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The Magnet 2d Library

EVERY MONDAY.

School & Detective Stories.

BRINGING THE "NUT" TO HIS KNEES!

"HARD LABOUR" FOR PONSONBY IN THE COBBLER'S SHOP!

(See this week's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co.—"Standing By Their Pals!")

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BUCCANEERS OF THE MAIN!

Thrilling Old-Time Pirate Stories!

No. 5.—THE PALACE OF DOOM!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Don Alvar Sancorbo.

"BEN LANYARD, what is this Silver Palace of Doom about which the Indians talk so much? As you have been to the Spanish-Main so often, you surely know something about it."

"It is a palace of treachery and death—a living grave, into which no white man has ever gone and found his way out alive."

The scene was the deck of the schooner Defiance, which had brought a crew of bold English buccaneers to the Spanish Main, to seek their fortunes by fighting against the Dons.

They had found their way into the Gulf of Mexico, and had landed on its shores in quest of gold. They had been attacked by a superior force of Spaniards, sent against them by the governor of the great Mexican port, San Juan d'Ulloa, whose name was Don Alvar Sancorbo.

They had beaten off the Spaniards, but in the fight one of their number, a youth named Ned Hawkins, had disappeared, and they had been unable to discover whether he was alive or dead.

Being unwilling to leave Ned to his fate while there was a possibility that he was a prisoner in the hands of the Dons, Captain Hunt, the skipper of the Defiance, had run the schooner into a hidden cove on the shore of the Gulf, and organised expeditions to seek the lost youth. Up to now, however, all these had failed.

Among those most eager in the quest was Hal Trevanion, a bold Devon youth, who had been Ned's great comrade, and who was ready to risk anything to help him, if he was still alive.

It was evening time, and Hal, having returned from an unsuccessful hunt for Ned ashore, was lying on the deck, talking to Ben Lanyard, the white-haired, ruddy-faced boatswain.

It was Hal who had asked the question which had evoked Ben's remarkable answer.

"I've never set eyes on the palace myself," Ben continued; "but I've heard many a yarn about it from the Indians. It's a vast building in the heart of the forest, many miles inland, and it's built o' some stuff that shines like silver in the moonlight. It used to be the palace of Montezuma, the Aztec Emperor o' Mexico, but now it's the home o' a demon!"

"A demon?"

"That's what the Spaniards and the Indians make out," nodded Ben. "They say that the Palace o' Doom is inhabited by a hideous demon, who robs and kills all the white men who go through the forest, and who is bullet-proof. I've heard tell that bullets have hit him an' rebounded as if they had hit against a rock!"

"That sounds impossible!"

"Maybe; but it's sober truth!"

"I wish I could get a shot at this demon of the Silver Palace!"

Old Ben looked at the youth, his eyes gleaming with admiration under his shaggy brows.

"Perhaps you will have your chance yet, young Hal Trevanion! Did you come to the Spanish Main to seek your fortune?"

Hal's face darkened as he replied:

"Not altogether. I came to hunt down the Don who murdered my father, who was the skipper of a buccaneer ship like the Defiance. Many months passed without any tidings concerning him, and then one of his crew came back to Devon. The man was a living spectre, and he told how the ship had been wrecked in the Gulf of Mexico, and my father and some of the crew were washed ashore. Wandering in the wilds, the castaways fell in with a Spaniard, who pretended to take pity on them, but who treacherously betrayed them to their deaths. The man who came home was the only one to escape. I vowed that when I grew old enough I would come to the Main to seek my father's murderer."

"Right, lad! What is the Don's name?"

"I don't know. Dick Polgelly, the last of the crew, had never heard it; but he described the Don to me so often, that I'm sure I should know the villain if I met him. By the way, Ben, what sort of man is the governor of San Juan d'Ulloa?"

"A cold-blooded, pitiless Spaniard, who prides himself on never having shown mercy to any Englishman who has fallen into his hands. Heaven pity Ned Hawkins if he's at Don Alvar's mercy! What's the matter? Have you gone mad?"

For Hal had leaped to his feet, and, seizing a gun, had sprung up on the schooner's bulwarks and levelled the weapon at the dense, tropical undergrowth which grew on the shore of the cove.

Out of the undergrowth was staring the dark, fierce face of a Spanish soldier.

"Fire at your peril, you buccaneer dogs!" he cried. "I have tracked you to your lurking-place to deliver a message to you. Don Alvar Sancorbo has captured your comrade, Ned Hawkins, and he bade me tell you that he will have the youth shot unless Hal Trevanion comes to San Juan d'Ulloa to save the life of his comrade by risking his own!"

Why did the Spanish governor want Hal to go to San Juan d'Ulloa?

That was what all the buccaneers wondered, but none of them could tell, although it was easy for them to guess that Don Alvar's object could be no other than a villainous and treacherous one.

The Spanish soldier, who called himself Martin Lopez, professed entire ignorance on this important point.

He declared that he had been simply ordered to find out the buccaneers, and to say that if Hal Trevanion wished to save the life of Ned Hawkins, he must go at once to San Juan d'Ulloa. He had to go alone, leaving all his companions behind him, and had to accept Lopez as a guide.

The soldier brought a safe conduct, in which the governor promised that no harm should befall Hal in San Juan d'Ulloa. The youth knew that this document might be worthless, but he did not hesitate as to what he should do.

"I must go!" he said.

"It will mean risking your life in the Don's clutches, lad," said old Ben. "Let me go instead!"

Hal shook his head. It was himself alone who could go on the perilous, mysterious expedition. Soon he had bidden his comrades farewell, and had plunged into the forest, and was alone with his Spanish guide.

It was a long journey to San Juan d'Ulloa, and Martin Lopez was a sullen, silent guide, who would tell nothing. They had to brave many dangers from the Indians and wild beasts, and often it seemed as if they could never get through alive.

But at last they reached their goal, and Hal Trevanion met his father's murderer face to face.

That murderer was Don Alvar Sancorbo himself!

The youth realised the truth at once when he was led into the governor's private room in the citadel of San Juan d'Ulloa. Dick Polgelly had described the treacherous Don too frequently for Hal to make any mistake when he saw the dark, lean, cadaverous features of Don Alvar Sancorbo, and met the stare of his gloomy, cruel eyes.

"So you are Hal Trevanion, senor?" the governor said, when Martin Lopez had left the youth and himself together. "I am glad to meet you! I have waited a long time to see your father's son!"

Hal found it hard work to repress his impulse to throw himself on the governor; but he knew that this would do Ned Hawkins no good. Even if he got the best of Don Alvar, how could he have found his comrade and helped him to escape?

So he waited; and the sneering smile of the governor of San Juan d'Ulloa showed that he meant mischief.

"Follow me, senor," he exclaimed, "and I will show you your comrade, and tell you what task you must accomplish if you wish to save his life!"

He clapped his hands, whereupon a file of soldiers, with loaded guns, appeared at the door.

Surrounded by these, and with Don Alvar Sancorbo at his side, Hal Trevanion was led through many gloomy passages and down many dark stairs in the citadel, until at length an iron door was flung open, and the light of a lantern was cast into a dark, foul dungeon, in which, on a rotting heap of straw, was lying Ned Hawkins, gaunt and famished, and weighed down by the chains which were riveted on his limbs.

"Ned!"

"Hal!"

Hal Trevanion would have rushed to his friend's side, but the soldiers thrust their guns before him and forced him back.

A harsh, mocking laugh broke from the governor.

"There lies your comrade," he said, "and he will never leave this dungeon alive, except to be shot, unless you go to the forest and kill the demon who lives in the Silver Palace of Doom. If you do this, and return to prove you have done it, the prisoner shall go free. I swear it!"

At first Hal thought that Don Alvar was mad, but soon he realised that he was in terrible earnest. Hal would have to undergo the fearful ordeal, or his comrade was doomed!

The youth did not hesitate. He was given a day to make his preparations, and spent the time in the armoury of the citadel, where, unobserved, he prepared a bullet for

(*Continued on page* 21.)

A rumour runs the round at Greyfriars that the Board of Governors intend to raise the school fees. Such a proceeding is viewed with alarm by the poorer juniors at the school, for if such a thing came to pass many of them would be compelled to leave Greyfriars. From a rumour, the "increase" becomes a fact. Harry Wharton & Co. are up in arms against the decision of the Governors, and in this fine story we see them——

Standing By Their Pals!

A Magnificent Extra Long Complete Story of the Chums of Greyfriars.

Told by Popular

FRANK RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's News!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Oh crumbs! It's back again!"

William George Bunter of the Remove Form at Greyfriars blinked indignantly at the junior who had interrupted him.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Close the door, old fat tulip," said Bob Cherry tersely.

Billy Bunter snorted. There was quite a crowd of fellows in the Remove Common-room, prep having been finished some time ago. Several fellows were playing chess, notably Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, commonly known as Inky, and Harry Wharton, captain of the Form. Bob was reading the local sports news, and by his side was Frank Nugent.

For once Billy Bunter was not the last to struggle over prep. The reason for that was probably because Bunter had no need to do any prep. He and his minor Sammy had been home, and it was as he poked his head into the Common-room by way of announcing his return that Bob Cherry rather mournfully commented that "it" was back again.

"I say, you fellows," said the fat junior anxiously. "I hope some of you had the sense to pocket a few slices of bread-and-butter for me?"

"Yes; and half a dozen cakes and tarts—I don't think!" said Skinner sarcastically.

"I shouldn't expect you to do the decent thing, Skinney," said Bunter loftily. "But my pal Bob——"

"He's talking about you, Russell!" said Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"His name's Dick——" began Bunter.

"Thought you said something about your pal——" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes. He, he, he! You must have your little joke, Bob, old chap," chuckled Bunter, with a suspicious eye on the cheerful Bob. "Of course, a fellow can't help making mistakes now and again. I——"

"You made one when you called me your pal," said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "You see, Bunty, I haven't got any cash, and I didn't purloin any bread-and-butter from the tea-table, so I can't be your pal, can I?"

"Beast! I say, Wharton, old fellow, did——"

"Another pal!" chuckled Dick Russell.

Billy Bunter snorted again at that, and turned quite a glare upon the fighting man of the Remove.

"I shouldn't expect you to lend me anything, Russell, in any case," he said. "Besides, you'll be gone from Greyfriars before my postal-order comes——"

"So shall we all!" chuckled Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—look here, you fellows, are you going to tell me that not one of you gave me a thought during the whole time I've been away?"

"Yes. I did," said Vernon-Smith lightly.

"Thought you would, Smithy, old chap," beamed William George. "These other rotters can go and eat coke! Yah! Trust my old pal Smithy to think of me! Where did you put it, Smithy, old man?"

"It?" asked Vernon-Smith, in a tone of great surprise. "What — the thought?"

"N-n-no! The grub, you know!"

"The grub? Bless you, my fat tulip, the thought I gave you was that somebody would run over you, and stop your ever returning!" said Smithy cheerfully. "My luck's evidently out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" howled Bunter. "Yah! I'm jolly well going to see what I can find!"

"You'll find a thick ear if you enter my study!" said Bob Cherry darkly.

"And the bootfulness of the esteemed Bunty will be terrific, if he pokefully thrusts his nose into our study," said Hurree Singh, in his weird and wonderful English.

"Look here, I'm jolly well starving!" howled Bunter indignantly. "You're a mean lot of beasts not to have given a thought to the returning warrior—I mean, traveller!"

"Go and eat coke!" suggested Skinner humorously.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, be sporty, you know," said Bunter, suddenly pathetic. "You—you may not have me much longer——"

It was at that moment that Dicky Nugent, the cheery leader of the Second Form, burst into the Common-room.

"Franky—I say, is my brother here?" he bellowed.

"Buzz off, you cheeky fag!" roared Bolsover.

"What's up, Dicky?" asked Frank Nugent quietly.

"Look here, Franky, is—is it true——" almost choked Dicky.

"What, kid?"

"What Sammy Bunter is saying. Of course, we all know he copies his major and trickles out fibs by the thousand, but——"

"Why, you cheeky fag——" howled Bunter major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—but Sammy is saying that—that the governors have raised the school fees fifty per cent or something, and—and that quite a lot of chaps will have to leave!"

"My hat!"

William George Bunter suddenly became the most important person in the Common-room. If he himself had blurted out that the school fees were being raised fifty per cent, little or no notice would have been taken. But the news came from Dicky Nugent, and although it had come from Samuel "Tuckless" Bunter in the first place, the fact that Dicky had brought it to the Remove was enough to give it ear, so to speak.

"What yarn is it your young brother has brought back, Bunty?" asked Dick Russell curiously.

"It isn't a yarn—it's a fact!" said Billy excitedly. "I was going to tell you fellows, only—only——"

"Only you were thinking too much of the inner man at the moment?" suggested Frank Nugent.

"Yes—I mean, nunno! My pater told me this morning that he's had a letter from the governors that the fees were being raised, and that Sammy and I would have to leave—I mean, that all

the poverty-stricken rotters would have to leave Greyfriars——"

"Is it a fact, Bunty, or is it another of your rotten inventions?" demanded Bob Cherry grimly.

"Oh, really, Cherry, you can take my word, I hope?"

"I'll take you by the scruff of the neck and bung you down the giddy stairs if it's all lies!" said Bob darkly.

"Don't I keep telling you that I've got to leave!" howled Billy Bunter.

"What about the Bunter millions?" said Skinner sarcastically.

"I flatly refused to allow my pater to pay more," said Bunter, who could always rely upon his fertile mind to get him out of a difficulty. "I said to the pater, 'Look here, old chap, don't you have it sprung on you like this.' And he said, 'Billy, my son, you're a credit to the Bunter family. Here's a cheque for fifty quid——'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And you were cadging only a couple of minutes ago—with fifty quid in your pocket!" howled Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I left the—the cheque behind, you see," mumbled Billy Bunter. "It's a fact. Sammy and I will be going to another school—Eton or Harrow, I expect. Of course, we don't mind, as it doesn't affect us very much. But it's rough on chaps like Penfold, and factory rotters like Linley, and fishing chaps like Redwing——"

"Thanks!" said Redwing, and he laughed, but there was an uneasy ring in his laughter.

"Then it's true?" shouted Dicky Nugent shrilly.

"Yes; of course it is!"

"Hurrah! Then we'll see the last of that fat clam Sammy!" hooted Dicky, and the irresponsible fag darted out of the Common-room and disappeared in the direction of the Second Form quarters.

"Why, the—the little beast!" gasped Bunter. "I say, Frank Nugent, I must say you've brought up your brother rottenly. It's downright bad manners to kick a fellow when he's down. Fancy yelling like a mad Indian because a fellow will have to leave Greyfriars!"

"But you needn't, unless you wanted to—you said so!" said Nugent, with a shrug of his shoulders.

And Frank Nugent thrust his hands moodily into his pockets and walked out of the Common-room. In a few minutes Mark Linley, the scholarship junior from Lancashire, had followed him, and after him went Dick Russell, Tom Redwing, and Dick Penfold. Other fellows listened a few minutes whilst Bunter repeated, so far as his memory would allow him, the wording of the circular his pater had received that morning.

Then the room began to empty more rapidly. Stott went out with Snoop, the former looking very downhearted. Skinner went out by himself, chuckling. It was like the cad of the Remove to chuckle when misfortune was somebody else's lot. Peter Hazeldene thrust his hands savagely into his pockets and fairly stamped out of the room.

Of those that remained Herbert Vernon-Smith alone looked unconcerned. As the son of a millionaire Smithy had nothing to worry about.

But others looked more than a little concerned. Harry Wharton was quite pale, although he knew well enough that there was sufficient money at home to keep him at Greyfriars.

It was not of himself that he was thinking. His mind was burning with another thought.

His guardian, Colonel Wharton, was one of the governors, and in that capacity he must have sanctioned the increase in the school fees. He was wondering whether the colonel realised just how much heart-burning that increase would mean.

"I say, Harry——"

It was Bunter's feeble voice which broke into the Remove captain's thoughts.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Wharton irritably, and he went out and slammed the door.

"I say, Smithy, old man——" began Bunter again.

"When you've finished the coke, start on the coal!" said Smithy, with a sniff, and he went out.

"Beasts!" muttered the Owl of the Remove, looking round for somebody else to "tap" for a meal before bedtime.

But there was no other junior left in the Common-room now. Everybody had gone.

For the first time William George Bunter realised that his information had caused no little alarm in the ranks of the Remove. A fifty per cent increase in the fees would be a big amount for some of the juniors' parents to pay out—and some of them simply could not do it. That would mean that the fellows would be leaving, and amongst them would be William George Bunter.

Bunter had an idea that it would not be to Eton or Harrow that he would be sent. And Bunter shivered.

It was a peculiar fact that Bunter, who always liked to bring news, good or bad, had failed to recognise bad news where it concerned himself. But the attitude of the other fellows drove it home.

William George had an idea that the path before him was to be anything but rosy, and he was mumbling dismally to himself as he made his way to Study No. 7, which he shared with Peter Todd, Alonzo Todd, and Tom Dutton, the deaf junior.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Many Letters!

"ANYTHING for me?"

The arrival of the letters at Greyfriars was nearly always the cause for great excitement and, perhaps, a little anxiety. On the morning following the return of Billy Bunter, there was a great deal more anxiety around the letter-rack than there was excitement.

"One for Cherry, two for Mauly, one for Penfold, one for Linley, and Russell—seems to be one for everybody!" sang out Vernon-Smith, who was nearest.

"I say, Smithy, I'm expecting a postal-order!" said Billy Bunter quickly. "Don't let any beast pinch my letter—— Ow! Yow!"

"What's the matter, Bunty?" asked Bulstrode innocently.

"Beast! You trod on my toe—yow!"

"Shouldn't have such big feet, my son! Sling my letter over, Smithy!"

And Bulstrode, having secured his letter, went off chuckling, leaving Bunter dancing on one foot and still yelling.

"You needn't worry, Bunter—there's nothing for you!" said Smithy, as he walked off with a letter for Tom Redwing, who shared Study No. 4 with him.

Smithy was looking a little concerned as he made his way to the study. He had an idea that that letter was going to bring confirmation to Tom Redwing of all that junior's most unwelcome thoughts.

Redwing was sitting at the window, staring out into the sunlit quadrangle.

"Letter for you, Tom!" said Smithy briefly.

"Thanks!" said Tom Redwing quickly, and he took the letter and ripped open the envelope.

A moment later it fluttered from his fingers to the table, and Vernon-Smith looked up to see his chum's lips come together in one straight line.

"As I thought," said Redwing bitterly. "I've got to go!"

"There are others," said Smithy gently.

"Oh, hang it all, why couldn't they let us alone?" burst out Redwing passionately. "They must have been making money—I suppose that that's what they wanted to do—and a school like this is not run by people who want dividends on their capital! Trusts, or something——"

Vernon-Smith nodded as his chum hesitated in some confusion. The hard-headed Bounder was a little more "up" in matters affecting finance than was the fisherman's son.

"Trusts to pay for scholarships, and all that sort of thing," he said. "The rest of the expenses is made up by the school fees and the extras."

"What are the extra expenses, then?" demanded Redwing hotly. "It's a blessed ramp—that's what it is!"

And he flung himself deep down into one of the armchairs, and thrust his hands morosely into his pockets.

In other studies there were somewhat similar scenes. Dick Penfold and Mark Linley were chatting together when Dick Russell came into Study No. 9, which Penfold shared with Trevor and Treluce.

"You—you chaps got to go?" asked Russell listlessly.

"Don't know yet," said Linley quietly. "Games are extra for scholarship boys. They used to be included——"

"Blessed if I want to be at a school where I can't join in the sports!" grunted Penfold.

"My pater said he simply can't afford to pay the increase," said Russell, with a shrug of his shoulders. "I've got to go!"

"I hear that Stott and Snoop will be going," said Linley thoughtfully. "The Todds have been warned that it may not be possible to keep them at Greyfriars. Hazeldene is in a savage mood because he's got to go. Potter and Greene of the Fifth are moaning about it, and even Tom North has said that he'll be leaving. Old Wingate's mad at that."

Wingate was skipper of the school, and Tom North had always been a most popular prefect. That he should be going would be a blow to the Sixth, for North was an important member of both the cricket and footer elevens.

"Tom Redwing will be the same as you fellows?" said Dick Russell.

"Yes."

The door burst open suddenly, and Trevor came in, panting.

"Wharton's in for it!" he gasped. "The chaps are going to rag him!"

"What on earth for?" demanded Mark Linley.

"His guardian's a governor, and lots of the fellows are mad about having to leave at the end of the term!" panted Trevor. "Oh, my hat! I bunked, in case they start a massacre!"

"Don't be an ass!" snapped Penfold.

"What's the good of their ragging Harry Wharton? He's got nothing to do with it, has he?"

"Don't know—and they don't care!" said Trevor, slipping into a chair and fanning himself. "Seems to me that anybody who's got ninepence will be

reckoned one of the favoured rich, and get hanged, drawn, and quartered!"

Mark Linley left the study without a word, and made his way to Study No. 1 in the Remove passage.

There were many fellows in the end study at the moment, besides Wharton and Nugent. Coker of the Fifth was there, and, as usual, Coker of the Fifth was laying down the law.

"I call it a downright ramp!" he roared. "Potter and Greene will have to go, and Greyfriars can't afford to lose Fifth-Formers like them! It's a rotten ramp, and your guardian should be jolly well ashamed of himself!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Three groans for Colonel Wharton!"

Harry Wharton's face was pale, but he was holding his head high. The actions of his guardian had nothing to do with him, and he was not responsible for them.

"I'm as much against the increase as any of you," he said quietly.

"But you won't have to go—you've no need to kick up a row!" roared Coker.

"Have you?" asked Nugent quietly.

"Ahem!"

Coker's resources were great. His doting Aunt Judy saw to that. If Horace Coker's education cost another thousand a year, Aunt Judy would have paid up so that dear Horace would be fitted to fight his way in the world. In the circumstances, Horace had little to shout about.

"I'm looking after Potter and Greene, and—and I'm jolly well going to kick up a row!" said Coker. "Trust me to look after the giddy weaklings! Trust me——"

"Trust you to make a silly ass of yourself!" growled Bob Cherry, coming along at that moment. "Buzz off, you Fifth Form ass! Go and make a row in your own quarters!"

"You—you cheeky fag——"

"Oh, scat!" said Bob Cherry. "I say, Wharton, I jolly well think we should have a meeting in the Common-room!"

"Just as I was going to suggest!" said Harry Wharton, and added, a little contemptuously: "These silly fatheads want to blame me because my guardian's a governor! I'm jolly well going to have something to say about it, I know that It's a blessed ramp——"

"Look here, Wharton," interrupted Coker, in a more conciliatory tone. "I'm pleased, of course, that you're up against this. I'll come along and take the chair at your meeting."

"Why, you—you cheeky dummy!" hooted Bob Cherry. "Go and hold a blessed meeting of your own!"

"But you fags don't know how to manage delicate matters like this," said Coker loftily.

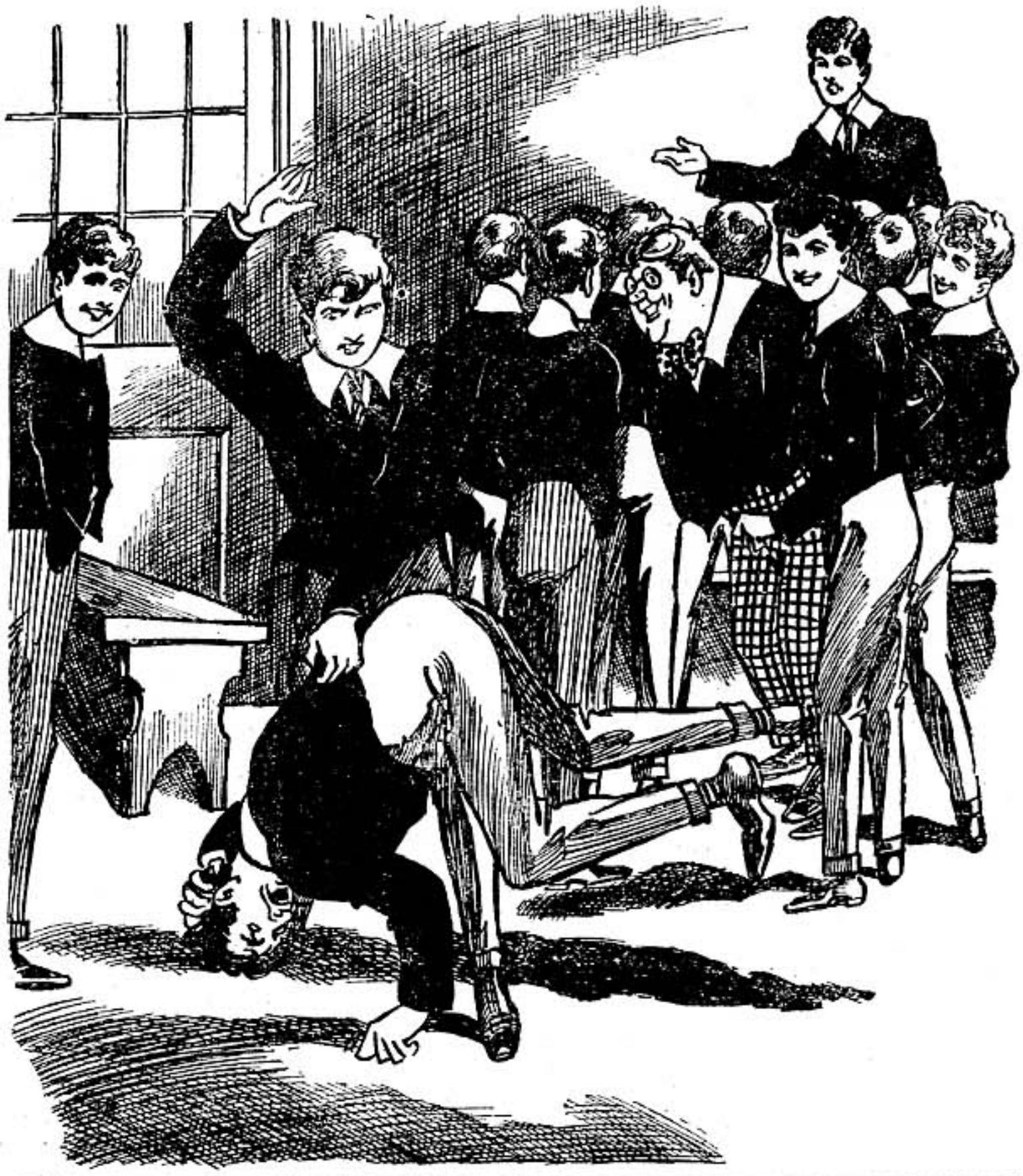
"If we didn't, we'd sooner ask Dicky Nugent than you, Coker!" said Vernon-Smith, with a chuckle. "Let the fathead talk to himself, chaps! This way to the indignation meeting!"

"What-ho!"

"I—I—I say, you chaps, I think you ought to rag Wharton—his beast of a guardian—ow! Yaroooooh!"

William George Bunter broke off his remark and gave vent to a yell. He found himself on the floor, and quite a host of fellows marched over him without apparently seeing him. The result was that Bunter was trodden on and kicked and bumped over a score of times before he sat up gasping and alone in the middle of the corridor.

"Oh, the beasts—the rotters! I believe it was Smithy—or Mauly—— Oh crumbs! The rotters!"



"Go it, Bob!" sang out Sir Jimmy Vivian. "Give him a couple for me!" Bob Cherry grasped Skinner by the slack of his coat, jerked him off the floor, and administered two resounding slaps which brought forth fresh howls from Skinner, and roars of laughter from the Removites. (*See Chapter* 3.)

It was neither Smith nor Mauleverer who had bowled him over. Coker had done that.

And William George Bunter, a little the worse for wear, and highly indignant, picked himself and rolled towards the Common-room.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

All or None!

MEETINGS held in the Remove Common-room were generally of the noisy variety. On this particular occasion, however, there was an unusual seriousness about the juniors.

Some of them, like Skinner & Co., were passing remarks intended to rouse the Remove against Harry Wharton & Co. But the sensible element was in the majority, and Skinner & Co. soon grew weary of passing remarks of that nature.

There was a buzz as Harry Wharton came in with Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull. Johnny was another junior who would not be troubled by the increase of the school fees, but he looked highly concerned about it all.

Harry Wharton climbed upon a form.

"Chaps——" he began.

"Hear, hear!"

"Shut up, this isn't a time for ragging!" said Wharton sharply. "We have got to get our heads together over this business. I——"

"Much better if we got Colonel Wharton's head against a brick wall!" suggested Skinner, with a sneer.

"You'll get my fist against your nose, you cad, if you say that again!" snapped Harry Wharton grimly. "I'm just as fed up about this as the rest of the fellows. What the dickens is going to happen to the giddy school if half the Remove goes away?"

"Hear, hear!"

There was much stress laid upon those two words. In the eyes of the Remove, at least, the Remove was the backbone of the school. Without the Remove—the Form as it was composed at present, that is—Greyfriars would quickly go to the dogs.

But obviously the governors had not thought of that. Probably, indeed, they did not look at the matter in the same light as did the Remove.

"To start at the beginning," resumed Harry Wharton. "The increase of fifty per cent in the school fees will hit about half the Remove. Of course, we know that it will also hit lots of other fellows in other Forms, but it is with the Remove we are concerned. Now, what are we going to do about it?"

"Strike!" piped Billy Bunter eagerly.

"What about a barring-out?" said Bob Cherry, who still remembered the time when he had barred himself against the authorities when the Famous Five had been sacked through no fault of their own.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"It's not a bit of good doing either of those!" he declared quickly. "The governors wouldn't be concerned about it. We should come up against the Head——"

"That doesn't matter!" said Skinner. "If we worry the old buffer he'll put it to the governors."

"Rats!" snorted Bob Cherry.

"Let the Head alone; it's nothing to do with him!" said Bulstrode gruffly.

"Well, if it comes to that," said Skinner arrogantly, "why trouble about it at all? After all, Greyfriars isn't exactly the place for factory cads——"

Skinner broke off as Bob Cherry made a lunge at him. Skinner dodged back, but the wrathful Bob was not to be denied.

"I'll give you factory cads, you worm!" roared Bob. "Grab him, somebody. I only want him for half a minute."

Skinner didn't want Bob Cherry for a fractional part of that time. He dodged frantically to get away. But he failed. Bob caught him by the scruff of the neck and whirled him round, his eyes blazing.

"If we had our way, it's such as you who'd be slung out!" roared Bob. "As your pater has plenty of tin, I suppose you'll stop. But here goes for a start!"

And the indignant Bob's fists lashed out right and left, and Skinner, wildly waving his arms in an endeavour to shield himself, collapsed to the floor with a howl.

"Ow! Yaroooooh!"

"Go it, Bob!" said Sir Jimmy Vivian cheerfully. "Give him a couple for me!"

"I'd finished, but anything to oblige!" panted Bob. "Kim up, Skinner!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob grasped Skinner by the slack of his coat, jerked him off the floor, and administered two resounding slaps which brought forth fresh howls from Skinner, and roars of laughter from the Remove.

"Yowowowowowow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Two for me, Cherry!" bellowed Bulstrode.

"Right!" said Bob cheerfully. "Here, half a mo, Skinney——"

"Yow-ow!"

And Skinner, picking himself up quickly, dashed out of the room. He had an idea that if Bob Cherry administered "two for Bulstrode," others might make similar requests. And Skinner, who disliked fighting, did not stop to see if that surmise was correct.

With the exit of the cad of the Remove, the juniors settled down to business again.

"When that maggot interrupted," said Harry Wharton, "I'd explained that it was no good butting up against the Head. It isn't his fault, and we have no cause to worry him."

"Let's rag Popper and Topham?" suggested Piet Delarey, the South African junior.

"They're probably away?" said Vernon-Smith quietly. "Besides, if we start bumping Popper we'd only get his back up!"

"And if I'm any judge of weight that'll want doing!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Personally, I think the best thing to do is to stand together," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "In short, we ought to make it a case of all or none!"

"Oh!"

"My hat!"

There was some surprise at that remark. The majority of the Remove had not thought of that.

Harry Wharton, seeing the impression he had made, proceeded to explain still further.

"What we want to do is to write to our people and tell them that if the increase stands it means that nearly all the best chaps will have to leave," he said. "In that case, I, for one, don't want to stop at Greyfriars!"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, and his eyes gleamed. "Neither do I! If Marky goes because of this, I'm going, too!"

"Begad! Count me in, dear boys!" yawned Lord Mauleverer. "If all the fellows are goin', I'm not goin' to stop here and welcome the new Remove, begad!"

"Good old Mauly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laughter came mostly from those fellows most affected. They could not help but realise that the richer fellows were doing, not only the decent thing, but sacrificing a lot. Greyfriars was a school in a million, the school in the world, in fact. To leave would mean much heart-burning.

Mark Linley's eyes were glowing. It was just like Bob Cherry to stand by him at a crisis like this. And Dick Penfold was smiling, too. Somehow it didn't seem half so bad when all the fellows were lining up.

"So the thing to do is to write to-day, everybody, to paters and maters and uncles and aunts and all that," said Harry Wharton, warming to his subject. "Tell 'em straight that we don't want to stop here, because all the decent chaps are being chucked out by the increase."

"Hear, hear!" said Monty Newland, who was about the third richest fellow in the Remove.

"Good old Wharton!"

"I must say it's decent of you chaps," said Mark Linley quietly. "At the same time, I don't think much good will come of it."

"Just so!" said Dick Penfold, with a shake of his head.

"Oh, rats! The governors won't let the whole giddy Form go, you fatheads!" said Harry Wharton warmly. "Besides, the idea may spread. Other Forms might take it up. Coker can be relied upon to stand in!"

"Good old Coker!"

"Thanks!" came in Coker's deep voice from the doorway. "What have I done?"

"Cokey, old man," said Bob Cherry enthusiastically, "for once your ugly old dial is to us like the rose in spring—nunno, that's all wrong somewhere——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But the fact is, Coker, although you're no end of an ass, we're asking you to stand by little us!"

"I'll give you a thick ear if I have any of your cheek!" said Coker darkly. "I came here to see if you've got fed-up with Wharton's silly rot——"

"Look here, you ass——"

"Peace, mes enfants," remonstrated Bob Cherry. "This is our notion, Coker."

And he proceeded to explain, and by the time he had finished Coker was rubbing his fingers through his thick, curly hair.

"That's not a bad idea for a Remove kid," he conceded thoughtfully. "In fact, it's a thumping good idea. Rely on me, kids. I'll guarantee the Fifth Form chaps write to their giddy people and put it to them properly. If they don't, I'll circularise their parents myself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker hardly knew whether that laugh was a compliment to his determination, or if the juniors thought his remarks were funny. He didn't stop to ask. He scudded off and rushed to the Fifth Form quarters. Two minutes later he was laying down the law in his usual fashion—and the Fifth thought that Coker had really got a brain-wave at last. Coker didn't explain that the Remove had presented him with the idea.

So it was settled.

That night the postman must have wondered what was the matter when he came to clear the school letter-box. There were hundreds of letters in the box.

The idea mooted in the Remove Common-room had spread. The Fifth, under Coker's influence, had been the first to fall into line. The Upper Fourth and the Third and Second Forms had seen that much good, and very little harm, could be done by writing home, and had, accordingly, written.

It remained to be seen exactly how many parents would fall in with the schoolboys' wishes.

Harry Wharton particularly anticipated opposition. As a governor of the school, Colonel Wharton might possibly object to his ward pointing out to him that the decision of the Board was unjust and unnecessary. Harry had never quarrelled with his guardian, but he thought that that record was shortly to be broken.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Revelation!

THE day following the posting of the letters was a fairly quiet one. Some of the juniors were on tenterhooks, but quite the majority viewed a possible exit from Greyfriars with some dismay. They were, as a consequence, a little less inclined to rag one another than usual.

Skinner made many remarks, and came in for many bumpings and not a few bruises. The more bruises he got the more bitter he became, and by the time the day had changed to night Skinner was surly, bitter, and revengeful.

He was in his study—No. 11 in the Remove passage—when the door opened. He looked up with a scowl.

But it was not a Remove fellow who entered. It was a fellow of about Skinner's own age, who looked just about as supercilious as Skinner looked bitter. It was Ponsonby of Highcliffe.

"Hallo, Skinney," said Ponsonby affably. "Thanks, I'll sit down."

Skinner growled something unintelligible, and Ponsonby sat down.

"Been in the wars, dear man?" asked the nut of Highcliffe, with a grin.

"Mind your own dashed business!" snarled Skinner. "What the dickens do you want, anyway?"

"Just dropped in for a chat—and a smoke," said Ponsonby easily.

He pulled out a handsome silver cigarette-case, and after a moment's hesitation offered it to Skinner. But Skinner waved his hand quickly.

"For the love of Mike don't smoke in here now," he said testily. "I've had the giddy Remove on me all day now. If a prefect or a master should come in there'll be more lickings. I'm fed-up."

Ponsonby nodded, and calmly lit a cigarette. He didn't trouble very much whether he was caught or not.

"Lots of others fed-up, too, from what I hear," he said thoughtfully.

"Lots!" said Skinner between his teeth. "The governors have raised the

Harry Wharton stood over the Cad of the Remove, with blazing eyes and fists still clenched. "Get up, you cad, and have some more!" he said thickly. But Skinner made no move. Suddenly the door opened and the Head strode into the room. "What does this mean?" he demanded sternly. "I have said before that I will not tolerate fighting in the Common-room. Get up, Skinner!" Skinner lay like a log. "Bless my soul!" gasped Dr. Locke. "The boy has been knocked out!" *(See Chapter 4.)*

giddy fees, and because all the rotten element—the factory cads and the fishing rotters and the bootmaking clique—will be leaving at the end of the term, the others are up in arms about it. Dashed silly, I call it!"

Ponsonby nodded again.

"Rotten, of course, for some chaps," he observed casually. "Rotten, too, that the guardian of the captain of the Remove should be one of those responsible for the increase in the fees."

"That's what I told them," said Skinner between his teeth. "Wharton ought to be scragged baldheaded!"

"Yaas. We'd do it, if he was at Highcliffe," said Ponsonby lightly.

"He's got too many pals here!" growled Skinner.

"His guardian suggested the stunt," said Ponsonby in the same casual tones.

Skinner started.

"How do you know that?" he demanded quickly.

Ponsonby shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, I just know," he said easily. "One gets to know these things, you know. Mobby was with Sir Hilton Popper, and the subject came up for discussion. The Pop bird told Mobby that Colonel Wharton's stunt was a good one, and that it was going to be carried through."

Skinner's eyes gleamed. Everybody at Greyfriars knew that Mr. Mobbs, the Highcliffe master, pandered to Ponsonby because he had aristocratic relations with any amount of money. It was quite likely, too, that Mr. Mobbs would be with Sir Hilton Popper, for the two had one thing in common—a passion for growing roses.

"Would you back me up if I told the chaps that?" asked Skinner eagerly.

"Certainly, dear man," said Ponsonby, tossing the cigarette end into the grate. "Anythin' to oblige."

Skinner rose to his feet.

"Come on!" he said grimly.

"Where?" asked Ponsonby languidly. "Awful fag to walk about, dear man. Can't you bring the fellows here?"

"They wouldn't come. Besides, they're all in the Common-room," said Skinner. "Come on, Pon!"

Ponsonby, with a yawn, dragged himself from his chair and walked arrogantly towards the Common-room.

There was a commotion when he entered. Bob Cherry leapt up from a chair near the fire, and gave a roar.

"Highcliffe cad!"

"Rag him!"

"The cheeky blighter! Bearding the giddy lions, by Jove!"

"Half a minute," said Skinner quickly. "Listen here, you chaps. Pon has it for certain that Colonel Wharton proposed the increase!"

"Rats!"

"He can prove it!" howled Skinner wildly.

Harry Wharton, his eyes gleaming with anger, stepped up to the cad of Highcliffe, and Ponsonby backed a pace.

"You'd better prove it, Ponsonby," said the Remove captain thickly. "If you don't, I'll give you the thrashing of your life!"

"You can ask Mobbs," said Ponsonby uneasily.

"Your Form master? What does he know about it?" demanded Bob Cherry hotly.

"He got it from the Popper fish," said Ponsonby, recovering his composure a little. "Care to come back with me, Wharton, and put the question to him yourself?"

Harry Wharton, his face paling, hesitated. His hands were clenched so tight that the knuckles showed white under his skin.

What was the good of going to Highcliffe and seeing Mr. Mobbs? Ponsonby would never dare to make the offer of taking him to Highcliffe unless he was quite sure of his ground.

Ponsonby grinned at the Remove captain's hesitation. It was the worst thing he could have done in the circumstances.

"Oh, kick the cad out!" said Bob Cherry between his teeth. "Lend a hand, Johnny!"

"What-ho!" said Johnny Bull at once.

"The handfulness is not the proper caper," said Hurree Singh. "I will bootfully assist, my esteemed chums!"

And Inky's boot came out with the intention of catching Ponsonby in the softest part of his anatomy. But there came an unexpected interruption.

Bolsover stepped quickly forward, and thrust Inky to one side. The bully of the Remove's eyes were gleaming now.

"Hold on a minute!" he said grimly. "If Ponsonby has offered to prove his words, you can't rag him for that. Wharton, as he has said, has nothing to do with the colonel's actions. Why rag Ponsonby because he proves that Colonel Wharton has acted like a rotter?"

"My hat! I'll—I'll——" said Harry Wharton thickly.

He would have thrown himself at the burly Removite, but Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent grabbed him and held him back.

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered Nugent.

"I won't shut up! The cad isn't going to call my uncle a rotter!" roared Wharton. "Lemme go, you fatheads! Bob—Franky—— Oh, my hat, I'll biff you both in a minute!"

"Excuse me, you fellows," said Ponsonby, as he jerked his gloves from his pocket. "I'll be goin', if you don't mind. S'long!"

And he hurried out of the Form-room, leaving everybody there in a state of excitement and turmoil. Skinner was grinning. A glance at Penfold's face was enough to tell him that there was one junior at least who would not hold Harry Wharton blameless for Colonel Wharton's actions. Penfold was looking bitter and resentful.

Dick Russell and Tom Redwing were looking uncomfortable, and they avoided looking at Wharton. Evidently they were in that unenviable state known as "half a mind."

"Chaps!" said Harry Wharton suddenly, and there was something of an appeal in his tones. "I say, you fellows,

if—if—if Ponsonby is right, my—my uncle has made a—made a mistake, you know."

"A pretty bad one—for us!" said Snoop bitterly.

"When you get an extra ten bob a week for pocket-money you may not think it was a mistake!" said Skinner, feeling uite safe at the moment to make a remark of that nature.

Wharton, so far as he could see, was not at that moment particularly popular.

But Skinner had made a mistake. Before anybody could stop him, Harry Wharton had leapt forward and hit out.

His right fist caught Skinner full on the point of the jaw, and even as the cad's head jerked back, Wharton's left came out with the speed of lightning and the force of a battering ram and caught Skinner on the ear.

Skinner opened his mouth to howl, but no sound came. He went to the floor with a crash which shook the room, and rolled over once. A moment later he was as a log of wood.

Harry Wharton stood over him, with blazing eyes and fists still clenched.

"Get up, you cad, and have some more!" said Wharton thickly.

"Here, chuck it, Harry!" said Bob Cherry bluntly. "That's a bit hefty, you know. You've knocked him right out!"

"I—I—I—I say. you fellows, is he—is he dead?" asked Billy Bunter nervously. "He isn't moving, you know."

"Oh, scat!" said Bob Cherry irritably. "Don't talk out of the back of your neck, you fat oyster!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

The door opened suddenly, and the juniors swung round. It was the Head!

Harry Wharton choked back the lump in his throat, and stared almost bewildered at Dr. Locke.

"What does this mean?" asked the Head grimly. "I have said before that I will not permit fighting in the Common-room. The gymnasium is provided for that purpose. Get up, Skinner!"

Skinner did not move, and Vernon-Smith stooped and got his arms under the fallen cad's shoulders and lifted him. Skinner's head sagged down until his chin touched his chest, and the Head's eyes gleamed suddenly.

"That boy has been knocked out?" he asked sharply.

"He said—he said——" stuttered Harry Wharton.

Dr. Locke thrust him on one side, and bent down and looked closely into Skinner's face. A moment later he rose to his full height, and fairly glared at the Remove captain.

"No matter what he said, Wharton, there is no reason for this brutality!" he said sternly. "I am ashamed of you!"

Harry Wharton flushed, his own eyes blazing.

"He'd no right——" he began hotly.

"Do not use that tone when you speak to me, sir!" thundered the Head. "I said that you had acted in a brutal manner, and I say it again. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, striking a lad so much weaker than yourself, with such brutal force! I shall punish you severely. Some of you other juniors administer cold water to that unfortunate boy's forehead. Follow me, Wharton!"

For a moment it looked as if Harry Wharton would disobey. But Frank Nugent gave him a gentle push in the back.

And Harry Wharton, with a white, set face, held his head high as he walked after Dr. Locke.

He did not return to the Common-room, although he was assured of plenty of sympathy had he done so. Frank Nugent found him in Study No. 1, sitting in the armchair, morose and fiercely angry.

"Get it hot?" asked Frank sympathetically.

"A half-dozen of the hottest!" said Wharton between his teeth. "And all over that cad! I'll make him sit up for it later on!"

"Leave him alone, old chap," said Nugent quietly. "He's not worth troubling about. And the Head'll come down like a ton of coals if he hears you've been biffing the cad again."

This was sound advice, and Harry Wharton knew it; and, although he was in no frame of mind to accept any advice, good or bad, he made up his mind to try and dismiss the incident from his mind.

"The rotter's only just come round," said Frank, by way of adding weight to his advice. "You've given him something to go on with, old chap. He won't be able to eat with any comfort for days to come!"

"Serve him right!" said Harry Wharton, between his teeth. "But I'm going to see my uncle, Frank."

"What on earth for? Wait until the replies come to the letters."

"I'm going to wait until to-morrow, because I'll have to. But I'm going to Wharton Lodge to-morrow afternoon, and I'm going to have it out with my uncle!"

"I'll come with you."

"Yes, and so will Bob and Johnny and Inky. We'll talk to him like Dutch uncles, and tell him plainly what we think about it. Now I'm going to have a walk in the Close to cool down. At the moment I feel as if I could fight every chap in the Remove!"

And Harry Wharton rose from his chair and walked out.

Frank Nugent made no move to follow his chum. He knew well enough that Harry Wharton had not entirely cured himself of that hot temper which had made him so unpopular when he first came to Greyfriars. In such moments as these Harry Wharton liked to walk it off, and none knew better than Frank Nugent that Harry was best left alone to do it.

Ponsonby's startling revelation had given Skinner the satisfaction he wanted. Several juniors—and later there would be others—were ready enough to blame Wharton now for having to leave Greyfriars. The price Skinner had had to pay for that satisfaction was rather greater than he had expected, or had any cause to expect.

Skinner, as a matter of fact, was feeling like nothing on earth. But there was some slight consolation to him in the knowledge that Harry Wharton would be pulled down a peg or two before very long.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

At Wharton Lodge!

WEDNESDAY being a half-holiday, saw the end of lessons at midday.

The Famous Five did not stop to have their dinner. They purchased sandwiches at the tuckshop, and stuffed them into their pockets for eating in the train. Late passes had been obtained without much difficulty from Mr. Quelch, whom Harry Wharton had informed quite bluntly that he was going to see Colonel Wharton about the increases in the school fees.

Mr. Quelch had looked hard at the junior captain, and his tone altered considerably as he promised that the passes should be ready for them at midday.

They were. And the Famous Five set out for the station to catch the train for Courtfield, where they had to change.

Harry Wharton was grimly silent. He looked worried and determined, and had not his usual high, fresh colour.

"Cheer up, Harry, old man!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully, as they entered the station. "You're not going to your execution, you know!"

"I feel like it," said Harry. "I've—I've never had a row with my uncle. And I'm not exactly looking forward to it now."

"The esteemed cadful Ponsonby might be telling the falseful lie!" said Hurree Singh consolingly.

"He was willing enough to bring his proof," said Harry, with a shrug of his shoulders. "I've been thinking the colonel must have got a bee in his bonnet. However, let's talk about something else until we get home. Cricket, for instance."

Although cricket was the rage again, there was little interest to be culled from its discussion by the Famous Five during the journey to Wharton Lodge. They certainly spoke about the great summer game, but they spoke with about as much interest as a professor of chemistry has for the breeding of sticklebacks.

Wharton Lodge hove into sight at last, and the juniors ceased even the mild muttering they had called conversation. But now that the crucial moment had come Harry was calm and collected, and absolutely fearless.

Colonel Wharton was at home, and he looked up from a newspaper as the five juniors entered the room.

"Why, Harry!" he exclaimed. "What on earth brings you here, my boy? How do you do, boys?"

"We have come to have a chat with you, uncle," said Harry grimly. "To come to the point, we don't like this stunt of yours!"

"What—ahem!—stunt, my boy?" asked the colonel mildly.

"The raising of the school fees," said Harry, striving to keep his anger in check.

The colonel frowned.

"Suppose you sit down, boys?" he suggested. "I will order tea for you."

He rang a bell, and tea was ordered for the juniors. The servants, knowing that Master Harry had a good appetite, proceeded to prepare for five hungry juniors with Harry's capacity as a base line, so to speak.

"Now, Harry, I think you might explain," said the colonel gravely. "What exactly is the trouble? I read your letter—written, I should imagine, at a time when you were either in a great hurry, or under some stress."

"Your answer hadn't arrived when we left, sir," said Harry. "However, we'll get to that later. I tell you, uncle, this extra fees business is a blow at the fellows whose paters can only just afford to send them to a school like Greyfriars. It's a blow at the scholarship chaps—and they are frightfully decent fellows. It's a bang at the poor chaps, and nothing up against the rich fellows."

"Well—ahem!" murmured the colonel uncomfortably. "The funds, you may not know, are rather low, Harry. The cricket—the sports fields—want enlarging and skilful attention. That can only be done with hard cash. The governors also want to erect a wireless experimental station——"

"Oh, hang that, sir—I mean, we'd—we'd rather have fellows like Penfold, and Dick Russell, and Tom Redwing at Greyfriars than fifty blessed wireless experimental stations."

"Hear, hear, sir!"

"The bear-hearfulness is terrific, esteemed sahib!"

Colonel Wharton polished his eyeglass with agitated fingers. He was evidently taken quite by surprise.

"The governors found that, compared with some of the other big schools, the fees are low. At the same time, it has always been somewhat of a difficulty for a boy to enter Greyfriars as a pupil. The Trusts which provide the income for the scholarships are in fairly low water. There are some things, Harry, which even the Remove doesn't get to know about."

And the colonel smiled, as if that was a great joke. Probably it was, but at the moment the Famous Five could not see it.

"Well, uncle, we either want the order rescinded, or I want you to take me away," said Harry, beginning to feel he was getting the worst of the argument. "Of course, we'd rather have the kybosh put on the giddy order, because there's no place like Greyfriars. You see, sir, we're not going to stop if the poorer chaps are booted out—for that is what it amounts to."

The colonel tapped thoughtfully upon the edge of his chair with the rim of his eyeglass before he replied.

"I should not stand in your way, Harry," he said slowly. "Although, I must say, I do not see how the departure of five boys is going to help the—er—less fortunate ones."

"Five, sir?" repeated Harry, and he laughed.

"More like five hundred!" grunted Johnny Bull.

The colonel started.

"Do I understand that there are more fellows who think the same as you do—who wish to leave if the others leave?" he asked sharply.

"Heaps of them, sir! In fact, all the decent chaps in Greyfriars have written home, asking to be moved at the end of the term unless the order is washed out," explained Harry.

He was regaining his confidence now. The colonel had not expected the richer fellows to stand in with the poorer element at Greyfriars, and taking a line through the colonel, a good idea as to the expectations of the rest of the governors could be assumed.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the colonel. "I certainly objected—quite between ourselves, of course, my boys—I objected strongly to the imposition of the extra fees, for it stands to reason that if the incomes of the Greyfriars Trusts are low, the incomes of other shareholding firms and individuals must be low, too. I——"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Harry Wharton, his eyes shining suddenly.

"My only hat!"

"Then it wasn't your stunt, sir?" said Bob eagerly.

"My—er—suggestion?" exclaimed the colonel indignantly. "Certainly not, my boy. It was Mr. Ponsonby's——"

"Ponsonby!" shrieked the Famous Five in unison.

And five juniors leapt to their feet as if their seats had suddenly become red-hot. They simply stared at Colonel Wharton.

"Ponsonby!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Not—not Ponsonby's father?"

"Eh?" ejaculated the bewildered colonel.

"I mean Ponsonby, you know—Ponsonby of Highcliffe——" stuttered Harry in some confusion. "Not his father, but Ponsonby's father—— Oh dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "What the silly ass means is—is the Mr. Ponsonby you speak of the father of Highcliffe—I mean—the Ponsonby of Highcliffe's father—— Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My esteemed and ludicrous chums meanfully imply that there is a cadful fellow called Ponsonby at Highcliffe, and they wish to know if the sahib Ponsonby whom you spokefully mentioned, is the otherful chap's father," said Hurree Singh.

"Oh, now I understand!" said the colonel, smiling. "Yes, I believe Mr. Ponsonby has a son at Highcliffe."

"Then what the dickens is he doing on our board, I'd like to know?" asked Frank Nugent indignantly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Since you've claimed possession of the board, my boy, I suppose you're entitled to some sort of explanation," said the colonel gravely. "Mr. Ponsonby was invited to join the board because of his undoubted ability to deal with finance. He is one of the most successful financiers in this country, and it was realised that only expert advice was of any use to us."

"And you've let in the pater of one of the biggest cads at Highcliffe!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Well, my only giddy grandmother!"

"That accounts for the increase, then!" said Johnny Bull. "Like son, like father! The rotters——"

"Sh'sh!" said the colonel warningly, as the tea was brought in.

Harry Wharton heaved a sigh of relief, and when the maid had gone out he turned to his uncle with glowing eyes.

"I'm jolly glad you weren't the guilty party, uncle," he said warmly. "We're up against that rotter—I mean, you see how jolly rotten it all is, sir! How can we stop at Greyfriars for the rest of the term, when we know jolly well that at the end of it all the best chaps are leaving?"

"Not all of them, surely. But—ahem!—your viewpoint is distinctly—er—disconcerting, my boy," said the colonel. "I must admit I'd forgotten that the increase would end in the separation of sound friendships at the old school. I'll write to Popper and Topham to-night, and point that out. I think they will agree to rescind the order, especially if they see that quite a large number of pupils will be leaving Greyfriars in addition to the number Mr. Ponsonby forecasted would have to leave."

"Well, that's what I call a jolly good end to a peaceful mission!" said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "Who's for a giddy old doughnut? If doughnuts and jam-tarts and buttered toast were put before——"

"Now don't you start talking about strikes, you dummy!" said Harry, with a laugh.

And the Famous Five, now their cheerful selves once again, tucked into

"Try the treacle," grinned Bob Cherry; "it will go well with the flour and the soot!" "You dare!" roared Ponsonby, struggling to regain an upright position. "You dare! I'll—yowp! Groooough! Oh gad!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five. "What a giddy picture!" chuckled Frank Nugent. "This will teach you not to tell fibs, Pon, old scout!" "Oh, gad!" moaned Pon. (*See Chapter* 6.)

tea and talked of everything else barring the increase in school fees.

Suddenly Bob Cherry brought his fist down upon the table with a concussion which shook every cup and saucer and plate.

"Ponsonby!" he said grimly.

"What about him?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Ponsonby—the Highcliffe bounder, I mean, not the Board Bounder!" said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He came to Greyfriars with a yarn that Harry's guardian had started the business, and Skinner made nasty remarks," said Bob, grinning. "I think we might call in at Highcliffe on the way back, and point out to Ponsonby that he has made a mistake."

"Good idea!" said Harry. "I'd forgotten that!"

"Must correct him!" said Johnny Bull, and he clenched his great fists under the table.

"The correctfulness must be terrific, my worthy chums!" purred Hurree Singh.

"It will be!" said Bob Cherry, under his breath.

The colonel looked suspiciously at the juniors for a moment. When Harry Wharton & Co. spoke in those mild terms about visiting a fellow they had mentioned as being one of the biggest cads at Highcliffe, it was time to be suspicious.

But they looked innocently back at the colonel, and he made no remark.

The colonel saw them off at the station, and it was not until the train had steamed out of the station upon the homeward journey that Bob Cherry crashed his fist into the cushioned seat and turned a perfectly ferocious face towards his chums.

"Ponsonby!" he hissed.

A moment later four other fists struck the seats with terrific force, raising a small cloud of dust. And four voices chanted in unison:

"Ponsonby!"

It certainly looked as if Ponsonby was in for a lively time.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Ructions!

EIGHT o'clock was striking when the Famous Five made their way out of the station at Friardale. Prep would be over at Greyfriars and Highcliffe, which was, perhaps just as well from the Co.'s point of view.

The gates at Highcliffe were open when the chums of the Remove arrived at the school, and they walked in as calmly as if they belonged to the place.

They knew their way to Ponsonby's quarters. They had been there often enough before, on errands very similar to the present one.

On the way up the stairs they passed several fellows, who stopped and looked at them as if they were curious animals. But the Famous Five passed on, smiling, and turned off the stairs at the second landing for the Fourth Form studies.

At the first door in the passage they stopped and knocked. There sounded a hurried slamming of drawers, muttered remarks, and a shuffling of feet. Then came Ponsonby's well-known drawl.

"Come in!"

The Famous Five needed no other invitation. If they had been kept waiting much longer they wouldn't have waited even for that invitation. They were on business bent, and brooked no delay.

Ponsonby was in the study, and with him were Gadsby and Monson and Vavasour. The rather smoky atmosphere might have been due to the herrings Monson was frying over the fire. On the other hand, it might not have been, for there was another odour in the study besides that of sizzling herrings.

"Good-evening," said Bob Cherry affably. "Nice night for this time of the year, isn't it, Pon?"

"Did you come purposely to point that out?" asked the nut of the Highcliffe Fourth sarcastically.

"Not exactly. Clear out, you chaps!" said Bob calmly, indicating Pon's chums.

"Right out, unless you want a hiding," added Harry Wharton grimly.

The Highcliffe nuts looked at one another in alarm. The Greyfriars fellows were five to four, which was a pretty good argument even if either of the Remove juniors could not have accounted for any two of the cads of Highcliffe.

"What's the little game?" asked Gadsby shakily.

"We're just going to correct a false impression which Pon has got hold of," said Harry Wharton grimly. "Are you going out, or are you going to be biffed?"

Gadsby slipped towards the door, and Vavasour followed suit. They did not like the look of the Greyfriars juniors. Monson made a grab for the herrings, and would have gone had not Bob Cherry gently taken the frying-pan from him.

"Not those, bluebell," said Bob softly. "We may want these, you see!"

"The wantfulness will be terrific!" said Hurree Singh, with a chuckle.

And Monson went out, without the herrings.

The moment they had gone Bob Cherry softly closed the door and locked it. Then he put a chair under the handle of the door, in case of accidents, and turned a smiling face towards the now pale Ponsonby.

"Pon, you are a wicked old fibber!" chided Bob Cherry. "You put it out at Greyfriars that the stunt of raising the fees at Greyfriars came from Colonel Wharton!"

"So—so it did!" stammered Ponsonby.

"Liar!" said Wharton hotly. "Because you were so ready to bring your precious Mobby along as proof, I took your word for it. But we've been to see the colonel, and we've found out that it is your father who started the rumpus!"

At that moment the handle of the door was gently turned, and an exclamation of wrath came from without as the door refused to budge.

"They've locked it!" came a whisper; and several other whispers followed.

"Look here, you're five to one, and I can't fight the lot of you," said Ponsonby, with a sneer.

"This isn't a fight, it's a ragging!" explained Bob Cherry patiently. "We merely wish to show you, Pon, that fibbers are bound to find trouble. Ask Billy Bunter—he'll tell you that the way of the fibber is hard, and even you can't beat Billy Bunter at that game!"

"Rather not!" said Johnny Bull, with a grin.

"So our advice to you, Pon, is to take it quietly," said Harry Wharton grimly. "You're going to get it, and if you resist, you're likely to get hurt. It's only a mild sort of ragging, whereas you might have caused a great deal of trouble at Greyfriars by your beastly lies!"

"Look here, I'll withdraw——" began Ponsonby eagerly.

"I dare say you will—so shall we, when we're done," said Frank Nugent, with a grin. "Are those herrings greasy, Bob?"

"Very," said Bob solemnly. "Would you like them cold or hot, Pon?"

"Look here, you beasts——"

"That's no answer, so we'll decide for you," said Bob. "You'll have them just as they are."

"Collar him," grunted Johnny Bull. "Shut up talking and set about the job!"

Four juniors made a grab for the luckless Ponsonby, and bowled him over. He did not fight. But he yelled, and his yelling almost drowned the rattling of the doorhandle.

"Open this door!" came a snappish voice from the passage.

"Mobby!" said Frank Nugent, and he grinned. "How nice it must be to have a master always at your beck and call, Pon. Where are those herrings, Bob?"

"My hat! I'll—I'll—— Rescue, Highcliffe!" roared Ponsonby. "Break the blessed door down and—— Gug-gug-gug! Oooooh! Yow! M-m-m-my—yowow!"

Bob Cherry gently dropped a large-sized herring into Pon's gaping mouth, and that served very well as a gag, which was just as Bob intended. With the remaining herrings in the frying-pan Bob proceeded to decorate Ponsonby's face, and he finished that part of the job by emptying the fat into his hair.

"You won't have to use any hair oil for weeks, old man," said Bob cheerfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the other Greyfriars juniors.

"But it may not smell quite so nice as your violet paraffin," went on Bob. "Perhaps we can make it a little sweeter by the addition of this extra-fine strawberry jam. We'll try!"

He tried, but though the jam stuck where it was ladled, it is to be doubted if that succeeded in "sweetening" the smell of the fat. Ponsonby's jaws worked frantically as he strove to yell, but the herring-gag acted extraordinarily well.

"You just go on eating your supper, old chap," advised Bob Cherry. "Don't worry about us. We wouldn't deprive you of your supper for anything. Have a little soot on your poor face, dear man? The waggling of the kipper's tail signals 'Yes!' I'll oblige!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The waggling of the fish's tail was due entirely to Ponsonby's frantic efforts to yell. By this time the din at the door was almost as great as that inside the study. Mr. Mobbs was getting cross, judging by the manner in which he hammered the door with his fists.

"Open this door, you young scoundrels!" he roared.

"Later on!" said Frank Nugent calmly. "We're busy just now!"

Nugent and Hurree Singh alone could not have held Ponsonby then. He wriggled like an eel, with the result that jam and soot and herrings rather spoiled the look of Ponsonby's expensive carpet. But the addition of Johnny Bull, who caught the Highcliffe junior by the legs, settled the matter. Harry Wharton rose to his feet, grinning, and looked round the study, with Bob Cherry, for something else to bestow upon Ponsonby.

They found the flour and treacle, and then nutmeg and a grater. These were cheerfully administered. By the time the Co. desisted Ponsonby looked like nothing on earth. By that time, too, Ponsonby had managed to clear his mouth of his fishy gag, and he began to

Whiz! There was a sudden hiss in the air, and an over-ripe tomato—a very much over-ripe tomato—came through the air from behind the Famous Five, and struck Sir Hilton Popper's aristocratic face. "My hat!" muttered Frank Nugent. "There'll be ructions for that. Wonder what silly ass did it?" "Begad! I'll have him expelled. I'll have him flogged! I'll have him sent to prison!" spluttered the baronet. *(See Chapter 7.)*

yell lustily for the help that could not reach him.

"Yow! Help! Rescue, you rotten funks! The dashed blackguards—— Gug—gug—gug!"

He ended in a choking gurgle as Bob Cherry stuffed a handkerchief into his mouth.

"Naughty, naughty!" chided Bob. "Little boys shouldn't speak of their betters like that! It's not done in the best circles, you know. Now, you chaps, seems to me it's time to go!"

Johnny Bull grunted.

"Going to have a bit of a scrap, I expect!" he said gruffly, as he pushed back his cuffs.

"Mmmmmmmmmmm!" from Ponsonby.

"Pon, being a bit of a night-owl, must have some way in," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Try the window, Bob? Is there a big drain-pipe, or giddy old ivy, or something?"

Bob chuckled, and made his way to the window. He quietly and gently raised the sash, and looked out into the darkness of the night. They were only two stories up, but that was a considerable distance to climb down, especially in the inky blackness.

"There's ivy!" he announced, a moment later. "We'll risk it, chaps!"

"What-ho!" said the others.

"Mmmmmmmmmmm!" came from Ponsonby again, and he made further and more frantic efforts to rid himself of his gag and warn his chums and Mr. Mobbs that the raggers were departing by way of the window.

But Bob had done his work well. The gag remained firmly fixed, and Ponsonby's efforts at speech ended in about as much noise as the average clock makes when ticking.

One by one the Removites climbed out of the window and clambered cautiously and steadily down the ivy to the ground. Once there, they scudded across the quadrangle and disappeared through the gateway.

"I'm afraid Pon's in a bit of a mess!" said Bob, with a panting chuckle, as they ran down the road towards Greyfriars.

"Not nearly so much of a mess as he tried to land me in!" grunted Harry Wharton.

"Nor such a messfulness as we shall be in when the ludicrous Mobby informally tells the Head we've been to Highcliffe!" commented Hurree Singh.

"Oh, my hat, I'd forgotten that!" said Frank Nugent, almost halting in his dismay. But he was going on again the next second, chuckling: "It'll be worth it! The cad won't come spinning lying yarns at Greyfriars again in a hurry! The rotter!"

Gosling was at the gates when they ran up to them. He held up his hand, and the juniors pulled up.

"We've got passes, Gossy!" said Bob Cherry. "Sorry to deprive you of the pleasure of reporting us!"

"Which I don't want to do, Master Cherry," said Gosling, with unusual geniality. "Which Mr. Quelch wants to see Master Wharton imedjit he comes in. Them was his horders!"

"Oh, my hat! What's up now?" muttered Harry Wharton, in dismay. "Surely Mobby hasn't telephoned already? They'll have hardly known we've gone yet!"

"Better go and see," advised Bob Cherry.

Harry nodded, and as the other juniors went up to study No. 1, he turned off and made his way to Mr. Quelch's study.

The Remove master was busy at his typewriter, and at such times he was not, as a rule, glad to see anybody. But he smiled quite genially as he saw Harry Wharton.

"Ah, Wharton!" he said cordially. "I have heard, I am sorry to say, that Ponsonby of Highcliffe has been making trouble here by saying that your uncle, Colonel Wharton, insisted upon the fees being raised to clear out the—ahem!—scholarship boys and the poorer lads. I just wanted to say that, whether the idea of raising the fees was Colonel Wharton's or not, I do not believe that he propounded as a motive the clearance from Greyfriars of the boys mentioned. That is all, my boy!"

"Oh!" said Harry Wharton, in surprise and confusion. "Th-th-thanks very much, sir! It's good of you——"

"Not at all, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch already poring over his typewriter again.

Harry Wharton hesitated.

"If you please, sir——"

"Well, Wharton?" asked Mr. Quelch, a trifle testily.

"We—ahem!—I; we found out, sir, that it was Mr. Ponsonby who suggested the new fees, sir."

"Indeed?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I was not aware that Mr. Ponsonby was a governor."

Harry Wharton explained how the board of governors had called in Mr. Ponsonby, with a view to seeking his aid in matters financial connected with Greyfriars.

"We called at Highcliffe, sir, and corrected Ponsonby's impressions," wound up Harry, who thought there was nothing like preparing a master for a shock. "He knows now, sir, who did make the suggestion. He's—ahem!—not likely to come here again with the same yarn, sir."

Mr. Quelch pushed back his chair, a grim frown gathering upon his brow.

"Am I to understand that you've been to Highcliffe, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir."

"And, I presume, your correction of Ponsonby's impressions was——"

The door opened immediately following upon a sharp knock, and Dr. Locke came in, frowning portentously.

"Mr. Quelch! It appears that five of your boys—— Ah, Wharton! Have you just come from Highcliffe?" thundered the Head, noticing the Remove captain for the first time, and quickly turning his attention from Mr. Quelch to him.

"Yes, sir. I was just informing Mr Quelch, sir!" said Harry nervously.

"Indeed! And did you tell him that you gravely assaulted one of the boys there, Ponsonby by name, and then

risked your lives by climbing down the ivy?" asked the Head coldly.

"Ahem! We—I was coming to that sir," said Wharton.

"Ahem! May I speak to you a moment, sir?" murmured Mr. Quelch.

The Head signed to Wharton to leave the study, and Harry went out, glad enough to get even a moment's respite from the Head's basilisk glare.

Wharton did not wait in the passage. He rushed to Study No. 1. Mr. Quelch would know where to find him when he was wanted.

"The Head's got the news, chaps!" said the junior captain breathlessly, as he rushed into the study. "He's with the Quelch bird. I was just nicely and gently telling Quelchy what we'd done to Ponsonby when in blew the beak! I might have prepared Quelchy for the trouble to come, and sort of soothed his anger. Now the fat's in the fire with a vengeance!"

"Better stuff our bags, I suppose!" said Bob Cherry, with a dismal grin.

"S'pose, so!" agreed the others.

There came the tramp of footsteps in the passage without, and the door opened. Mr. Quelch stood in the doorway, his thin lips set in one straight line.

"If you boys pay another similar visit to Ponsonby of Highcliffe, I can promise you a flogging all round!" he said, and, without another word, he went out, closing the door behind him.

For a moment the Famous Five looked at one another and gasped. They could hardly believe their own ears.

"My only Sunday topper!" panted Bob Cherry. "I believe we've been let off!"

"Good old Quelchy!" said Harry Wharton, with a breathless chuckle.

"Bet you he pitched the yarn to the Head that Ponsonby had been here to make trouble!"

"Why should he?" asked Frank Nugent, with an air of mystification.

"He's just told me that he didn't believe the lies Pon's been telling," explained Wharton. "Pon's been here today, and said that the colonel made the suggestion to get rid of the scholarship chaps! My hat, what a let off!"

"The let-off is terrific!" purred Hurree Singh, in huge delight.

It was a let-off. There was no mistake about that. But that there would be double punishment for them the next time they ragged Ponsonby & Co. at Highcliffe was something else about which there could be no mistake!

It behoved the Famous Five to go warily for a bit.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
The Governors' Visit!

"BOY!"

It was during the dinner recess on Friday that the Famous Five were strolling in the quadrangle for a breather before going into dinner. They were discussing the all-absorbing topic of what they were going to do if they left Greyfriars.

"Boy!"

They took no notice at first. There was more than one boy in the quadrangle. They knew that bark, too. It belonged to Sir Hilton Popper, one of the governors of Greyfriars, and Sir Hilton was not liked at Greyfriars.

"Boy!" rapped the baronet for the third time.

The Famous Five turned at that, and found Sir Hilton staring at Harry Wharton much as a tiger would stare at Billy Bunter if that worthy grabbed its dinner from under its very eyes.

"Were you addressing me, sir?" asked Harry politely, raising his cap.

"Of course!" snapped Sir Hilton. "Is your—is Colonel Wharton here yet?"

"Yet?" repeated Harry in surprise. "I wasn't aware that he was coming, Sir Hilton!"

"Well, he is!" growled the irascible baronet. "He told me so in his letter, begad! So is Sir Timothy Topham! Has he come yet?"

"I haven't seen him, sir!" said Harry Wharton, beginning to wonder why all the governors were suddenly coming to Greyfriars.

Whiz!

There was a sudden hiss in the air, and an over-ripe tomato—a very much over-ripe tomato—came through the air from behind the Famous Five and struck the baronet full in the face.

There was a gasp from Harry Wharton & Co., and they swung quickly round. There was not a soul to be seen. Whoever had perpetrated the deed was gone now. Bob raised his handkerchief hurriedly to his nose to hide a grin as the pips from the unsavoury tomato began to trickle down the baronet's purple face.

"My hat! There'll be ructions for that!" muttered Frank Nugent. "I wonder what silly ass did it?"

"Begad! I'll have him flogged! I'll have him expelled! I'll have him sent to prison!" roared Sir Hilton, suddenly finding his voice and raving like a mad Indian on the warpath. "Wharton, you young scoundrel——"

"I didn't throw it, sir!" said Wharton angrily.

"Well, one of you did! Who was it?" fumed Sir Hilton, as he frantically wiped his face with his handkerchief. "Who was it, I say? Begad, I'll have you all flogged and expelled, you ruffians! Ow! Begad!"

"Harry!"

Wharton swung round sharply. He knew that voice well enough. It was Colonel Wharton who had arrived, immaculate as ever, and behind him stalked Sir Timothy Topham. Sir Timothy, unlike his friend Sir Hilton Popper, was quite a sportsman, though a bit of a martinet.

"Hallo, sir!" said Wharton eagerly. "What brings you here?"

"I've come for you, my boy!" said Colonel Wharton, with a suspicious twitching at the corners of his lips as he bowed formally to the purple Sir Hilton. "You can pack up as soon as you like!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Harry.

"Here, I say, sir——"

"Don't dare to interrupt me, Colonel Wharton!" fumed Sir Hilton Popper furiously. "One of these scoundrels threw a tomato at me—at me, begad! I'm going to have them flogged——"

"You needn't trouble, for I'm taking my ward away," said Colonel Wharton stiffly.

"And expelled! At least, I'll have that satisfaction!" roared Sir Hilton Popper.

It was at this moment that Dr. Locke came bustling upon the scene, anxious to avoid trouble, for it looked as if the two stiff gentlemen were going for one another just as a couple of fags might do.

"Gentlemen—gentlemen!" said the Head hastily. "Pray come to my study, and——"

"Dr. Locke," said Colonel Wharton—and he was all courtesy then—"I'm taking my nephew from Greyfriars at once. There is no harm in my speaking before anybody present. I have resigned from the Board——"

"Resigned!" gasped Wharton.

"My only topper!" said Cherry.

"Silence!" snapped the Head.

"I have resigned," resumed Colonel Wharton steadily. "I cannot be a party to these increases in the fees, now that I know exactly how it would affect the boys here. I have told you, Sir Hilton Popper, and you, Sir Timothy Topham, my reasons, and have enlarged upon them. My nephew has no wish to remain at Greyfriars in the circumstances, and I'm taking him away to-day."

"If Harry goes I'm going, too!" said Bob Cherry recklessly.

"And me!"

"The go-fulness of my unworthy self will be terrific!" said Hurree Singh, with unusual warmth.

"Boys, pray do not talk such nonsense in the presence of the governors!" snapped the Head angrily. "Kindly dismiss!"

Bob Cherry looked rebellious. But he could not disobey the Head in the face of the governors. He nodded to Nugent, Bull, and Hurree Singh, and they walked away towards the School House.

"Huh! A good job when those rebellious young scoundrels are gone!" said Sir Hilton angrily.

"Ahem!" said Sir Timothy gently. "The letters this morning are—er—rather strong, are they not, Dr. Locke?"

"They are," said the Head grimly. "I have at least a hundred and fifty letters from parents by to-day's mail. Nearly all of them state that as their sons have expressed a wish to leave Greyfriars at the end of this term, they are falling in with those wishes."

"Hurrah!" said Wharton, and flushed as the Head glanced sternly at him.

"Begad! The young idiots!" said Sir Hilton fiercely. "Fancy throwing over a school like Greyfriars, begad, because some of their less fortunate fellows can't afford to pay the fees——"

"The increased fees, sir," corrected Harry quietly.

"Wharton! How dare you interrupt? Go at once, sir! I will see you later!" thundered the Head.

"May—may I speak to my uncle for a moment, sir?" asked Wharton.

"Aside, yes!" snapped the Head. He couldn't very well refuse that request.

Colonel Wharton and his ward went on one side, and there Harry lowered his voice and almost whispered to his uncle.

"Uncle, I can't come away yet," he said quickly. "I'm captain of the Remove, you know, and I must stand by until the end of the term. I'll go then, of course; but I must stand in with the chaps until the end of the term. There's going to be trouble, anyhow, and I must stand by my pals!"

"Very well, my boy," said the colonel, and he patted his ward on the shoulder. "That is the way a soldier's nephew should speak, Harry!"

The next moment the colonel had turned upon his heel and had marched past the little group by the gates and went his way down the road towards the station.

For a moment Harry stood looking after him, his heart beating fast. Then he turned upon his heels and ran in to dinner, what time Sir Hilton was raising his voice in increasing anger as he told the Head how somebody had thrown a rotten tomato at him.

In the manner that things will get know, it was common knowledge before afternoon lessons had commenced that Harry Wharton was going away at the end of the term. Billy Bunter supplied the information to the effect that Wharton could have gone that day had he liked. Because he had not, apparently,

(Continued on page 16.)

THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

HARRY WHARTON EDITOR

Supplement No. 179. Week Ending June 14th, 1924.

EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

I CAN'T say that I have ever been fired with the ambition to plough and sow, and to reap and mow, and to be a Farmer's Boy-oy-oy-oy. I am not a tiller of the soil, either by heredity or inclination. My pater was a soldier, and my grandpater was a soldier, and so were most of their progenitors (good word that). I don't remember ever to have heard of a "Farmer Wharton" in our family. I come of a fighting stock, that prefers the sword to the ploughshare.

I shouldn't care to be buried in the heart of the country all my life, in an atmosphere of pigs and poultry. It would be very nice and novel for a time, but when the novelty had worn off I should find myself longing for busy streets—for "the thronged and the lighted ways," as Kipling calls them. I should soon grow weary of the grunting of the pigs and the cackling of the broody hens.

But we are not all built alike. There are fellows at Greyfriars who would take to farm life like ducks take to water. They would "rise at six, feed the ducks and chicks," with cheerful energy. And they would be in their element in breaking-in a ferocious bull, or doing acrobatics on the top of a hayrick.

And doubtless there are lots of my readers who have a liking for farm life, too. This being so, I feel that a Special Farming Number of the "GREYFRIARS HERALD" will be as welcome as the flowers in May.

The subject of farming has been tackled by our cheery contributors with their usual zest. They do not claim to possess an expert knowledge of farming—with the exception of Billy Bunter, who declares that he understands farming and cattle-breeding from A to Z. He adds that he means to be a farmer himself when he arrives at years of discretion. When!

You mustn't take Bunter seriously. His craze to become a "Varmer Giles" will soon pass. He has had a good many ambitions in his time, but they have all fizzled out. First he was going to be a Cabinet Minister; then he had visions of becoming a chef in a fashionable restaurant. He has also fancied himself in the roles of detective, jockey, prize-fighter, poet, and playwright. The probability is, Bunter will become none of these things, but will have to content himself with a very humble "walking-on" part, on the stage of Life.

I hope you will thoroughly enjoy this number, which will be followed by others of a novel and interesting nature. Meanwhile, if you have any bright and brainy ideas for subjects for special numbers, send them along to me, care of the Editor of the MAGNET LIBRARY.

HARRY WHARTON.

MY UNCLE'S FARM!

By BILLY BUNTER.

MY Uncle Fred's a farmer,
A wealthy man is he;
His lovely farm in Bunkumshire
I'd like you all to see!
He farms a million acres,
He owns five hundred ploughs.
A thousand head of cattle—
Chickens and cats and cows!

He's got a glorious orchard
With peaches, pears, and plums;
I mean to stay with Uncle Fred
When the Vacation comes.
I'll live inside that orchard
And fill myself with fruit;
Till I get indigestion
Both chronic and acute!

My Uncle Fred's been farming
For close on fifty years;
He's made a fine old fortune—
A million, it appears.
And when of worldly pleasures
The old gent's had his fill,
He'll shuffle off this mortal coil
And leave me in his Will!

No longer I'll be stony,
No longer on the rocks;
For I shall roll in riches
And give my schoolmates shocks!
They'll gnash their teeth with frenzy
And fairly tear their hair;
For not a stiver will they get
From BUNTER—MILLIONAIRE!

THE LIMBO OF THE BYGONE!

A well-informed chum tells me that he has heard there is a ruin of an old monastery down in Sussex, bearing the honoured name of Greyfriars. He asks me whether Mr. Frank Richards knows of the existence of this ancient stronghold. You bet he does. The fact is, Mr. Frank Richards knows pretty well all there is to know about the South Coast. He has been all over the world, but he has a special fancy for such venerable towns as Winchelsea and Rye.

FARM NOTES AND NEWS!

By Bob Cherry.

IS it true that when Billy Bunter travels by train he has to go in a cattle-truck with the rest of the "fat stock"?

* * *

TOM REDWING, the sailor's son, will never become a tiller of the soil. He is far more interested in the tiller of a ship!

* * *

ANOTHER fellow who is not keen on farming is Alonzo Todd. "I could never train a bull," he confesses. "I have tried to train the Bull we have at Greyfriars, but he is too refractory an animal." We agree that Johnny Bull is a big handful!

* * *

LORD MAULEVERER thinks that farm life is "simply stunnin', begad!" He can think of nothing nicer, he says, than to lie dozing in a hayfield. But what would happen to his lordship's crops?

* * *

GOSLING, the porter, is averse to farming. He says he would never be able to hobble across the fields, because of his bad "corn." It would go against the "grain," we presume!

* * *

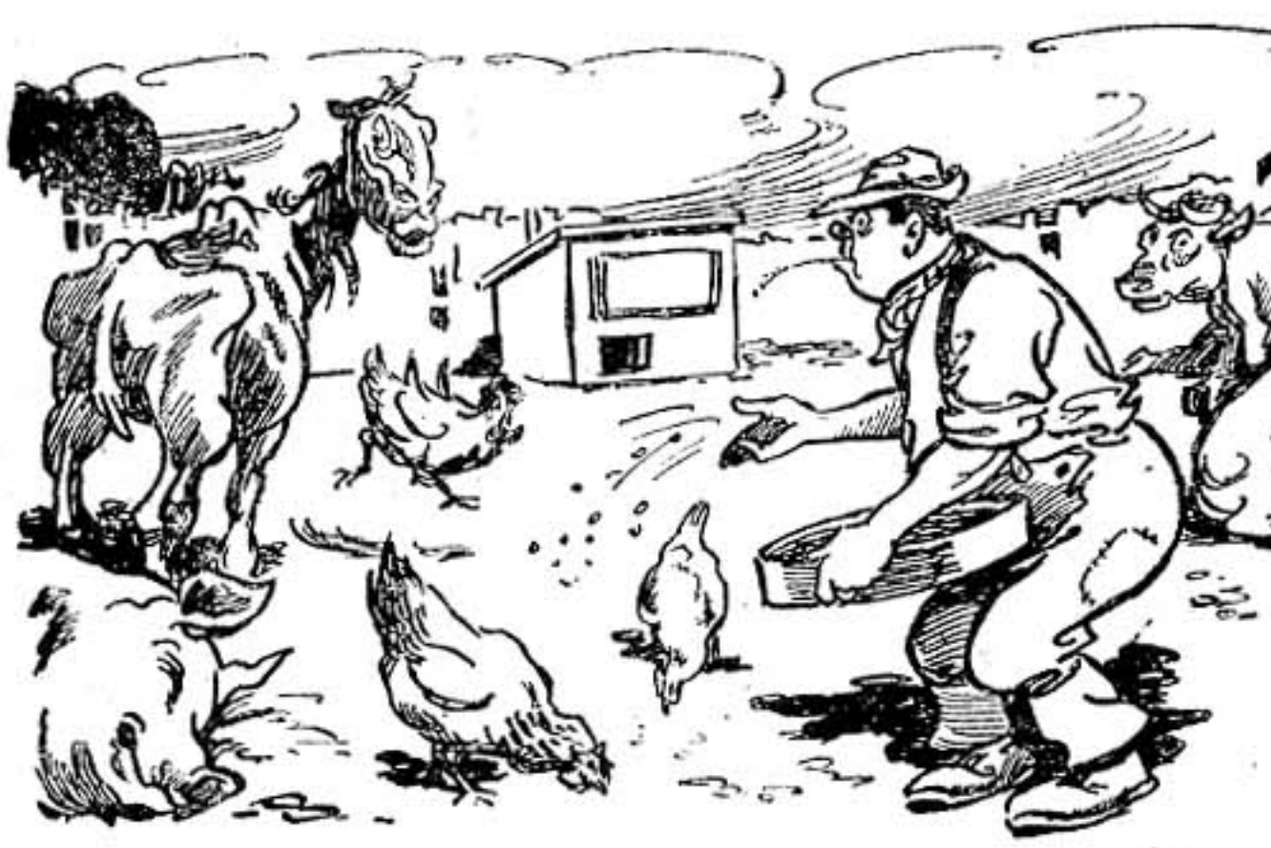
BILLY BUNTER'S love of farm life springs from the fact that you get plenty of cream, and new-laid eggs, and prime pork, and tender lamb. Farm produce has a fattening effect; so goodness knows what would happen to Billy Bunter if he lived on a farm! He would in all probability go off pop!

* * *

DICK PENFOLD, the bard of the Remove, is rather sweet on farm life. He says it would provide him with plenty of inspiration. No doubt he would find it a simple matter to rhyme "corn" with "morn," and "cattle" with "rattle," and "duckling" with "chuckling." But personally, I can't picture Pen working with a pen in a cattle pen!

* * *

MR. PROUT, the master of the Fifth, says that if he hadn't become a schoolmaster he would probably have been a farmer. It would afford him plenty of opportunity to go out and shoot game. From what we know of Mr. Prout's marksmanship, he would probably run amok and shoot all his own ducks and chicks!



The Greyfriars Farmers!

Our Contributors Tell Us How They Would Like Farm Life!

BILLY BUNTER:

Ever since I was a tiny tot I have wanted to be a farmer, and to deal in fat stock, and lean stock, and rolling-stock, and piggs and poltry. They say that farmers are always grumbling. Goodness nose what they've got to grumble at. Look at all the ripping things they get to eat. Skimmed eggs and new-laid milk and roast pork and clotted cream. They do themselves well at farmhouses. I've stayed at one, as a non-paying guest, so I know what I'm talking about. They live on the fat of the land. Farm life would just suit a frail, aneemick fellow like me. I should soon begin to put on flesh, and my slender figger would fill out until it became almost corpulent! I've got a welthy uncle who farms a million acres down in Bunkumshire. When he shuffles off this mortle coil, I've no doubt he'll leave his farm to me, and then I shall be in my element! Can't you picture me dragging bulls to market by the scruffs of their nex? Can't you imagine me milking the sheep and sheering the cows? I should make a jolly good farmer. I know the bizziness from A to Z. There's nothing I couldn't do on a farm, from taming a mad bull to ringing a chicken's neck!

BOB CHERRY:

Afraid I should make a poor hand as a farmer. I confess I don't know a short-horn from a Canterbury lamb! I've only got the vaguest notion how to milk a cow; and I don't know what you feed pigs and poultry on. I should probably feed the poultry to the pigs! I'm not afraid of hard work, and I'm a lover of early rising; but, apart from that, I've no qualifications for becoming a Farmer Giles!

ALONZO TODD:

Talk not to me of farming! The mere mention of the word goads me to such fury that I feel like saying "Bother!" or "Oh blow!" or equally strong language. I thought I was doing Farmer Kimber, of Friardale, a good turn, when I volunteered to do his farm work for him, because he had sprained his ankle and had to stay indoors. I sacrificed a half-holiday, and worked very hard and conscientiously on the farm; and all the thanks I got was a horse-whipping. I feel too sore to talk about the tragic affair; but Frank Nugent describes it in detail on another page.

DICKY NUGENT:

i don't care 2d. about farming. it's a jolly sight too slow for my liking. fancy sitting on a plow, and going along at the rate of half a mile an hour! i'd much rather have a moter-bike or a naroplane. besides, I'm no lover of cows, bools, heffers, piggs, poltry, dux, and other wild beests that you find on a farm. white mice are my faverite pets. i haven't got the slightest ambition to plow and so, and to reap and mo, and to be a farmer's boy-oy-oy-oy—so that's that!

DICK PENFOLD:

I'd rather like it on a farm, for country life is full of charm. I'd rise at six and feed the ducks; then ride a horse—what-ho, she bucks! And then I'd try to tame the bull. Better than mugging Greek in school! I'd keep an orchard full of plums, and give free passes to my chums. I'd keep a crowd of apple trees; a dairy, and a hive of bees. I'd trade in "Penfold's Potted Honey," and simply make a mint of money. I'd walk waist-high in yellow wheat, and it would be a glorious treat! I'd revel in the new-mown hay, and I'd be happy, blithe, and gay. Oh, for a cosy farm in Kent, where I could live, and be content!

LORD MAULEVERER:

Farm life would suit me down to the ground, dear boys, because I should find plenty of time to rest my weary limbs. What could be nicer than to curl up in a quiet corner of a cornfield and go to sleep? I wouldn't mind following in the footsteps of Rip Van Winkle, and not waking up for donkeys' years! I'm afraid my crops would go to rack and ruin, but I shouldn't mind that, so long as I had a private income of my own. Anybody know of a nice little farm going begging, where a lazy and languid lord can pass his time in rest and tranquillity?

MR. PROUT:

When I stood at the cross-roads of my career, as a young man, I said to myself, "Which is it to be—a schoolmaster's life, or a farmer's?" I chose the former, though I have often doubted the wisdom of my choice. My favourite hobby is game-shooting, and I should get plenty of opportunity for this on a farm. I should be out all day with my rifle, sniping snipe and potting partridges and riddling rabbits. Unkind critics suggest that I should probably shoot all my own ducks and chicks by mistake; but my marksmanship is not so erratic as all that!

WILLIAM GOSLING:

Wot I says is this 'ere—I shouldn't 'ave no objection to spendin' the evenin' of my days, so to speak, on a farm. I've jest about 'ad enough of my dooties as a porter. I'm sick an' tired of turnin' myself into a beast of burden, an' carryin' trunks an' portmanters an' packin'-cases all over the place. Wot I wants is a nice little farm of me own—not more than a million acres—with a dozen labourers to do all the donkey-work, while I rests my poor aged limbs in the noo-mown 'ay an' puffs me pipe. If the young gents of Greyfriars would be so good as to get up a subscription, an' buy me a farm, I shall be internally grateful, as ever was!"

(Well, of all the nerve! You don't want much, Gossy! A farm costs hundreds of pounds, and at the present moment the joint resources of the Famous Five amount to fourpence! —Ed.)

THE HEAD:

I have been asked if the life of a farmer appeals to me. Frankly, it does not. I cannot picture myself in the habiliments of a farmer, or visualise myself performing the hundred-and-one manual tasks that fall to his lot. Every man to his trade is an excellent maxim. I shall probably remain in the scholastic profession all my days. The nearest I have ever been to filling the role of a farmer was when I spent a very enjoyable and peaceful holiday on a farm in Hampshire. Every morning at six o'clock it was my custom to feed the chickens. But that, as everyone knows, is easy work when compared with following a plough or gathering in the harvest.

(Supplement ii.

Alonzo's Helping Hand!

By Frank Nugent.

ALONZO TODD has always had the reputation of being an obliging sort of fellow. Sometimes he is too obliging. He is always eager to help lame dogs over stiles, and when he heard that Farmer Kimber of Friardale, was confined to his house with a sprained ankle, Alonzo thought it would be a good idea to help a lame farmer over a stile, by way of variety.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and Alonzo went trotting out of gates. His cousin Peter hailed him in the school gateway.

"Whither bound, Lonzy?"

Alonzo halted.

"I am about to embark on a mission of kindness, my dear Peter—a mission of which our esteemed Uncle Benjamin would warmly approve."

"Blow Uncle Ben!" said Peter irreverently. "What's the latest stunt?"

"Farmer Kimber has had the misfortune to sprain his ankle."

"And you're going to bandage it for him and massage it, and turn yourself into a family doctor?"

"Not at all. I shall assist Farmer Kimber in a more practical way than that. He has no labourers on his farm—it is only a small farm, as you know—and in the ordinary way he does all the farm work himself. Now that he is confined to his house he is helpless. There is nobody to carry on the work for him. The chickens have been left without food; the bull has to remain unmilked——"

"But you don't milk bulls, fathead!"

"Eh? Are you certain of that, my dear Peter?"

"Of course, my dear duffer! How on earth can you be of any use to Farmer Kimber, when you don't know the first thing about farming?"

"Really, Peter, you are painfully blunt in your expressions! I confess I have not a practical knowledge of farming, but I have a theoretical knowledge, which is just as good."

Peter gave a grunt.

"You leave Farmer Kimber alone," he said. "You haven't got a grudge against him, have you?"

"Certainly not!"

"Then why go and hinder him?"

"I am not going to hinder him," replied Alonzo, in tones of reproach. "I am going to help him."

"Same thing!" murmured Peter. And he strolled away, leaving Alonzo to proceed on his errand of mercy.

Farmer Kimber's little farm was situated on the outskirts of Friardale. When Alonzo called at the farmhouse, he found the plump and portly tiller of the soil reclining in an armchair, with his damaged ankle swathed in bandages. Farmer Kimber was an amiable man, but he looked anything but amiable now. His farm work was being neglected, and he was almost at his wits' end with worry.

"What do 'ee want?" he growled, when Alonzo presented himself.

"Ahem! I have heard of your predicament, Mr. Kimber, and I have come to express my sympathy, and to offer my assistance."

Farmer Kimber opened his eyes wide.

"Be this one of your schoolboy larks?" he asked suspiciously.

"Not at all. I am in sober earnest. I shall be delighted to sacrifice my half-holiday, and busy myself on your farm. I shall doubtless find plenty to do."

"Oh, ah!" said the farmer. "There's the chickings to feed, an' the cows, an' the calves an' the pigs. If you could manage them little jobs for me, young gent, I should be right-down grateful."

Alonzo beamed.

"Leave it to me," he said. "The work shall be carried out with the utmost dispatch."

And he flitted out into the farmyard.

For the next hour Alonzo was industriously employed. He rather liked pottering about on the farm, attending to the animals and fowls. It seemed quite a simple matter to give them their food. He went into the cow-pens and fed the cows. Then he gave the calves their afternoon tea. Then he adjourned to the pigstyes, and fed their grunting occupants. After which he ministered to the "chickings," as Farmer Kimber called them.

These duties having been carried out—without a hitch, as Alonzo thought—he emulated Alexander of old, and looked round for fresh worlds to conquer.

There was a bull in the loose-box, but Alonzo hadn't the courage to go in and feed it. He wasn't afraid of cows or pigs or feathered fowls, but he had a wholesome dread of bulls. Alonzo had often been pursued by them, in peril of his life, and he considered they should be given a wide berth.

This particular bull was a very ferocious creature. It was snorting and stamping in its box. Alonzo looked through the peep-hole, and saw that the animal was not tethered in any way.

"It is very restless," he murmured. "Doubtless it is in need of exercise. I think I will let it out. I shall have to use great caution, though."

Very gingerly Alonzo opened the door of the loose-box. Then he hastily pulled it back, jumping behind it as he did so, so that the bull would be unable to attack him.

No sooner was the door opened than the bull came charging out. Alonzo, peeping from his place of refuge, watched it go careering around the farmyard, bellowing fiercely and charging full-tilt at the various obstacles in its path. Pails and milking-stools and other articles were whisked off the ground and sent hurtling into space. The bull fairly ran riot, and Alonzo, looking on with startled eyes, began to wonder whether he had acted wisely in giving the bull his freedom.

Having tossed everything within reach, the frenzied animal went rushing through the gateway and into the road. Alonzo watched it disappear in the direction of Friardale. He made no effort to coax it to come back!

"It will no doubt return of its own accord, when it has had sufficient exercise," he murmured. "I will now go and make my report to Farmer Kimber."

Well satisfied with his afternoon's work, Alonzo made his way to the farmhouse. He found Farmer Kimber out of his chair, hobbling round the room with the aid of a stick. The farmer's face was purple with wrath.

"Wot do 'ee mean by it?" he stormed. "Why, you've bin an' let the bloomin' bull loose!"

"My dear man——"

"Go an' bring it back!" roared the farmer. "If it gets as fur as Friardale, it'll start smashin' shop winders, an' goodness knows what! Take the bull-stick, an' a rope, an' go an' fetch it!"

Alonzo shook his head.

"I will do anything within reason," he said, "but I will not attempt to—er—take the bull by the horns, and bring it back. I confess I am afraid of the monster. Pray do not glare at me like that, Mr. Kimber; it is most disconcerting. I am sorry if I did wrong to let the bull loose."

Farmer Kimber continued to hobble round the room, snorting like his own bull.

"Wot other mad pranks 'ave you bin up to?" he demanded. "You 'aven't let the cows loose, I suppose?"

"No, no. I have given them their corn——"

"Corn!" shouted the farmer, in horror.

Alonzo nodded.

"And I have given the chickens their cake——"

"Wot! You mean to say you've fed the chickings with cow-cake, and the cows with the chickings' corn?"

Alonzo shrank back before the farmer's ferocious glare.

"I trust I have not made a mistake!" he faltered. "I gave the pigs their hay, and the calves their barley meal."

"You—you——" snorted the incensed farmer. "You've made a fair mess of things, you 'ave! It was the pigs wot ought to 'ave 'ad the barley meal, an' the calves should 'ave 'ad the 'ay!"

"Dear me!" murmured Alonzo.

"An' you've fed the fowls with wot the cows ought to 'ave 'ad, an' vicey versa!" roared Farmer Kimber. "Furthermore an' moreover, you've let that there bull loose! It's a lark—a schoolboy lark, that's wot it be! I'll lark yer! Where's my 'oss-whip?"

Crippled though he was, Farmer Kimber showed surprising energy. He snatched up a horsewhip from the corner, and proceeded to chase the unfortunate Alonzo round and round the room. The whip rose and fell, and Alonzo yelped with anguish.

"Ow-ow-ow! Yow! Yooop! I am at the mercy of a madman!"

Farmer Kimber continued to go great guns with the horsewhip. It followed Alonzo all round the room, like a pursuing Nemesis. Finally, the Duffer of the Remove managed to reach the door. He threw it open with feverish haste, and darted through, and fled for his life. He didn't stop running until he reached the gates of Greyfriars.

That evening the bull was captured by a couple of rustics, and taken back to its owner; but not before it had done extensive damage in Friardale by charging full-tilt at shop windows, and causing unparalleled scenes of panic and confusion.

The bill for damages was sent in to Alonzo—as if he had not already suffered enough! And it will be a long, long time before Alonzo again volunteers to help a lame farmer over a stile.

THE END.

(Continued from page 12.)

liked, some of the original scoffers went over to Wharton's side.

Lessons that afternoon were stormy. Mr. Quelch was in a tantrum, and hundreds of lines and dozens of lickings were the result. Then Dr. Locke came in and demanded to know who had thrown the tomato. Nobody answered, and the Head went away in what Bob Cherry afterwards described as a royal wax.

The Head did not discover the culprit. Neither did Sir Hilton Popper, and it may have been because of that that Sir Hilton Popper spoke in a loud voice that Gosling heard very distinctly at the school gates.

"We will not alter our decision because a parcel of impudent young scoundrels don't like it!" said Sir Hilton, with a snort.

Mrs. Mimble heard it from Gosling, and she passed it on to Mary, the maid, who was in the act of passing it on to the page when Billy Bunter heard it.

Five minutes later everybody in the school knew that the governors were going to stick to their decision, and that the school fees were to be raised, despite opposition.

Harry Wharton, when he learned the news, gathered his chums under his wing, and the Famous Five strolled out of the gates to talk over their plans in comparative secrecy. In Greyfriars nothing was safe. Bunter's bootlace had a habit of becoming untied outside study doors, and Skinner's cunning was beyond all description.

"There's only one thing to be done," said Harry Wharton, with a sigh. "We'll all clear out of Greyfriars, and see if we can't get together at some other school."

There was a grunt from Johnny Bull.

"I'd like to get that fatheaded Popper in a corner for five minutes," he said.

"I'd much rather have Ponsonby senior," said Frank Nugent bitterly.

"The ratherfulness is terrific, my worthy chum," said Hurree Singh quietly. "The beastful Ponsonby is the causefulness of all the trouble."

"Blessed if it isn't a case of like son, like father!" said Bob Cherry warmly. "It's a snob's cut at the—well, talk of angels!"

Bob Cherry ended his remark suddenly with that. The others looked up the lane. Cecil Ponsonby, with Gadsby, Vavasour, and Monson, was coming round the bend.

Harry Wharton flushed as he saw his old enemy. There was a supercilious sneer upon the cad's lips, and Harry longed to knock it off. But he remembered the warning Mr. Quelch had given them.

"Walk straight past the cads, or I'll be biffing them!" muttered the captain of the Remove, between his teeth.

"Let's lick 'em, anyhow!" said Bob Cherry recklessly. "We'll get licked when we get back, but I'm game to risk that!"

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull.

But Wharton shook his head.

"The cad is sure to sneak," he said bitterly. "Let him go by. Hang him for his lies about my uncle, anyway!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Just like you, Harry," he said. "The first to save trouble, but the most ready to make it!"

"Ass!"

Ponsonby & Co. drew up. As they were spread across the road, either they or the Famous Five had to split up. It was beneath the dignity of the Removites to split up, so they walked ahead.

"Hold on, you fellows!" said Ponsonby.

"Looking for trouble?" asked Johnny Bull, in his blunt way.

"Not a bit, dear man!" drawled Ponsonby. "When does the general exodus take place?"

"Mind your own dashed business!" snapped Harry Wharton. "Come on, you chaps!"

"Blessed if I know why you want to go, Wharton!" said Ponsonby, with a keen glance at the captain of the Remove. "You've got plenty of dough, haven't you?"

"That's my business!" snapped Wharton; and he walked on.

The rest of the Co. followed him, their hands clenched hard. But they had had their warning, and unless they were pushed into a scrap, they meant to heed it.

"Anyway, we've cleared out the riff-raff, dear man!" said Monson, with a gleeful chuckle.

"Oh, rather! Good old Pon!" said Vavasour.

"Shut up, you fools!" hissed Ponsonby.

But it was too late. Harry Wharton had heard every word. He swung round like a flash, his face pale with anger.

"So it was you who put the idea into your father's head, was it?" he roared. "My hat! I'll—I'll——"

"Steady, Harry!" said Frank Nugent, laying a restraining hand upon his chum's arm.

But Wharton flung it off with a single gesture, and the next moment he was lashing out right and left at Ponsonby's aristocratic nose.

Ponsonby howled and yelled and ducked. But it was no good. A lightning-like right took Ponsonby clean under the chin, and he went flying on to his back.

"Ow! Yow! You—you—— Ow!" he spluttered.

"Oh, mop up the giddy ground with them!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The mop-upfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Singh hotly.

Bob Cherry stood down. Fair play was a jewel, in his opinion, and his chums could easily account for the four Highcliffians. They did, and in less than five minutes Ponsonby & Co. were on their backs in the dust, groaning or yelling.

"You cad!" hissed Harry Wharton, as he glared down at the fallen leader of the Highcliffe nuts. "You don't know what trouble there's going to be when your caddish idea is put into practice! You ought to be hanged!"

"Then drawn!" said Nugent, panting.

"And boiled in oil!" added Johnny Bull.

"And the worthy and ludicrous Ponsonby senior should be on the rightful side of you, my cadful Ponsonby!" said Hurree Singh; and for once the Indian junior was fiercely angry. "In my country we would quickly dispose of you!"

"Oh!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "Stow it, Inky! This isn't giddy old India, you know. But perhaps you want some more, Pon?"

"Ow!"

"I'm willing to take on any three of you," added Bob, with a chuckle. "There's not four of you left whole, so I'll take on the bunch! There's a sterling offer for you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the Co.

"Yow! Oh, my jaw!" moaned Ponsonby.

"Oh, come on, you chaps!" said Wharton, in great disgust. "I'm fed-up with them!"

The Famous Five walked on, grinning, leaving the Highcliffians to sort themselves out as best they could.

"The utter worms!" said Frank Nugent, pale with anger. "I can see it all now. Ponsonby, as soon as he heard his pater was on the Board of Governors of Greyfriars, put the rotten notion into his head. He knows jolly well that there are many chaps in the Remove who could not stand the increase. Oh, the cad! The utter, blithering, disgusting——"

He broke off. Words simply failed him. The chums looked at him sympathetically. They knew that he was the only one of the Co. who would of necessity have to go. But that didn't alter their decision. If Frank Nugent went, they all went.

"We ought to take it out of Pon for that!" said Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed suddenly.

"Why shouldn't we?" he said quickly. "Dick Penfold will have to work as a cobbler if he leaves Greyfriars. Dick Russell will go back to the sea. Mark Linley will have to slog in a factory!"

The others looked dubious. They could see what Harry Wharton was driving at. He meant that Ponsonby should be made to work in the same manner as the luckless scholarship juniors would have to work if they were forced to leave Greyfriars.

Bob Cherry chuckled suddenly.

"I'd rather like to see Pon working in old Mr. Penfold's shop," he said, "or aboard Mr. Redwing's fishing-smack!"

"Fancy the slacking ass scrubbing a deck!" said Nugent.

"That's what I'm getting at!" said Wharton eagerly. "It could be done!"

"There'll be trouble——" began Johnny Bull, still a little dubious.

"Let it all come!" said the Remove captain recklessly. "We're leaving at the end of the giddy term, any old how. I'm game for anything, so long as Ponsonby is made to sit up!"

Still the others hesitated. They could foresee trouble—lots of it. Ponsonby would kick up a fuss, and perhaps the Head would take a stern view of the matter and hand out lickings all round.

"Look here, are we going to let Pon do all this, and take it sitting down?" demanded Wharton wrathfully, as his chums hesitated.

"N-no!"

"Then follow your uncle!" said Wharton. And he turned upon his heels and went back the way he had come.

The hesitation of the others disappeared. Where Wharton went they would go. With set, grim faces, the Famous Five approached the corner in the lane.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.
Going Through It!

"OW!"

"Yow! Bump the ass!"

"Yoop! It was his rotten idea! Ow!"

Bob Cherry chuckled as they reached the bend. Evidently Ponsonby's friends were wrathful.

The Famous Five turned the corner, and grinned. Monson, Gadsby, and Vavasour had secured a grip upon the luckless Ponsonby, and were bumping him in the hard dusty road. His yells could be heard a mile away, and the clouds of dust which arose from the road as he was bumped must have been remarkably unpleasant to taste.

"Leggo, you duffers! You rotters! I'll wipe up the road—— Ow!" roared Ponsonby.

Monson had caught sight of the Famous Five. And Monson did not want to meet them again. He shouted a warning, and he and Gadsby and Vavasour dropped Ponsonby to the road and took to their heels.

"You asses! You silly goats! Oh dear!" gasped Ponsonby.

"When friends fall out——" quoted Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snarled Ponsonby. "The rotters have bumped me in the beastly road. Look at my clobber! Look at my——"

"They've done us a good turn, anyway!" said Harry Wharton grimly. And he got a grip upon one of Ponsonby's arms and jerked him to his feet. "It was your rotten idea, wasn't it, that the fees at Greyfriars should be raised?"

Ponsonby did not answer.

"And your pater has adopted it," said Frank Nugent bitterly. "You're going through it, Pon!"

"Look here, it ain't fair," said Ponsonby uneasily. "You're five to one, and——"

"I'll take you on my little ownsome, if you like," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Anything to oblige."

Ponsonby had an idea that if he went with Bob Cherry he would get the worst of the bargain. So he did not reply to that kindly invitation.

"Do you know it means that Mark Linley will have to go back and work at the factory?" said Harry Wharton angrily.

"Well, that's where he belongs, isn't it?" sneered Ponsonby.

"And Dick Penfold——" began Nugent.

"The cobbler's son is better working with his father," said Ponsonby. "You must admit that you don't really like these cheap-jacks at your school!"

"We don't admit anything of the sort!" snapped Bob Cherry. "They're a jolly sight better than you ever will be, you rotter! Anyhow, we're going——"

"We're going to give you a taste of it," said Harry Wharton. "Collar him and bring him along, you chaps!"

"Look here, where——" began Ponsonby hotly.

He was collared, and, with Harry Wharton holding one arm and Bob Cherry the other, he was marched down the road.

Harry Wharton directed them. He had not given his own chums any idea as to what he intended to do. But, like Ponsonby, they very soon found out.

They passed into Friardale, and there Wharton jerked Ponsonby in the direction of Mr. Penfold's shop. Dick's father was the village cobbler, and could always be seen hard at work mending boots and shoes.

"Inside with him!" said Harry grimly.

Ponsonby was pushed into the shop, and the old cobbler looked up in surprise. The juniors could see that he was worried, and they didn't have to think for half an hour before they could guess the reason.

"Good—good-afternoon, young gentlemen——" he began feebly.

"Here's a fellow dying to know what it's like to work for a living," explained Harry Wharton, with a chuckle. "Got a broom handy, Mr. Penfold?"

"Look here, you rotters——" howled Ponsonby.

"And a pail of cold water, soap, and floor-cloths, Mr. Penfold," put in Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Pon wouldn't like to go home without cleaning the windows," said Frank Nugent seriously. "We'll want a leather!"

"I'm not going——" howled Ponsonby furiously.

"You're not; you're stopping here until the work's done!" said Johnny Bull grimly.

"By gad, I'll see you hanged first!" said Ponsonby.

And, pale with fury, he leapt at Bob Cherry, who happened to be nearest, and started to hit out right and left. Pon chose the wrong man. Bob coolly knocked aside Pon's wild blows, and gently tapped Pon on the tip of his nose. The nut of Highcliffe gave a howl, and sat down on the floor amidst the boots and shoes.

"Your new assistant is rather recalcitrant——" began Wharton.

"He's whatter?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"He's not so bad as that, I'm sure," said Johnny Bull.

"Recalcitrant," said Wharton firmly. "But we're going to make him do some of the things Dick will have to do at the end of the term, Mr. Penfold!"

"Really, young gentlemen——"

"Where's the giddy broom?" demanded Frank Nugent. "We'll have to be going soon."

Mr. Penfold's eyes gleamed. Probably he was not displeased with the turn of events. He guessed that, in some way or the other, Ponsonby was connected with the decision to raise the school fees. He disappeared into the back parlour, and when he came back he had a broom, a pail of cold water, and floor-cloths.

"There you are, Pon," said Harry Wharton. "Get busy!"

"I'm not——" howled Ponsonby.

"Got any glue, Mr. Penfold?" asked Bob Cherry quietly.

"Plenty, Master Cherry!" said Mr. Penfold gravely.

"Would you mind heating it? Pon might want some for his hair. He's got funny habits, you know."

Ponsonby bit his lips. Glue in his hair was something that he did not like to think too much about. He took one keen glance at the Famous Five, and it was very apparent that, though they might be cheerful, the Greyfriars Co. was in deadly earnest.

"My hat! I'll be dashed glad when you're gone from Greyfriars!" he muttered thickly. "Gimme that broom!"

Bob Cherry handed it over without a word.

Pon took it—in fact, he snatched it. A sudden paroxysm of rage seemed to seize him, and with a mighty swing of

"Gimme that broom!" muttered Ponsonby thickly. Bob Cherry handed it over without a word. Pon took it—in fact, he snatched it. A sudden paroxysm of rage seemed to seize him, and with a mighty swing of the broom he swept the lamp off the counter and turned upon the Famous Five. Hurree Singh made a dash for the lamp, and, snatching up a sack, smothered the flames. (*See Chapter* 8.)

the broom he swept the lamp off the counter and turned upon the Famous Five.

Hurree Singh made a dart for the lamp, and, snatching up a sack, smothered the flames. Nugent and Bob Cherry made a simultaneous rush for Ponsonby, and together they crashed to the floor.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" pleaded Mr. Penfold anxiously.

"Gimme some of that black stuff you put on the soles!" roared Bob Cherry. "I'll teach you, you cad, to smash up the happy home! Gimme something for his boko, Harry!"

Harry Wharton, his heart beating fast at the narrow escape they had had, snatched up a pot full of a blackish liquid. He did not hesitate. There was just sufficient light by the single candle at Mr. Penfold's bench to see which was Ponsonby.

He swooped the liquid over Ponsonby's face.

"That's a start, you cad!" he snapped.

"Lemme get up, you cads! Woowow-owow! Gug-gug-gug! Five to one—oooh!" roared Ponsonby. "Oh, my hat! Oh dear! Oh crumbs! Oooooh! You rotters!"

"Let him get up," said Bob Cherry angrily. "I'll give him the licking of his life!"

"This isn't a case for a licking," interposed Harry Wharton. "Neither is it a rag. The rotter's got to work!"

"A licking will do him good," argued Bob.

"So will work," said Wharton. "Look here, Ponsonby, you've got to do the work. You may as well make up your mind for that. We'll stop here all night, if necessary, and there's plenty of glue and stuff——"

"You'll get sacked for this!" snarled Ponsonby.

"What do we care?" asked Wharton, and he grinned. "We're going at the end of the term, you know. All of us—the greater part of Greyfriars!"

"What!" exclaimed Ponsonby, for the moment forgetting that he was in the toils.

"We're all going, or none of us, you see," said Bob Cherry sweetly. "There'll be a fresh lot in the Remove, Ponsonby, and they may not be so nice and gentle as we are. You can look out for squalls!"

"Well, my only Sunday topper!" gasped Ponsonby.

"You won't be able to get your Sunday topper on if you don't start and clean up," said Johnny Bull darkly. "Cut the cackle, you chaps, and set the rotter on his job!"

"What-ho!"

Bob Cherry thoughtfully took up an old cricket-stump which was standing in a corner of the shop, and Ponsonby looked at him from out of the corner of his eye.

He presented a peculiar spectacle, with his face all black and dripping from the liquid Wharton had thrown over it. But, for the moment, the nut of Highcliffe appeared to have forgotten it in his surprise at finding that all Greyfriars was standing against the increased fees.

But he remembered it when they came down to the matter in hand again. He bit his underlip, and gasped and spluttered as he tasted the black liquid.

"You rotters!" he said between his teeth.

"Get on with it!" snapped Bob Cherry, and he tapped Ponsonby with the end of the stump by way of reminding him that they meant business.

Ponsonby took the broom, and the Removites kept a wary eye upon him. But Ponsonby had had enough for the time being. He began to sweep up, whilst Mr. Penfold looked on anxiously.

The sight brought chuckles from the Greyfriars juniors. The nut of Highcliffe soiling his immaculate hands by using a broom was a sight for gods and little fishes, as Bob Cherry afterwards remarked.

The shop was swept out, and the bits of leather sorted out from the heaps of boots and shoes in the corners. When that was done, Ponsonby was forced to take off his coat, get down on his hands and knees, and set to work at cleaning the floor.

He gasped and choked with rage as his hands rapidly became stained and soiled in the dirty water. It required three pails of water before the taskmasters declared themselves satisfied.

Ponsonby was allowed to get up at last, and by that time he was half-dead with fatigue.

"Now you see what you've put in for Penfold," said Harry Wharton pleasantly. "This is what your rotten idea is going to do for a Greyfriars chap—a chap whose boots you're not fit to lick, you cad! You can clear off now, but there's more to come!"

"I'll get my own back——" began Ponsonby, between his teeth.

"Wait a minute!" cut in Bob Cherry. "There's a lamp to pay for! How much did it cost, Mr. Penfold?"

"Ten shillings and sixpence, but it doesn't——"

"That's fifteen bob you've got to fork out, Pon," said Bob Cherry grimly. "A little extra for the inconvenience you've caused. Fork out!"

"I won't——"

"Where did you say that glue was kept, Mr. Penfold?" asked Bob quietly.

Ponsonby bit his lip, and fumed with rage. But he was in no mood to stand any more ragging that night. He paid over the fifteen shillings, and was allowed to clear off.

The juniors watched him go, grinning. But Mr. Penfold was more than a little alarmed.

"You will get into trouble, young gentlemen," he said anxiously. "Master Ponsonby is a vindictive lad. And I can't take that extra money, Master Cherry."

"We'll take the four-and-six and drop it in the hospital box at Greyfriars," said Harry Wharton. "The ten-and-six is for a new lamp. You can't refuse that."

"I can't afford to!" said Mr. Penfold, with a grim laugh.

And the Greyfriars juniors nodded, took four-and-six of the money Pon had left, and wended their way back to Greyfriars, satisfied with their day's work.

But there was more to be done yet.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Brain-wave!

PREP was over in Study No. 1 in the Remove passage when Billy Bunter rolled in. The fat junior's eyes were gleaming behind his huge spectacles, and he was fairly panting for breath.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Buzz!" said Harry Wharton tersely.

"I've got a topping idea, Harry, old fellow——"

"If you old fellow me, I'll biff you!"

"But—but I say, old chap—I mean, Wharton, the masters are holding their debating society meeting to-night, and we'll lose our chance!" persisted Bunter eagerly.

Wharton looked at Nugent. Nugent looked at Wharton, and tapped his forehead significantly.

"Bats!" he said briefly.

"Look here, I'm not talking about cricket, you dummies!" said Billy Bunter wrathfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling asses, don't you see that now is our chance to get the masters on our side?" howled Bunter.

Harry Wharton started.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"You all know what a dab I am at putting a case. I'm going in for the law when I grow up, I'm such a good speaker," said Bunter fatuously. "Why not butt in at the masters' meeting, and put it plainly to them that they jolly well ought to go when we go?"

"My hat!"

"The fat ass has really got a brain-wave at last!"

"Oh, really, Nugent! I'm full of ideas—that's why my 'Weekly' is such a huge success!" exclaimed Billy Bunter. "You leave it to me. I'll talk to them like a Dutch uncle! Leave it to me."

"You'll mess it up, you ass!" said Nugent witheringly.

"Don't you go pinching my idea!" howled Bunter indignantly. "I jolly well thought of it! All I want is some of the chaps to back me up——"

Harry Wharton hesitated. Bunter's idea was quite a good one. But that he would carry it out badly was a foregone conclusion. At the same time, as he said, it was his idea, and it would only be fair play to give him a chance.

How the masters would take it didn't trouble Wharton at the moment. At a time like this, they should buck in with the fellows.

"We'll try it," he said suddenly. "Gather together about a dozen chaps, Billy, and we'll meet at the masters' room."

"Oh, good!" said Bunter.

He loved the limelight, and he was assured of lumps of it in his capacity as spokesman for the Remove.

Ten minutes later there were twenty juniors outside the masters' room. They were all talking in whispers—a fact which might have given the assembled debating society an inkling of what was to come.

"Now, no jaw, you fellows," said Bunter importantly, as he caught hold of the handle of the door. "Leave the jaw to me. Just you say 'Hear, hear!' when I get to an important part!"

"Have you started yet?" asked Bob Cherry sarcastically.

"Rats!" growled Bunter, and without the preliminary of knocking—Bunter seldom thought of anything like that—he turned the handle and walked in.

Mr. Quelch was speaking at the moment. He was in the act of bringing one fist down upon his open palm by way of adding to the force of his speech.

He broke off as the interruption came, and fairly goggled at the juniors.

"Boys! What does this mean?" he thundered. "How dare you——"

"Impertinence!" gasped Mr. Prout, master of the Fifth.

"Unheard of impudence!" snorted Mr. Twigg.

"If you please, sir——" began Bunter nervously.

"Hear, hear!" said the deputation solemnly.

"We've come to appeal to all the masters at Greyfriars to back us up," went on Bunter, warming to his subject. "We believe they are sympathetic——"

"Hear, hear!" agreed the deputation heavily, and more than one junior chuckled at the fat fellow's cunning.

"But——" began Mr. Quelch.

"We are sorry for the boys who will have to leave," put in Mr. Prout. "But this is not the time——"

"We think that if the masters went to the Head and told him that it ain't right for the governors to interfere with the liberty—the liberty of the history——"

"Subject, you ass!" whispered Wharton.

"Well, history's a subject, ain't it?" demanded Billy Bunter warmly. "Don't interfere, Wharton. If you can't understand me in the—if you can't follow my speech, I will put it more plainly for your benefit——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Boys! I hesitate to deal severely with you when you are all—ahem!—put out by the threatened increase in the school fees, but I must say at once that I cannot allow our meeting to be interrupted in this manner," said Mr. Quelch, his voice less stern than usual. "You must go!"

"We appeal to you, sir—to you all ——" said Wharton hastily.

"Shut up, Wharton, you beast——"

"Be quiet, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Wharton, you have a certain right to appeal to your master. But this is a gathering of masters and——"

"All the better, sir," said Wharton calmly. "The masters don't want to have a school full of new pupils, do they, sir? They'd rather stick to the lot they've got now. Well, sir, couldn't the masters also join in the all or none movement?"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, completely taken aback by Wharton's cool suggestion.

"There's something in that," said Mr. Lascelles quietly.

"Really, Lascelles——" said Mr. Prout.

"Good old Larry!" came in a stage-whisper from Bob Cherry.

"Silence! Boys—ahem!—bless my soul—leave it as it stands for the moment—we—we will discuss it in private!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Thank you, sir!"

Without a word Harry Wharton turned upon his heel and began to push the deputation from the study.

"Outside, you fellows," he said quickly. "We've said all we've got to say——"

"I ain't finished yet, you beast! It was my idea!" howled Bunter.

"Kick him, somebody!" said Bob Cherry tersely.

"Yarooooh!"

Judging by the sound, Bunter was kicked!

The door of the masters' room was closed when the last junior had got out, and even above the hubbub in the corridor the juniors distinctly heard Mr. Lascelles' voice raised in argument.

"Cut off, chaps," said Harry Wharton. "There won't be any good butting in any more. It's up to them now!"

The majority of the juniors began to disappear in the various studies. But Dick Penfold, Mark Linley, and Tom Redwing stayed behind with the Famous Five.

"I say, Wharton," said Mark Linley quietly. "All this is awfully decent of you, and all that——"

"Rats!" said Wharton cheerfully.

"But it won't be any good," prophesied Redwing dismally. "I wish it would!"

"We've other strings to our giddy bows," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Keep your pecker up, chaps! Whilst we're here there's hope, you know!"

The others nodded, and the Famous Five made their way to Study No. 1 to discuss the next move.

Every muscle in Ponsonby's back was beginning to ache; every bit of skin on his hands was tingling; but he dared not slack under the eagle eye of Skipper Redwing. "I can't go on!" muttered the wretched junior at last. "I'm whacked!" And Ponsonby collapsed to the deck in a heap. (*See Chapter* 10.)

In the middle of the discussion Billy Bunter came bursting into the study.

"They've—they've gone!" he panted excitedly.

"Who?"

"Where?"

"The masters. They've all gone to see the Head!" gasped Billy Bunter. "I knew jolly well my speech would do it! Trust me to put it properly——"

"Trust you to muck it up!" said Johnny Bull, with a grunt.

"Look here, I think the fellows ought to stand me a feed," said Billy Bunter indignantly. "I would scorn any suggestion of a reward for my services, of course. I couldn't think of such a thing, really——"

"Ha, ha, ha! Clear out!"

"Buzz off, you fat clam!"

"Look here—— Ow!"

A deftly hurled cushion caught Billy under his fat chin, and he went backwards through the doorway into the passage, where he rolled against the wall and sat down.

By the time he had staggered to his feet the door was closed and locked, and there was no entrance for William George Bunter.

"Yah! Beasts! Funks!" he roared through the keyhole. "I'd jolly well wipe up the study with you, only—only I have an appointment with the Head to back up the masters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go and eat coke!"

And the Owl of the Remove rolled down the passage—without the feed.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Ponsonby does the Trick!

"NOW for Pon!"

It was two days later, a Saturday, when Bob Cherry made that remark. It was a half-holiday at both Greyfriars and Highcliffe, and the Famous Five had a certain little business to transact with Ponsonby.

It was now known all over the school that the masters threatened to resign if the increase was not cancelled. It was even rumoured that Dr. Locke had written to the governors to say that he did not think his health would permit of his reorganising Greyfriars, with completely new masters and pupils.

But there was something that was not a rumour. It was the fact that Mr. Ponsonby had declared that all the masters and all the boys could leave if they liked. Sir Hilton Popper, still smarting under the effect of the tomato that had smashed in his face, backed up the new governor. With Colonel Wharton still off the board, the motion was carried.

Now the Removites had come to the conclusion that the only way to get at Mr. Ponsonby was through Ponsonby junior. They knew that the father doted on the son, and lavished upon him all the good things of this world. And, it being Ponsonby's idea in the first place, the Removites considered that they were only helping Ponsonby to a better outlook and less snobbishness when they

made up their minds that Ponsonby must go through it.

The cad of Highcliffe certainly did go through it.

He was collared, with Monson, Gadsby, and Vavasour, from before the very gates of Highcliffe, and whirled down the road by a score of Removites. To some of the Greyfriars juniors it was nothing more than a rag. To others it was anything but a rag.

"I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter, as he toiled in the rear. "Let's tar and feather him!"

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry.

"It's a jolly good idea," said Snoop indignantly. "The rotter would have something to do for weeks if we smothered his hair in tar!"

"Let us go, you rotters!" howled Monson.

"Oh, rather!" gasped Vavasour.

"It's nothing to do with us, you beasts!" howled Gadsby.

Ponsonby was beyond speech. He was breathless by the sudden attack, and it was in his mind that something after the cobbler's shop business was coming his way.

But the Greyfriars juniors whirled him down towards Pegg Bay.

"If you duck me, you cads——" he gasped at last.

"Nothing like a ducking for you, my tulip," said Bob Cherry. "Look here, you chaps. Some of you keep Monson & Co. here. We'll look after Pon."

Monson & Co. heaved a sigh of relief. Evidently they were to be nothing more than prisoners for the afternoon.

They even grinned as Ponsonby was marched off towards the harbour by the Famous Five and Tom Redwing.

"What are they going to do?" asked Monson.

"Pon'll tell you to-night!" chuckled Bulstrode. "You chaps have got to stop here. We are not risking your fetching Mobby on the scene!"

Monson & Co. grinned again, and settled themselves down upon the sands, with a dozen Greyfriars juniors around them.

Meantime, Ponsonby was marched straight across the harbour to a fishing craft already for sea. He recognised, in the stern old fisherman who stood at the helm, Tom Redwing's father.

"So you've brought him, young gents," said Mr. Redwing grimly.

"Yes. He's going to work this afternoon," said Harry Wharton grimly. "Where's Tom?"

Tom Redwing had disappeared, but he came back in a moment, and in his hand he held a rope's end.

"A little argument," he said quietly, and he handed over the rope's end to Bob Cherry, who took it and whirled it through the air.

"Look here, you fellows, this isn't playing the game," said Ponsonby, with an attempt at affability.

"Is putting rotten ideas in your pater's napper playing the game?" asked Tom Redwing quietly. "You must have known jolly well that chaps like myself would have to leave. It was a caddish trick, that's all. You thought you'd get some of your own back."

"I—I—I——"

Tom Redwing flung off his coat, and Ponsonby looked uneasy. If it was going to be a fight he knew he was in for a licking. But there was to be no fighting—unless Ponsonby forced it himself.

"We're going out for an afternoon's fishing, Pon," said Harry Wharton. "You're going to work, just like Tom Redwing will have to work at the end of the term. You can then write and tell your pater all about it."

"I'm not——"

Ponsonby broke off sharply. Bob Cherry had whirled the rope's end again, and it made an ominous swishing in the air.

"Let go the ropes!" roared Skipper Redwing suddenly.

"Come on, Ponsonby!" said Tom Redwing briskly.

The fisherman's son was at home on the boat. He had worked hard enough upon it before he had won his scholarship to Greyfriars. He fairly leapt across the boat, and began to untie the heavy ropes.

Ponsonby made no movement.

"I'll—I'll get blisters on my hands!" he said anxiously.

"You'll get blisters somewhere else, if you don't buck up!" said Bob Cherry warningly.

He tapped Ponsonby with the rope's end. Bob's tap was no light one. Ponsonby gave a jump into the air and howled.

"Let up!" he roared. "Yow-ow! I'm doing it, hang you!"

"Better language on the deck!" roared Skipper Redwing.

There was no help for it.

Ponsonby set to work, fuming with rage, bitter and revengeful. But he did the work, and saved himself the rope's end.

The boat put out to sea, and then Ponsonby got an insight into a fisherman's life. Often had he sat in a boat on the Sark and fished. There, he had wondered why more men didn't go in for the simple life of the fisherman.

Here, he was beginning to understand. Every muscle in his back ached before an hour had gone by. Every bit of skin on his hands was tingling, the salt water which drenched them every time the nets were hauled in causing them to smart more than any caning had done.

"I—I—I can't go on!" he muttered at last. "I'm whacked!"

"Tom Redwing will have to do this all his life, thanks to you!" said Harry Wharton relentlessly.

"I'll—I'll get my pater to pay——"

"Stop!" thundered Tom Redwing. "I don't want charity, Ponsonby! But it'll do you good to see how money-grabbing people punish the poor! I'm in for it, and so's Dick Penfold and Mark Linley and heaps of others. And it's all your doing!"

Ponsonby collapsed to the deck, and so pitiful did he look that even Skipper Redwing forgot that the nets were down and should be hauled in.

"I'm—I'm whacked!" he muttered again.

"There's factory life to introduce to you yet," said Bob Cherry coldly. Mark Linley was his chum, and Bob was dreading the parting which was to come.

Ponsonby started.

"How long is this going on?" he asked. "It's going——"

"Until the end of the term," said Harry Wharton. "You'll be ragged every time we meet!"

"Oh gad!"

Ponsonby was the picture of dismay. He was, moreover, whacked to the world. Smoking and late nights did not tend to make him strong enough to bear the rough work he had been subjected to.

Angry and contemptuous though the chums were, they called a halt then.

The Famous Five and Tom Redwing did the rest of the work, acting under the skipper's orders, and it was seven fagged juniors, and not one as had been intended, who went ashore at last at Pegg Harbour.

Monson & Co. looked at their chum and grinned. The immaculate Ponsonby was looking decidedly down in the mouth.

"You can cut now, Ponsonby," said Wharton, a little more gently. "The next stunt——"

"There'll be no next stunt!" said Ponsonby between his teeth, and he walked off, without deigning to glance at his chums.

The Greyfriars juniors looked at one another uneasily.

"I say, you fellows, does he mean he's going to bunk?" asked Bunter eagerly.

Bob Cherry shrugged his shoulders.

"Serve him right if he feels he has to!" he said warmly. "The rotter has caused enough of us to bunk, hasn't he? I've got no sympathy for him!"

"And there's none here!" said Johnny Bull.

"The nopefulness is terrific, my worthy chums," said Hurree Singh.

Dick Penfold and Tom Redwing looked all sympathy. They knew what it was like to work as Ponsonby had worked in the cobbler's shop and on board the fishing-boat. And Ponsonby was not cut out for it, and to him it was like a term of hard labour.

The Removites went back to Greyfriars, and in Study No. 1 they found the most comfortable spots and laid themselves down to rest their weary limbs. They knew how they felt, and they could guess how much worse Ponsonby was feeling.

. . . . . .

It was after prep that a message came for Wharton from Mr. Quelch. Trotter, the page, brought it.

"Mr. Quelch wants you, Master Wharton," he said; and he went out.

For a moment Harry Wharton looked at his chums.

"Wonder if Pon's been kicking up a row?" he murmured.

"I don't care," said Bob Cherry recklessly. "He'll get the factory stunt to do just the same!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Better go and see, Harry," said Frank Nugent.

Harry Wharton nodded, and went out of the study. He was prepared for trouble, and he was quite ready to take whatever was coming to him.

Mr. Quelch, however, was positively beaming when the captain of the Remove entered his study.

"Ahem! There's a telegram arrived from the governors, Wharton," he said quietly. "It appears—ahem—that Mr. Ponsonby can manage to replenish—er—the Greyfriars account at the bank without increasing the fees——"

"Hurrah! Licked, by gad!" shouted Harry Wharton. "Oh, my hat! S-s-s-s-sorry, sir! I—I—I——"

"You may go, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, with a smile.

Harry Wharton went—quickly. In less than five minutes the news was all over the school, and there was, of course, general rejoicing. How it had come about the juniors did not know—and they did not care. All that mattered was that Greyfriars would go on in the same jolly old way, with the same jolly chaps.

But they hazarded a guess that Ponsonby had wired his pater. What was on the wire they thought they knew—a plea to give up the idea, as life was becoming unbearable to him. They could not be certain, but it accounted in a way for Ponsonby's remark at Pegg that there would "be no next stunt."

(*Continued on page 27.*)

BUCCANEERS OF THE MAIN!

No. 5.

THE PALACE OF DOOM.

(*Continued from page 2.*)

the especial benefit of the so-called demon of the mysterious palace.

Then he set off from San Juan d'Ulloa, and plunged into the forest.

It was a long and perilous journey of six days and night, and Hal had literally to fight his way against the fierce beasts and the fiercer Indians, who, mistaking him for one of their hated foes, the Spaniards, endeavoured to kill him.

He never faltered in his task, however; but, following the chart of the forest which Don Alvar had given him, pressed onward dauntlessly.

At last he forced his way into a vast clearing in the forest, and saw the Palace of Doom.

But as Hal crouched on the verge of the clearing, there came to him from the interior of the mysterious pile a long, wailing, awful cry, as if from some human being in dire peril and agony. He started forward.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Retribution!

AS HAL entered the Palace of Doom the wailing cry sounded once more, fainter now, as if coming from the innermost depths of the strange building.

Going in the direction whence the cry came, he passed through a series of vast halls, each more cavernous and sombre than the others, until, finally, he reached a hall which was so nearly dark that he seemed to be surrounded by a grey mist, through which he could scarcely discern the vaulted roof or the massive pillars of gleaming white stone which supported it.

"Who cried out? Is anyone here in danger of death?"

So hollow was the echo of Hal's voice when he called out that he was himself startled, and paused for a moment. There was no reply, for even the wailing cry had ceased.

Hal moved forward once more, but had not taken half a score of steps when he found himself in a terrible trap.

From above fell a rope, the end of which was fashioned into a slip-noose. This noose dropped over the youth's shoulders. He had not time fully to extricate himself, but he succeeded in getting his right arm free. Then the rope tightened, and swung to and fro half a yard from the floor.

Looking up, he made out that above him was a balcony, which overhung one side of the hall. Over the edge of this was hanging a figure which the youth could scarcely believe was human. In the dim light it presented a grisly, grey aspect, with a horrible death's-head face and glaring eyes.

"The bullet-proof demon of the palace!"

The words rose to Hal's lips, but, far from shaking his nerves, the sight of the sinister shape made him more resolute. He had armed himself with a couple of pistols, which he had thrust into his belt.

If he could reach one of them with his free right hand, he intended to put it to the proof whether the figure above him was bullet-proof or not!

As Hal struggled to reach the pistol he continued to look up, and was, therefore, unaware that across the floor of the hall was writhing the sinuous body of a huge anaconda serpent—the most deadly reptile known in the Spanish Main. It was gliding straight towards him, and the figure in the balcony watched, with savage triumph, to see the greenish-hued folds encircle the suspended youth, and crush out his life.

Hal guessed nothing of the danger that menaced him; but——

Crack!

He had seized his pistol, and he pulled the trigger while dangling in the air, and his aim was true! With a scream of mingled agony, fear, and astonishment, the figure above him lurched forward, lost its balance, and pitched headlong over the edge of the balcony, falling with a thud to the floor right in front of the anaconda.

In an instant the reptile, thus diverted from its meditated attack on the English youth, coiled itself round its new prey. Shriek after shriek rang through the Palace of Doom, and Hal Trevanion's heart was chill within him as he realised that it was no demon, but a man, after all, who was at the mercy of the monster.

Steeling his nerves, the youth reached for and grasped his second pistol, and then aimed for the head of the anaconda as well as he could in the uncertain light. He knew that if he failed to kill the reptile at first shot he would be lost, for, in that case, as soon as the serpent had finished with its first victim it would turn on him.

But he could not leave the wretch on the floor to his doom.

Crack!

Again the sharp report of a pistol sounded in the hall, and Hal did not miss! He had waited until he could see the swaying body of the anaconda, and the bullet shattered the reptile's head.

It was several minutes ere Hal could draw himself up so far with his right hand as to loosen himself from the noose. When he at last dropped to the floor, he found a dying man stretched beside the quivering folds of the dead serpent.

It was Don Alvar Sancorbo himself!

There was no doubt of that as soon as the youth had removed the disguising mask from the distorted features.

The governor of San Juan d'Ulloa never recovered his senses, but he raved incoherently, and thus Hal learned that the Don was, in truth, the murderer of his father.

The governor himself, and none other, had been the so-called demon of the palace, having disguised himself, and lurked in the mysterious old place at intervals in order that he might lure travellers to their doom, and rob them of their gold.

An Indian fortune-teller had warned him that he was destined to meet his death through the son of the man he had murdered, and for this reason he had not dared to attack Hal openly, but had plotted to send him to the Palace of Doom, where he had intended to kill him by treachery.

But the anaconda had glided into the palace from the forest by chance, and had helped to frustrate him, and Hal's bullet had done the rest.

For while making his preparations in the citadel of San Juan d'Ulloa, Hal had wondered if any bullet but one of lead would have a better chance of killing the mysterious robber of the palace, and had secretly provided himself with a tiny pellet of steel. When the governor lay dead, Hal found that he wore a shirt of mail, which was impervious to soft lead, but through which the steel bullet had passed and brought him to his deserved fate.

From the stiff finger of Don Alvar, Hal took a signet-ring, and then lost no time in hastening back to San Juan d'Ulloa. It was a more terrible journey than the first had been, and he was half dead when he staggered into the Don's stronghold.

He was barely in time! The treacherous governor had never intended to spare Ned Hawkins, and Hal arrived to find his comrade standing before a file of soldiers who were preparing to shoot him.

"Stop, in the governor's name!"

Dashing forward, with his clenched fist Hal knocked down the Spanish officer who was about to give the order to fire. The Dons were enraged, but the sight of their governor's ring made them believe that Hal was really a messenger from Don Alvar, sent to stop the execution.

So they made no opposition when Hal dragged his comrade away on pretence that he had to take him to the governor. Forcing their way through the crowd, the two chums made their escape from San Juan d'Ulloa.

In the forest they fell in with the buccaneers, who were on the way to seek or avenge them, and all the adventurers reached their ship in safety.

THE END.

(Now look out for the next thrilling Buccaneer story—"The Mystery of the Crimson Cave!"—appearing in next Monday's bumper issue of the MAGNET.)

Crack! Again the sharp report of Hal's pistol sounded. The bullet shattered the reptile's head.

Grand Series of Complete Detective Stories Featuring Ferrers Locke!

The QUEST of the PURPLE SANDALS

No. 8.—THE DRAMA OF THE DERELICT!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
A Bombshell for Barton!

TOWARDS the red, angry sun the four-masted barque Siwash Queen lurched westward through the tumbling waters of the vast Pacific.

It was two bells in the first dog-watch when a seaman with matted black hair, grimy face, and wearing coarse blue jersey and trousers, rolled his way along the heaving deck towards the cabin of Captain Barton, situated under the poop.

The man stopped by the cabin door and glanced furtively over his shoulder. Then he knocked, and, opening the door, inserted himself inside the room.

The skipper of the windjammer was reclining gracefully in his bunk, with his legs, encased in sea boots, dangling over the side. He had been navigating the ship until long after Vancouver Island had slowly sunk like a smudge of blue smoke into the sea far astern. Wearied by his long spell on watch, he had thrown himself into his bunk without troubling even to discard his rough peaked cap.

Turning with half-closed eyes towards the door he saw the seaman, and appeared about to fly into a violent rage, but he checked his anger as he recognised the man.

"Mr. Locke!"

It was indeed the great English sleuth, Ferrers Locke, who had entered the cabin, but disguised so effectually that his closest friends would not have known him.

"Sh'sh!" said the sleuth. "Remember cap'n, I am plain Joe Simmons now—a member of your crew."

While speaking he closed the door and drew a light-coloured curtain across the port of the cabin which looked out on the after-deck.

"You will pardon my visit, cap'n," he said. "I know you've had a jolly tiring day. But I have made a discovery of immense importance, which I feel it my duty to communicate to you. I couldn't get you alone before, and I didn't want to arouse suspicion among the crew by approaching you near the wheel."

The captain, who had adopted a sitting posture on the bed, reached for a tin of black tobacco and extended it towards the sleuth.

"Help yourself to a pipe, Mr. Lo—I mean—er—Simmons. That wicker-chair you will find quite comfortable."

"Thanks!" said the sleuth, seating himself. "But I won't smoke. I don't wish to be here longer than I can help. Your bo'sun, Rorke, has kept me busy during the day—hang the fellow!" There was a twinkle in the sleuth's eyes. "That soogee he issued to me to swab the rails was liquid caustic. It's burst half a dozen of my fingernails already. And I want to turn in early and get a sleep—I had none last night."

The seamed, weather-beaten countenance of the skipper of the Siwash Queen broke into numerous little wrinkles as he gave a grim chuckle.

"I warned you—er—Simmons, that ye'd have a rough passage afore the mast o' this packet. Howsomever, you would have your way——"

"And I don't regret it," said Locke seriously. "I've seen aboard this ship a man whom I have wanted to lay my hands on for a long time—none other than Dr. Harvey Kruse!"

Captain Barton's eyes popped almost out of his head.

"Tar me!" he exclaimed. "The Dulwich murderer!"

"None other!"

For a few moments there was silence in the cabin. It was as though Captain Barton had received a clump over the head with a marlinespike which had dazed him.

When his bo'sun, Rorke, had trapped Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake on board the Siwash Queen in Vancouver Harbour, neither the captain nor his subordinate had suspected for a moment the big game they had secured. But when Locke and his assistant had been released, after the ship was under way, the former had made a statement which had caused the skipper and bo'sun no little amazement. The sleuth had proved his identity, and to an extent had made known the amazing case which had brought him half-way round the world.

Some months before a famous scientist named Professor Arnold Erskine had been shot in his home at Dulwich, a suburb of London. When Locke's old friend, Inspector Pyecroft, and Scotland Yard, had succeeded in putting an innocent man in the cells, the great private sleuth had proved that the crime was committed by no less a person than Dr. Harvey Kruse, the Harley Street specialist, an old-time friend of the slain man. At first the motive was wrapped in mystery, but amazing developments speedily followed. Locke and Drake were sent for by the Home Secretary himself, who made a statement that put an entirely different complexion on the Dulwich case.

It seemed that Professor Arnold Erskine had succeeded in finding a formula for the conversion of base metal into gold. Fearful of the effect on national finances if this astounding discovery became public, the Home Secretary commissioned Locke to find the only paper in existence known to bear the secret of the murdered man, and to destroy it.

Clues pointed to the fact that the formula was secreted in a pair of purple sandals of Indian workmanship, which were missing from the collection of curios of the late professor. It was quickly evident that Dr. Kruse, who slipped through the net of the law, was also aware of the secret, and was determined to secure it at all cost. Then began an amazing quest, which led Locke and Drake across the Atlantic and the Dominion of Canada, and left them eventually shanghaied aboard the four-masted barque, Siwash Queen, outward bound for Java and Singapore.

The latest discovery the detective had made before leaving Vancouver was that a Hindu named Bhana Singh had secured the sandals and was on his way to Calcutta with them. Locke had deter-

mined to follow by the next steamer, but, occupying his time in a hunt for Kruse, he and Drake had been trapped aboard the windjammer.

His deduction which had led him to the barque had not erred, for sure enough, the amazing doctor, in a disguise that was remarkable indeed, was among the crew before the mast.

The silence which had fallen in the little cabin was broken by Captain Barton saying:

"You're pulling my leg, Mr. Locke, surely?"

"I was never more serious in my life," replied the sleuth earnestly. "Needless to say, the man has little of the appearance of the immaculate Dr. Harvey Kruse, the specialist in tropical diseases, as he was known in Harley Street a few brief weeks ago. He wears a beard, and by the use of lime or some dye, he has made this and his hair blonde in hue. He was shanghaied aboard the Siwash Queen in Vancouver, apparently before you and your charming bo'sun took the same liberty with me and my estimable young assistant, Jack Drake, who, in disguise now, is helping the ship's cook. Kruse speaks with a Scandinavian accent, and is known among the men by the nickname of 'Dutchy.'"

Rising from his bunk, the skipper paced the cramped quarters of his cabin like a caged animal.

"The Dutchman!" he muttered. "Surely you must be mistaken?"

"Not I," said Locke. "He is Kruse, the Dulwich murderer, all right, and I have him cold. To save you endless trouble during the voyage across the Pacific I suggest that Kruse, alias the Dutchman, should be allowed to work his passage in the ship. When we get within a day's run of Java I'll make an opportunity and clap the darbies on him. Until that has been done I want neither you nor your bo'sun to treat me or Drake in any way but as members of the crew."

"I understand, Simmons. From the time you leave this cabin until you have arrested your man, Rorke and I will carry out your instructions to the letter. And mighty glad I am you ain't a-goin' to rob me o' one o' my crew afore we make the Java lights."

Ferrers Locke rose, opened the door, and stepped outside. For the benefit of any member of the crew who might happen to be within earshot, he said in a gruff, disguised voice:

"Ay, ay, cap'n, I'll tell the cook's mate to get 'em out o' the store now!"

With a nautical roll the disguised detective ambled to the galley, which exuded an appetising odour of corned beef and carrots.

Most of the crew were seated on the fo'c'sle head smoking and swapping yarns, for the Siwash Queen was bowling merrily along under full canvas before a south-easterly wind.

The man with the flaxen hair and beard, whom the sleuth knew to be the super-criminal he had sworn to take, was seated on a coil of rope among them.

The coast clear, Ferrers Locke slouched into the galley where Jack Drake was engaged in the pleasant task of sampling some of the steaming-hot carrots.

"Hi, sonny, where's the cook?" demanded Locke roughly.

"Gorn to cut 'is corns," answered Drake in a piping tone. He was known on board as Noakes, and no more did Kruse guess that this grubby-faced, cheeky lad was the cute young assistant of the world's greatest sleuth, than he suspected the presence of Locke himself on the ship.

Ferrers Locke crossed the galley, helped himself to a boiled carrot, and put his head close to that of the boy.

"Beware the 'Dutchman,' Drake," he whispered. "You and I between us will keep a watchful eye on him across the Pacific. The fellow is Kruse himself!"

"Corks!"

"It's as true as there'll be a short portion of carrots for some unlucky member of this crew," muttered Locke, helping himself to another of the delectable vegetables. "I saw Dutchy asleep this morning, and quietly rolled the right sleeve of his vest up. His arm bore the brand of the poised serpent! I shall arrest Kruse before the vessel puts in at Java and hand him over to the local police authorities for escort to England. Extradition proceedings will have to be taken, of course, but I daren't wait until the vessel puts in at Singapore. Kruse is as slippery as an eel, and I'm running no risks of his giving me the slip at the first port we touch. As long as the ship is at sea Kruse can't get away. From now onwards you and I are merely two members of the crew of the Siwash Queen until the wily doctor is safely in irons."

Hearing heavy footsteps approaching, the sleuth slouched out of the galley, just in time to avoid the cook, and made his way forward. Mounting the steel ladder to the fo'c'sle-head, he seated himself among the crew, drew out a rank clay pipe, and lighted it. Beside him was the man known as Dutchy.

A tough seaman who hailed from Liverpool struck up a tune on an accordion, and Ferrers Locke raised his voice melodiously in a song. And as the blood-red sky of evening deepened into the smooth violet of a Pacific night, the master-crook, all unknowingly, was enraptured by the voice of the one man who, of all others he feared, might one day indirectly be the one to adjust the noose about his neck!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mutiny!

THE gently swaying oil-lanterns shone dull yellow through the haze of acrid tobacco smoke in the fo'c'sle of the Siwash Queen, now within four days' easy run of Java.

A group of men were gathered under the hammocks on the port side, engaged in earnest conversation. And it was

The man who had been holy-stoning the deck, and who had edged towards the captain's side, shot out his fist like lightning. It crashed against "Dutchy's" chin with a thud that might have been heard in the fo'c'sle, and the man went to the deck like a felled ox. *(See page 24.)*

the foul pipes of these that were responsible for the thickened atmosphere of the crew's sleeping quarters.

Into this den of conspirators came Joe Simmons, alias Ferrers Locke. Used though he was to the foul atmosphere of the fo'c'sle in the second dog-watch, he choked distressingly.

"Here, Joe," said a man named Bill Greer, "come and give your opinion o' this here suggestion on the part o' Dutchy."

Locke slouched over to the group under the hammocks, and leaned against a heavy wooden stanchion that creaked and groaned like a live thing in pain as the old windjammer rose and fell to the ocean rollers.

Not a soul on board, save Captain Barton and the bos'un, Rorke—neither of whom, of course, were present in the fo'c'sle—had an inkling that the great English sleuth and his astute young assistant were on board the barque.

Although the stain which the detective had put on his countenance in Vancouver had worn off, the blistering rays of the tropic sun had amply made good any defect in his disguise. On the other hand, Dutchy, alias Dr. Harvey Kruse, who had adopted the role of sea-lawyer, had lost in a degree the tint of straw in his hair and beard, both of which had become suspiciously darker. But if anyone else had noticed this slight transformation beside Locke and Drake, no comment had been made. Possibly the slowness of the darkening process as the dye had worn off had made it practically unnoticeable, save to the keen, expectant eyes of the two crook-hunters.

"What's the bobbery?" demanded Locke in the gruff voice he had assumed since leaving the Canadian port nearly four weeks previously. "What's ole polony-face slingin' the gaff about now?"

"I don't dink dis guy oughter know," grunted Dutchy. "We got to select der men, ain'd it?"

Ferrers Locke drew his bronzed fist back over his left shoulder threateningly.

"What d'ye mean by I ain't ter be trusted?" he snarled. "I'll knock seven bells out o' ye, ye slab-sided bohunk!"

The seaman known as Greer thrust his bulky form between Locke and the "Dutchman."

"Quit it!" he said shortly. "We're all mates aboard this packet, ain't we? Simmons can be trusted as much as the rest o' us. Though I hold as it ain't wise to put the prop'sition up afore that there young son o' a gun what works in the galley. He don't count."

Ferrers Locke dropped his fist.

"Let's hear the proposition, mate. Here ye are wi' your ugly heads together like a lot of Guy Fawkes plotters, and I jes' want ter know what it's about. I'm one o' ye, ain't I?"

"In course ye are!" said Greer heartily.

"Dots so," agreed Dutchy in a more friendly tone. "But we haf to be ver' careful, Joe. Listen, and—and I will tell you der business vat I speaks about to der oders."

Thereupon Kruse unfolded a plan that almost took the sleuth's breath away. He had given Kruse ample credit for brilliancy of brain, but this latest effort of the amazing crook increased his admiration of the man's resources, despite himself. And not once during the recital did Kruse forget in any detail the dialect of Northern Europe which he had assumed with his character of a Scandinavian seaman.

Briefly, the plot which was poured into Locke's receptive ears was this:

The Siwash Queen was an old ship owned by Captain Barton himself, who traded with her in the same way as any ocean-going tramp-steamer. The captain had taken aboard in Vancouver a special cargo of machinery made in America for use in the sugar plantations of Java. By conversations which Kruse had overheard between the skipper and the mate, the crook had learned that the agents to whom the machinery was to be delivered had never seen Captain Barton personally. The machinery was to be paid for on delivery.

Therefore, the proposition which Kruse set up was that the crew should take the ship and make away with the skipper, the mate, and the bo'sun. After the victims had been put over the side, he suggested that Bill Greer should take the role of captain of the Siwash Queen. Having delivered the plantation machinery and received the money, the crew were to scuttle the ship among the islands, and take to the boats with the loot.

As Kruse, alias Dutchy, paused in his halting explanation Ferrers Locke gave a gruff exclamation of surprise.

"Bust me, you must be mad, Dutchy!" he said. "D'ye want us all to dangle on ropes wi' nothing under our feet?"

"It's as safe as der Bank of England," muttered Dutchy. "Vosn't I tell you dat we send der cap'n and der mate and der bo'sun to Davy Jones? Dead men tell no tales, ain'd it?"

The disguised sleuth looked round at the coarse faces lighted by the yellow, swaying lanterns.

"It—it sort o' gets me by the throat, boys," he said. "The idea o' sendin' three men below for food for the crabs don't anyways meet my likin'."

"Phsaw!" said Greer. "It won't take you long to get over them false sentiments, Joe. This means a fortune, man! It means if ye've got a wife and kids ye can keep 'em in comfort for the rest o' your life. If ye ain't, ye can raise Cain ashore for a twelve month, and still be rich."

"Yes; but when we're picked up," said Locke, protesting feebly, with the consummate skill of a born actor. "When we're taken out o' the boats after scuttling the old windjammer, how are we a-goin' to account for it all?"

"Dot's easy," said Dutchy. "We tell der rescuer peobles dot der ship haf been lost in a storm, and dot der cap'n, der mate, and der bo'sun haf gone down wi' it. Who's to say oderwise if we all hang together?"

"That's what I'm thinking, mate," muttered Locke. "We might all hang together!"

Bill Greer loosened the dirty blue kerchief at his throat, almost as though clawing away a hempen rope.

"Spike me, ye're a wet blanket, Joe! Pussonally, I can't see no flaw in Dutchy's plan. I'm a kind-hearted man myself, but this is the easiest way o' picin' up a wad o' money I've heerd tell of. Think it over, mate; but, understand, if ye breathe a word to a soul outside this fo'c'sle, ye'll feed the crabs yourself afore ye're many hours older!"

On the following evening, when the old ship was cleaving her way through a sea as smooth as a pond, the discussion was resumed on the secluded fo'c'sle-head. For the sake of his own plans, Ferrers Locke pretended to fall in with those of his quarry Kruse, alias Dutchy.

The whole plot was matured, the capture of the ship was timed to take place at eight bells on the following morning, on the change of the watch.

The exact method was ingeniously arranged by the author of the scheme himself. A deputation of men, headed by the "Dutchman," would make their way aft, bearing plates containing food, and Dutchy, as spokesman, would complain about the quality of the grub. On a given signal the captain would be rushed and laid out, leaving the mate and bo'sun to be dealt with afterwards.

That night, unknown to any of his fellow-members of the crew, Locke crept aft, warned the intended victims of the plot, and Jack Drake, and swore them all to secrecy.

He, too, laid his plans. At eight bells the following morning Jack Drake was to be in the skipper's cabin clearing the table—one of his many duties. The bo'sun was to see that he—Locke—was set to work near the wheel on the poop-deck, where the captain, mate, and bo'sun would also be on the changing of the watch.

He slept soundly that night on the open deck, a custom adopted by several of the men in this hot climate.

On the following morning, when Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake were on duty aft and the captain was chatting to the mate on the poop-deck, the men streamed up from the fo'c'sle. Some of them bore plates containing fragments of food in their hands. All were scowling, and most evinced decided signs of nervousness.

They moved aft in a body, led by Dutchy, and mounted the ladder leading to the poop.

Captain Barton, with commendable restraint, waited for them. Not by word or gesture did he convey the fact that he was aware already of the intentions of his crew.

"Spike me, what's the meaning o' this?" he demanded gruffly. "What's the complaint ye've got now?"

Detaching himself from his comrades, the disguised Kruse ambled forward and stopped within a yard of the skipper.

Ferrers Locke, holy-stoning the deck by the wheel, raised himself up and edged a trifle nearer to the pair.

"See that," whispered Bill Greer to another of the mutineers, "old Joe Simmons is ready t' gi'e the sipper a crack over the head when Dutchy gives the signal."

The man who hoped soon to be occupying the shoes of the captain stopped muttering as Dutchy began to address Captain Barton.

"It vos like dis, sir. Der vos too many veevils in deese biscuits. Der men don't like dem."

"Too many weevils!" exclaimed Captain Barton. "Bless my soul, man, I've never heard a salt-water sailor make such a ridic'lous complaint afore. Why, weevils'll do ye the world o' good."

"Der men are all vegetarians on this here ship, cap'n. Dey objects——"

Slowly his fist swung back to floor the captain to the deck.

The mutineers made a slight step forward ready to complete the work which they knew their comrade was about to begin.

And then the unexpected happened. The man who had been holy-stoning the deck, and who had edged towards the captain's side, shot out his fist like lightning. It crashed against the Dutchy's chin with a thud that might have been heard in the fo'c'sle, and the man went to the deck like a felled ox. The seaman who had floored his shipmate dropped on one knee and whipped from

his pocket something that shone like silver in the tropic sun. There was a metallic click and a pair of handcuffs were upon Dutchy's wrists!

So swiftly had the incident taken place that for a brief moment the crew were as though hypnotised. Then a bull roar arose from the throat of Bill Greer.

"Thunder! The traitor! Kill him, boys!"

But the ill-assorted crew of the Siwash Queen cringed back with gruff murmurs of alarm as they found themselves looking into the muzzles of four steady revolvers.

To them it seemed like some strange feat of magic that the skipper, mate, bo'sun, and the man they knew as Joe Simmons, were holding those grim-looking weapons that covered them.

"Ye dogs!" roared the skipper. "Mutiny, would ye! Take my ship! I'll have you all clapped in gaol when we make Singapore!"

Now the men, including Bill Greer, were thoroughly scared. Each realised only too well that the game was up, and the only thought of the rogues was to escape punishment.

"It was Dutchy's fault, cap'n," wailed a little, ratlike seaman, with a face like a small mahogany idol. "'E put us up to it."

As the fellow was talking the man who had been laid out opened his eyes, and, half-raising himself on his elbow, looked up at the man whose fist had struck him with the force of a pile-driver.

Immediately the seaman known as Joe Simmons lowered the black barrel of his revolver until it pointed directly at the manacled man's chest.

"Well met, my man—eh?" he said, in a voice that no one of the crew aboard had ever heard him use before. "You hardly expected to meet me here, Dr. Harvey Kruse!"

The sullen crew looked on in amazement, but their bewilderment was nothing compared to that of the man sprawled on the deck. Some of the bronze put into his cheeks by the sea and sun faded out, leaving his countenance a dirty saffron in tint. His eyes became glazed and staring.

"Who—who are you?" he gulped.

"The man you left for dead in the shack which you fired near Vancouver a month ago."

And, with a cry like that of a mortally wounded animal, the man on the deck ejaculated the name of the one man whom he feared more than anyone on earth:

"Ferrers Locke!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
The Typhoon!

STANDING on the poop-deck, with his revolver covering the cowering form of the amazing doctor, Ferrers Locke addressed the mutineers.

It was a brief and telling speech. Every man aboard the Siwash Queen had heard of the world-famous English sleuth, and their surprise at the turn events had taken was comical to behold.

Locke gave a list of the manifold crimes of the man he had captured, and how he had penetrated his disguise.

The fact that the crew had unwittingly associated themselves with a man whose hands were steeped in crime frightened them out of all their truculence. Their repentance was genuine. It was clear, even to Captain Barton, that most of the men were more weak than vicious, and it had only been by the extraordinary personality and persuasive powers of the master-crook that they had agreed to the unscruplous plan of seizing the ship.

There was little likelihood of their making the attempt again, and Captain Barton agreed, greatly to their relief, not to proceed against them when port was reached, though he stated his intention of discharging the lot at Singapore.

Dr. Harvey Kruse was put in a cagelike structure, built for his reception, on the lower deck. The door with which the carpenter provided it had a heavy padlock on the outside. There was no more chance for the master-criminal to get out of his shipboard prison than for a sheep to swim the Pacific.

Later that morning Ferrers Locke went below, and seated himself on an upturned cask by the doctor's prison.

"I have arranged, Dr. Kruse," he said, "for you to have the usual shipboard diet, and your blankets will be brought to you this evening. Should you desire any small privilege, you may submit it, and I will grant it if I possibly can."

Kruse, still in the same rig which he had worn as "Duchy" in the fo'c'sle, gripped the bars of his prison and glared out at the detective who had effected his arrest.

"Extremely kind of you, Mr. Locke!" he sneered. "You have the luck of a seventh son. How the blazes you ever escaped from that shack at Vancouver is a miracle. However, you've turned the tables, and I'm resigned to my fate. There's just one boon I would crave until we reach Java or Singapore, wherever you intend to put me ashore. I should be grateful for a few hours' exercise a day on the upper deck under guard."

"I'm sorry, Dr. Kruse," replied Locke calmly; "that is a privilege I cannot grant. I have no intention of giving you the opportunity of making a dash for the side, which might necessitate someone shooting you. You will pay for your crimes in the lawful way. The voyage will soon be over, and the door of your prison shall not be opened until the police at Singapore are here to take you out!"

The baffled crook, who had seen a faint hope of meeting his end by a better means than the rope, half-turned his head away.

Ferrers Locke rose to go, but Dr. Kruse swung round suddenly and begged him to remain a moment.

"Mr. Locke," he whispered hoarsely, "it is little to you, surely, whether I go to the gallows or not. I know the job you were given by the Home Secretary. It is to find the sandals—the purple sandals which were missing from the collection of Professor Erskine. In Vancouver I obtained a clue to their whereabouts. Give me the chance to make my get-away, and I will put you on the track of the sandals."

Ferrers Locke laughed grimly.

"I thank you, Dr. Kruse," he said. "Your help is not required. I myself found out to whom China Joe sold the sandals, and I am going on the track of that elusive individual after you are safely in the custody of the Singapore police."

And with that he turned on his heel and walked away, leaving the captured crook gritting his teeth with baffled rage in the gloomy, cage-like structure.

Going up on deck, the sleuth saw that a change had come over the weather. The sky, which had been a brilliant blue, had deepened in tint until it was almost purple.

Jack Drake saw his chief, and trotted across to him.

"My aunt! I think we're in for a blow!"

Hardly had the lad spoken when the bull voice of the skipper rang out.

"All hands shorten sail! Jump to it, lads!"

Like cats the crew sprang to the rigging, Locke among the very first. Hand-over-hand they went aloft and out on the yards. The sea was like a millpond. Not a bird was in sight—not a flying fish or dolphin rippled the surface of the

With a cheery shout of farewell, Ferrers Locke ran aft and stood on the poop—a solitary figure on the doomed vessel, silhouetted against the angry sunset.
(*See page* 26.)

ocean. The silence of death brooded over the sea.

With the perspiration rolling off their brows in streams, the crew of the Siwash Queen worked frantically to shorten the sails of the becalmed barque.

And then a cry rang out from the man on the foremast.

"Get below, mates—for your lives!"

Ferrers Locke and the other looked up from their work across the expanse of sea, now the colour of bronze. In the distance a thin white line was just discernible. But it gave a warning which none daré ignore.

Swiftly the men edged from the yards and descended the rigging. By the time they had reached the deck the thin ribbon had assumed the definite aspect of a great wall of foaming water, leaping like a battalion of charging white horses at the ship.

And then it was as though a giant's hand had caught the barque by her heel and hurled her forward. Next instant she was racing before a tropical typhoon in a raging sea, while a ninety-mile-an-hour wind shrieked like a legion of demons.

During the next few hours all on board lived through a seething nightmare. Time and again it seemed as though the Siwash Queen must founder. But each time a great wave put her on her beam-ends she shivered and slowly righted herself. And then towards evening the storm abated, and the sea went down somewhat.

Then, and not till then, was the carpenter able to report on the damage sustained to the ship. Her deck structures had been stripped, and her mizzenmast had gone by the board. She had settled by the head, and wallowed like a lame duck in the trough of the waves. The report was one to fill the bravest heart with dismay. So badly had she sprung a series of leaks that already there were over eight feet of water in the forward holds. She settled deeper, and her foundering, in the opinion of the captain, was only a matter of time.

At last, fearful of leaving it until too late, the captain decided to abandon ship.

Fortunately, two of the starboard boats were undamaged. Most of the crew entered the large one; then the second one was lowered on the falls from the davits, and put into the water.

Locke curtly ordered his young assistant, Jack Drake, to get down into it, and the boy, after a protest, obeyed.

Captain Barton stood on the poop, and told Locke to follow suit. But the sleuth, who now believed, like all the others, that the sinking of the ship was only a matter of minutes, was not forgetful of his duty.

Staggering across the heaving, glistening deck, he descended the iron ladder to the lower-deck, and approached the cage where Dr. Kruse sat huddled in a frightened heap against the bulkhead.

"Dr. Kruse," he said, in a strong voice, "the ship is sinking. We are about to abandon her."

The crook staggered to his feet, and stretched out imploring hands.

"Don't leave me, Mr. Locke!" he implored. "Don't leave me like a rat in a trap to drown.

"You well deserve the fate!" said Locke sternly. "But it is not my duty to be your judge and the avenger of your victims. The law says you must be legally tried and condemned before your life is forfeited. I am going to release you!"

The amazement of Kruse was immense. He stood aside as Ferrers Locke turned the key in the padlock and pushed open the door. The criminal stepped out from his prison, and the sleuth escorted him on deck. Arriving there, Kruse dashed madly away. Locke did not follow him; he was certain that the man would go away in the first boat. He himself went to assist with the lowering of the second boat, and he was too busy to give the ex-captive another thought.

All the crew remaining, with the exception of Ferrers Locke and Captain Barton, descended the rope into the second boat. By this time the first had got away, and was a mere black smudge on the sea in the gloom of the evening.

"We can only take one more!" bellowed Bill Greer, from the cutter. "She's almost down to her gunwale already!"

The captain, who was standing on the deck near Locke, heard, and he stepped away from the rail.

"Get into that boat, Mr. Locke!" he ordered brusquely.

Ferrers Locke stood motionless, looking at the rugged old captain.

"You will be of more service to the men in navigating that boat, captain," he protested. "I beg that you——"

"Get into that boat!" bellowed the captain.

It was a dramatic scene, this picture of the old skipper—a brave English gentleman, if ever there was one—insisting upon remaining by his sinking ship.

Ferrers Locke averted his head, a lump rising in his throat. And then he turned swiftly again as he heard a thud and a gurgling cry behind him. There, outstretched on the deck, was the captain of the Siwash Queen. A broken bit of spar had descended and struck him on the side of the head.

Locke stooped by the side of the fallen man, who was quite unconscious. Then, raising Captain Barton in his arms, he lifted him over the rail.

"Get a hold o' him, Greer!" he ordered brusquely.

Bill Greer stood up on the side of the cutter, and raised his powerful arms towards the gunwale of the windjammer, now not more than eight feet above the water. Carefully he lowered the skipper into the boat.

"Come on, Mr. Locke!" said Greer. "We might just manage one more!"

But the detective saw that the boat was already overmanned. His weight in it would most certainly prove the last straw.

With a cheery shout of farewell, he ran aft and stood on the poop, a solitary figure on the doomed vessel, silhouetted against the angry sunset.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Derelict!

TEN hours had slipped away—ten of the longest and most nerve-racking hours that Ferrers Locke had ever endured in his life.

Dawn had broken over the southern sea, and the old Siwash Queen was still afloat, water-logged.

When the fact that this was the case had become apparent through the night, Ferrers Locke had turned into the captain's bunk and snatched an hour or two of much-needed sleep.

He awakened on the instant as a regular, monotonous sound as of two pieces of wood being struck together reached his ears. He sat up in the bunk as motionless as a statue. There was something uncanny about that monotonous sound. He was alone, to the best of his knowledge. Whence, then, came that strange noise?

The idea occurred to him that a spar had come adrift and was clanking against one of the standing masts, and as he leaped out of the bunk he laughed at himself for having conceived any mystery in the affair.

He went on deck, to find the sun slashing the eastern sky with yellow, and a vast waste of tumbling sea, without a sight of sail or land, about the floundering vessel.

The sound which had alarmed him had ceased, but it struck him as queer that there was no loose spar or any other such natural cause to account for it.

He made his way forward, intending to try to get down to the store to secure some bunting or other material to hoist as a signal of distress to the peak of the mainmast.

The decks had dried under the

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influence of the strong south-westerly breeze, which bore on its bosom a hint of the spicy isles of the East Indies. By the capstan he stopped suddenly, alert in every fibre of his being. A few splashes of some liquid was on the deck. He knew that no spray had broken over the vessel's bow for some time. The righting of the ship was sufficient evidence of that. It was unlikely that a flying-fish, crossing the vessel's bows, would splash the deck in one spot only, and that in the centre.

Stooping down, he gazed intently at the sea-scoured planking. Some short brown fibres adhered to the deck close to the wet marks. He picked one up in his hand and examined it carefully.

"By Jove!" he muttered. "A queer go, this! Someone has broken a coconut at this spot—and not many minutes ago, either!"

Cautiously he made his way down an iron ladder to a deck awash with water. He reached the store-room, and peered in. On a shelf above the water-level was an old sack, open. Locke thrust his hand in it, and extracted a coconut.

"Well, I'm hanged!" he muttered to himself, as the full realisation of things swept over him.

He was not alone on the water-logged ship!

Ferrers Locke knew only too well that the fresh-water tanks, which had been kept supplied by a process of condensation, had been swamped by the encroaching sea. The find of coconuts was a boon, for it meant that he was safe, as far as both food and drink were concerned.

But it was evident that someone before himself had found this hoard of coconuts, which bore every evidence of having been in the vessel on a previous voyage.

Who was his companion on the derelict?

He went on deck again and looked round, but no one was in sight. A sense of caution prevented him from shouting to let the other know where he was. As far as he had known, everyone had gone away in the boats. The whole affair was a complete mystery.

The Siwash Queen wallowed in the seas, and no sign of a sail appeared above the horizon that stretched in a sweeping circle about the derelict.

The hours dragged on, and cautiously Ferrers Locke peered into various parts of the ship, in the hope of spotting his mysterious fellow-voyager. But the man, whoever he was, had either slipped overboard or else concealed himself in some part of the windjammer which was quite unknown to Locke.

When night fell over the tumbling waste of waters, Ferrers Locke, whistling loudly to throw off the eerie sense of mystery that brooded over the vessel, walked aft towards the skipper's cabin, still without having had a sight of his mysterious fellow-voyager.

. . . . .

The stars were peeping out of the deep violet sky of night when the bulky form of a bearded man, garbed in the coarse jersey and trousers of a seaman, quietly mounted an iron ladder forward. He wore no boots or socks, and his bare feet made no sound as he glided aft along the swaying deck.

Bending low, he slithered round to the square port of the captain's cabin, which looked out upon the deck, and listened intently. A soft, rythmical sound, as of a man breathing in slumber, came from the interior of the cabin. The thick lips of the gorilla-like man bared, showing a set of white teeth in an evil gleam. His hand went up to his belt, and there was a gleam of steel as he drew out a long-bladed knife. Cautiously he inserted his head in the open port, and gazed downwards at the bunk. Then he struck the knife into the bulging blankets with all his force, and a demoniacal grunt of satisfaction left his lips.

Next instant he swung round with a startled gasp as a familiar voice rang in his ears:

"Drop that knife, Kruse!"

The weapon clattered to the deck as Dr. Harvey Kruse found himself gazing into the muzzle of a revolver, held in the steady hand of his greatest enemy—Ferrers Locke!

"Really, you gave me credit for very little intelligence, Dr. Kruse," murmured the famous sleuth, in a smooth tone. "Did you really imagine that I would sleep in the most obvious place in the ship? Hardly—hardly! My little trap worked beautifully—just a couple of pillows under the blankets and a piece of sandpaper attached to the swing door of the cabin to give that gentle, rythmical sound as of human breath, which—er—doubtless deceived you!"

Kruse gave a sharp intake of breath.

"No, don't be angry, Dr. Kruse," resumed Locke. "I think you are intelligent man enough to know now that the game is up with a vengeance! I don't know how you came to stay on board the ship—I imagined you had gone away in one of the boats. Probably in your haste you slipped and struck your head. Indeed, now I see you more clearly, I perceive that such was the case. It is a nasty bruise you have above your ear, doctor. And so you and I are left on board. This time you shall not escape!"

With his levelled revolver he forced the arch-crook below, and padlocked him in the cage, which, being amidships, had escaped the water.

Leaving the crook fuming with rage and snarling like a wild animal, the detective went up on deck again. He climbed to the masthead, and gazed over the sweep of tumbling ocean. And there, on the southern horizon, he saw a white speck like a gull's feather protruding from the water. An exultant cry rose from Locke's lips:

"A sail! A sail!"

In that moment of delirious joy he saw his great immediate problem solved. He was saved—and he had caught his quarry, Dr. Harvey Kruse!

THE END.

(Will Ferrers Locke and his quarry be taken off the derelict? See next week's grand, thrilling yarn, "The Secret of the Sacred River!"

STANDING BY THEIR PALS.

(Continued from page 20.)

Strange to say, Snoop, in the exuberance of his joy, confessed to Mr. Quelch that it was he who had thrown the rotten tomato at Sir Hilton Popper. He got a thousand lines for that, but he didn't mind. Perhaps Snoop had an idea that the school to which he would have been sent would not have been the same class of school as Greyfriars. It was, as Bob Cherry said, the only case on record when Snoop had confessed anything of his own free will. It would probably be the last. Snoop would not be at peace with the world for long.

The whole of Greyfriars seemed to have something to say to the Famous Five, who had, after all, brought about the revision. Even old Wingate, captain of Greyfriars and the mightiest man at the school, dropped into Study No. 1 to say it was "bully for them."

But, as the Co. cheerfully remarked, they had done nothing remarkable. They had stood up for their pals at a time of stress, and that was all there was to it. After all, Ponsonby, who had really started the commotion, had ended it.

Perhaps that was so. All the same, there was no cause for wonder that Harry Wharton went up in the estimation of the Removites—especially those who had been living in the dread knowledge that every day brought them nearer to the time when they and Greyfriars must part.

THE END.

(Be sure to read "The Man Who Came Back!"—next week's grand, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars.)

NEXT MONDAY'S PROGRAMME!

"THE MAN WHO CAME BACK!"
By Frank Richards.

THERE is an extra-special story of Harry Wharton & Co. in store for you next Monday, chums, that will keep your interest at a high pitch. When a man "comes back" we reckon that he arrives at a certain stage of perfection after a period of reverses. In this case the "come back" is an old Greyfriars boy who was expelled many years ago. He touches Dr. Locke's kindly heart with a pitiful tale of his struggle against adversity, and beseeches the Head to give him a fresh chance at Greyfriars as a cricket coach.

THE LEOPARD CANNOT CHANGE ITS SPOTS!

Dr. Locke consults Mr. Quelch in the matter, and Philip Blagden—ex-scholar of Greyfriars, and ex-convict into the bargain—takes up his new duties amongst familiar scenes. One of the "familiar scenes" to which Mr. Philip Blagden seems to pay special attention is the ancient ruin known as the Priory. Around and within these crumbling brick walls Mr. Frank Richards weaves his plot, with Philip Blagden as the central figure. You will like this stirring yarn, chums, although little of your sympathy will go out to Blagden, whom, it transpires, is just as much a rogue as ever he was.

"THE SECRET OF THE SACRED RIVER!"

There is another thrilling complete story in our grand series of detective yarns dealing with the Purple Sandals. The chase is nearing the end, and the secret of those same sandals is shortly to be revealed. Mind you read this grand story, boys, for it forms the most important link in the chain of clues collected by Ferrers Locke, the wizard detective.

"INVENTIONS!"

That is the subject Harry Wharton & Co. have chosen for their next issue of the "Herald." Such a subject offers plenty of scope for fun and excitement, and the finished article abounds with both. Don't miss it!

"THE MYSTERY OF THE CRIMSON CAVE!"

To complete a really good, value-for-money programme, there is another short complete story of the stirring days of our forefathers. This particular yarn introduces Harry Morgan, a notorious buccaneer who "made hay while the sun shone." But, like the majority of pirates, Morgan never lived to a ripe old age—retribution followed close on his heels!

GRAND NEW SERIAL!

Last week I gave you a few particulars of the stunning treat I have in store for you, boys, when the Ferrers Locke series finish. Now I can expand a little more. This magnificent story—and you will all vote it magnificent, I have not the slightest doubt—is staged over the period when Richard the Lion Heart was away in Palestine with his gallant Crusaders. At that time, as historians tell us, certain barons, snug in their castles in England, were working for Prince John, who was aiming to seize the throne in his brother's absence. One of Prince John's rascally agents was Hugo, Earl of Charndene—a terror to all who crossed his path. In this coming serial Hugo, Earl of Charndene, figures largely. He makes, if one may be permitted to use the term, a pleasing villain—in bold relief against Tom Hadleigh, a silversmith's apprentice, the hero of the story, and as plucky a lad who ever drew breath or burnished a goblet.

"SHERWOOD GOLD!"

That is the title of this amazing story—a title that arouses your curiosity and your interest as it is intended to do. Forming the background of the skilful plot the author has woven is a talisman—a broken talisman. And this talisman, when the two broken pieces are placed together, provides a stake for the possession of which the Earl of Charndene would risk his soul. I will say no more at this moment concerning the plot, for to do so would spoil something all the better for keeping.

The author draws thrilling pictures of numerous encounters with the men-at-arms in the service of the rascally earl and Robin Hood and his merry men of Sherwood, for Tom Hadleigh throws in his lot with the outlaws. We get more than a glimpse of ancient pageantry, tournaments, intrigues, and the loyalty of such sterling men as Robin Hood, Little John, Alan-a-dale, and others sporting the Lincoln green.

There's not a dry line in this serial, chums. Summing up, I do not hesitate to say that nothing like it, nothing so good, nothing so thrilling, has ever appeared in your favourite paper before. Look out for the opening chapters, starting in the "Magnet" dated week ending July 5th, and tell all your pals who are non-readers of the "Magnet" that this splendid serial is a good thing that should on no account be missed.

WITH TRUE INTENT.

That's Frank Richards all over. He is always trying to please. It is enough to touch the heart and make strong men weep to see it. But when a painstaking correspondent implores me to let him know whether Peter Todd's grandmother, on his uncle's side, used bone knitting-needles or was content with the wooden variety, I confess I am done. It's these whimsical, tricky little details which dodge one. Some readers want to know so much. They inquire what kind of jam Bunter had at his tea on the third Monday in the month; and, good and excellent fellow as he is, Frank Richards cannot get all these facts into his yarns.