrers Locke, the great English private sleuth, who that afternoon had been working as a lumberman in the mill of the Red Cedar Lumber Company at False Creek, turned on his heel and walked quickly away. Taking a side-turning, he went down to the waterfront district, and entered a dos-house in Cordova Street. Mounting the rickety staircase, he entered Room No. 23, where his young assistant, Jack Drake, was washing in an enamel basin.

"Cheerio, chief!" said the boy, looking round. "You weren't long in following me, then."

"No, I should have been here even sooner had I not met Pycroft. I've asked him to call."

He had just time to take his overalls off and wash and tidy himself when heavy footsteps sounded on the stairs.

"My giddy aunt!" said Jack Drake, with a laugh. "I'd know those fairy foot-steps among a thousand. Pycroft is here."

A knock sounded on the door, and the burly Scotland Yard man poked his red face into the room.

"Come in, Pycroft!" cried Locke. "Don't stand on ceremony."

The inspector inserted his huge bulk into the room and shut the door behind him. Then he subsided into a chair and mopped his brow with a red handkerchief.

"There!" he panted. "So this is where you've been hiding yourselves lately. Rotten place to live, eh?"

"Not so bad," said Locke, putting on his coat. "We've lived in worse."

He extended a box of cigarettes towards the inspector, who took one and lighted it. Locke himself put on a pipe, and when it was drawing settled himself on the edge of the bed.

"Pycroft," he said, "the case of the Caplano Canyon crime is ended."

Pycroft leaned forward with a little gasp of surprise.

"You—you mean you've caught the man who slew Mrs. Goodenough?" he asked, with a quiver in his voice.

"I did catch him," answered Locke quietly; "but, thanks to the interference of a number of men in the Red Cedar Mill, China, Joe made a break for freedom."

"Gosh!" exclaimed Pycroft. "Then, he's escaped the rope?"

"He has," replied Ferrers Locke calmly. "For China Joe was killed not half an hour ago in the belting of the Red Cedar Mill."

Inspector Pycroft rose from his seat and paced slowly up and down the room, his hands clasped behind him. He did not know quite whether to be pleased or sorry. China Joe was one of two men whom he had set out to bring to justice. Had he caught the Chinaman it would have been a big feather in his cap. But Ferrers Locke had brought the case to a conclusion, and there the matter ended. Now there remained but to put the handcuffs on Dr. Harvey Kruse, the super-criminal whom he had hunted from England.

Some time before, a Professor Arnold Erskine, noted for his scientific discoveries, had been foully assassinated in his residence at Dulwich, a suburb of London. The crime had proved a complete mystery until Ferrers Locke had proved the murderer had been none other than Dr. Harvey Kruse, a specialist in tropical diseases, of Harley Street. Kruse had been an old friend of the professor, and at first Locke could find no motive for the crime. But the Home Secretary of Great Britain had sent for the sleuth, and had revealed a secret which had put an entirely different aspect on the Dulwich crime.

It seemed that Professor Erskine had made the most amazing discovery of the age—nothing less than the finding of a formula whereby base metal might be converted into gold. Apprehensive lest the discovery might leak out to the public, the Home Secretary had sent for Locke. The great statesman was aware that the professor's secret had been set down on a piece of paper, which could not be found among the dead man's effects. It was this formula which Locke was commissioned to find and destroy.

As far as the Home Secretary was aware, he was the only living man who knew of the existence of this paper. But Ferrers Locke speedily discovered that Dr. Kruse was also in the know. The only available clue to the whereabouts of the missing formula led the sleuth to the belief that it was hidden in a pair of purple sandals of Indian workmanship, which had been sold from the professor's collection of curios.

Already Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake had hunted the sandals across the Atlantic and the Dominion of Canada, right to the Pacific Coast. And when within hand-grasp of the sandals, the precious footwear had been stolen by the late China Joe, and now they were as far on their way as ever.

Inspector Pycroft himself was in no way concerned in the quest of the sandals. He knew that, for some special reason, Ferrers Locke was moving heaven and earth to lay hands on the articles in question, but he was unaware of the stupendous secret, which the sandals were believed to contain.

As he passes the ill-furnished apartment in Brand's Rooming House his thoughts reverted entirely to Dr. Kruse, whose astuteness had enabled him to slip through the net of the law on several occasions.

Stopping in his walk, Pycroft spread out his feet and, leaning his knees a habit he had contracted from the time when, as a policeman, he had chaffed pretty corks in London areas.

"Well, Mr. Locke," he said, "I suppose it's up to me to congratulate you on having disposed of the case of that Asiatic murderer. I—I suppose you haven't tumbled across a clue concerning the whereabouts of that doctor chap? If so, you might pass it on."

(Continued on page 23.)

Major Thresher, a magistrate and a near neighbour of Greyfriars, suddenly takes it into his head to close a path that runs between his property and Greyfriars. Peter Todd, the schoolboy lawyer, is convinced that the major has no legal right to adopt such a high-handed measure, and proceeds to point out the "law" on the subject to the intractable major. See how he fares.



A GRAND EXTRA-  
LONG STORY OF  
Harry Wharton and  
Co. of Greyfriars  
BY  
FRANK RICHARDS

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

#### An Interrupted Snooze!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's Skinner up to?" It was Bob Cherry who asked the question in great astonishment as the Famous Five were starting out for a short stroll after tea one evening.

The juniors were sauntering along the narrow, walled-in passage which at this point divided the school property from the premises of Major Thresher, Greyfriars' next-door neighbour, when they came upon Skinner suddenly.

And Skinner was certainly "up to" something!

With his chums, Snoop and Stott, a sword Skinner was seated astride Major Thresher's garden wall with a fishing-rod and line in his hand. And on the faces of Skinner & Co. were anticipatory grins.

Harry Wharton & Co. blinked up at them in astonishment. There was no water in Major Thresher's garden, and certainly no fish, so that Skinner's actions were extraordinary, on the face of things. "What on earth are you up to, Skinner, you ass!" demanded Harry Wharton.

"Shush!" breathed Harold Skinner in a whisper. "I'll have a bite in a minute. Shush!"

There was a soft chuckle from Snoop and Stott, and Harry Wharton clambered up the low, ivy-clad wall. Then he understood, and grinned; he could not help it.

In the well-kept garden below was Major Thresher. He was sprawling in a garden chair on the lawn, and across his knees was an open newspaper.

But the gallant major was not reading. His eyes were closed, and from his wide-open mouth proceeded a series of deep, rumbling snores. In the cool of the evening Major Thresher slept the sleep of the just, whilst Skinner fished.

Harry Wharton's grin gave place to a look of alarm as he saw what Skinner was fishing for.

"You-you silly ass, Skinner—" he began.

"Shush!" warned Skinner.

The hook at the end of the line dropped lower and lower. It hovered for a brief second over the sleeper's embroidered smoking-cap, and then Skinner got his "bite."

He gave a sudden deft jerk of the fishing-rod, the hook caught in the tassel of the smoking-cap, and the cap went sailing up into the air. "Good shot, Skinner!" coked Stott. "Oh, crumb!"

Skinner caught the cap neatly as it swooped towards him. He unhooked it coolly, and jested it on his own head on top of his cap.

"How's that?" he grinned. "Now for another— Hallo! The old sport's waking up!"

That sudden jerk at his head had evidently awakened the major. The rumbling snore ceased abruptly, and Major Thresher sat bolt upright, blinking around him drowsily.

He seemed to miss his cap at once, for his hand went straight to his shining, bald pate. Then he heaved himself to his feet and began to look for it. He searched the lawn around, and looked closely under the chair and under his newspaper.

Then a puzzled look came over his face—a look of sheer bewilderment, which almost made the breathless juniors choke with suppressed laughter.

Hardly daring to breathe, the juniors on the wall waited, expecting every second that the old gentleman would look up and discover them.

But discovery did not come; and, after another uncertain look around him, the major seated himself again with a grunt. He settled himself back, and his eyes closed. As he did so, Skinner chuckled and made another cast with his fishing-line.

Harry Wharton's grin changed to a frown.

At the best of times the ex-Army officer was not a good-tempered old gentleman. On more than one occasion stray cricket-balls and the like had done damage in the major's garden, and, naturally enough, the major cherished no

kindly feelings towards Greyfriars or its occupants.

"That's enough, Skinner!" whispered Wharton. "You ass! You'll have the old chap—"

"Rats!" chuckled Skinner. "Watch me!"

Once again the hook hovered over the major, and once again Skinner got a "bite"—this time with a vengeance.

What Skinner was fishing for this time was not clear; but what he caught was very soon clear, as the major suddenly leaped from his chair with a berish yell and clapped his hand to his ear.

At the same moment Skinner also yelled, as the unexpected jerk at the line pulled him clean off the wall.

Skinner landed among a bed of the major's chrysanthemums in a sprawling heap, and lay there, roaring.

The major was roaring, too—roaring with pain and rage. The sudden jerk had not only taken a piece out of the major's ear, but it had resulted in the hook becoming fixed in the collar of his velvet jacket.

He danced about, fairly howling. Then, suddenly grasping the situation, he made a rush at the hapless Skinner, the line and rod dancing along after him.

"Begad! You—you young villain!" he bellowed. "Goosey young cub, begad! Hah! I—I'll teach you!"

The luckless Skinner, who was rubbing himself and groaning, looked up in sudden alarm.

"Ow! I say, sir! Yow! Oh dear!" he gasped. "Ow! I'm hurt! Here, I say, lerge!"

But the major had no intention of doing that yet. Like Skinner, he also was hurt, only more so. And the sight of the junior sprawling rocklessly among his precious prize chrysanthemums was the last straw for Major Thresher.

With a roar, he tore the hook from his collar and snatched up the fishing-rod. This he snapped clean in two across his knees, and flung away the more slender end. The thicker end, however, he did not fling away.

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"Hurt, are you?" he booted, grabbing the shrinking Skinner by the collar. "I'll hurt you, my fine fellow! Impudent young scamp, begad! This—this is too much! Never in my life have I been subjected to—"

The irate major fairly spluttered with right and wrong indignation. Finding his words inadequate, he proceeded to lay the thicker end of the fishing-rod across Skinner's back.

"Whack, whack, whack!"  
"Yarragh! Ow! Help! Yow! Yoocepp!" yelled Skinner. "Stop the old fool, someone! Yarragh!"

The weapon rose and fell, and Skinner's yells rose and fell in discordant harmony. Skinner had already regretted having lacked the presence of mind to let go of his rod at the critical moment; he had good cause to regret it more so now.

He writhed and wriggled frantically in the major's fierce grasp, and he yelled to the juniors on the wall for aid in agonized accents.

But Harry Wharton & Co., on the wall, were laughing too much to do that, even had they had any intention of helping Skinner, and when they hadn't Skinner's practical jokes never met with much encouragement from the Famous Five, and they felt that Skinner fully deserved what he was getting now. As Bob Cherry put it, he had "fished" for it and "caught" it!

But the major's active days were over, and he was forced to halt at last—luckily for Skinner.

"There, sir!" he panted, flinging away his weapon—or, rather, Skinner's—"Let that be a lesson to you, my fine fellow. That will—teach you to refrain from playing your confounded practical jokes upon me, begad! Huh! Now, clear, you young scoundrel!"

Skinner snatched quickly enough. Almost weeping with rage and pain, the luckless practical joker dived unsteadily for the wall. Harry Wharton leaned down and gave him a hand up.

The major watched, panting and wheezing from his exertions. Then as Skinner reached safety, he shook his fist up at the rest of the grinning juniors.

"Yes!" he snorted. "Grin, you young monkeys! Assaulted in my own garden, begad! My chrysanthemums wantonly damaged, too! It—it's disgraceful—scandalous! You'll hear more of this, my fine fellows! You hear me? I say, you'll hear more of this!"

"He, ha, ha!"

"Cheeky young cubs!" roared the angry old gentleman.

Exasperated by the juniors' laughter, the major made a rush for the wall. Skinner, Snop, and Stott had already snatched over it; and Harry Wharton & Co. followed their example in a flash.

"Well, my hat!" grinned Bob Cherry. "What a fiery old carcase!"  
"And got it, too!" chuckled Johnny Bull unsympathetically.

Skinner groaned, and rubbed his back. His face was savage.

"Brother!" he hissed. "He—he's nearly killed me! And he's snatched my rod, too! It was a good one and new. My pater only sent it me this morning. Oh, the old rotter!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, trying to suppress his grin. "You ought to have left the old chap alone, Skinner."

"Hear, hear!"

And that was all the sympathy Skinner got from the Famous Five. They walked away, grinning, and they left Skinner groaning.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### No Road!

"I SAY, you fellows—" "Oh, buzz off, Bunter!" "Roll away, old barrel!" advised Bob Cherry, pointing significantly to the toe of his boot.

But Billy Bunter did not take Bob Cherry's advice—wise as it undoubtedly was. In point of fact, Billy Bunter was far too excited to hear, much less heed Bob's remark or notice the significant lifting of his boot.

"I say, you fellows," he gasped. "I've got news—"

"Blow your news—" "You won't say that when you've heard what it is," grinned Bunter. "What do you think? Old Major Thresher—"

"Blow Major Thresher—" "That's what everybody's saying," grinned Bunter. "The old chap on the grappath. He's—he, he, he—closed that short cut to the beach."

"What?" "It was a shout; and Billy Bunter chuckled. As he had expected, his unwanted news had proved to be of interest to the Famous Five after all.

"Fact!" he giggled. "The old hunk has shoved a barrier across the passage just where it runs between his rotten old garden wall and the school wall. It was old Skinner's fault, I believe. He played a trick on the old chap last night, and now the major's done this. He, he, he. The fellows are awfully about it."

"Well, my hat!" breathed Harry Wharton.

It was just after dinner the next day, and the juniors had forgotten all about the incident in the major's garden the previous evening. They remembered it only because they afterwards remembered the major's parting threat to the effect that they would "hear more of this!"

The crusty old gentleman had obviously not dismissed the incident from his mind so easily as they had.

"If it's true, grinned Bob Cherry, "there be actions, you chaps!"

"I should jolly well think so," snorted Harry Wharton. "Why, the silly old idiot can't close it—he's no legal right to close it."

"That's just what Wingate said," grinned Bunter. "But he's done it—put a shacking great barrier across; think of those yards of barbed-wire. I say, you fellows, just come and look at it."

"We'll jolly soon do that!" exclaimed Wharton grimly. "That path may cross the major's field; but it's a right of way for all that. Come on, you chaps!"

The juniors snatched their caps, and left the study with a rush. Billy Bunter trotting at their heels in a state of great excitement.

Across the quad and round by the school allotments they went as a brisk run, and in a few seconds they reached the little narrow lane. And there they soon found that Bunter's news was true enough.

At the very spot where Skinner had played his luckless practical joke, a barricade of timber and barbed-wire was stretched across the passage. And before this a swarm of indignant Greyfriars fellows were pushing and shoving.

Harry Wharton pushed his way through the yelling crowd to where Wingate and Gwynne were standing before

a notice, nailed against the barrier. The notice was brief and to the point, and read

### "NOTICE.

### ROAD CLOSED.

Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted."

Harry Wharton scanned the notice, and addressed Wingate, who was just turning away with his chum.

"My hat! What thundering cheek!" he gasped. "We're not putting up with this sort of business, Wingate!"

"Got to—until the Head knows," growled the captain of Greyfriars. "I'm just going to report the matter to him, Wharton. You kids—"

"But—but he's no right to close it!" stammered Harry. "It's been a right of way for ages, Wingate."

"I know—at least, I believe so," said Wingate grimly. "But we've got to make sure of our ground before we do anything. Anyway, we'll see what the Head thinks. You kids had better clear."

And Wingate strolled away with his chum, looking rather thoughtful. Most of the seniors present followed him.

But the "kids" did not clear. Unlike Wingate, the excited juniors saw no reason why they should wait to see what the Head thought about it.

"Well, this is a bit thick!" growled Johnny Bull. "It means going right round the school buildings every time we want a breath of sea air. We aren't standing it!"

"It is a rotten injustice!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, frowning. "But—"

"Sinah the rotten, barricade down!" roared Balstrode. "Down with the old rotter!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Down with it, you chaps!"

There was a roar of approval, and the angry crowd pressed in wrathfully. Harry Wharton held up his hand.

"Hold on, you chaps!" he shouted. "Let's make sure of how we stand first. The footpath runs across Major Thresher's field lower down, you know."

"Rot!" snorted Bolsover. "Think we're waiting for the beaks to act. They'd rather give way than have trouble with old Thresher. Blow waiting!"

"That's right enough," said Harry. "We're jolly well not going to wait for the beaks! But we want to make sure that the footpath is a right of way."

"You can take my word for that," grinned Peter Todd, who had just come up. "I've just overheard Quelch telling Wingate it is. Old Gosling claims it's been a right-of-way for hundreds of years."

"You—you're sure of that?" demanded Harry.

"Quite sure, old top! That barricade and notice-board is bluff—sheer cheek! The giddy major has broken the law himself in fencing it off—trampled on the rights of the public, you know!"

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed, and he said "That's good enough, then!" he snapped.

"If the major can take the law into his own hands, we can! Cut off for axes and wire-cutters, some of you! We'll jolly soon have that fence down!"

"Yes, rather!"

There was another roar, and quite a swarm of Removites and Fourth-Formers rushed away for axes, hammers, wire-cutters. They had scarcely gone when three Fifth-Formers arrived on the scene.

They were Coker & Co. Coker's chums, Potter and Greene, were looking amused and expectant. Coker himself was looking grim and determined.

Shouldering the juniors in his path out of the way without ceremony, Coker marched up to the notice and stared at

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it. Then he snorted, and eyed the juniors witheringly.

"You kids seen this notice?" he snapped.

"Yes, kid; we have, kid!" said Bob Cherry. "We're looking at it now, kid!"

"I want no cheek!" announced Coker loftily. "This isn't the time for cheek, either. You're a lot of weak-kneed funks! Standing there like a lot of dummies, with a thing like that staring you in the face. Do you know what I'm going to do, Wharton?"

"Make a bigger fool of yourself than usual!" inquired Wharton.

"I'm going to pull that dashed fence down!" shouted Coker, glaring round him. "If you cheeky little sweeps are going to put up with this sort of thing, I'm not! Does the blessed old fire-eater think he owns the blessed earth? I'll teach him! Watch me!"

And Horace Coker attacked the barricade with determination, tugging and tearing at the boards with his bare hands. Coker was evidently in deadly earnest.

"Go it, Coker!" encouraged Bob Cherry. "You'll have it down in about a hundred years at that rate."

"Yarrough!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker roared, and the juniors roared as the Fifth-Former "found" the barbed wire, and started to dance about, sucking his hands frantically.

But the slight check only seemed to add fire to Coker's determination, for, after dancing about for a moment he renewed his attack on the fence with furious energy, but more caution. He was still wrenching away at the stout boards when a red face, with a bristling, fierce moustache, appeared above the wall of Major Thresher's garden.

"Boy!"

It was Major Thresher himself, and Coker almost jumped out of his skin at the thunderous bellow.

"Oh—oh crumbs!"

"You—you young scoundrel!" roared the irate major. "How dare you attempt to break down my fence! I say, how dare you, sir?"

"Go it, Coker!" yelled the juniors.

"Boo! Boo!"

A chorus of hoots and groans greeted the major. His face grew purple.

"You impudent young rascals!" he hooted. "Begad! It is fortunate I saw what is going on from my window. I order you to leave that fence this instant! Do you hear me? Break down my fence—hey? Don't you see that notice, sir?"

"Blow you and your notice!" snorted Coker. He had recovered himself by this, and the cheers of the juniors encouraged him. He glared up indignantly at the irate major. "Go and eat coke, you crusty old martinet!"

"Wan—eat?"

"Crusty old martinet!" repeated Coker recklessly. "Come to that, how dare you close a public footpath—eh? Like your cheek! Go and eat coke!"

The major spluttered with wrath.

"You—you dare to talk to me like that, boy?" he rumbled. "Begad, I will make you smart for this, my fine fellow. Do you know that I am a magistrate, and can—"

"Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself," snorted Coker. "Magistrate, eh—and breaking the law like this! Bah! Anyways, this fence is coming down. Here goes!"

And Coker renewed his attack on the fence, heedless of the fuming major, who seemed to be on the point of an apoplectic fit. At that moment several



What Skinner was fishing for this time was not clear, but what he caught was very soon clear, as Major Thresher suddenly leaped from his chair with a feroic howl and clapped his hand to his ear. At the same moment Skinner also yelled as the unexpected jerk at the line pulled him clean off the wall. Crash! Skinner landed among a bed of the major's chrysanthemums in a sprawling heap, and lay there roaring. "You—you young villain!" roared the major.

(See Chapter I.)

juniors came rushing up with axes, hammers, and various other implements. "Good egg!" snapped Harry Wharton. "Now we'll join you, Coker! On the ball, you chaps!"

"Hurrah!"

Crash, crash, crash!

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### No Go!

THE Greyfriars juniors attacked the barrier with a will. They believed they were in the right, and Greyfriars fellows were not the sort to put up with injustice. They had declared war on Major Thresher, and they went into battle in no half-hearted manner.

Coker had already loosened one of the stout boards nailed against the posts. He now snatched an axe from Peter Todd, and nearly brainied Harry Wharton with his first terrific blow, as he set about the job in real earnest.

Crash, crash, crash!

The splinters began to fly as the other juniors joined Coker—taking care to give the over-enthusiastic Horace a very wide berth, however. With a pair of wire-cutters Bob Cherry soon made short work of the strands of barbed wire.

The eyes of Major Thresher almost

bulged from his head as he glared at the work of destruction. He glared for fully a minute, his mouth opening and shutting like a codfish, as he strove to speak.

"You—you scoundrels!" he stuttered, his voice husky with passion. "Begad! Mum-my fence! Before my very eyes! Stop! D'you hear, you young villains! I—I'll have you all flogged—I'll have you expelled—I—I'll have you arrested!"

"Go it, chaps!" roared Coker.

Crash, crash, crash!

They went it with terrific vim, seemingly careless as to whether Major Thresher went into a fit or not. Storming and raving, the old gentleman danced about, shaking his fist helplessly at the juniors.

But suddenly from beyond the wall there sounded a crash, and the major's furious face vanished like a jack-in-the-box with startling abruptness.

There followed another crash, and a wild bellow of pain and rage. Evidently the box—or whatever the major had been dancing upon—had collapsed under the strain.

A peal of laughter rang out from the Greyfriars juniors; but they did not stop work. It was close on time for class, and they intended to finish the job now they had started it. The fence was already half demolished.

Crash, crash, crash!  
From beyond the garden wall came the major's voice, bellowing to somebody.  
"John! John, you old rascal! John! At the double, man!"

"He's calling up reinforcements!" chuckled Bob Cherry, "The rascal's an old gardener!"

"Gorted Coker. Go it!"  
After that the work went on without interruption for fully five minutes, until once more voices sounded from beyond the wall. Then came the sound of something being trundled along the gravel path inside the major's garden.

Bob Cherry warned up the low wall, and peeped over it. Then he gave a gasp of alarm, and dropped down again.  
"Look out, you chaps!" he shouted.

"They've got—"  
"Blow them!" roared Coker. "Get on with the job!"

"But they've got—"  
"Shut up! It's your funks!" yelled Coker. "Here, don't—"

But the rest of the juniors had also heard that queer, heavy trundling, and they instantly guessed what it was. They retreated along the passage with a rush. As they did so the heads of Major Thresher, and old John, his gardener, appeared over the wall.

"Come on, you rotten funks!" yelled Coker. "Afraid of two blessed old codgers! Bah!"

Crash, crash, crash!

And Coker renewed his vigorous assault on the fence. But the juniors did not come on. For John's head had been followed by his shoulders and arms, and in his grasp was the shining nozzle of a garden-hose.

"Look out, Coker, you ass!" warned Harry Wharton. "Rua!"

But Coker did not trouble to look up.  
"Boy!"

"Rats!" panted Coker. "Buzz off! I'm busy!"

"Very well—oh, very well!" stuttered Major Thresher. "Are you ready, John?"

"Yesir!" grinned John.  
"Then, fire!" roared the major.

Swoosh! Splash! Crash!  
Yarrroo! Groogh!

The shining stream of water from the hose took Coker clean under the chin and fairly bowled him over. The axe flew from his hand, and he sprawled on his back roaring and spluttering.

But he did not lie sprawling for long. The grinning gardener raked him "fore and aft," drenching him to the skin, and Coker scrambled to his feet frantically.

But he took a great deal to damp Coker's ardour. Instead of taking to his heels he gave a roar of defiance, and, grabbing the axe, he attacked the fence again.

"Good old Coker!" roared Bulstrode—from a safe distance. "Go it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Swoosh! Wizz! Crash!

Once again Coker went down, and once again he scrambled, gasping, to his feet as the hose played upon him remorselessly.

It was more than flesh and blood could stand, and this time the gallant Coker took to his heels, followed by the terrible stream of water.

He dashed the laughing juniors higher up the lane, gasping and panting and roaring. He was drenched through to the skin, and his shoes squelched dismally as he ran up.

"Ow! Oh crumba! The rotter! I'm splattered." "Ow! My hat. I'm drenched through! Why didn't you grinning rotters back me up? Ow! Wow!"

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"We warned you, you burbling chump!" laughed Harry Wharton. Despite their set-back, the juniors could not refrain from laughing at the dismal, bedraggled Horace. "Why didn't you run for it, you idiot?"

"Oh, shut up!" snarled Coker. "You're a lot of funks! Yah! My hat!" The old rotter wet his trousers—me, you know! I'm not finished yet, though!"

"You're—you're going again!" gasped Frank Nugent.

"Oh, go to pot!"

And with that Coker squelched away in high dudgeon, leaving a trail of wetness in his wake. Whether he was finished or not it was obvious that Coker had had enough for the moment. His chums, Potter and Greens followed him, grinning. Their expectations had been more than realized.

"Well," said Harry Wharton, becoming suddenly serious. "It looks as if we're licked for the month."

"No good trying to face a blessed hose-pipe!" grunted Johnny Bull. "But we're not licked yet, Harry!"

"No thundering fear!"

"We're jolly well not!" snorted Harry Wharton. "We've half smashed the fence down already, and we'll finish the job after tea."

"I'll jolly soon find a way of dealing with that hose-pipe dodge. And if the old hunk should get the giddy old fence up again, we'll just smash it down again—every time!"

"Yes, rather!"

"If the old buffer wants trouble, he can have it," said Harry. "But he's not doing us any likes with Greyfriars chaps. We're in the right over this business; and, what's more, we're going to fight for our rights."

There was a roar of approval at that. And just then the distant tinkle of a bell sounded, and the crowd hung about the fence no longer. The major and his man were still guarding the barricade, or what was left of it—and, after shouting cat-calls and yells of defiance in their direction, the crowd of fellows swarmed over the stile leading on to the school allotments, and made all speed for their respective Form-rooms.

Major Thresher had certainly won the first skirmish; but the battle was not over yet, and they were not dismayed. As Harry Wharton said, they could finish the job after lessons. And they were determined to finish it.

But, as it happened, there was a surprise in store for the Greyfriars juniors. They had counted on the opposition of Major Thresher, and his bidding to their plans; but they had not counted on the opposition of the Greyfriars authorities.

Immediately afternoon lessons were over, Harry Wharton & Co. got their caps and streamed downstairs, intending to proceed to the scene of operations and finish the job they had started at noon.

But as they crossed the hall a crowd of fellows congregated round the notice-board attracted their attention.

"Half a minute, you chaps!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "What's the rumpus here, I wonder?"

Instinctively Harry Wharton guessed that it was something to do with the Major Thresher affair. And he was right.

On the green-board was pinned a brief announcement in the Head's handwriting, and it did not make pleasant reading for the juniors by any means.

"NOTICE.  
"The footpath running between the premises of Major Thresher and Greyfriars property will be, from to-day, placed out of bounds."

"The immediate vicinity of the footpath is also placed strictly out-of-bounds, and any member of the school found causing a disturbance, or loitering there, will be severely dealt with."

"H. H. LOCKE,  
"Headmaster."

"Well, my hat!" breathed Harry Wharton in disgust. "If that isn't the limit!"

"Fairly puts the tin hat on things!" growled Bob Cherry.

There were disgusted looks on all sides. It was, indeed, the limit! It was one thing to be up against Major Thresher; but being "up against" the Head was a different matter altogether.

They were dished and done, as Bob Cherry put it. Even a reckless chap like Coker wouldn't dare to "finish the job" in face of that grim announcement.

"It's just what I said," sniffed Bolsover. "The Head knows jolly well old Thresher is in the wrong; but he's climbed down rather than have trouble. I expected this!"

"The Head isn't likely to let the school in for a costly lawsuit for the sake of the footpath," grinned Peter Todd.

"That's so," said Harry. "But, all the same, the old buffer's bluffing. If the Head stood up to him, he'd climb down quickly enough. He's a blessed magistrate, and he must know he's in the wrong. It's sheer bluff."

"Plow! I believe you're right there, Wharton," said Peter Todd, looking thoughtful. "I wonder—"

"Anyway," said Harry Wharton doggedly, "we're not beaten yet, you fellows. We've got to obey that notice, I suppose; but we'll find a way of doing old Thresher yet."

And Harry Wharton turned and led his chums back to Study No. 1, his face wearing an angry frown. For the moment they were beaten; but Harry Wharton, though, had no intention of giving up the fight, had no intention of the loss of the short cut, though annoying enough, was nothing to the sheer injustice of the major's act—the fact that Greyfriars had been forced to bend the knee to the arrogant and domineering major. It was maddening.

"I suppose the old stick reported to the Head about our escap at noon," said Nugent, as they entered the study. "I wonder there wasn't a frightful rumpus if he did!"

"He must have done!" grunted Harry. "But the Head knows we're in the right; he's just satisfied himself with putting the show out of bounds to prevent further trouble. We'll not be asking for a flogging, so we'll steer clear of the place. But we've got to think out a wheeze, you chaps!"

Harry paused as the door opened to admit Peter Todd. Peter looked round with surprise.

"Well, you sick-looking lot of moulted owls," he remarked cheerfully. "I suppose you meant what you said just now, Wharton—that you're still on the war-path against the giddy major?"

"Yes, I did!" grunted Wharton.

"Good!" said Todd, coming inside the room and closing the door. "I think I've got a wheeze that'll do, old top! You said you thought old Thresher was bluffing, Wharton—that if somebody stood up to him he'd climb down soon enough. Well, I think so, too, now."

"You've got a wheeze!" asked Harry eagerly.

"I fancy so," grinned Todd. "It's like this, if you ask me, you fellows. The giddy old tyrant knows he's no legal right to close that footpath. But he

knows there's nobody with any cash left to fight the case and he knows our Head wouldn't bring the school into a costly law suit just for that. He's banking on bluff."

"That's right!" said Harry Wharton. "But—"

"Well, two can play at the game of bluff," said Toddy. "If legal pressure is brought to bear on the college, I'll guess he'll climb down quickly enough."

"You ass, Toddy!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Who the thump's going to pay a lawyer's fees—ah? I've just three—"

"Nobody," said Peter Todd coolly. "What about one of us tackling the job? I'll take it on if you like. It'll not be the first time I've acted the giddy legal man. Say the word, and I'll visit old Thresher, and lay the legal side of the question before the old buffer! I bet I'll put the wind up him."

Harry Wharton, "What about the Head? And think the blessed major will listen to you, you—"

"No need to mention Greyfriars," grinned Toddy. "And I shall be rigged-up to play the part, of course. He won't know what's behind me. If I can bluff him into thinking he's up against somebody as strong as himself, I fancy he'll jolly soon open that passage again. What?"

"Phew!"

"Great Scott!" breathed Harry Wharton. "I see the wheeze now, Toddy! It's great—if you can carry it through."

"Ripping!" agreed Bob Cherry delightedly. "Nobody can turn out legal rot like you do, Toddy. Good man!"

"That's good enough, then!" said Toddy. "I thought at first that old Wibley would do the job best. But I think, after all, it had better be me. Wib's a dab at impersonations, but he can't turn out the legal stuff like me. My pater's a giddy lawyer, you know that—"

"You're the man, Toddy!" said Harry Wharton promptly. "We'll easily rig you out with clobber and things from the

Remove's dramatic property-box. My hat! It—it's great!"

"That's settled, then!" grinned Peter Todd. "It's too late to-night, but we'll have all to-morrow afternoon for the job. We'd better settle all details now, though."

And Peter Todd seated himself and settled down to discuss the details of his wheeze with Harry Wharton & Co.

There was little prep done in Study No. 1 that evening. And when the Famous Five and Peter Todd went up to bed that night they wore cheery grins on their faces—grins which were in striking contrast to the gloomy looks of the rest of the Remove. It almost seemed as if the plotters already felt they had victory within their grasp.

But if so, they were just a little premature in that respect. Harry Wharton & Co. and Peter Todd were rather counting their chickens before they were hatched!

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Poor Old Toddy!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. told nobody of their little scheme. In delicate matters of this kind it was just as well not to have too many "in the know."

Immediately after dinner the following day they slipped unobtrusively from the school and met together in Friar-dale Lane just past Major Thresher's residence. Harry Wharton was carrying a bulky parcel, whilst Peter Todd carried a small, black brief-bag.

"All clear!" announced Harry Wharton, glancing up and down the lane. "Nobody spotted you, Toddy, I suppose."

"Only Bunter!" grinned Peter Todd; "He spotted my bag and followed me to—"

"What?"

"I led him round to the cloisters, and gave him the slip there," grinned Toddy. "He thinks it's a feed on, I suppose. I

expect he'll spend the afternoon searching the ruins. Let's hope so."

There was a chuckle, and without further ado Harry Wharton led the way through the hedge bordering the lane. Beyond the hedge and running right up to the major's premises was a thickly-wooded plantation.

Selecting a spot well screened from view of the lane, the conspirators got down to the business in hand without delay.

From his parcel Bob Cherry took a topper—a rather worse-for-wear topper—and somewhat ancient. From his parcel Harry Wharton brought to view a flowing black tie, a "choker" collar, and a frock-coat of decidedly uncertain age.

They ought to fit you a treat, Toddy!" he exclaimed, eyeing the "clobber" thoughtfully. "They've only recently been cut down for old Wib. You'll have to pad a bit, though. Here's the whiskers and grease-paint and stuff. Buck up!"

"Good!" murmured Peter Todd. He changed his collar and tie, and put on the frock-coat. As Harry had opined it fitted him perfectly—after he had stuffed an old cricket-shirt inside the chest, at all events. Then, with the aid of a mirror hung from a handy bough, he proceeded to "make-up."

He finished at last. The whiskers were of the mutton-chop variety, and they suited Peter Todd's somewhat angular features admirably. The Famous Five gurgled when they viewed the finished article.

"Absolutely it!" grinned Harry Wharton. "You look a trifle more like a giddy undertaker than a lawyer's man, but you'll do, Toddy. The dear old major's short-sighted, luckily."

"I'm ready, then!" said Toddy. "Luckily, I've got one of the pater's visiting-cards by me, so that will be all serene. I've smudged the name with ink, so he won't spot anything."

He looked inside the black bag to make sure all was right, and then he led the way through the trees. At the outskirts Harry Wharton called a halt.



"How dare you close a public footpath, eh?" roared Coker. "Like your cheek! Go and eat coke!" Major Thresher spluttered with wrath. "You—you dare to talk to me like that, boy?" he rumbled. "You—" "Bah!" snorted Coker. "This fence is coming down!" And Coker renewed his attack on the fence, heedless of the fuming major. Several juniors came rushing up with axes. "Good egg!" said Harry Wharton. "Now we'll join you, Coker! On the hall, you chaps!" "Hurrah!" roared the Co. Crash, crash, crash! The juniors attacked the barrier with a will. (See Chap. 2.)

"We'll wait here for you, Toddy," he said. "Don't forget to talk in a deep voice—no good luck, old chap!"

And after making sure the coast was clear Toddy started out. He left the shelter of the trees and walked away with a long, loping stride towards the gateway of the major's house.

The Famous Five watched him go with rather uneasy grins on their faces. Certainly Peter Todd wasn't likely to be recognized. He was tall for his age, and with his whiskers, his bushy eyebrows, and his huge horn-rimmed spectacles he looked the part to the life. But if anything went wrong they knew that the bogus lawyer was in for a high time.

But Toddy himself wasn't worrying. He entered the gates and marched sedately along the drive. With cool and confident dignity he mounted the entrance steps, and within a couple of minutes of sending in his card—or rather his pater's card—he was being shown into the library.

Peter Todd was elated. He had feared that the crusty old gentleman would refuse to see him. He noted also, that though there was curiosity and a trace of hostility in the major's eyes, there was no suspicion there. And the touch of nervousness vanished. His disguise was a success.

With a low bow to the major he took the chair indicated, carefully turning his back to the light. Then he got down to business, before the major could ask awkward questions.

"I am, sir," snapped Major Thresher. "Ah! Then I will explain without delay, sir. My business is in regard to the public footpath which happens to cross a portion of your land, Major Thresher." "Begad!" gasped the major.

He glared at Toddy and half-rose from his chair.

"As you are possibly ignorant of the fact, Major Thresher," proceeded Peter Todd ponderously, "my business is to bring before your notice the fact that this footpath is an ancient right-of-way, sir."

The major blinked at him, his face brick-red and wrathful. But Toddy noted, with satisfaction, that his eyes showed more than a trace of sudden unconsciousness.

"Oh, indeed!" he snorted. "And may I inquire who is disputing my right to do as I wish on my own property?"

"H'm! You—you have my card, sir!" murmured Toddy diplomatically. "I will admit that your visit is somewhat unusual, Major Thresher. In the circumstances, however, it was deemed wiser to seek a personal interview before we—"

"One moment, sir!" spluttered Major Thresher, glowering at his visitor. "I am aware that—that certain irresponsible persons claim that the footpath is a right-of-way. But let me tell you, sir, that I refuse to admit that such is the case."

"Nevertheless, that is so," said the bogus lawyer politely. "And, if I may say so with due respect to you, major, the public's rights in closing the footpath, H'm!"

"Nonsense, sir!" retorted Major Thresher heatedly. "I suppose that confounded headmaster has sent you? I refer to Dr. Locke, the headmaster of Grey."

"The gentleman you mention has certainly not sent me," said Toddy, quite truthfully. "He is utterly unaware of this visit, sir."

"Then," snorted the major, banging his fist on the table, "may I inquire who—"

"That," interrupted Toddy blandly, "I am not at liberty to disclose—yet, sir. In order to avoid a costly lawsuit, however, my clients are willing to give you an opportunity of removing the offending obstruction and notice-board."

"I will do so if I refuse!" bellowed the major.

Peter Todd shook his head sadly. Despite the major's obvious wrath, his inward uneasiness was apparent to the disguised junior. Toddy's confidence increased.

"Then, in that case, sir," he murmured, "I will shake up his head again, 'til they will exercise their rights by taking steps to have the passage-way cleared. Should you then persist—"

Peter Todd got no farther. For at that moment an unfortunate thing happened. Toddy shook his head the second time, and his false side-whisker came loose from its moorings, as it were.

It dropped to the carpet before the major's starting eyes, and the effect on the old warrior was surprising.

For a brief instant he stared, as if petrified, at his luckless visitor. Then he made a jump and snatched at Toddy's remaining whisker. It came away in the major's hand, and with it came the luckless junior's false hair.

It was an exceedingly awkward moment for Peter Todd. He sat as if turned suddenly to stone at the unfortunate development.

But he did not stay still for long. A brief moment the amazed major glared speechlessly, and then he jumped up with a bellow of rage, his face purple with wrath.

"You—you impudent scoundrel!" he roared. "Ha! I might have known it. A rascally impostor, begad! I will have you arrested, my fine fellow! I—I'll have—"

Spluttering with outraged dignity, Major Thresher jumped for the door and locked it. Then he dashed for the telephone standing on the table.

Peter Todd guessed what for, and he decided not to wait until the window was open, a fact the gallant junior had overlooked, and Peter reached it in a bound.

Crash!

There was a crash as the telephone-receiver left the major's hand and dropped to the table, followed by a much heavier crash as the enraged major charged after his visitor, and tripping over the carpet measured his length across the floor.

But Peter Todd's luck was also out that afternoon.

As he bounded on that terrific crash, and guessed what had happened. But before he could congratulate himself Peter himself came to grief.

As he bounded on to the lawn outside the window Peter charged full into a bulky figure which, as luck would have it, happened to be passing the window at that moment.

It was old John, the major's handyman, and he gave a strangled howl as the junior butted him and bowled him over. They went down together with a thud and rolled over on the trim lawn.

"Stop! Stop, you scoundrel!" came a roar from the window. "I saw that fellow, John! Stop him, I say!"

But the luckless Toddy was already "stopped." He lay on his back, half-winded, and with the portly man-of-all-work sprawling across him.

"Some gorpup!" panted Peter Todd frantically. "Ow! Gerroff! Oh, my!"

Through the corner of his eye Peter Todd glimpsed the irate major charging

down upon them. But by this time the wretched John had recovered his scattered wits, and before the junior could scramble clear his grasp closed upon him.

"I got 'im!" he bellowed. "I got the rascal, sir!"

"Ha! Hold the scoundrel, John!" roared the major.

He came galloping up, panting and gasping and snorting. The hapless Toddy gasped as he saw the glint in his eyes.

"Hold him, John!" gasped Major Thresher again. "Begad! The—this scoundrelly impostor! Now, my fine fellow—"

It was useless to struggle now; Toddy realised that, and he was dragged, unresisting, to his feet. He blinked apprehensively at the major.

But there was no comfort to be found from looking at the major—quite the reverse. That tumbler in the library had not been finishing his tea. The old gentleman's wrath. He was in a towering rage.

Minus his whiskers, his false hair, and his topper, the hapless impostor looked a ludicrous sight. But the major did not laugh. He glared at the junior for a moment, and then he gave a sudden start, and peered very closely at the bogus lawyer.

Then he gave a roar.

"Begad! What—what—why, the confounded rascal is a boy—a boy! The—this imposture! Ha! I have it! I know you now, my fine fellow! You—you are a Greyfriars boy! Ha! Don't attempt to deny it, sir!"

Toddy didn't attempt to deny it.

"It—was only a lark, sir!" he stammered. "Only a lark—"

"Only a lark!" snarled Major Thresher. "You will find, young man, that I view your—your lark, as you call it, in far more serious—manner than you anticipate. But for the fact that I hold the good name of your school in high esteem I would have you instantly arrested for this impudent imposture. As it is, I will take you at once to your headmaster, and insist—no, begad! I will deal with you myself! I have already had some experience of the futility of making complaints to Dr. Locke. John, hold the rascal one moment!"

"Yesir, Certainly, sir!"

The major plunged away, muttering to himself. He came back in a couple of seconds, carrying a stout walking-cane.

"I am now going to attempt to teach you a lasting lesson, you young rascal!" he said grimly.

And, so saying, Major Thresher grasped the junior by the collar and proceeded to bring the cane into play.

Whack, whack, whack!

The major was seething with indignation and wrath, as might be expected. That fall in the library had hurt the old gentleman considerably, and he proceeded to do his best to hurt Toddy. He laid the stout cane on with terrific vim.

Whack, whack, whack!

On the major's announcing that he would deal with the matter himself, Peter Todd had experienced a thrill of deep relief. He had expected a licking at the hands of the major, of course, after hearing that. But a licking at the hands of even Major Thresher was far preferable to being taken or reported to the Head.

So thought Toddy, until the major started in with his cane. Then Toddy wondered if a licking at the hands of even the major, in his present state, was to be preferred. And as the major continued his doubts on that point increased ten-fold.

Though the gallant major's fighting days were over, there was, as Toddy afterwards expressed it, plenty of life in the old dog still.

The hapless junior writhed and gasped and wriggled as that terrible case swished down again and again. Peter Todd had to bite his lips hard to keep back the cries of pain. It was the most terrific thrashing Peter Todd had ever received. He was groaning and gasping and panting, and twisting himself into all sorts of shapes when at last the major desisted, breathless and almost collapsing himself with his unwonted exertions.

"There!" he panted, releasing Toddy at last. "That, I fancy, will be a lasting lesson to you. John, kick the young scoundrel off my premises. Ah, on second thoughts, though, do not kick the rascal! He has had enough, I fancy. Show him out the way he came!"

"Yesir," said John, grinning broadly. "This way, young 'un!"

Mopping his heated brow, but looking a great deal satisfied now, the major stumped indoors, still panting and wheezing. The hapless Peter Todd fairly tottered away on the heels of John.

He managed to retrieve the somewhat battered silk-hat, but he decided it wiser not to bother about the rest of his scattered make-up. He was only too glad to get away whole himself.

He dragged his limp form after old John, and soon he was limping slowly and painfully back along the drive.

Luckily the lane was deserted at the moment, though Peter was too dazed and bewildered to care whether anyone saw him in that state or not just then. He reached the plantation in safety, and a moment later Harry Wharton & Co. had surrounded him.

They fairly blinked aghast at the extraordinary figure.

"Toddy!" gasped Harry Wharton. "What—what—"

Peter Todd groaned and collapsed amid the undergrowth.

"Ow! Oh crumbs!" he gasped, with a wriggle. "Ow! I'm nearly killed. Wow! What as said old Thresher was an old crock! He—he's a blessed young Hacksenschmidt!"

"Great Scott!"

"Then—then it hasn't come off!" asked Nugent.

"Come off!" almost snarled Peter Todd. "No, it hasn't! But my thumping whiskers did."

"Your—your whiskers?"

"My whiskers!" groaned Toddy pathetically. "And it was just going off well, too. Ow! Blow the luck! Wow!"

The juniors waited sympathetically. They wanted badly to laugh. But Peter looked such a pathetic figure that they hadn't the heart to laugh. Then Toddy related his adventures or, rather, misadventures dolefully.

"Poor old Toddy!" said Bob Cherry when he had finished. "What frightful luck! It's a wash-out, then!"

"You've done your best, anyway. Toddy," comforted Harry Wharton.

"The bestfulness is terrific, Toddy!" added Hurree Singh, with deep sympathy. "The esteemed Toddy got it neckfully, but he deserves our gratefulness thanks."

"Dear, henr!"

"What about the other things, though, Toddy?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in sudden alarm. "Prout's bag and his horn-rimmed reading-glasses? You—you haven't—"



As Peter Todd shook his head one of the false side-whiskers came loose from its mooring, as it were, and dropped to the floor. For a brief instant the major stared as if petrified at his luckless visitor. Then he gave a jump and a roar, and snatched at Toddy's remaining whisker. It came away in his hand, and with it the junior's false hair. "You—you impudent scoundrel!" spluttered Major Thresher. "A rascally impostor, begad!" (See Chapter 4.)

"Oh, crumbs! I—I've left 'em behind!" said Toddy, with a hollow groan. "Oh, my hat! That's done it!"

"Phew!"

"It has fairly," said Harry Wharton dismally. "You were an ass to collar them, Bob!"

"More trouble!" grunted Harry Wharton. "Prout's bound to miss 'em, and if that fat as Bunter blabs—"

"There'll be a shindy," said Toddy, nodding. "I'm sorry, you chaps, but—I'm simply daren't go back for 'em—not for a thousand quids!"

"No fear!" said Harry, grinning ruefully. "Well, it can't be helped, I suppose. Anyway, the wheeze has failed. Blow it! Let's got back."

They waited while Peter Todd wiped the grease-paint from his features and changed. And then, when all was ready, they started back for Greyfriars in a gloomy crowd.

The great plot had failed—failed dismally. And not only had the luckless Peter Todd received a record thrashing, but they had lost various articles of make-up, and they had lost Mr. Prout's handbag, and his spectacles into the bargain. And with regard to this latter loss Bob Cherry, at least, was feeling far from happy.

Peter the Plotter was not a success.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.  
More Trouble for Toddy!

PETER TODD took things easy for the rest of that eventful day. He was sore both in body and mind, and he devoted all his time to resting and nursing his numerous aches and pains.

And, in addition to being sore, Peter Todd was worried—very worried. He was worried in regard to Mr. Prout's bag, and more especially his spectacles. He was not worried on the Fifth Form master's account, however, but on account of Bob Cherry.

As yet Mr. Prout had not, apparently, missed his black brief bag. He had not announced the loss of that. But he had missed his spectacles, and he had not failed to announce the fact. He had searched high and low for them, and he had made numerous inquiries without result.

And Mr. Prout, though usually a good-tempered gentleman, was exceedingly wrathful. He remembered distinctly leaving them on his study table at noon that day, and he naturally concluded that some daring individual had porloined them for a "joke."

He was right, of course, there. Bob Cherry had seen them lying on the table when he had gone into the room to "borrow" Mr. Prout's handbag, and he had succumbed to the sudden temptation to "borrow" the spectacles also.

But though regretting his rashness now, Bob saw no reason why he should acquit Mr. Prout with that fact, especially now they were gone.

Billy Bunter did, however. He had happened to pop into Study No. 1 just after dinner, when Bob was trying the spectacles on for a lark, and not having been invited in, Bob had immediately kicked him out.

But Bunter had recognized the glasses, and when Mr. Prout had started his inquiries after tea, Billy Bunter had visited Bob Cherry again. This time Billy Bunter had entered the study feeling confident he would not be kicked out. He had started by referring to the fact that Mr. Prout was looking for the fellow who had "punched" his glasses, and he had ended by suggesting that Bob should loan him half-a-crown on the strength of an imaginary postal-order he was expecting.

But the little blackmailing stunt had failed. The irate Bob had along the fat junior's neck and crop from the study; and, naturally, Bunter was not feeling kindly disposed towards Bob Cherry.

"It's a jolly shame, Toddy!" grumbled Bunter indignantly, as he came into Study No. 7 just after prep. "Here's poor old Prout hunting high and low for his blessed specs, and that ratter Cherry's got 'em all the time! I'm going to show Cherry up, Toddy!"

"You fat worm!" hissed Toddy.

Bunter fairly jumped at the ferocity in Peter Todd's remark.

"You dare to blab, Bunter," snorted Peter, "and I'll skin you alive, you fat frog!"

"Oh, really, Toddy!" stammered Bunter. "What?"

Peter Todd grasped his fat study-mate by the collar and shook him.

"If you dare to blab to Prouty that Cherry's had his blessed specs, I'll—'I'll burst you!" he snapped. "Have you told anybody else, you fat sneak?"

Billy Bunter broke loose with a sudden wrench, and jumped to the door, his eyes glinting behind his big glasses.

"Look here, Toddy, you beast!" he roared. "It's no blessed business of yours, is it? Yah! I may or may not have told a few fellows that Cherry's got Prouty's specs. I'm going to show the beast up, you know! He kicked me, he kicked me hard, the rotter! Yah! Go and cook!"

And with that Billy Bunter departed in great haste, for Toddy was already jumping after him. But at the doorway Peter halted, and turned back into the study with a grunt. He knew the hopelessness of chasing Bunter.

For the rest of that evening Billy Bunter gave Peter Todd a wide berth. And whether he had "blabbed" or not, Peter Todd did not know; he hardly thought he would dare to do so after his threat.

But Peter was worried, for all that. If Bunter's knowledge was already common property, then it wouldn't be long before Mr. Prout heard of it. And in any case there was the possibility of Major Thresher finding the specs and returning them—with explanations—to the Head. In that case there would be serious trouble for all concerned, in addition to Bob Cherry.

So that when Peter Todd went to bed that night he had determined upon what he considered to be the only course of action. The spectacles must be found, and returned to Mr. Prout before morning.

Toddy did not tell the Famous Five his plans. He knew they would never allow

him to take further risks. But when all the rest of the Remove were fast asleep he slipped out of bed and dressed swiftly. Then he left the sleeping dormitory quietly, and in a few moments was out in the dark quad.

It was a starlit night, mild and still, and Toddy made straight for the school almshouse, and was soon crouching in the little lane below the major's garden wall.

Without hesitation the daring junior scouted the wall, and dropped down into the garden beyond. The house appeared to be in darkness, and he made for the patch of lawn beneath the french window of the library.

He had a fairly clear idea where he dropped the precious spectacles, and with the aid of a pocket-torch he began to search the short turf with due caution.

He had scarcely started when a sound from behind the closed french window brought him up short with a gasp. As he stared at the curtained window he fancied he caught the dim glimmer of a light within.

What?—fancy? On hands and knees the junior crouched breathlessly, his heart thumping violently against his ribs, his eyes fixed upon the dark window.

For fully a minute he crouched, motionless. But no further sound or sign came; and Toddy breathed freely again, and went on with his search.

Almost at once his eyes caught the glint of something in the grass beneath a bush, and next instant his hand had closed on the missing spectacles.

"Oh, good!" he breathed Peter Todd. He shoved them into his pocket, and was just rising to his feet, when once again he gave a start, and crouched, as he was, motionless.

This time there was no possible doubt of it. From behind the curtained window had come a faint crash, followed by other sounds that Toddy could not fathom. His eyes once again caught the glimmer of a light in the closed library.

"Man-my hat!" breathed Toddy. The thought of burglars leapt instantly to the junior's mind, and he stared at the window, listening intently. He was still doing so when his heart gave a sudden leap.

From within the house had sounded the sudden ringing of a bell, a faint shout. It was followed immediately at once by a commotion within the library, and then, before the startled junior could move, the library window flew open and a dark form plunged out.

It was a man, and before Toddy knew what had happened, the murderer had stumbled headlong over his crouching form.

Crash! They shuddered to earth together, and next moment they were rolling over together in a deadly embrace.

"Got you!" panted Peter Todd. With the idea of burglars still in his mind, Toddy clung on grimly to the kicking, struggling form.

But Toddy had spoken too soon. Even as he gave utterance to his claim the man gave a savage grunt, and his doubled-up knee took the junior in the pit of his stomach with vicious force. With a strangled gasp, Peter collapsed, and the fellow leaped to his feet and darted away.

As he lay there, panting, the junior caught a swift glimpse of his form outlined against the starlit sky above the garden wall, and then it vanished.

And in that instant two things happened. From the opened french window a bulky form in pyjamas and dressing-gown plunged, and a blinding glare of

white light descended full on the prostrate junior.

At the instant another half-dressed form dashed round the corner of the house, and a heavy grasp fell on the sprawling junior.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Toddy. He blinched up helplessly, first into the grim face of Major Thresher, and then into the startled, rugged face of old John, the major's manservant.

"I've got 'em—got the second-rate pair, sir!" panted the latter, hauling the junior to his feet. "Why?"

He was interrupted by an amazed bellow from his master.

"Begad!" he stammered, staring. "Is—is it possible? Ah! I fancy I recognize this rascal, John. You—you daring young scoundrel! Not content with your impudent visit this afternoon, you have dared—dared—bring him indoors, John—bring him in, I say!"

"Yesir!" grunted John. The astounded major stamped through the open french window. John followed, dragging the alarmed Peter after him, navigating his course across the dark room, the fender fumbled for the electric-light switch, and there followed a click.

The room was flooded with light, and then the major jumped, as did John and Peter Todd.

"What—what—what?" ejaculated Major Thresher. "G-god gracious!"

The sudden light had revealed a scene of destruction. The library was in disorder and confusion. The desk drawers had been ransacked, and their contents strewn about the floor. Ornaments lay in pieces on the carpet, photo-frames had been hurled and broken, and the door of a curtain cabinet swung open, showing a riled interior. The room looked as though a mad bull had been let loose in it.

The astounded major glared at the scene of destruction with goggling eyes. He seemed to be fighting for breath.

"My boys! You—you young villain!"

Peter Todd gave a start; there was no mistaking the drift of the manservant's remark. His face went suddenly white.

"I—I say!" he gasped, in alarm. "You—you don't think that I—I—"

Toddy broke off suddenly as he caught the major's glittering eye.

"So—so this is your game, hey?" he rumbled hoarsely. "You—you villain! So—so this is your revenge, my fine fellow, for the thrashing I gave you this afternoon, hey? A thrashing you so richly deserved! I am astounded—I say, I am astounded!"

"But—but I didn't do it—I swear I didn't do it!" gasped the luckless Peter. "I know nothing about it, sir. I was just—"

"Be silent, sir!" thundered Major Thresher. "Don't dare to add falsehoods to your crime, begad! Crime! It is nothing less! You shall pay dearly for this outrage! Ha, John!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You will remain with this—you young wretch for one minute. And on no account are you to allow him the slightest opportunity of escaping. On my return, I propose, to take our prisoner before his headmaster. We had, I suppose, find it necessary to rouse the school at this hour. But a serious matter of this nature cannot wait. Ha! And," added the major grimly, "should I not receive satisfaction at the hands of the Greynriars authorities, then I shall feel it my duty to see that his punishment is a matter for the police."

And with that the major withdrew. He was absent less than a minute, and when

he returned he was fully dressed. During his absence, Toddy had made no movement, nor had he spoken. But now he made another desperate attempt to clear himself.

But it was hopeless. The stubborn old gentleman would not listen to a word. And very soon the junior found himself tramping dismally along the dark lane towards Greyfriars, a prisoner between Major Thresher and his manservant.

He hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels. It had all happened so swiftly and unexpectedly, that he was still dazed and bewildered. He had had no time to think properly as yet. It all seemed like a horrible nightmare, and he almost found himself expecting to wake up and find it all a dream in reality.

But by the time the school was reached, and he heard the well-known tinkle of the bell in Gosling's Lodge as the major tugged savagely at the bell-ropes, he realised with a sudden sickening feeling of foreboding, that it was no dream. There was still more trouble ahead for him—serious trouble this time.

It was certainly not Peter Todd's lucky day!

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Backing Up Toddy!

**I**T was Billy Bunter who first drew attention to the fact that Peter Todd's bed was empty when the Remove turned out at rising-bell the following morning.

The discovery, though unusual, aroused no alarm among the Removes—with the exception of Harry Wharton & Co. Knowing how their chum was worried with regard to Mr. Proust's spectacles, they were filled with uneasy forebodings.

And they very soon learned that their fears were not groundless. By breakfast-time the amazing news was known—news that caused a sensation.

Peter Todd had broken bounds. He had been captured playing some trick in Major Thresher's garden, and he had been brought to Greyfriars at a late hour by the major, and had spent the rest of the night in the punishment-room.

That was all that was known generally, as yet. But it was quite enough to cause dismay among the Famous Five.

"I feared as much!" groaned Harry Wharton, as the chums of the Remove left the dining-hall after breakfast. "Oh, the silly chump! He must have gone after those dashed specs, and he must have been collared by the major."

"Poor old Toddy!" said Bob Cherry glumly. "But we'd better look out for trouble, too, now."

"We can't let Toddy stand all the brunt of it, anyway," said Harry. "Hallo, here's Wingate!"

George Wingate came along the passage just then, and Harry stopped him. The captain of Greyfriars was the most popular fellow, perhaps in the whole school, and his popularity had a great deal to do with the fact that he did not look upon even the fags of greyfriars as being beneath his notice—as did many seniors.

He gave the juniors a good-natured nod.

"I say, Wingate," exclaimed Harry eagerly. "What's this about Peter Todd? Is it true?"

"Oh, you've heard, then?" grunted Wingate, frowning. "The young fool!"

"What's he done, Wingate?" asked Bob Cherry breathlessly. "We've heard he's been caught in Major Thresher's garden. Is that so?"

"You'll know soon enough, I fancy,"

said Wingate grimly. "I hope you kids had nothing to do with it!"

"We?—What's he charged with, Wingate?" stammered Harry Wharton.

"I'll tell you!" said the captain, giving the juniors a sharp look. "He's charged with breaking into the major's library, and trying to smash the happy home up. You kids know anything about it?"

"Great Scott!"

The juniors stared in dumbfounded amazement at Wingate.

"But—but that's terrific, Wingate!" gasped Wharton. "Does—does he admit doing it?"

"Naturally he doesn't!" grunted Wingate. "The young fool's spinning some yarn about going to search for Proust's spectacles in the garden. It's a yarn that won't wash, though. Anyway, if what the major claims is proved, Toddy's booked for the sack—and if it's true, he deserves it!"

And with that Wingate walked away.

"Phew!" breathed Bob Cherry.

The juniors eyed each other in great alarm. They had expected the yarn about the spectacles; they had not expected the rest—far from it. It was considerably worse than they had feared.

"We can't let this go on, you fellows," said Harry at last. "We aren't going to see poor old Toddy sacked."

"No fear!"

"We know that Toddy must have gone for the specs," went on Harry grimly. "The rest is all rot, of course! I expect it's all come out now about yesterday afternoon—the major would see to that."

"That's so!" breathed Frank Nugent. "It's all up with us, then."

"I don't think so—yet," said Harry Wharton quietly. "You know what Toddy is; he's a jolly good sport, and he'd die before he'd bring us into the business. We've got to bring ourselves into it, you chaps. There's nothing else for it."

"Oh dear!"

"It's pretty plain from the way Wingate spoke," said Harry, "that they won't believe Toddy's word that he went last night to search for the specs. We, and only we, can prove that he did—at least, that he talked of doing so last night. And we can prove that they were Proust's specs that he wore in the afternoon."

"That means a whopping deal of trouble for me, anyway," groaned Bob Cherry. "But I'm with you, Harry. If it does do no good, it'll be better than letting poor Toddy suffer alone. It's up to us to chip in."

They were all in agreement upon that.

"Come on, then," said Harry Wharton, setting his lips. "Let's go to Quelchy."

"He's with the Head, I think," said Nugent.

"We'll go to the Head, then," snapped Harry. "In any case, it means going to the Head."

And without further discussion, Harry Wharton led the way grimly to the Head's study, all the juniors hurriedly putting their ties and collars straight as they went. Their faces were determined, but anything but cheery.

Harry Wharton knocked on the door,



From the opened french window a burly form in pyjamas and dressing-gown emerged and descended full on Peter Todd's prostrate figure. "Oh, crumbs!" gasped Toddy. "Bogad! " bellowed the major. "I fancy I recognise you, you young scoundrel!" (See Chapter 5.)

and a moment later they were inside, with the door closed upon them. To their surprise the room seemed to be full of people. Besides the Head, Mr. Quelch and Major Thresher were there, the latter's red face grim and ominous.

And Peter Todd was there. He stood before the Head's desk, his features a study in pain, his story ended.

Mr. Quelch gave them a stern frown as they trooped in. Peter Todd gave them a glance of frantic warning. Wharton ignored it, however.

"Excuse me, sir," stammered Harry hurriedly, in response to a rather angry glare from Dr. Locke. "But it's about Todd—I mean, Peter Todd."

"We know something about it, sir," said Mr. Quelch, with a stern frown, glancing over at Mr. Quelch. "You know why Todd is here, then, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir! We—we've heard about it," stammered Harry. "We—we've come to tell you that we're to blame as much as Todd—I mean, Peter Todd, and so on, as much as blame for what happened yesterday afternoon."

"Begad!" gasped Major Thresher, giving the juniors a peculiar look.

The Head's face went sterner.

"Oh, indeed!" he repeated—this time in stately tones. "Do you mean, Wharton, that you were accomplices of Todd's in that impudent imposture at the major's house?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry Wharton. "We—we were in it, as much as Todd was. But Todd—I mean, Peter Todd, got punished and we didn't, sir. We—"

"Were you concerned in Todd's visit to the major's house last night, Wharton?" demanded the Head harshly.

"No, sir," replied Harry slowly. "But—but we know what he went for; he went to search for Prou— I mean, Mr. Prou's spectacles."

"Ah!" Once again the Head gave Mr. Quelch an expressive look. "And why would you come, of your own accord, to tell me this, Wharton?" he asked gravely.

"Because—well—because," stammered Harry, flushing, "we wanted to help Todd, we weren't going to see him face things alone, sir. That's not all, though! We can prove that the spectacles he wore yesterday were Mr. Prou's, and we know he only went out last night to look for them in the major's garden. He wanted to go after tea yesterday; and we stopped him."

"That certainly bears out Todd's own statement, sir," said Mr. Quelch, with a relieved expression on his stern face.

"Nonsense," sir!" hooted Major Thresher, bristling instantly. "I admire these young rascals for owning up—for trying to save their chum; I say, I admire their pluck, begad! But—but their statements regarding those confounded spectacles is an obvious fabrication—a trumped-up story for the purpose of saving their wretched accomplice, Ha!"

Dr. Locke treated the fuming major to a heated glare. He never had much patience with the fiery old soldier. He was weary of his neighbour's constant complaints, and the major's action in closing the footpath had angered the Head beyond measure.

But he had been forced, to save trouble, to give way, though he had done so much against his inclination.

"Pray allow me to deal with these boys, my dear major," he said tartly. "I do not agree with your opinion. Now, Wharton, kindly tell me all you know of this disgraceful affair."

Harry Wharton did so—gaining courage from the obvious relief shown

on the Head's kindly face as he proceeded.

"Thank you, Wharton!" exclaimed the Head grimly at last. "Your statements have agreed in every particular with Todd's own story. It appears to be obvious, Major Thresher, that this wretched boy only visited your premises last night in order to search for the spectacles. His story that an unknown person emerged from your library, and colluded with him on the lawn, appears to me to be more than possible. Doubtless he was a burglar; indeed—"

"Burglar—pooh, pooh!" snorted the major wrathfully. "I am convinced, doctor, that this boy perpetrated the crime, and did it out of a mean, spiteful spirit of a revenge for the thrashing I administered, sir. He was interrupted in his fell work by the ringing of the burglar alarm. He thereupon bolted, but tripped on my lawn, and was captured."

"But, my dear major—"

"Nothing," stormed the major, banging his fist on the table, "that these young rascals may say can alter my opinion. Spectacles—bah! Where are they, sir—I say, where are they? This morning my man searched every inch of the lawn. There were no spectacles there. Rubbish, sir! I say—"

The major paused and blinked at Peter Todd. That junior had given a sudden start, and after fumbling in his pocket he drew out a pair of hornrimmed spectacles, and laid them on the table.

"I—I found them on the major's lawn last night," he stammered. "I forgot to tell you that, sir—I clean forgot that I had them on me."

"Bless my soul!" stammered the Head. "These are certainly Mr. Prou's spectacles."

"And they have particles of grass still adhering to them, sir," added Mr. Quelch, peering at the spectacles.

The major was nonplussed for the moment. Then his face assumed a brick-red hue.

"That proves nothing!" he snorted. "This this absurd story regarding spectacles has been pre-arranged by these young villains. That fellow, Podd—Todd—was caught in the act by me. Would a burglar have wrought such wanton destruction? Nonsense!"

"There is one point I think we have overlooked, as yet," exclaimed Mr. Quelch, ignoring the major's outburst. "You claim, I think, major, that several articles—curios—were missing from your library. Did you search this boy last night, sir?"

"Begad!" ejaculated the major. "No, I did not. Never even thought of it! Confound it! Turn out your pockets, you young rascal!"

Major Thresher—"The major was interposing angrily, but Peter Todd was already turning out his pockets. They held nothing but the usual conglomeration of objects dear to a schoolboy's heart.

"That signifies nothing!" snarled the major. "Since he left my charge last night he has had ample opportunity of getting rid of his plunder. Ha!"

The Head held back his rising anger with an effort.

"Were the—curios of value, Major Thresher?" he inquired tartly.

"They were among my most treasured possessions!" snapped the major. "One article—a small idol of peculiar design—was my most cherished possession, sir. It was obtained by me at great personal risk from a ruined temple in India some years ago. I would not have lost that idol, sir, for a thousand pounds!"

The Head did not seem very impressed. "Very well, major," he said, a trifle wearily. "I am afraid that, for the present, at all events, this matter must remain in abeyance. I shall certainly not convict this boy without more satisfactory proof of his guilt. Meanwhile the—"

"What?"

The major leaped from his chair with a bellow.

"What?" he spluttered furiously. "Am I to understand, Dr. Locke, that you do not propose to punish this—this young rascal? Am I to understand, sir, that you refuse to—"

"Pray restrain yourself, Major Thresher," retorted Dr. Locke quietly. "I have certainly no intention of allowing the matter to drop—from from it. You may rest assured that, should this boy be proved guilty of the charge, he will be suitably punished. In any case, his punishment for what he admits having done will be severe."

"The major gave vent to a snort.

"I might have known it, sir!" he said bitterly. "I might have known that you would have shielded the young rascal from what I already know of your methods of discipline, sir. But," he added grimly, "your methods will not suit me, Dr. Locke. As I cannot get satisfaction from the school authorities, I will now go and place the matter in the hands of the police!"

The Head started from his seat in horrified alarm.

"One moment!" he cried, as the major was preparing to stamp out. "I implore you to reconsider that decision. I am sure, as an old Greyfriars boy yourself, that you would do nothing so calculated to injure the good name of the school. I beg that you will allow me a little time in which to investigate this extraordinary affair thoroughly. In common justice to this boy, I must insist upon that."

The major paused, and appeared to consider the matter. He was not a bad-natured old gentleman, and he nodded at last.

"Very well, doctor," he grunted at last. "I will take no further steps in the matter for twenty-four hours. Huh!"

And with that Major Thresher took his departure, banging the door rather violently as he went. The Head sank back, mopping his forehead.

"This is an amazing affair, Quelch!" he murmured. "However—" He seemed to become aware suddenly that the juniors were still present, and he turned to them. "For the present, you may go, my boys," he said briefly. "Until this matter is cleared up, I will hold the question of your punishment in abeyance."

Harry Wharton & Co. left the room, and the Head turned a frowning glance upon Peter Todd.

"For the present you will go to the punishment-room, and will remain there until I send for you again, Todd," he said sternly. "Will you kindly escort the boy, Mr. Quelch?"

Peter Todd left the study in Mr. Quelch's company, and three minutes later he was in the punishment-room with the door closed and locked upon him.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### To Save Today!

"W E'VE simply got to do something, my fellows," said Harry Wharton through his teeth, "and we've got to do it thundering quickly!"

It was just after tea the same day, (Continued on page 17.)





Supplement No. 178.

HARRY WHARTON  
EDITOR

Week Ending June 7th, 1924.



# Billy Bunter's Ride!

After "JOHN GILPIN"

By DICK PENFOLD

**B**ILL BUNTER was a Greyfriars chap  
Of "credit" and renown;  
(He called on me the other day  
And borrowed half-a-crown.)

With this half-crown he hired a horse,  
A fresh and frisky steed;  
Quoth he, "Some gentle exercise  
Is what I badly need.

"I'll canter down the country lanes,  
And sit my saddle proudly;  
The folks will all flock out to see,  
And cheer me long and loudly.

"It will reduce my overweight,  
For I'm a trifle stocky;  
I want to get as lithe and slim  
As England's leading jockey."

When Bunter mounted in the lane  
We cheered him to the echo;  
And Cherry yelled, in tones of gloom,  
"He's bound to break his neck-o'!"

The porpoise swung himself astride,  
The steed began to caper;  
For on the road in front of him  
Was strewn a daily paper!

"Hellup!" gasped Bunter. "Whoa, you  
boast!  
Or I shall be unseated;  
And that would be a tragedy—"  
The phrase was not completed.

Away went Bunter, neck or nought,  
Clutching the colt's neck wildly;  
"We'd better fetch the ambulance,"  
Mark Linley murmured mildly.

The horse was bolting at top speed,  
'Twas the most scared of mokes.  
Said Skinner (who's a racing man),  
"I'll back it for the Oaks!"  
Supplement i.]

In clouds of dust it disappeared,  
And Bunter vanished also;  
"He's panic-stricken," Squiff exclaimed,  
"I've never heard him bawl so!"

The perspiration on his brow  
Stood out in mighty drops,  
"Ow-ow! I sha'n't get any peace  
Until the beggar stops!"

Up hill, down dale, they swiftly sped,  
And Bunter's face grew sickly;  
Then, somersaulting through the air,  
He fell in bushes prickly!

The noble steed rushed on alone,  
Its hoofs were fiercely flying;  
And from the hedge came strangled  
screams:  
"Fire! Murder! Help! I'm dying!"

A rescue-party soon arrived,  
First aid was then applied;  
Said Cherry, in his sweetest tones,  
"Did you enjoy your ride?"

We fetched a hurdle from a field,  
And laid the porpoise on it.  
"Good gracious! Is he dead?" inquired  
An old dame in a bonnet.

"No, ma'am," said Bull, "he's still alive  
I'm very pleased to say.  
There's nothing wrong with Bunter; it's  
The horse that's 'passed away'!"

We bore our Buntie back to school,  
Our steps were slow and solemn;  
The fierce remarks the porpoise made  
Would fill a lengthy column!

Long live the sport of horsemanship,  
And Bunter, long live he,  
And when he next doth ride abroad  
May I be there to see!

## EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

"YUCKS! Tally-ho!" That's what I  
feel like shouting when I start  
to tackle this latest and greatest  
number of the "Greyfriars  
Herald."

At the mere mention of a horse the blood  
rushes more swiftly through my veins, and  
I feel quite frisky. I picture myself on a  
pacing steed, racing along at breakneck  
speed. (Jove, I'm getting quite poetical.)  
It was one of England's merry monarchs  
who raised the famous cry:

"A horse! A horse!  
My kingdom for a horse!"

His Majesty did not specify the sort of  
steed he wanted. Whether his passionate  
longing was for a clothes-horse, or a rocking  
horse, or a cart-horse, or a cab-horse, we do  
not know. Anyway, he wanted a horse, and  
he seems to have shouted himself "hoarse"  
into the bargain!

Horse-riding is great sport—if you know  
the right way to go about it. Not every  
fellow is a jockey by nature, even though  
he may be by inclination. There is, besides,  
every other pursuit which is worth while,  
has to be studied and practised. The raw novice  
who expects to be able to sit a horse at the  
first time of asking will probably get a  
shock—a whole series of shocks, in fact!

Read Dick Penfold's ballad about Billy  
Bunter's ride, and you'll see what I mean.  
Greyfriars has quite a number of enthu-  
siastic amateur jockeys. There are lively  
stables out at Courtfield where horses may  
be hired by the hour, day, week, or month.  
Some of the wags take their early-morning  
exercise on horseback. Mr. Larry Lancelotti  
is often to be seen careering gaily down  
Friarfield Lane; whilst we have often  
observed the portly person of Mr. Frouf  
perched on a plump pony. Mr. Frouf  
does not believe in frisky and spirited steeds.

He likes to take his pleasures sedately—not  
at all. I cannot imagine him riding either  
of the famous French horses, Epignone or  
Gallahad III. If he attempted to do so, his  
steed would probably shed him on the way!  
One of the most exciting events on our  
programme last Sports Day was a Greyfriars  
"Derby." Horses were hired for the occasion,  
and a dozen fellows took part. Micky Des-  
mond describes the thrilling event on another  
page. It was great fun, and it sent the  
onlookers into hysterics.

I feel confident you will vote this Special  
Horse-riding Number to be one of the best  
we have published. It is a sure winner  
the way—not an "also ran"; and if laugh-  
ing really makes one fat, I anticipate my  
reader-chums becoming an army of Billy  
Bunters!

If you are keen to do me a service—and,  
incidentally, do yourself one—pass this  
supplement on to a non-reader and who wants  
cheering up. The more followers to the  
banner of the "Herald" the merrier.

By the way, look out for next Monday's  
special Supplement on "Farming." Both the  
light and serious sides of "Farm's a  
boyce" are treated, and the result is—A-I.

HARRY WHARTON.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 252.



I'VE seen a good many comical sights in my time, but nothing to compare with the Greyfriars "Derby."

It was a thrilling race, as well as a comical one, and the excitement was at fever-heat.

There were a dozen competitors, and the horses had been hired from the livery stables over at Courtfield.

Billy Bunter had hoped to hire a horse and take part in the event, but, owing to lack of funds, he was unable to procure a steed. However, he contrived to beg, borrow, or steal a seaside donkey, known as the "Pride of Pegg." Bunter declared that he would win the Derby just as easily on a donkey as on a horse. "I'm a born jockey, you fellows," he said, "and as soon as the pistol cracks you won't see me for dust. Pride of Pegg will make all the running, and win in a canter by about twelve lengths. Pity the prize isn't a tuck hamper instead of a mouldy silver cup!"

The course to be taken was three times round the cricket field. Mr. Larry Lascelles was the official starter, and Wingate of the Sixth was the judge.

The jockeys had to "weigh-in" before the race, and when Billy Bunter plumped himself on to the weighing-machine it collapsed!

Mr. Lascelles generously suggested that Bunter, in view of the fact that he was to ride an ancient donkey, should be given a good start. But the fat junior indignantly declined. "I'll start from scratch with the others," he said. "And if my donkey can't beat a set of cross-legged Tishies, I'll eat my Sunday topper!"

There was considerable excitement when the rival horses—and Billy Bunter's donkey—cantered to the starting-point.

The runners were as follows:

Horse.	Jockey.
BLACK BESS	H. Wharton.
MERRY JESTER	R. Cherry.
FIREFLY	F. Nugent.
BONNY BOY	T. Brown.
SPEEDAWAY	H. Vernon-Smith.
BLINKERS	J. Bull.
THE RAJAH	Hurree Singh.
FORTY WINKS	Lord Mauleverer.
BAG O' BONES	P. Todd.
SAY BO!	F. T. Fish.
TISHY IL.	Wun Lung.
PRIDE OF PEGG	Billy Bunter.

Wagering was permitted—not in coin, but in apples. These were the starting prices:

EVENTS BLACK BESS, BONNY BOY;  
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2 to 1 against SPEEDAWAY, THE RAJAH, FIREFLY; 4 to 1 against MERRY JESTER; 6 to 1 against BLINKERS; 10 to 1 against BAG O' BONES, SAY BO! TISHY IL. 40 to 1 against FORTY WINKS; 10,000 to 1 against PRIDE OF PEGG.

There was a sensation at the start. Billy Bunter's "steed" got off the mark without waiting for the pistol, and it lurched and stumbled down the course amid shrieks of laughter from the on-lookers. Billy Bunter urged it on, being evidently under the impression that the race had started in earnest.

"Gee-up! Put a jerk in it! You've got 'em all beat!" panted Bunter, clutching the donkey affectionately round the neck.

Then a shout from the rear disillusioned the fat junior.

"Hi! Come back! That's a false start!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bunter. And he permitted Gwynne of the Sixth to lead the refractory donkey back to the starting-point.

When the pistol was actually fired one horse remained at the post. This was FORTY WINKS, who had decided to take an afternoon siesta. His jockey—Lord Mauleverer—could not wake him, because he happened to have fallen asleep himself. By means of sundry prods with a cricket-stump Wingate stirred horse and jockey into action, and FORTY WINKS started off at a snail's pace.

Meanwhile, there was a thrilling race for supremacy. BLACK BESS, BONNY BOY, SPEEDAWAY, and MERRY JESTER kept together in a bunch, and it was a rare struggle. Billy Bunter's donkey was hustled out of the way by the horses. It took fright, and suddenly turned tail and ran the wrong way.

"Hi, Bunter! Where are you going? Port your helm!" came a voice from the crowd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter was just as terrified as the donkey. He could do nothing with

it. He clung tenaciously to its neck, bellowing at the top of his lungs. Suddenly the donkey lowered his head, and Bunter "went over the top," turning a somersault in the process. He landed on the grass with a bump and a roar.

"You clumsy fat idiot!" yelled Skinner of the Remove. "Is that your idea of winning the Derby? I'd put my shirt on PRIDE OF PEGG, and my pants and socks into the bargain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

By this time the leading horses had entered upon the last lap.

Bob Cherry was riding a great race on MERRY JESTER. It was a chestnut colt, and it simply pelted down the turf. Bob was in imminent danger of being unseated, but he held on gallantly.

But MERRY JESTER was not allowed to have matters all his own way. He was challenged by SPREDAWAY (Vernon-Smith up) and by BONNY BOY, which Tom Brown rode with the skill of a professional.

However, Bob Cherry managed to get the last ounce out of his steed, and in a desperate finish he secured the verdict by a short head.

The final placings were as follows:	
MERRY JESTER	1
SPREDAWAY	2
BONNY BOY	3

The winner's price was 5 to 1, so that those who had wagered an apple on his success received six apples in return, and their own pippin back.

Billy Bunter lodged an objection against the winner for bumping and boring, but the objection was overruled.

Harry Wharton rode a plucky race on BLACK BESS, who ran well for three-parts of the race, but tailed off badly at the finish. Frank Nugent showed good jockeyship on FIREFLY, and Peter Todd's ancient mope—BAG O' BONES—very nearly sprang a big surprise, for it finished close behind the first three.

Fisher T. Fish came to grief on SAY BO! And Wun Lung could make no headway on TISHY IL., who repeatedly crossed his front legs, and refused to exceed the speed limit for snails.

Lord Mauleverer's horse—FORTY WINKS—had another nap when he got half-way round the course. But the shouting which greeted the winner happened to wake him up, and he ambled slowly to the winning-post.

Altogether the Greyfriars "Derby" proved a most exciting affair. I mean to win it myself next year on IRISH MOLLY.

THE END.

[Supplement ii.

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It's "a hundred to one" you will enjoy these "racy" reminiscences of your favourite contributors!

#### BILLY BUNTER:

My most thrilling ride is described by Dick Penfold in this issue. It was more of a "killing" ride than a thrilling one, though! I'm always reckoned to be the best horseman at Greyfriars—except by jellu bees like Wharton and Cherry—but I admit I got a shock on this occasion. There was a lack of understanding between me and my horse. He took his teeth between his bit, and bolted. I shouted to him to stop in about seven different language. First I tried the English "Woe!" But that was no good. Then I tried Scotch, and shouted "Bide a wee!" But the brook ran faster than ever. Then I lapsed into Russian: "Haltsk! Why don't you stopovitch?" But still the frantic creature took no notice. So I bawled to it in the language of Fisher T. Fish: "Say, bo! Guess you'd better put the emergency brake on!" Then I tried Irish, and Spanish, and even German, but it was no use. The beast didn't seem to understand any language. It galloped along at about a hundred miles an hour—it would have made an express train look like a tortoise—and then it suddenly reared up and sent me flying into some prickly bushes! I came a fearful cropper. My back was broken in six places, and my neck hung by a mere thread to my trunk. I was lucky to escape with my life! I'm going to sue the owner of that wild beast and get condensation!

#### ALONZO TODD:

Some put their trust in chariots, and some in horses; but my most thrilling ride was neither in a chariot nor on a horse. It was on a dear, delightful, docile donkey, which I hired on the sands at Margate. My Uncle Benjamin has always warned me against donkey-riding, on the grounds that it imperils life and limb. But I was in a particularly reckless mood that day. You should have seen Neddy careering across the sands, with me hanging on to his ears! He went along at a breathless speed. Even an old gent in a bath-chair could not keep pace with him! I felt certain I should fracture my vertebrae—or, vulgarly speaking, break my blessed neck—but, fortunately, I emerged unscathed from the ordeal. I often look back on that thrilling ride with a sense of wonder at my own daring. I would not attempt such a foolhardy feat again—not if I were offered the princely sum of four-pence!

#### SAMMY DUNTER:

My most thrilling ride was on a horse called Pretty Polly. It was a wooden

horse, belonging to some roundabouts. I scrambled on to its back, and paid my tuppence, and round and round we went, faster and faster, until I grew quite dizzy and got into a pannick. Somehow or other, the roundabouts had got out of control, and they couldn't stop them! I pictured myself being taken to the nearest hospital, on a stretcher.

We were making about a hundred revolutions a minute, and my nervous system wouldn't stand it. It was about to make a despatch leap from the horse's back and trust to luck where I landed, when the roundabouts began to slow down, and I breathed again! But what an experience, dear readers! You wouldn't have liked to be on that horse—or in that boat, either! Next time I go to a fair I shall be very careful not to risk life and limb on the roundabouts!

#### BOB CHERRY:

When I won the Greyfriars "Derby" on Merry Jester it was far and away my most thrilling ride. I had several narrow escapes of being unseated. But I hung on grimly, and urged my gallant steed along—not that he needed much urging! He went like the wind. I lost my breath, and my school cap, and very nearly my head into the bargain! In the last lap I was seriously challenged by Vernon-Smith on Speedway and Tom Brown on Bonnie Boy. But my noble charger made a last desperate spurt, and won by a short neck, amid thunders of applause. Yes, verily, and in good sooth, 'twas a great race, O my masters!

#### DICK PENFOLD:

The most amazing ride of mine was when I was a boy of nine. I had a horse that went by steam; it really was a perfect scream! I set the snorting steed in motion; it made a bee-line for the

#### WHAT IS COMING?

Medhinks it would be a pretty plan to arouse your curiosity in regard to the next little treat in store for Magnettes. Requests have poured into my office in shoals for a serial story dealing with the romance of olden times. Well, your editor is always out to please his many thousands of readers, and he modestly thinks that the new serial he has decided to publish after the Ferrers Locke stories have drawn to a close, will create a sensation such as MAGNET readers have never experienced before. To create a flavour in your mouths, as it were, I will divulge the fact that this new serial is staged over a period when Robin Hood and his merry men held sway in the forest of Sherwood. How's that? Keep an eye open for further details, chums!

ocean. I couldn't stop it, though I tried, and felt jolly queer inside! I coaxed and threatened and entreated; I roared, I belloved, and I bleated. But still that steed rushed on and on, till every shred of hope was gone. It sped across the sands and shingle, with many a jarring jolt and jingle. And then into the briny sea it very promptly bifurked me! I kicked and struggled in the brine. (Remember I was only nine.) With panic I was off my rocker; I thought of Davy Jones' locker—the place where all non-swimmers go when water-wings go bust, you know! However, help was soon in reach. They laid me gently on the beach, and pumped the water out of me. (I think I'd swallowed half the sea.) Thus ended my most thrilling ride. Almost a case of suicide!

#### LORD MAULVEVERER:

I don't profess to be much of a horseman, begad, although I put up a fairly good show on Forty Winks in the Greyfriars "Derby." I came in eleventh, which was pretty good. (Mauly omits to state that there were only twelve runners!—Ed.) I can't say I have had many thrilling rides on a gee-goe, but I once had a very thrilling trip in a chabanc, when the brakes suddenly gave out, and we thundered down a steep hill at about a hundred miles an hour! I entertained wild thoughts of snaking out my will, but there was no time for that. I made sure my number was up, and sat tight and waited for the inevitable crash. Luckily, however, there was nothing to obstruct our course, and we shot right down the hill and half-way up another before the beastly chabanc wobbled to a standstill. That was my most thrilling ride; and it very nearly resulted in the removal from this planet of a certain member of the aristocracy!

#### WILLIAM GOSLING:

"Wot I says is this 'ere. I don't believe in gallyvantin' about on hosses, an' racin' an' chasin' all over the place. Leave that sort of thing to the professional jockeys, that's wot I says. It ain't the way a sober an' respectable man of mature years oughter behave. I ain't never 'ad a thrillin' ride—not on hossback, anyway. My motto is 'Safety First,' an' I refuses point blank to ride in anythin' more swift than a wheelbarrow. That's quite good enough for the likes of me. As for the young 'uns, wot took part in the Greyfriars "Derby," they was askin' for trouble, an' it would 'ave served 'em right if all their bloomin' necks was broke, as ever was!"

THE END.



# My Tips for the Greyfriars Derby!

Special Article written on the  
eye of the Great Road  
By DICK RUSSELL.

**W**HAT will win the Derby? I don't mean that insignificant little race which is run at Epsom. I refer to the Greyfriars Derby.

I have carefully studied the form of the animals engaged, and I shall be able to make my selections with every confidence.

Eleven horses and one donkey will line up for the start. We can safely leave the donkey out of our calculations. Billy Bunter is riding it—one donkey on top of another, as Bob Cherry humorously describes it—and what Bunter doesn't know about jockeyship would fill whole volumes. The PRIDE OF PEGG, which happens to be the name of the silly ass in question, cannot possibly win, unless all the horses sit on their haunches and refuse to run.

Now we come to horses themselves. The joint favourites for the race are BLACK BESS, with Wharton in the saddle, and BONNY BOY (Tom Brown up). BLACK BESS is reported to be a direct descendant of Dick Turpin's famous horse. I have had the privilege of seeing her perform in the trials; and you can take it from me that she will take a deal of beating. She is bound to run well, and should very nearly win.

Tom Brown has designs on winning the Derby with BONNY BOY. Good luck to him! Shrewd judges of horse-flesh declare that BONNY BOY is "the goods," and that he will make his rival go all the way. I subscribe to this view myself. Tom Brown is a jolly good jockey, and he will get the last ounce out of his steed. BONNY BOY will flash round the course like a streak of lightning, and should very nearly win.

Vernon-Smith, another capable jockey, is considered to have a good chance on SPEEDAWAY. This animal has a glib-edged chance of victory. It won the Friarholme Gold Cup last week, and the Wapshot Stakes the week before. And it would have won the Courtfield Grand National had it not come in second. Here, then, is a horse which merits our serious consideration. I have good grounds for saying that it should very nearly win.

Hurree Singh, who is riding THE RAJAH, has a distinct chance of success. The same remark applies to Frank Nugent, on FIREFLY. These horses are stable companions. They both come from Courtfield. THE RAJAH is a cart-horse which has been in the service of a firm of coal-merchants for the last fifteen years. Such an experienced animal may be relied upon to keep its feet, and not lose its head. I do not know anything about the pedigree and past history of FIREFLY, but I am assured he is a genuine stayer. Both he and THE RAJAH should very nearly win.

Bob Cherry is simply bubbling over with confidence. He declares that nothing will stop him from winning the Derby with MERRY JESTER. This animal has a reputation for being frisky at the post, and he will need strong handling. But if he is on his best behaviour, he should very nearly win.

We must not ignore the chances of Johnny Bull on BLINKERS. This veteran war horse—I believe he saw service in the South African War—is a sound stayer, and will plod along gamely till the finish. He must be regarded as a very dangerous rival to the younger horses, and he starts at quite a useful price—6 to 1. You can take it from me, my friends, that BLINKERS should very nearly win.

I have heard some very sarcastic comments concerning BAG O' BONES, which Peter Todd will ride; and also concerning TISHY II, which will be steered by Wun Lung. But these long-priced outsiders have a habit of confounding the critics; and from private and very special information which I have received, I may say it is quite on the cards that both BAG O' BONES and TISHY II should very nearly win.

There are two other horses which we must on no account overlook. Fisher T. Fish will ride SAY BO—a big horse of the hustling type, which will almost certainly be there or thereabouts at the finish. Lord Mauseverer will ride FORTY WINKS, and if he and his horse can only keep awake, they should very nearly win.

To sum up, I consider that BLACK BESS will win the Greyfriars Derby; or possibly BONNY BOY; or doubtless SPEEDAWAY; or in all probability THE RAJAH; or perhaps FIREFLY. A win for MERRY JESTER would not astonish me. I should not be surprised to see BLINKERS lead the field. Other horses with reasonable chances of winning are BAG O' BONES, SAY BO, TISHY II, and FORTY WINKS.

Now that I have given you my special tips, straight from the horse's mouth, you can pay your money and take your choice!

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## TURF GOSSIP!

By Herbert Vernon-Smith.

**W**E have actually had a Greyfriars Derby—an event which will be talked about for many moons. Nothing quite like it has ever been seen before at the old school. Eleven horses and a donkey participated in the race; and the donkey did NOT rouse home an easy winner. Billy Bunter was on its back—for a time, at any rate!—and the animal protested at having to carry a human bladder of lard weighing half a ton. It got rid of its burden at the first opportunity, and Billy Bunter, who had entertained fond hopes of winning the Derby, "came down to earth" in no sense than that one.

It was a capital race, and Bob Cherry's victory on MERRY JESTER was both popular and thrilling. My own horse—SPEEDAWAY—was only a neck behind; so it was a very close thing. I have already congratulated Bob Cherry on winning the Special Cup presented by Mr. Larry Lawson, I now congratulate him again in print.

Some of the horses engaged in our Derby cut comical capers. They were supposed to be three-year-olds, but several of them were "in the sere and yellow leaf," as Shakespeare has it. Peter Todd's horse, BAG O' BONES, was well past the flower of his youth. Indeed, if horses received old age pensions, he would be the first to qualify. But BAG O' BONES proved that a good "old 'un" is better than an indifferent "young 'un," for he finished fourth, which was a great achievement for such a veteran.

Fisher T. Fish, who hired an animal which he christened SAY BO! looked upon the Greyfriars Derby as a dead cert. But these "dead certs" have a habit of coming unstuck, so to speak; and Fishy's horse never had a look-in; though Fishy repeatedly implored it to "hustle," and "pull its socks up," and "put some pep into it." Fishy says that if there is to be a Greyfriars Derby next year, he will ask his "popper" in the States to send over a real live horse, from the same stable as ZEV, which defeated our English horse, PAPYRUS, some time back.

Great things were expected of BLACK BESS, which Harry Wharton rode. It started in great style, but was worn down before the finish. Tom Brown did well to finish third on BONNY BOY; and Frank Nugent put up a good show on FIREFLY. Lord Mauseverer might have won the race on FORTY WINKS, but both horse and jockey developed that "tired feeling," and considered it "too much fag" to make an effort. They both went to sleep at the starting-post, to the vast amusement of the spectators—barring those who had tipped FORTY WINKS to win!

On the whole, it was a glorious race; and I hope to take part in many more exciting tussles of the same kind. I don't see any reason why horse-racing should not become part and parcel of our sports programme at Greyfriars. The masters enjoyed the fun just as much as the fellows; and seven of the staid and dignified heads about the double-deck kept his face straight when Billy Bunter was thrown from his donkey. The only safe animal for Billy Bunter to ride is a rocking-horse! (Supplement is.

## PETER THE PLOTTER!

(Continued from page 12.)

and the Famous Five were seated in gloomy conclave in Study No. 1. For some time there had been a silence in the room, but now Harry looked up suddenly, and there was a curious gleam in his eyes.

It was not the first time, by any means, that Harry had passed that same remark during that eventful day, and the rest of the juniors failed to note that there was a trace of something bordering on hope in Harry's tone now.

"What's the good of talking!" growled Johnny Bull. "We've gassed enough, and worried our brains enough, goodness knows! But it's no good. We've done all we could. I'm afraid Toddy's booked!"

"Only a quickful miracle can save the esteemed Peter now," said Hurree Singh dolefully. "I'm afraid so!" groaned Frank Nugent.

"There'll be trouble if he is sacked!" growled Bob Cherry savagely. "The fellows were waxy enough with the blessed old major over that footpath; they'll play 'Hamlet' if old Toddy's sacked through it."

"Toddy's not going to be sacked!" said Harry Wharton emphatically. "You fellows, I fancy I've got an idea that will do the trick!"

"You—you've got a wheeze!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"I think so!" exclaimed Harry. He got up and started to pace the room thoughtfully.

"It's fairly clear," he went on, "that both Quezky and the Head are inclined to believe Toddy's story. Our job is to convince the silly old major that Toddy didn't do it."

"He'll take some convincing, the stubborn old buffer!" remarked Cherry glumly. "But—"

"With a bit of luck we'll do it, though," said Harry. "I think I've got the very wheeze. It's a bit wild—in fact, it's terrific. But it might come off. It's risky, though!"

"Blow the risk!" said Bob. "If it saves old Toddy, we're on."

"Yes, rather!"

"Here it is, then," said Harry grimly. "You fellows heard what the major said, that one of the curios missing was a little image—an idol. He said he got it pinched it, in a way, I suppose—from a ruined temple in India. Well, that set me thinking. I remembered reading a magazine story once about a fellow—an explorer—who did the same sort of thing. Got that?"

The juniors nodded. They were eyeing their chum in puzzled amazement.

"Well, in this story the explorer chap brought the idol thing to England. He thought it was done with; but it wasn't. He was followed to England by a gang of fanatical Hindus, members of a religious sect. They were after the idol. It was a sacred idol or something. They'd sworn to get it back. They tracked the explorer chap down, and got it back—nearly killed the explorer, too. That was the gist of the yarn."

"I've read a yarn something like that, too," said Frank Nugent. "But you don't mean—"

"That gave me the idea," went on Harry. "Supposing a gang of Hindus have taken the major's idol—"

"Oh, but that's rot, Harry!" growled Johnny Bull. "Toddy said distinctly

that he saw the fellow who bowled him over. It was a white man—a ruffianly looking—"

"I know," said Harry, with a grin. "I only said supposing. Supposing we could convince the giddy old major that that's just what has happened? Supposing we could make him believe that a gang of Hindus smashed his happy home up and pinched his idol? That would let Toddy out, wouldn't it?"

"Phew!"

"What a wheeze!" breathed Bob Cherry. "But—but it would take some doing. How on earth—"

"It should be easy enough," remarked Harry reflectively. "We're all good at theatricals. We can get ourselves up as Hindus and collar the old chap. And we've got Inky here to talk to him in Hindustani. He needn't tell any fibs; but he can lead the old chap to suppose that we're the chaps who did it. By Jove! I can see it working out splendidly!"

"My only hat!"

"Harry the Plotter, this time!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The esteemed Harry has hit on the workful wheeze this time, and no ridiculous mistakefulness," grinned Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "I will joyfully talk to the esteemed and stubborn major in my own deplorable language to save Toddy, my chums."



The astounded major glared at the scene of destruction with goggling eyes. "My boys!" mumbled old John, gazing sorrowfully at Peter Todd. "You young villain!" Toddy gave a start. There was no mistaking the drift of the manservant's remark. "I—I say," gasped the junior in alarm, "you—you don't think that I—I—?" Toddy broke off as he caught the major's glittering eye. "So this is your game, eh?" he rumbled hoarsely. "This is your revenge for the thrashing I gave you this afternoon?" "But I didn't do it!" gasped Peter.

(See Chapter 5.)

try to save Peter Todd from being sacked. That ought to be enough for you."

It was enough—for the time being. Toddy was a good sort; he was exceedingly popular in the Remove. And after hearing that even fellows like Billy Bunter and Skinner were eager enough to help. And very soon, by means of a rope of twisted sheets, Harry Wharton & Co. had been lowered to the quad below.

"Carefully now," whispered Harry Wharton, as the window above was softly closed behind them. "Seniors as well as masters will be about yet. Come on!"

Exercising great caution, the juniors started out for the woodshed behind the chapel. It was scarcely dark yet; but the juniors were lucky. They reached it in safety, and as they crowded inside Harry closed the door.

Then he produced a piece of candle, carefully shielding the light to prevent stray gleams filtering through the many cracks in the plank walls. At that hour it was scarcely dark yet; but they were taking no risks.

They had already hidden their "props" in the woodshed earlier on that evening, and they were soon busy with false moustaches, beards, eyebrows, and stain. Hurree Janset Singh, of course, did not need his hands and face staining. The dusky junior contented himself with a trim moustache and a pair of bushy eyebrows.

"We shan't need turbans," remarked Harry Wharton, as he fixed a straggly, goat-like beard to his youthful chin.

"Indians rarely wear 'em in England. And chaps on errands like the one we are supposed to be on wouldn't attract attention by wearing 'em, you can bet! These old hats will do nicely."

They were very soon ready. They had deemed it unnecessary to change clothes. All had either a raincoat or a dustercoat to hide their Etons, and with scarves round their necks, coat-collars turned up, and their hats pulled down over their eyes, they looked the part of a gang of dingy Hindus to the life; and particularly villainous gang at that!

"You'll do!" grinned Harry Wharton, staring admiringly at his chums. "And if I look anything like you chaps, I'll do, too."

"Good job we've learned a bit of Hindu lingo from Inky," grinned Bob Cherry. "I'll talk to the old."

"The less we say the better, Bob," said Harry Wharton quickly. "The old chap was in India for ages, and he'll spot us in a flash if we start gassing. Leave all the talking to Inky. You remember all I told you to say, Inky."

"You can safely rely upon me saying all the necessary stuff," stammered remarkably, chuckled Hurree Janset Singh. "The rememberfulness, my esteemed and ludicrous chum is—"

"Terrific!" added Bob Cherry, with a chuckle.

"Good!" murmured Harry Wharton. "And, come on!"

"And, after a cautious blink outside, Harry Wharton led the way out, and they started out on their risky expedition.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Not a Success!

"HERE we are," whispered Harry Wharton. "Quiet now!"

The juniors had reached the little lane, and were crouching under the shadow of the major's garden wall. Before them, a few yards away, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 852.

loomed up the hated barricade across the passage-way.

Bob Cherry glared at it in the gloom. "He's had it built up again, then?" he growled. "If only we had a bit of dynamite, we'd jolly soon make short work of that little lot."

"Shut up, Bob!" whispered Harry Wharton. "No time for thinking of that now. I'll spy out the land first. Quiet!"

"Supposing—"

"Dry up!"

"But supposing—"

"Quiet!" hissed Harry Wharton.

"The old buffer may be on the other side of the wall, Bob. Quiet!"

"You silly ass! I was only going to say perhaps the major's had his stroll and come in again. We do what we do then!" grumbled Bob Cherry.

"We'll jolly soon find a way of getting him to come out," sniffed Harry Wharton. "Quiet, for goodness' sake! I'll have a squint!"

He pulled himself up on to the wall, and peered cautiously over into the garden. It was almost dark by this, and he could see little. In the garden there was no movement or sound, however. And a light gleamed from the library window.

The light told Harry what he wanted to know. The major took his nightly stroll round the garden as a cure for insomnia, and he usually went directly to bed after it.

"All serene!" whispered Harry down to his waiting chums. "He's in the library still. Come on—carefully now! Mind his blessed cucumber-frames with your good boots, Bob!"

"Right!" moved Bob.

But he was careful, for all that. And a minute later all were safe in the garden beyond. Then, treading carefully, they followed Harry Wharton along the garden path in the gloom away from the house.

The juniors reached the end of the garden without incident, and Harry Wharton led the way to where an ancient brick tower of circular design loomed up against the darkening night sky. The tower was built sheer against the garden wall, which at this spot abutted on the school playing-fields.

Harry tried the door, and breathed freely on finding it unlocked. The building was used as a workshop and tool-house by John, the major's handy man, and near the door stood work-bench.

From his pocket Harry took a piece of candle, and, having lit it, he stuck it to the bench. Then he pushed the door open wide.

"Now we've got to hide and wait," grinned Harry. "The light can't be seen from the house; but the giddy old major will see it coming up the path. He'll wonder what it means, and come to investigate."

There was a chuckle, and the plotters separated. Harry and Hurree Singh took shelter behind the open door; Bob Cherry, Frank Noyes, and Johnny Bull hid themselves in the bushes outside the tower.

Then they waited in silence, as the minutes ticked by slowly. It was a warm, quiet night, and only a soft rustle in the trees, and the occasional sleepy twittering of a bird broke the stillness.

They had not to wait long, however. Scarcely had three minutes passed when a sound reached the juniors' straining ears. It was the soft tread of slippers feet on the path.

"Not a sound!" breathed Harry Wharton. "He's coming!"

But the juniors outside had already

heard the sound. They could also smell the scent of a cigar, waving towards them on the breeze.

A figure suddenly loomed up in the gloom, came nearer, and then quite suddenly the sound of footsteps ceased, and the juniors heard a grunt. It was followed by the major's voice in a sort of growling snort.

"Ha! What—what— A light, begad! That scoundrel John again! What's the confounded fellow thinking of?"

The major's voice rose angrily. And as John happened just then to be having supper in the major's kitchen there was naturally no answer.

"Great Scott!" snorted the major.

"Where is the fellow?"

He flung his cigar away, and stamped towards the tower, still growling remarks concerning John. He stomped up the steps to the tower, and entered the lighted interior.

What happened to the major then was a terrific shock to the old gentleman. The attack came sudden and swift, and it took him entirely by surprise, and rendered him helpless.

Scarcely had he crossed the threshold when he was gripped by unseen hands from within and from without. He was bundled unceremoniously into the gloomy apartment, and the door closed behind him.

"Begad! What—what—"

The amazed major spluttered helplessly. Then, suddenly catching a glimpse of his attackers, he started to struggle furiously, and his voice rose to a wild yell.

"Help! You—you villains! John! Help! Hindus, begad! Hindus, by Jove! Unhand me, you villains! Help!"

The gallant old gentleman struggled furiously, bellowing angrily as he struggled. But he had left it too late. Harry Wharton had already passed a strong cord round his arms, pinning them to his sides before he had grasped the situation.

Taking great care not to handle the major roughly, the five conspirators bundled him to the bench, and tied him to it. They did not trouble to gag the old soldier. The walls of the old tower were thick, and the house was far beyond the reach even of the major's bellowing voice.

It was done at last, and the Famous Five stepped back, gasping and panting. Major Thresher glared at them with staring eyes.

"Hindus, begad!" he stammered. "Am I dreaming? G-good heavens! You—you scoundrels! What does this—this outrage mean?"

The major's voice faltered a trifle. He could see his captors plainer now, and in the flickering candle-light they certainly looked a villainous gang. It was no wonder the gallant major's voice faltered.

There was something terrifying in the grim silence with which the attack had been made. There was something more than terrifying in the silence of his captors as they grouped themselves around him.

"W-what does this mean, I say?" stammered the major. "I—I— He broke off suddenly, and from English he changed into what was to all but Hurree Singh a curious jabbering. Evidently Major Thresher, the Indian veteran, had not forgotten his Hindustani.

But Hurree Singh understood it. He stepped forward, and the next moment he was answering the major in his own language. He was cool and collected, and he spoke in a deep, gentle voice.

What he was saying Harry Wharton and the rest hadn't the faintest idea of

course. But as the sibilant words came swiftly from Inky's lips they saw the major's expression change. He stared at Inky with bulging eyes, and his jaw began to drop lower.

"He's doing it!" thought Harry Wharton gleefully. And he winked slyly at Bob Cherry.

Obviously, Hurree Singh himself thought so, too. He had been prised carefully by Harry as to the exact terms to use, and he used them. He had been prised to lead the old gentleman to suppose that they had stolen the idol, and that they intended to revenge themselves upon the major for taking it.

Not that the juniors had any intention of doing that. Far from it.

They had arranged that when Hurree Singh had finished his explanation to the major he should give Wharton a signal, and that Wharton should then pretend to hear a sound outside, and should lead them out in a mad stampede, thus leading the major to suppose they had taken fright and bolted.

But, unfortunately, it did not work out that way. They had not taken into consideration the fact that the major was a fighter. They had been so engrossed in watching the major's features that they had not noticed that, while listening to Inky, the major had been working with his hands at the knots behind him.

They soon did know, however. The knowledge was brought to their notice with startling suddenness. Before Hurree Singh had a chance to give the signal the major acted.

His hands came from behind him suddenly, and, with a wild roar, he went into action.

Crash, crash!  
With yells of surprise and alarm the conspirators scattered before the old gentleman's furious rush.

"I'll teach you, you villains!" roared the major, in English. "I'll teach you, you scoundrels!"

Crash, crash!  
The bench went over with a terrific crash, and the candle flew away and went out, plunging the place into deep darkness. In the blackness the juniors charged about, frantically avoiding the old soldier's rushes.

Harry Wharton found the door at last, and as he dragged it open there was a wild stampede to get out.

"Stop!" roared the major. "Stop, you villains!"

But the "villains" did not stop. Bob Cherry was out last. He fairly charged the major out of the doorway, and, tumbling headlong down the steps, he scrambled back on his feet, and took to his heels after his chums.

"This way!" shouted Harry Wharton. "Oh, my hat!"

Headless of obstacles, the juniors tore headlong along the path, anxious only now to get away from the terrible major. The great wheeze had failed—failed dimly, and there was nothing else for it but to run.

And they flew! Harry Wharton reached the wall first, and he fairly tumbled over into the lane beyond. His chums came tumbling after him. The major's bellowing was drawing nearer, and they did not linger in the forbidden pathway.

They reached the dark woodshed at last, breathing and panting and dismal.

"Oh dear!"

"Great Scott! What a washout!"

"Who'd have imagined the old buffer could be as game as that?" groaned Bob Cherry. "He fairly sent me spinning. Oh dear!"

Hurree Singh rubbed a bruised chin dolefully.



"You claim, I think, major, that several articles—curios—were missing from your library?" said Mr. Queich. "Did you search this boy Todd last night, sir?" "Begad!" ejaculated Major Thresher. "No, I did not. Confound it! Turn out your pockets, you young rascal!" "Major Thresher—!" interposed the Head angrily, but Peter Todd was already turning out his pockets. They held nothing, however, but the usual conglomeration of objects dear to a schoolboy's heart. (See Chapter 6.)

"The esteemed and ludicrous old major caught me fastidiously under the chin with a terrifically painful blow," he mumbled. "What was the impertinence, my chums?"

"I hardly know," said Harry glumly. "He must have got loose. We didn't tie him properly. What asses we were! Was he swallowing it all right, Inky?"

"Like the esteemed and ridiculous lamb," mumbled Hurree Singh. "It would have successfully come off but for the rotten luckfulness. Oh dear!"

"Well, it can't be helped," said Harry dismally. "It was rotten luck, you fellows. Anyway, we'd better get back to the dorm as quickly as possible. I've left my beard somewhere in the garden."

"And I've left my whiskers; dropped them when I bumped the old buffer in the doorway!" growled Bob Cherry. "If he finds them he'll know it was a joke."

"That's what I mean," nodded Harry. "He'll guess at once what it means. He'll probably remember having seen Inky at Greyfriars. It means serious trouble if he does."

"Oh dear!"

"We'd better get to bed before he thinks of telephoning," went on Harry swiftly. "Come on!"

"Yes, rather!"

At lightning speed the juniors removed all trace of stain from their faces, and shed their facial "ornaments"—or, at least, what was left for them to shed—and, leaving the things hidden in the woodshed, they hurried to the quad. A

bandful of gravel thrown at the dormitory window soon brought the twisted ropes of sheets dropping down to them, and in a few moments all were safe in the dormitory.

Headless of the curious questioning from their Form-fellows, they undressed quickly and slipped into bed, tired and depressed. They had failed, and they saw no reason why they should invite chipping by telling the story of their failure. In any case, they had a dismal foreboding that their curious Form-fellows would hear the truth soon enough.

But they were wrong there, fortunately. There came no visit of inquiry from Mr. Queich, and they dropped asleep at last, a little easier in their minds. And when rising bell went the next morning they dressed and went down to find no pressing invitation to visit Mr. Queich awaiting them. Nor did any come during the anxious day. If Major Thresher had found the tell-tale articles, and arrived at the truth, then he was obviously in no hurry to acquaint the school authorities with his suspicions.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### By Sheer Accident!

"Oh, bother!" snorted Bob Cherry. "Likewise hang and blow!"

"What?"

"A puncture!" sniffed Bob Cherry. "Now, isn't that the limit!"

He jumped from his bike, and his chums did likewise, with alarmed looks. A moment's examination of his front tyre soon confirmed Bob's statement. His tyre was flat as a pancake.

"What a thumping nuisance!" exclaimed Harry Wharton dully. "That means we'll be late for lock-up, you chaps!"

"Oh dear!"

The chums of the Remove were returning from a cycling spin in the cool of the evening—the evening following that of their luckless expedition against Major Thresher.

It had been anything but a happy day. Certainly they had received no hint, as yet, that the terrible old major had reported them, or even that he suspected them of being the "villainous gang of Hindus" of the night before. But it had been an anxious day, for all that. Their anxiety on their own behalf had been as nothing to their anxiety for the hapless Peter Todd.

How matters stood with him they did not know—beyond the depressing fact that he still lay in the punishment-room. The twenty-four hours' grace, given so reluctantly by the major, had long since lapsed, and they knew that nothing fresh had been discovered by the Head.

Yet the fact that nothing had happened to Peter was comforting. It was known that the major had paid the usual weekly visit that morning, and they could only conclude that either the major had not found the tell-tale articles they had left behind, and that he still believed the "sacred idol" affair genuine, or that he had extended the time-limit.

In their anxiety for news the chums had not left the school once during the day, but after tea Harry had suggested a short spin before lock-up, and they had gladly agreed to seek a bit of fresh air.

And now, on the return journey, Bob had got a puncture, and they were still a couple of miles from Greyfriars. "You fellows hurry on," said Bob, "and I'll walk. No good all of us being late."

"No need for you to walk, Bob," said Harry, after a quick glance round. "There's an old cottage yonder; you can leave your jigger there until to-morrow, and ride back on my back step."

"Oh, good!"

It was a sensible suggestion, and the juniors made at once for the cottage. Harry pointed out. It was a tumble-down, wretched-looking hovel, just visible through the trees, but it would suit the purpose, nevertheless, thought the juniors.

They left their machines outside the broken-down fence, and Harry walked up the weed-grown path. The place appeared to be little more than a deserted ruin; but smoke was curling from a chimney, and they concluded that it was occupied.

Harry Wharton knocked on the door and waited. There came no movement from within, and he knocked again. "Nobody at home?" called Bob Cherry.

"Somebody like it!" growled Harry. He waited another minute, and then stepped round to the back of the wretched habitation. He was absent from his chums' sight only a minute; but when he reappeared again his features were ablaze with excitement.

He placed a finger on his lips, and beckoned to them frantically. Wonderingly they tiptoed along the path, and a moment later they were standing by

Harry's side at a little window round the corner of the cottage.

It was evidently the kitchen window, and was dirt-begrimed and uncurtained. "Look!" breathed Harry Wharton. "Just look, you chaps!"

They looked, wondering what their chum had discovered to make him shake so with excitement.

They knew well enough the next moment, as they peered cautiously in turn through the dirty window they got the surprise of their lives.

The cottage was inhabited, after all. Seated at a dirty table in the stone-flagged kitchen were two men—a young man and a much older one—obviously father and son. And a disreputable and nasty pair they looked.

They were examining several articles on the table, and so engrossed were they in their task that the juniors understood why Harry's knocks had not been heard. But the juniors gave no thought to that—they were too dumfounded at sight of the articles on the table. For they were curious—small ornaments and trinkets of Oriental design.

And one was an immense bronze idol of peculiar shape and design!

"Great, Scott!"

"Phew!"

As the last to view the articles drew back from the window the juniors looked at each other with speculations, low-breathed, but expressive.

They had never seen the major's precious treasures before; but they did not doubt that they were seeing them now.

"Well, this beats the band!" whispered Bob Cherry. "What an amazing—"

"Shush!" warned Harry Wharton. One of the men within was speaking, and his voice resounded the astounded juniors clearly. The juniors had no qualms concerning eavesdropping after what they had seen.

"I tell you you're a fool, old 'un!" came from the younger fellow, in a snarl. "Aren't you satisfied w' what you've done? 'Aven't you 'ad enough of the stone-jug already? You was lucky to get clear, the other night. You've got them things!"

"Them things!" snarled the older man, flinging a small ivory knife across the table savagely. "What good is them? I wish I 'adn't took 'em. If only that infernal alarm 'adn't gone off—"

He broke off, and his clenched fist struck the table with a vicious thud.

"Listen, young 'un!" he hissed. "I'm goin' and this time I'll finish the job. I vowed to pay the old 'ound back, and I'm going to! Get that? It's not lost I wants—it's to get square with the 'ound as put me away. I'm goin' agen to-night, and after I've done the job, we'll clear, no more!"

"You're askin' for it if you do!" was the angry retort. "An' you'll ave me dragged in, too! Anyway, I'm clearin' while the goin's good, and you can do as you likes, you old foo—"

The juniors heard no more—indeed, the old man said no more just then. Forgetting the necessity for caution in his eagerness to see and hear all, Harry Wharton had pressed closer to the window, and his foot had caught an empty tin, sending it tinkling over the cobbles.

"Look out!"

The yell sounded within the cottage, and the juniors wheeled to flee. Wharton, Cherry, Bull, and Singh dashed away, but Nugent stumbled against a projecting beam, and measured his length with a crash.

There followed the clatter of heavy boots on the cobbles, and before Nugent

could rise the two men were on him with a rush.

"Hold on!" gasped Harry Wharton, glancing back from the gate. "They've got Franky!"

The juniors wheeled in a flash, and as they saw their chum struggling in the grasp of the ill-kempt rascals, they went back with a rush.

It was no time to stand upon ceremony. Harry and his chums knew what to expect from the pair of ugly-looking rascals. Both were powerfully built men, and the juniors realised they would stand no chance against them in a fight.

Harry came up to them like a whirlwind, and his fist smacked home against the younger man's unshaven jaw. He happened to be stooping over Nugent, and he reeled sideways and crashed to the cobbles.

Next instant there was another crash as Bob Cherry's curly head took the older man in the back with the force of a battering-ram, and he sprawled head-long in another companion.

"Run for it!" gasped Harry Wharton. Frank Nugent was on his feet now, and he joined his chums in a mad stampede for the gate. They grabbed their bikes, and leaped into the saddles. Hoodless of his grating, bumping front rim, Bob Cherry drove madly at the pedals. They tore away from the dingy habitation with a chorus of yells and oaths ringing in their ears.

Glancing back when a couple of hundred yards away, Harry saw that their enemies had stopped in the roadway, and he gave the word to dismount.

"Well?" panted Harry Wharton, as they leaned breathlessly against their bikes. "What do you fellows think about that?"

"Think about it?" echoed Bob Cherry, his eyes gleaming. "It doesn't need thinking about, Harry. Fancy stumbling on the whole secret of the business like that! It's amazing!"

"Most amazing coincidence I ever struck across!" groaned Frank Nugent breathlessly. "What had we better do, Harry? It's pretty plain—"

"Get back home first!" snapped Harry grimly. "We can talk things over and decide what to do then. We've got to find a place where we can leave Bob's bike, though."

They hurried on, and presently a turn in the road brought another cottage into sight—this time a well-kept, pretty thatched cottage with a porch ablaze with crimson ramblers.

"This is better!" remarked Bob.

A respectable-looking man was working in the little front garden, and the juniors approached him. To Bob's request for permission to leave his bike he willingly gave consent.

"We called at a cottage lower down the road," said Harry Wharton. "When the bike had been handed over. "Rather a tumble-down show it was. Who lives there!"

The cottager stared at them. "You bin there?" he gasped. "Well, if you take my tip, young gents, you won't go agen. Joe Coombs is a bad lot, and his son's little better. Did you see 'em?"

"We had a bit of a dust-up with them," grinned Bob Cherry. "What are they?"

"Scamps—both of 'em." was the brief retort. "You ask Mister Chub up at the farm. They're pests to the neighbourhood—that's what they is. The old man 'ad jes' come out of prison—got twelve months for poaching, he did!"

Harry Wharton only asked one question—a question that surprised the cottager.





Unknown to the disguised juniors the major was working at the knots of the cord that bound his hands behind him. Suddenly his hands came free, and with a wild roar he went into action. "Crash, crash! With yells of surprise and alarm the conspirators scattered before the old gentleman's furious rush. "I'll teach you, you villains!" roared the major. Harry Wharton dragged open the door, and there was a wild stampede to get out. (See Chapter 8.)

"Who sent him to prison—I mean, who was the magistrate?" he inquired quietly.

"Lemmie see! Yes, it was Major Thresher!" he said reflectively. "You young gents will know him—he lives next to your school."

"Oh!"

The juniors had heard as much as they wanted to hear. After thanking the labourer, they started off, leaving him at his gate staring curiously after them. With Bob standing on the back step of Harry's machine, they raced for Greyfriars, and arrived there in record time, and only just in time to answer their names at call-over.

And almost the first fellow they met after call-over was Peter Todd. The juniors blinked at him, wondering why he was not in the punishment-room still. "What's happened, Toddy?" demanded Harry eagerly. "Has it come out—"

"Worse luck—no!" said Toddy wretchedly. "I'm afraid it's hopeless, you fellows. There's nothing fresh except that the major's clumbed down a bit—he's given no another twenty-four hours to own up or clear myself. That time will soon be up now, though. But the Head's a brack! He's giving me every chance, and he's let me out of the punishment-room until time's up—<sup>325</sup> he won't keep me penned up any longer. It's hopeless, though!"

"Is it?" said Harry Wharton. "That's where you're wrong, old top! In fact, it's jolly hopeful, Toddy."

"Yes, rather!"

Peter Todd stared at the juniors' smiling faces. But as Harry started to tell him what they had discovered, his gloomy face brightened wonderfully.

"Great Scott!" he breathed, when Harry had finished. "So that's it! My bat! Have—have you report—"

"We've done nothing yet," said Harry. "And we're not going to report it yet, either. We'll deal with this, Toddy. We're not going to let the police or anyone bungle this job. That scoundrel said he was going to visit the major again to-night. We're going to be

there to collar him. We're going to catch him in the act!"

"I see," said Toddy slowly. "Old Toner would bungle it right enough. You're right, Wharton. But—but I'm coming, too, Wharton. I'll jolly soon prove if he's the same merchant—though it's pretty certain now. Oh, thank goodness!"

And as Peter Todd accompanied the juniors to Study No. 1 to discuss plans for the evening's adventure, his face was cheery and bright.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Cleared Up!

"**Q**UIET!"

"But dash it all—"

"Quiet!" hissed Harry Wharton frantically. "Here's the major. Can't you stop wriggling?"

"I can't help it!" gasped the irrepressible Bob Cherry, still wriggling. "Wouldn't you wriggle with a blessed caterpillar down your blessed neck? Ugh!"

It was after ten the same night, and once again Harry Wharton & Co. were crouching beneath the bushes in the major's garden. But this time Peter Todd was with them.

They had been some time there now, and though it was a pleasant, starlit summer's night, it was none too comfortable, crouching there hardly daring to move, as the long minutes passed.

But they had determined to keep watch and ward, and they intended to stay there all night if need be.

And at last the sound of footsteps pacing the gravel path were heard approaching from the house. At the same moment, once again, the scent of a cigar was wafted to their nostrils on the gentle night breeze.

It was certainly hard luck on Bob Cherry that, just then, at the critical moment, a roving caterpillar had chosen to explore the aperture between his collar and his neck.

But it happened so, and Bob had to make the best of a trying situation. As

the footsteps of Major Thresher drew nearer, he set his teeth, and manfully resisted the desire to wriggle.

A burly form loomed up in the gloom, and the major, puffing leisurely at his cigar, strooped past their hiding-place.

His footsteps died away, and Bob Cherry gasped his relief as his groping fingers dislodged the exploring caterpillar and flung it away.

"Quiet, yet!" breathed Harry Wharton. "He'll be going in soon, and then we'll sneak closer to the library window. I expect that brute will make for there. We'll hide in the bushes by the window, and—"

He paused abruptly, and his hand closed like a vice on Peter Todd's arm.

A soft rustle in the bushes scarcely six yards from them was heard. Then, even while the startled juniors stared at the spot, a hulking form appeared in view. It passed their hiding-place like a ghost, moving silently after the major on the grass bordering the path.

"Mum-my hat!" breathed Harry Wharton. "It—it must be that scoundrel!"

For a brief instant the juniors were at a loss. They had not expected the scoundrel Coombs for another hour yet.

But it was he without a doubt. Who else could it be? And the skulking form had followed the major!

The terrible danger of the moment flashed across Harry Wharton's mind suddenly then. But before he could utter a sudden scuffle, followed instantly by a cry and a heavy fall, reached the juniors' ears.

"Quiet!" shouted Harry Wharton. "Good heavens!"

He leaped to his feet and tore along the path with his alarmed chums at his heels. Bitterly Harry Wharton blamed himself at that moment for not having warned the major.

But it was too late for vain regrets now. It was the time for action.

He reached the scene with a rush—a circular clearing, whose centre was an

(Continued on page 28.)

old garden-well, faintly seen in the starlight. And close by this two dimly-seen figures were struggling together.

Evidently the major had scrambled to his feet after that fall, and was making a fight for it. Without hesitation, Harry Wharton joined the struggle like a third wheel.

He picked out the hulking form of Coombs in a flash, and made a flying leap upon the scoundrel's back. With an oath the rascal released his grip, and turned, snarling, upon the plucky junior, and they went to earth with a crash.

At the same moment, Bob Cherry, Nugent, Ball and Singh rushed up, and flung themselves into the struggle.

The major reeled away, and tripped backwards against the low wall of the well, and crashed across the boarded top. What happened next, only Peter Todd, rushing up behind his chums, was in time to see.

As the major crashed on the old boards there was a confused vision of flying wood, and then the major's figure vanished abruptly from sight.

"Good heavens!"

Headless of the struggle going on a couple of yards away, Toddy stared petrified at the ominous gap in the broken lid of the well.

For a moment—the next he was leaping on the brick wall. Kicking aside the remaining rotten planks of wood, he grasped the rope that held the bucket. Then with a yell of warning to his chums, he sprang out with his weight upon the rope. For an instant the old cogs seemed to stick, and then he went down with a rush and a swirl of handles.

Lucky the well was not deep—he was at the bottom almost before he knew it, and the shock almost took his senses from him.

In the horrible, smelly blackness he found himself struggling in a mire of water, mud, and refuse. His feet found firm foothold at last, and next moment he was searching, feeling his way round the stone walls, almsy with the moss growths of years.

A groan reached his ears, and next instant he found what he was seeking—his groping hand encountered cloth—and a moment later he was clinging to the slackened rope of the bucket, supporting the unconscious form of the major in his arms.

Then he shouted—shouted desperately. What had happened above ground he could only conjecture; but presently the starlit circle above his head was darkened, and a voice—Harry Wharton's voice—came down to him hollowly.

"Hold on, Toddy—hold on!"

Toddy set his teeth and waited. The weight of the old gentleman on his arm was almost more than he could bear, and his arm was numb and nerveless.

But presently his heart leaped, as another movement came from above; and then a dark figure came swarming down to him. It was Harry Wharton. He came down the rope, hand over fist, and was soon at Peter Todd's side.

"Can you hold on, Toddy?" gasped Harry, his voice sounding eerie in the blackness. "Have you—"

"I've got him here!" panted Peter. "Be quick!"

"We'll have to risk the rope breaking; it seems strong enough, though," muttered Harry. "Hold on another minute, Toddy."

What he was doing Peter could not see, but presently he felt him fumbling with a rope round the major's waist. It was not an easy job in the darkness, but it was made fast at last. Then Harry sent his voice echoing up the shaft.

It was answered at once from above, and almost instantly the rope began to tighten. And at that moment the major grunted, and the juniors felt him move in their grasp.

"You're all right, sir!" said Harry firmly. "Steady! They're just going to pull you up."

"By gas!" came in a faint gasp from Major Thresher.

"Hold on to the rope—grip it above your head, sir!" said Harry quickly.

The half-conscious major seemed to understand then. His struggles ceased, and he gripped the rope above his head, as it tightened round his waist. The next moment he was being drawn slowly upwards.

But would the rope hold? The anxious juniors watched it almost trembling with fear. But it did hold. And soon the juniors saw, in the glow from a lantern held above, his twisting form hauled into safety.

The rat was comparatively easy to the nimble, athletic juniors. The rope came down again, and first Peter Todd and then Harry Wharton went up it. They scarcely waited to be hauled—they swarmed up it hand over fist, and willing hands helped them over the rim of the well.

There Harry Wharton seated himself on the coping, panting, while Peter Todd sank to earth, exhausted and faint. Old John, the major's handy-man, was kneeling by his master's side on the grass—he had evidently been aroused by the commotion.

Harry Wharton got up and joined him. "Better get him inside quickly, John!" exclaimed Harry. "You fellows can help—"

He was interrupted by a wrathful grunt from Major Thresher as that gentleman sat up abruptly.

"Inside, hey?" he rumbled huskily. "Begad! What's the confounded fellow talking about? I want to know what this means before I stir from here. Ha!"

His eye caught sight of the figure of Coombs lying trussed on the grass. His eyes glinted up evilly at the major in the lantern light.

"You—you scoundrel!" rumbled the major, glaring down at him. "You were the fellow—ha! I know the scoundrel! What—what—"

"I can tell you what it means, sir!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "That is

the man who broke into the library the other night. He came here to-night to finish what he started to do then. He meant to harm you—to kill you, I believe, sir!"

And in cool, level tones, Harry told the major all he knew, and the major's face was a study when he had finished.

"By gad!" he ejaculated. "So that's it, hey? I am astounded—I say, I am astounded. And— Bless my soul! Why, here's the very fellow whom I was fool enough to blame for it. Ha!"

He stared down at Toddy, still exhausted on the ground. Then he looked at Harry Wharton, an unspoken question in his eyes.

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "It was Toddy who went down the well after you. He saved you from drowning, sir."

"Did he, begad!" gasped the major. He stooped down to Toddy and gripped his hand with terrific force. "Then he's a fine fellow—a dashed fine fellow, if he is a cheery young monkey. John!"

"Yes," said Harry. "It was Toddy who was in the tower and lock him up. Don't give him a chance to escape, or I'll sack you! Now, you young rascals, follow me! Ha!"

And the juniors followed the major, exchanging grins as they went. Still walking a trifle unsteadily, the old gentleman reached the open french window and plunged inside, and the juniors followed. Taking some articles from the desk, he handed them to Harry Wharton.

The juniors fairly blinked at them. They were the whistlers and false moustaches they had lost.

"There, you young rascals!" snorted the major, a peculiar look in his eyes. "That's your property, I fancy!"

"You—you knew, sir?" stammered Harry, his face crimson.

"Looks like it—hey!" said the major, with a grim chuckle. "Take 'em; and think yourself lucky I didn't report you, my fine fellows. Begad! It was a masterpiece of strategy! I'm thankful I didn't report you now—begad, I am! And now get off home, you young monkeys, I'll see your headmaster in the morning."

And the "young monkeys" went.

The interview the next morning was not as bad as the juniors had anticipated. They had expected punishments for their escapade; but there were no punishments—the gallant old major saw to that. Thankful that all had turned out well, Dr. Locke was only too glad to give way to him. The juniors had entered the dreaded apartment quaking; they left it smiling.

And later that day they learned that the scoundrelly Coombs and his son had been handed over to the police, and that the curios had been recovered, and they knew that Major Thresher was as satisfied as they were.

Altogether it was a triumph for Toddy and for Harry Wharton & Co. For that same day the obnoxious notice-board and barricade disappeared from the disputed lane, and there was peace once more between Greyfriars and its neighbour.

And no one was more thankful than the schoolboy lawyers, who had now ceased to answer to the title of Peter the Plottier!

THE END.

(Be sure and read next Monday's grand, long complete school story of Harry Wharton & Co., boys, in its entitled "Standing By Their Pals!" Order next Monday's MAGNET NOW and avoid disappointment.)

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Every Wednesday

## THE QUEST OF THE PURPLE SANDALS!

No. 7.—The Clue of the Black Duet!  
(Continued from page 2.)

Ferrers Locke watched a swirl of blue tobacco-smoke go sailing ceilingwards. "My dear old Pycroft," he remarked, "you know I never begrudge giving you any information that is in my possession. But, candidly, I must confess that the whereabouts of Kruse is as much an enigma to me as it is to you at the present moment. The fellow seems to have vanished into thin air. However, I have now alighted upon a clue which may help me in finding the sandals, the job with which my client entrusted me. If during the course of my investigations I should hit on anything that indicates the presence of Dr. Kruse in this city, I will let you know with the utmost despatch." The inspector twirled his hat in his hand.

"Well, Mr. Locke, I must be getting along for some grub. It was kind of you to put me wise to the China Joe affair. Gosh, if only I could lay hands on Kruse, and get back to the Old Country I should be happy! What with quick-lunch counters and cafeterias, cold water and baked beans, I've got the worst attack of dyspepsia I've ever had in my life. I'd give a month's pay for a sight o' the Thames Embankment again."

Ferrers Locke rose from the bed and laughed heartily.

"You'll see it in time, old man," he said. "Meantime, if fortune favours me and you strike my clues regarding Dr. Kruse or the sandals, I shall expect to receive a message from you."

"Right," said Pycroft. His hand went to the door-handle, but he turned inwards again towards Locke and Drake as though a sudden thought had struck him. Then he drew a local newspaper from his pocket, and, opening it, indicated an advertisement to the detective.

"See that, Mr. Locke," he said. "It's a full description of Dr. Kruse even to the brand-mark of the poised serpent which he bears on his right arm. And there's five hundred dollars reward offered for any information leading to his capture."

Locke shrugged his shoulders. "In my opinion, Pycroft, there has been too much publicity already in this case of Kruse. Still, the police are entitled to their own methods, although I can't say that I agree with the wisdom of inserting an ad. like this one. However, he added, with a light laugh, as he handed the newspaper back, "you may trust me to have a shot at nabbing that five hundred bucks myself."

Directly the burly inspector had taken his departure, Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake briskly discussed the case on which they were engaged.

"China Joe stole the sandals, but he got rid of them," said Locke. "The fellow was living near the mill, and the sandals were not in his shack, nor had anyone seen them, as far as I could discover. But just before China Joe died I demanded of him the whereabouts of the parcel he stole. And with my own fingers I wrung from his throat two words—'Bhana Singh.'"

"Corks!" said Drake. "Now what the dickens does that mean?"

Ferrers Locke paused, and relighted his pipe.

"There's only one explanation of the words, as far as I can see, my boy," he

said. "Bhana Singh is the name of a Hindu. My theory is that China Joe disposed of the sandals to an Indian named Bhana Singh, probably owing to the fact that the Chink gambled away his money and needed more. At any rate, it's the only clue we have at the moment. So, for the lack of something better, we must try to discover whether a Hindu of that name is known anywhere in Vancouver or district. Go out now, my boy, get yourself a meal, and afterwards proceed to the Powell Street district to make a few inquiries. My intention is to mingle among the Hindus who live at the western end of False Creek, and try to pick up some information there."

With a cheery "An revoir," Drake left the room and descended the stairs.

Locke made a few alterations to his facial appearance with a little grease-paint and adjusted a scarf round his neck. Then, with a final glance in the crooked mirror on the rickety washstand, he also left the room and descended the stairs. No one knew the great English private sleuth as he appeared in his consulting-room at Baker Street, would have guessed his identity now. He looked a typical low crook of the waterfront district, with brown, grimy face and stubby chin.

Leaving Brand's rooming house, he turned to the right and ambled along Cordova Street, when a man in plain clothes, and only too obviously a police-officer, stopped him.

"Mr. Locke!" whispered the man. The sleuth recognized the fellow as one of the Vancouver police officials who had aided him in the earlier stage of the China Joe case.

"How do you know me, Jackson?" he asked. "This disguise must be pretty rotten."

"No, sir," returned the man. "I saw Inspector Pycroft a few minutes ago, and he described the clothes you were wearing. So I waited for you to come out of your rooming-house to hand you this letter. It was delivered at police headquarters early this evening."

Rather surprised, Locke took the grubby envelope from the man's hand, and, with a muttered word of thanks, ambled away. Stopping in the doorway of a building a hundred yards farther down the street, he ripped the envelope open with his thumb, and drew out the equally grubby note which it contained.

The missive read:

"To Ferrers Locke, the detective, "Dear Sir,—I am an Englishman who emigrated to Canada some months ago. A short time back I saw by the newspapers that you had arrived in this city, and to-day I saw a description of the Dr. Kruse who is wanted for the Dulwich

murder. Putting two and two together, I reckoned you to be on the track of the doctor. If so, I think I can point out the very man to you. He has been working near me on a rough carpentry job, and yesterday I noticed a peculiar mark on his arm which answers to the description given in the newspaper of the brand of the poised serpent."

"If you will continue to the grey shack three hundred yards due east of Stormont Halt on the B.C.E.R. at 10 p.m. to-night, I will point out the man in question to you."

"My reason for notifying you instead of the police, is that you once did me a great service in England, though you may have forgotten it. I trust that if my information leads to the capture of Dr. Harvey Kruse, you will see that I receive the five hundred dol. reward which is being offered for his capture."

"Yours truly,  
"EDGAR SWAYLES."

Twice Ferrers Locke read this strange message through. He ambled back along the street, and casually asked the plain-clothes man if he knew who had delivered it at headquarters. The man said it had been delivered by an urchin of the streets, who had been given twenty-five cents by an unknown man for doing it.

Moving away again, Locke turned the matter over and over in his mind. He had received too many mysterious letters in his career not to feel suspicious of this one. Yet he remembered the name "Edgar Swayles" well, though he had never met the man. In an indirect way two years before in a case which had received great publicity in England, he had been responsible for keeping the man from being unjustly put in prison. If the letter was a hoax it was an exceedingly queer one, and the result would be merely a waste of time. If it were some kind of trap, Locke believed in his own astuteness to get himself out of any scrape. If this letter were genuine, it might well lead to the almost immediate capture of the arch-criminal Kruse, which he considered second only in importance to the finding of the purple sandals themselves.

Only after much clear thought did the detective come to his decision. He would go to the grey shack at Stormont Halt, and trust to fortune and his own wits.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Terror of the Shack!

IF Ferrers Locke were to get to the meeting-place at the time named he must postpone his visit to False Creek. Instead of going to the Creek, therefore, he partook of a meal and boarded one of the fast cars of the British Columbian Electric Railway, taking a ticket to Stormont Halt, which is situated halfway between Vancouver and New Westminster.

It was dark when he alighted from the car. Making his way among the trees which lined the rails to the east of Stormont, he approached the shack, situated about fifty yards down a clearing dotted with tree-stumps. A light burned inside the place, but there was no sign of any living soul, though the door of the little building was wide open.

The sleuth dropped his hands into his coat-pockets and whistled softly. In one of those pockets was an automatic pistol loaded in the breach and magazine.

He approached the door and looked into the shack. No one was there, as he had thought from his first view of the

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building. The place was furnished with a rough chair and a table, and a cupboard half open, revealing some tins of salmon and beans. A dirty strip of Japanese matting was spread on the floor. A large oil-lamp provided the illumination. Near this lamp, on the table, was an enamel cup and saucer and a used plate, which tended to give the appearance that the owner of the shack had not long finished a meal.

Suddenly there was the snapping of a twig to his right, and Locke, looking round, saw a broad, bearded man approaching him.

"Mr. Locke?" murmured the man, in a quiet, musical voice.

"At your service!" said the sleuth, without, however, taking his hands from his pockets. "You are Mr. Swayles?"

"That's me, sir," answered the man. "I hope that to-night I can do as much for you as you once did for me. Pray enter my humble abode!"

"After you," murmured Locke, politely stepping aside from the entrance of the shack.

The man stepped softly.

"I suppose it is the nature of detectives to be suspicious, Mr. Locke?" he remarked, as he stepped into the shack. "Evidently you are not quite certain that I am the man I profess to be. But then, of course, you never met me. I, too, should not have known you in that disguise, but that you have come in response to my note."

He waved his hand toward the chair at the table, and Locke seated himself. But the keen eyes of the sleuth never left the burly form of his host, as the latter shut the door and drew down a faded yellow blind over the window.

Turning round, Swayles leaned his broad frame against the wooden wall of the shack, and looked at the detective with a smile of amusement.

"Really, I wish you would be a bit more trustful, Mr. Locke," he remarked languidly. "I don't like to feel that the muzzle of a revolver is pointing at my belt. It gives me a nasty sick sort of feeling."

The sleuth did not move a muscle for a few seconds. His eyes roved up and down the coarse clothes of the man who had brought him to this place.

"I am sorry to be such a churlish guest, Mr. Swayles," he said. "Caution is second nature to us crook-hunters, and this meeting, you must admit, is a trifle irregular. You will prove your bona fides, sir, by at once getting to business, and informing me where the wanted man, Dr. Kruse, may be found."

The bearded man half turned, and his hand went up as though to adjust a cord of the window-blind. Next instant something struck Locke's head with a thud, and the detective stumbled forward over the table, and rolled from the chair, an unconscious heap upon the floor.

It was some minutes later when the detective opened his eyes. Before him he saw the bearded visage of the man who called himself Swayles.

"My heavens, what has happened to me, dazedly, what happened?"

He tried to rise, but found himself unable to do so. Then it dawned on him that he was bound hand and foot. Opening his mouth, he emitted a rather feeble shout, and then a filthy piece of oiled cloth was thrust between his teeth, and a rough man, tied a scarf over his mouth to keep the gag in position.

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With dilated eyes he gazed into the bearded visage of his captor, whose face now was close to his own. A terribly familiar voice fell on his ears.

"You were asking, Mr. Locke, where the wanted man, Dr. Kruse, may be found. I promised to show him to you, and I am a man who keeps my promise. You are looking at him now—I am Dr. Henry Kruse!"

Now did Locke realize to the full his desperate situation. He strove to tear asunder his hands which were bound together and get them at the throat of the arch-crook.

But Kruse had done his work only too well, and the cords which bound the sleuth's wrists were not so easily to be broken.

"You wish to know what happened, my dear Mr. Locke? I will tell you. On that beam which you see overhead I had set a little booby-trap. It was merely a chunk of hardwood, nicely rounded at the edges, and projecting over the edge of the rafter. On pulling a string by the window-cord I dislodged a small wedge, and so caused the piece of hardwood to descend upon your unfortunate head. You see, I had placed the chair exactly under the booby-trap, in readiness. I do so hope you will pardon the liberty I took, my dear Mr. Locke," added the crook, with a smile.

Placing the chair at the side of Locke, who was lying on the floor close to the table, Dr. Kruse calmly lighted a cigarette.

"I have little time to waste, Mr. Locke," he said, in the voice of one calmly discussing a business proposition. "You have had exceedingly bad luck in your quest of the wanted man, your dealings with me. The blunder of that genial idiot, Pyecroft, enabled me to escape you in the past. You are a dangerous man, Mr. Locke."

He blew a smoke-wreath towards the beam which bridged the shack a few feet above his head.

"Yes, Mr. Locke," he resumed, in the same quiet, pleasant tone, "I will pay you the compliment of saying that you are the only living man I fear. You have stood in my path too long, but it is not without pain that I shall undertake the task of removing you from it. I have carefully considered the means, and shooting would be much too noisy—besides, the report of a pistol always gives my nerves the jumps. The thought of disposing of you with a sharp knife, Mr. Locke, positively makes me shudder. I confess I always flinch, even when I use a razor on my chin. You will admit it is hardly convenient to dress you, and I am forced to adopt the best means at my disposal."

From his pocket he withdrew a large, cheap-looking watch and regarded it with a faze silently for a few moments.

"Time presses, Mr. Locke," he said wearily, as he rose from his chair. "It has been a rather one-sided conversation. I am afraid, and I fear I have not been in the least entertaining to you, my guest. However, I shall do my best to provide you with some excitement during the next few minutes, if you will remain where you are."

Kruse chuckled grimly at his joke. With eyes starting out of his head the sleuth watched this man, whose hands already were stained deep in every crime under the sun, as the doctor took a tin of oil from the lower part of the cupboard.

Now there was no doubt as to the murderous intention of the fiendish scoundrel.

Locke saw him unswear the stopper

of the tin, and pour the oil upon the floor and walls of the shack. Only too well did the sleuth know the reason for Kruse's action.

By destroying the shack with fire, Kruse would not only remove him from his path, but would eradicate all trace of his crime. For, in all probability, it would be thought afterwards that any evidence remains that might be found would be those of the owner of the razed shanty.

Taking the lighted lamp from the table, Kruse moved towards the door, and opened it.

"I wish you good-bye, Mr. Locke!" he said meaningly. And with that he deliberately tossed the lamp on to the floor, where the glass globe shattered to fragments.

A great yellow flame leapt towards the ceiling as an oil-patch near the door ignited. In a flash Kruse stepped outside the door and pulled it to, and the helpless sleuth heard his demoniacal laugh outside the building.

In a frenzy Ferrers Locke rolled away from the flames, but swiftly the yellow-forked tongues of fire ran along the floor and up the walls. They darted from one oil-patch to another, and then a leg of the table burst into flames.

The heat was terrific. The odour of his singing eyebrows and hair entered the nostrils of the sleuth. Within a minute the fire would be consuming his clothing even as at present it was wiping out of existence that table-leg. His brain seemed numbed; his eyes saw the grim spectre of death staring him in the face. He hadn't a chance—a dog's chance!

And then something seemed to snap in his brain, and a fierce howl flooded his mind. With a desperate effort he thrust himself to sitting position, and thrust both his bound ankles and wrists into the flames that licked the table-leg. He felt the fire eating at his flesh, but he dug his teeth into his lips, and strove to tear his bonds apart.

He saw the tongues of flame rising through the cords and the bonds blacken. Then a sudden snapping heralded his success. The cords on his wrists broke first, and the detective snatched his blistered hands away from the devouring flames. A second later his feet were free.

With the perspiration streaming from his brow he leapt to the wall and tore down the overall that was hanging there, and wound it swiftly round his two fists. It took but a moment to do, and then Locke hurled himself full at the window-blind. There was a sharp shattering of glass and cracking of woodwork, and the blind tore away from it fastenings.

As the long tongues of flame leapt at him, the sleuth crashed through the aperture he had made in the window, and fell, with a thud, on the ground outside the shack.

Partially stunned by the fall, for he had struck the side of his head already bruised by Kruse's "booby-trap," he nevertheless, managed to rise and stagger away from the shack of death. And then he fell forward into a shallow ice-cold stream, and lay full-length, lapsing the life-giving water like a parched animal.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Hot on the Trail!

FOR nearly five minutes Ferrers Locke lay full-length by the bank of the stream. Then, still dazed, he staggered to his feet and gazed back at the shanty, now a furnace



Placing the chair by the side of Locke, who was lying on the floor bound hand and foot, Dr. Kruse calmly lighted a cigarette. "I have little time to waste, Mr. Locke," he said in a voice of one calmly discussing a business proposition. "You are a dangerous man. You have stood in my path too long, but it is not without pain that I shall undertake the task of removing you from it." (See page 24.)

of flame. A shout rose from the direction of the pine-trees on his left, and two or three men burst into the clearing. Going to meet them, the sleuth was bombarded with questions from a number of rail workers who were camped in the district.

In a few words he explained the situation, and revealed his identity. The amazement of the men on learning that this was none other than the great English detective of whom they all had heard was immense. But not one of them, though eager to help the sleuth in every possible way, was able to give any information about Kruse, who had made his get-away after firing the shack.

Leaving the shanty to burn itself out, Ferrers Locke made his way along the line of the electric railway to Stormont Halt, and made further inquiries. Unfortunately, they were as abortive as his first.

Now Locke decided to set the police machine in motion. He took a car back to Vancouver, and visited the police headquarters. His appearance created no little surprise. His face was grimy, his wrists and hands blistered, and he was wringing across his arm the old pair of overalls which he had taken down from the wall of the shack to wrap about his hands before bursting out of the window.

In a few minutes he had put the police in full possession of his adventure with the wanted man.

The superintendent set the telephone wires humming, and notified the substations of Vancouver, North Vancouver, New Westminster, Chilliwack, and other places. A thousand uniformed police and plain-clothes men were thus immediately put on the qui vive, and made aware that the wanted man—Dr. Kruse—had been seen within the hour at Stormont Halt.

While the sleuth was having his burns dressed by the police-surgeon, Inspector Pycroft, accompanied by Jack Drake, entered the building. Both were surprised at seeing Locke there, and so unknown in appearance.

"Oh, I say, chief!" exclaimed Jack Drake, after their first greetings. "I've found out something jolly important. A Hindu, of the name of Bhana Singh, sailed for Calcutta aboard the steamer *Sunderbund* yesterday."

"Confound it!" exclaimed the sleuth. "And he may have the purple sandals with him. That means we may have to hunt the beggar in India. Still, we must let that matter rip for the moment. We can't catch Bhana Singh to-night. But, egad, we may be able to get Dr. Kruse!"

And he told Jack Drake and Pycroft of his adventure at Stormont, and showed them the overalls which he had brought away from the shack.

"Fon my word!" muttered Pycroft. "It's almost incredible that the doctor could have been lying low so close to

the city. But the fact that you've seen him will make him discard his beard, with a better chance of someone recognising him."

He took the dirty overalls from Locke's hand and examined them.

"Ugh!" he groaned. "No name of the makers, no laundry mark—nothing. These aren't going to help us much."

"Don't you believe it," answered Locke. "My theory is that Kruse has had to work for his living during the past few days. If we can get into touch with some of the men with whom he has associated we may be able to learn something of his habits since he has been in this district, and be in a better position to deduce his intentions for the future."

There was an excellent laboratory in the police headquarters building, and Ferrers Locke requested the use of it for some minutes. Permission was willingly granted, and Ferrers Locke, Drake, Pycroft, and the superintendent entered the room. Here the famous English sleuth made a series of tests. He took a thin glass slide and coated it lightly with a special kind of wax. While Drake held the slide close to the overalls, the sleuth knocked some dust out of the garments, some of which adhered to the slide. Chemical tests quickly established the fact that the majority of the minute particles of dust were of black lead.

Looking up a directory of Vancouver  
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and district in the superintendent's office, Locke jotted down several addresses of factories, in which stove polish was manufactured.

"Oh, by the way," said the superintendent suddenly, "not a month ago a lead-pencil works was started on the outskirts of New Westminster."

"By Jove," exclaimed Locke, "that's useful to know! There would be a deal of blacklead dust floating about a factory of that type, and these overalls, which I believe belong to Kruse, are smothered in this kind of dust. Besides, as he was occupying the shack on the line to New Westminster, it looks extremely likely that he was working out in that direction some where."

A fast motor-car was summoned to headquarters by the superintendent. Ferrers Locke, his assistant, Inspector Pycroft, and a local detective entered it, and were driven rapidly through the night to the works of the Coast Pencil Company on the outskirts of New Westminster. A night-watchman there gave them the address of the manager, who had to be roused from his bed. This gentleman was able to remember a worker answering to the description of the bearded individual who had trapped Locke in the shack at Stormont. The name under which Kruse had worked at the factory was "William Cornish."

He became rather matey with one of our workers named George Peddar, who lives in the bunkhouse about two hundred yards from here," volunteered the manager. "Doubtless Peddar could tell you more about the man than I can."

Leaving the manager, the investigators made their way to the bunkhouse, and roused the occupants, who were none too pleased having their beauty sleep interrupted. But on the promise of a monetary reward, the man named George Peddar was induced to put on a few clothes and come into the adjoining eating-room, to make a statement regarding his acquaintance with Cornish, alias Dr. Harvey Kruse, the Dulwich murderer.

It appeared that Kruse, who had little money, was attracted to Peddar, owing to the latter's knowledge of the shipping of the port. For Peddar had been a seaman before coming ashore to earn more money in the new pencil factory.

After fifteen minutes' interview with George Peddar, and much keen questioning on the part of Ferrers Locke, the investigators entered the motor-car and drove back towards Vancouver.

"It seems to me," said Ferrers Locke, who was sitting between Pycroft and Drake in the back seat, "that it was Kruse's intention to get away to sea. Possibly he found this place getting too hot to hold him, and had lost hope of getting the sandals. He pumped Peddar, with the idea of getting to know the ropes, in preparation for an attempt to ship aboard some vessel."

Arriving at the police headquarters, Locke suggested to the superintendent that the piece should keep a keen eye on all vessels leaving the port. Then he and Drake returned to their dingy quarters in Cordova Street. Here the sleuth looked over the shipping list of the previous day's newspaper, and formulated another plan to his young assistant.

The two adopted fresh disguises, pulled on grubby blue jerseys and caps, and sauntered down to the docks together. For Locke had seen that in the early

hours of the morning a barque, called the Siwash Queen, was due to sail. It struck him that Kruse might make an attempt to ship in this vessel. His idea was to board the wind-jammer, reveal his identity to the captain, and make some inquiries. In case Kruse was on board, he and Drake were going to adopt the role of inebriated seamen, who might be thought to have boarded the wrong ship.

The sleuth paid a night-waterman to row him and his assistant to the Siwash Queen, aboard which there seemed to be a certain amount of activity. On their way they sang snatches of song. Arriving at the starboard sea-gangway, the sleuth pressed an extra ten dollars into the astonished waterman's hand, and promised him another ten if he would wait. Then the two swarmed on board.

Unnoticed at first, they crept forward, and obtained a view of some of the members of the crew, who were working on the fore'side head, but Kruse was not among them.

Yours arose from the forward hold, and, descending an iron ladder, the two went to a lower deck to investigate. A burly, ill-favoured individual in a peaked cap stepped into view from the direction of the chain-locker, and Locke hastily drew Drake into a small, dark compartment, in which was stored bunting and odds and ends of ropes and canvas. He pulled the door of his shut to conceal himself and Drake from view.

"Probably the bo'sun, my boy," whispered Locke. "We don't want to meet him. If we reveal ourselves to anyone it must be the captain."

They heard heavy steps on the deck outside, then the door of the little store-room in which they were hiding was pulled shut with a bang. And there was the grinding sound of a bolt being shot home. At once the sleuth grabbed the handle and gave it a violent tug, but the door refused to budge. There was nothing for it now but to reveal their presence, and he raised his voice in a shout, and kicked violently on the hard wood door. The only response was a snuff, mocking laugh, and the sound of footsteps receding along the deck outside.

Calmly at first Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake set to work to get out of the place. In his pocket the sleuth had a useful combination steel tool, with which he hacked at the woodwork by the light of Drake's electric-torch. If he could get at the bolt, and that bolt was rusty—as well it might be on an old ship—he might make short work of getting out of this shipboard prison. And then the grinding sound of steel upon steel reached his ears, mingled with the melodious voices of sailors singing a favourite old sea chanty.

Locke paused in his work, and he and Drake looked at one another with blanched faces.

"My hat," gulped the boy, "they're weighing the anchor—the Siwash Queen is putting to sea!"

"No doubt of it," muttered Locke, through his clenched teeth. "And we, my boy, look like going with her. We've been shanghaied!"

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## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### The Man with the Flaxen Hair!

FULLY an hour slipped away while Ferrers Locke, for want of something better to do, fished at the outer bolt of the door through a small aperture which he had cut in the woodwork of the door with his jack-knife. Bad luck in the shape of two iron bands across the near side of the door had prevented him from enlarging the hole sufficiently with his knife to get his hand through to draw back the bolt.

At last the bolt was cut through, and the sleuth pulled the door open. Only too well, however, did he know that it was too late.

Somewhat to his surprise, he saw that the hatch through which he and Drake had descended to the lower deck was still open. Taking his revolver from his pocket, he started to mount the ladder, when a face appeared over the edge of the hatchway, and a deep voice addressed him.

"Put that gun in your pocket and come up on deck, ye lubber!"

The first impulse of the sleuth was to raise his revolver, but glancing upwards, he saw the gleaming barrel of a pistol pointing directly at him. He gave a light laugh, and stowed his revolver away.

He and Drake went up on deck and fished themselves out of the burly bo'sun, who had locked them in the store-room. With him was a caucasian-shouldered man in a blue reefers, whom Locke instinctively knew to be the skipper of the Siwash Queen.

"There ye are, skipper," said the bo'sun, "a likely couple, eh? Now we ain't so short-handed as it seemed we were a-join' to be."

"I'm afraid," said Locke politely to the captain, "that your enthusiastic subordinate errs in imagining that he has shanghaied a couple of seamen. Allow me to present you with my card." From the pocket of the wastcoat he wore under his blue jersey he extracted a small white piece of pasteboard, and extended it towards the captain, who took it with a growl like that of a surly bear. A light from a deckhouse shone upon the card, and revealed the name printed thereon.

"Ferrers Locke!" muttered the captain. "How—how the blazes d'ye manage to come by this, me man?"

"Simply because it is my own card," replied the sleuth. And quickly he poured into the ears of the astounded skipper and bo'sun the story of the quest which had brought him and Drake aboard the Siwash Queen in Vancouver Harbour.

Especially Captain Barton of the wind-jammer was snared. Locke's appearance was that of a seaman, but his accent proclaimed him to be an educated man. Moreover, by his knowledge of the Kruse case he convinced both the wind-jammer men that he was indeed the famous English sleuth.

Both the skipper and the bo'sun were profuse in their apologies for the full of the consequences which might accrue through their having shanghaied the noted couple.

Locke swore them both to secrecy as to his identity. After that he and Drake went with Captain Barton to his cabin to discuss matters further, leaving the bewildered bo'sun, whose name was Rorke, on the forward deck, scratching his head.



"I am afraid that your enthusiastic subordinate errs if he imagines that he has shanghaied a couple of seamen," said Locke quietly, handing the captain his card. "Farrers Locke!" muttered the skipper, reading the inscription. "How—how the blazes did you manage to come by this?" "Simply because it is my own card," answered the sleuth. "And allow me to present my assistant, Jack Drake!" (See page 26)

In the cabin Captain Barton offered to put in at Victoria, the chief port of Vancouver Island, and land the two. When Locke, however, discovered that the *Siwash Queen* was bound for Java and Singapore, he expressed a wish to stay aboard, and offered, greatly to the skipper's delight, to work as a member of the crew. After all, he wished to follow the Hindia, Bhana Singh, to India, and he would be able to reach Calcutta probably as quickly by continuing in the windjammer as if he returned to Vancouver to await a steamer.

He went forward to the fo'c'sle and mingled with the crew, who were only too glad to have an extra hand to help in working the ship. The fact that the newcomer had been shanghaied merely provided a source of merriment. Meantime, Jack Drake was turned over to assist the cook.

It was at dawn that Farrers Locke, who had snatched a couple of hours of much-needed sleep, made a momentous discovery upon turning out of his hammock. Across the fo'c'sle was a fair-haired seaman with blotchy face, rolled up in a blanket close to the bulkhead and fast asleep. Not having seen this man before, Locke ambled across the gently rolling deck and gazed down upon the fellow. Suddenly his eyes started, and he stooped to get a closer view.

There was an amazing resemblance in this man to the crook who, wearing a beard and disguised, had trapped him in the shack at Stormont. The sleeping

seaman, too, had a beard, but it was flaxen like his hair. Peering even closer, Locke detected that the beard in parts near the roots of the hair was darker. Could it be possible that Krusse had dyed his beard and hair, obtained another suit of clothes, and reached this windjammer?

Locke glanced behind him. No one was looking. He dropped on his knees and very gently pulled up the short right-hand sleeve of the suspected man's vest. And there revealed to his eyes was the brandmark of the poisoned serpent. It was Dr. Harvey Krusse!

The detective's hand slipped into his left hip-pocket, where a pair of handkerchiefs were neatly stowed. As he made the movement, the man on the deck by the bulk-head opened his eyes and raised himself into a sitting posture. Locke watched him like a hawk; but there was not the slightest sign of recognition on the part of the notorious crook. Farrers Locke took his hand from his pocket as the man rose to his feet.

"Hallo, matey?" said the sleuth gruffly. "Didn't notice you aboard this packet yesterday. When did you join us?"

Krusse rubbed a begrimed hand across his eyes. He gave the impression of being dazed, but the sleuth could not help according him a silent admiration when, in the dialect of a Scandinavian, he said:

"Vere vas I? Vas dia der schooner doas-house?"

"Guess not, mate," said Locke, with

a grim chuckle. "Ye're aboard the *Siwash Queen*—out'ard bound for Singapore."

"Vot!" exclaimed the other, with starting eyes. "Dun some dirty crimp vos put the sleep stuff in my drink and send me to sea." His hands clawed the air, and his teeth gritted, as though with rage. But the narrowed eyes of the sleuth detected a hint of satisfaction at the corners of his mouth.

For two or three moments the world-famous detective and the most dangerous living criminal stood eyeing one another. But only Locke knew the identity of the other. And then Krusse turned on his heel, crossing the deck of the fo'c'sle, and staggered up the steel ladder to the deck above.

Farrers Locke watched him go. The *Siwash Queen* was putting into no port before Java was reached. Krusse could not escape from the ship. When the windjammer approached port he could make his opportunity and clap the wanted man in irons.

Farrers Locke had his quarry cold!

THE END.

(It would almost seem as though Fate had played into the hands of Farrers Locke, but with a notorious scoundrel like Dr. Krusse nothing is certain. Read next Monday's fine story, "The Drawa of the Develcut!" and see whether or not Farrers Locke has got his quarry "cold.")

## NEXT MONDAY'S PROGRAMME!

### "STANDING BY THEIR PALS!"

**T**HE Famous Five of the Remove at Greyfriars are renowned for their loyalty to each other; they have always stood shoulder to shoulder through foul and fair weather.

In this coming story we see them going one better—nothing less than fighting a stern and strenuous battle on behalf of several poorer scholars of the old school.

Information leaks out, through Billy Bunter in the first place, that the board of governors intend to raise the school fees. The mere thought of such a step being put into practice rouses the indignation of one and all. Dick Penfold, Mark Linley, and other well-known characters, whose people are not exactly rolling in filthy lucre, realise with deep regrets that they will have to pack their bags and depart from Greyfriars.

Such a wholesale splitting of long and happy friendships mean, in the eyes of the scholars themselves, the ruin of Greyfriars. Again it is realised generally by the "thinkers" of the school that such a course as the governors contemplate is unworkable and despicable.

Then someone reminds the Removites that Harry Wharton's uncle is a member of the board of governors, and the bitter

feeling originally directed against the governors shifts to windward, as it were, and sweeps against Harry Wharton himself. The captain of the Remove finds himself in a very delicate situation. He is just as much enraged against his uncle as his schoolfellows, for Harry, rather unjustly as it turns out, imagines that his uncle is to blame. Harry has to live down the fact that his guardian is a member of the board—a most unpleasant task when such fellows as Harold Skinner & Co., and even Ponsobny, of Highcliffe, remind him, with delight, that Colonel Wharton is a "rotter," for giving his sanction to the proposal of increasing the school fees.

### THE TRUTH WILL OUT!

The Famous Five and the rest of the Remove put their learned heads together. It is unanimously agreed that the whole school will leave at the end of the term if the increased fees are "passed" by the board. Armed with this knowledge, Harry Wharton & Co. visit Colonel Wharton himself, and lay the facts before him. It transpires during the interview that Colonel Wharton is not to blame for the suggested increase. In fact, he has been "all against" it. In fairness to himself he gives the name of a new member of the board of governors who is responsible for the whole scheme. And that name creates a suspicion in the breasts of the Famous Five that Cecil Ponsobny of Highcliffe knows more about the matter than he chooses to tell.

From there the story sweeps along on a strong tide of incident, culminating in the well-known fact that you will learn for yourselves next Monday! A great story this, boys! Don't miss it!

### "THE DRAMA OF THE DERELICT!"

Another magnificent complete story in our grand detective series, chums, which brings nearer the solution of the secret of the purple sandals. Ferrers Locke, like the kettie on the hob, is getting warmer and warmer.

### "FARMING!"

Harry Wharton & Co. have given us a sparkling supplement dealing with its above subject. There is a lot to be said about the farmer's "boyce," and the energetic staff of the "Herald" has got down to "brass tacks" in a manner that is as original as it is interesting. The cockerel makes all the noise, but the hen delivers the goods. The latter part of the old saying can be applied to Harry Wharton & Co.

### "THE PALACE OF DOOM!"

That is the title of a short complete story of the good old days. When the skull and crossbones flew at many a mast-head. Look out for it in the Monday's topping issue of your favourite paper.

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