

Extra-SPECIAL Long Story of "THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME!"  
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

# The MAGNET 2<sup>d</sup>





# THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME!



By FRANK RICHARDS.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### A Spill in the Snow!

**I**'T'S coming down!"

"What-ho!"

Harry Wharton glanced from the windows of the car into darkness thick with whirling snowflakes.

There was no doubt that it was coming down. It was coming down with a vengeance!

The chauffeur had slowed down. The road was thick with snow. Only a few flakes had been falling in the calm, clear evening when the chums of Greyfriars had left Cavandale Abbey, where they had spent the Christmas holidays. But a few miles from the abbey it had come on in a sudden, heavy flurry.

"Cheerio!" said Bob Cherry. "What's the odds so long as you're 'appy?"

"The happiness is great, but the esteemed cold is also terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"We shall be in late!" said Johnny Bull.

"Better late than never," said Bob cheerily; "and if we get stuck in the snow, it will be never! Or, at least, not till the milk in the morning."

"My hat! That's a skid!" ejaculated Frank Nugent, as the car rocked.

"The skidfulness was—"

"Terrific!" chuckled Bob. "We might have picked a nicer evening. Still, matters might be worse."

"They couldn't be much worse," said Harry Wharton, staring into the thickness of the snowstorm.

"Lots!" answered Bob. "Banter might be with us! Think what a jolly old blessing it is that he's still staying at Cavandale."

And the juniors chuckled in assent. Billy Bunter, with whom the Famous

Five of Greyfriars had had the pleasure—or otherwise—of spending the Christmas holidays, was entrenched at Lord Cavandale's mansion, to remain till the end of the vacation.

The Famous Five were going to spend the end of the vacation at Wharton Lodge, and they had been more than willing to leave William George Bunter in more magnificent quarters.

It was a run of only about fifteen miles to the lodge, and they had expected to make it in quick time. But the sudden heavy fall of snow altered all that.

The car was following a rather steep lane that led to the Wimford road; but the main road was still some miles ahead. In that hilly lane it bumped and jolted over ruts and ridges that were hidden by a thick white blanket.

Bump!

"Oh, my hat!"

The juniors were pitched together as the car bumped and rocked again.

"This is jolly!" gasped Frank Nugent.

"The jolliffulness is—"

"Preposterous!" chuckled Bob.

More than a snowstorm and a rocketing car were required to damp Robert Cherry's exuberant spirits.

The car glided on again, grinding through thick snow. The headlights gleamed out into black January darkness.

"Well, I shan't be sorry to get to Wharton Lodge!" remarked Johnny Bull. "We— Oh, my hat! Whoooop!"

Bump! Crash!

"Look out!"

Exactly what happened the five schoolboys in the car hardly knew. There was a skid and a whirl, and the car crashed, and leafless branches dashed against the windows. One of the panes went, and a frosty branch thrust into the car.

"Oh crumbs!"

"We're over—"

"Hold on!"

"Gerroff my neck!" came Johnny Bull's voice, in muffled tones. "Ow! Gerroff! You're squashing me!"

The car was half on its side, the bonnet plunged deep into tangled thickets. The juniors sprawled; Johnny Bull, rather unfortunately for him, at the bottom of the heap.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob.

Harry Wharton wrenched open the door on the upper side, hurling it back. He was the first to scramble out.

After him came Bob and Nugent, and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh; and then he gave a hand to the breathless Johnny and dragged him out.

The five juniors stood in whirling snowflakes.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Hurt?" shouted Bob Cherry, peering at the chauffeur through the flakes.

"No, sir!" gasped the driver. "But—the car—" He had shut off the engine. "She's done, sir."

"Oh, great Christopher Columbus!" ejaculated Bob.

Nugent whistled.

"Can't you get her to go?" he asked.

"Fraid not, sir! She's taken a crash—on that tree—might have been a bad smash!" said the chauffeur. "I'm sorry, young gentlemen; I shall have to walk back as far as Ashwood and get help."

"Oh crumbs!"

The chums of the Remove looked at one another. They were stranded; there was no doubt about that.

"It's five miles back to Ashwood," said Harry Wharton. "Six or seven to the abbey. May as well walk on as walk back."

"What about the bags?" asked Nugent.

"We should have to leave the baggage



on the car, anyhow. It's about eight miles to the lodge. We can do it."

"Looks as if we shall have to!" said Nugent. "In fact, there's nothing else to be done."

"Luckily, I know the country about here pretty thoroughly," said Wharton. "We needn't follow the roads; we can save miles in the lanes and footpaths. After all, a walk won't kill us."

"No fear!"  
"The no-fearfulness is terrific. Let us proceed walkfully," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, "and the soonerfulness is the betterfulness, for the esteemed cold is preposterous."

There was obviously nothing else to be done, and the chums of Greyfriars made up their minds to it.

"You can bring the baggage on to Wharton Lodge to-morrow," Wharton said to the chauffeur. "We'll walk the rest now."

"Yes, sir!"  
And the Famous Five started, heading for the distant lodge, and leaving Lord Cavandale's chauffeur to proceed in the opposite direction.

Down the lane they went in a bunch, with their caps pulled low, and their coat-collars turned up against the wind.

For a mile they followed the lane, tramping through the thick snow, and then Wharton halted. There was a shadowy opening in the woods that bordered the lane on the right.

"Right wheel!" he said.  
Bob Cherry stared into the gloomy path under overhanging, leafless branches that were crusted with snow, stretching over the dim path like skeleton arms.

"Is that a jolly old short cut?" he asked.

"Yes! It saves a good mile by going through the wood. I know every inch of the way," added Wharton reassuringly. "I belong to this part, you know."

"Right-ho! Lead on, Macduff!" said Bob.

And the juniors turned into the gloomy footpath under the trees. Here the snow was less thick than in the open lane, the branches above intercepting many of the flakes. Still, there was plenty of it, and the juniors' feet sank deep into the white carpet as they tramped on.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry suddenly.

Wharton glanced round.  
"What—" he began.

"I saw somebody! Hallo—look out!"  
From the blackness under the trees, a black shadow detached itself. A burly form, half seen in the gloom, blocked the path of the Greyfriars fellows, and a deep, throaty, surly voice growled:

"'Old on!"

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Handling a Footpad!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stopped suddenly.

Their hearts beat a little faster at that sudden challenge from the dimly seen stranger in the gloom.

It was a man of burly frame who stood before them, muffled up against the cold, with a cap pulled down over his ears. Except for the glint of threatening eyes, he was little more than a shadow to them. But they made out that his right hand grasped a heavy stick, which was lifted as if in menace.

"'Old on!" repeated the surly voice.

"What do you want?" rapped Wharton, recovering at once from the

surprise. "Who are you, and what do you want?"

"I fancy I can guess that one!" murmured Bob Cherry, and he stooped behind Wharton, and gathered up handfuls of snow. In fact, it was pretty clear, before the man answered, that it was a footpad who had barred the path of the schoolboys through the lonely wood.

"Never mind who I am!" growled the surly voice. "But I'll tell you what I want. I want all you young coves 'ave got about you, and I want it quick."

Bob Cherry, a little behind Wharton, kneaded a snowball hard. None of the Greyfriars party had any idea of being robbed by a tramp—Bob least of all.

Wharton's eyes gleamed at the shadowy figure.

"You'll get nothing from us," he said curtly. "Stand aside!"

There was a glimmer of discoloured teeth, as the ruffian's stubbly lips were drawn back in a snarl. The cudgel swung into the air:

"I ain't fooling!" he snarled. "Burn my body and boots, you're jest the coves I like to meet in a place like this here! 'And over your loose cash, watches and chains, too, afore—"

"Stand aside!" rapped out Wharton, clenching his fists.

"You cheeky rotter!" bawled Johnny Bull. "There's five of us here, and we'll handle you fast enough if you don't shift."

**Just "Tatters" he is known by. Who his parents were, what his real name is, are mysteries that have puzzled "Tatters" for years. But "Tatters" meeting with Harry Wharton & Co. opens up a vista of happiness that the friendless waif hitherto has only dreamed of.**

"You'll get 'urt!" came the surly growl, and the cudgel was brandished in the air. "Now, then—oooooooooh!"

Whiz!  
The snowball flew from Bob Cherry's hand with unerring aim. It crashed fairly into the stubbly face, and the ruffian staggered backwards with a howl.

Before he could recover his balance, Harry Wharton had leaped at him, and his fist crashed on a stubbly chin. The force of the blow made his knuckles tingle. With a breathless grunt, the ruffian dropped on his back in the snow.

"Bag him!" yelled Johnny Bull.

With a stream of lurid oaths, the man was struggling to rise; and had he reached his feet, with the cudgel in his hand, there was no doubt that some of the schoolboys would have been seriously damaged. But he was not given time. Wharton followed up his blow, by dropping with his knees on the ruffian, dashing him to the earth again, and the next instant Bob was on him, tearing the cudgel from his hand.

The cudgel was flung away into the darkness under the trees. The ruffian grasped at Wharton, to fling him off, when Bob's grip closed on him. A moment more, and Johnny Bull was piling in, and Nugent and the nabob were not far behind.

"Got him!" gasped Bob.

"The gotfulness is absurd!" panted the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Jump on him!"  
"Bag the brute!"

The fallen ruffian was struggling furiously. He was burly, and sinewy, and his struggles were desperate. But the Famous Five were too many for him—easily too many for him, powerful as he was.

For three or four minutes there was a breathless struggle; but at the end of it, the ruffian was lying gasping on the ground, held by the Greyfriars fellows, with a knee on his chest.

"Had enough?" gasped Bob Cherry. A spluttering gasp was the only answer.

The ruffian had evidently had enough. He could only pant for breath, as he lay sprawling on his back in the snow, in the grasp of the Greyfriars fellows.

"We've got him!" chuckled Bob breathlessly. "I rather think the gentleman is sorry he spoke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"He ought to be run in!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yes, rather! But we can't carry him five or six miles!" grinned Bob. "If he's sorry, we might let him crawl away. Are you sorry, Bill Sikes?"

A curse answered him from the sprawling ruffian.

Bob Cherry took a businesslike grip on his collar.

Bang!  
There was a fiendish yell from the footpad as his head smote the ground. The snow under him softened the tap a little, but not much, to judge by the beef that he put into his yell.

"Sorry now?" asked Bob politely.  
"I'll out yer!" gasped the footpad. "I'll meet you agin, and I—I'll—Whoooooo!"

Bang!  
"Third time of asking," said Bob Cherry, while his comrades chuckled. "Are you sorry, dear man?"

"Leggo! I—I'll—"

Bang!  
The roar from the footpad as his head smote the hard, unsympathetic earth for the third time, awoke the echoes of the snowy wood far and near.

He struggled frantically, and for some moments the Famous Five had to hold him hard. But he gasped and sank down again, spluttering with breathless fury.

"You haven't answered me yet, Weary Willie!" said Bob, with undiminished politeness. "I asked you whether you were sorry!"

"Burn my body and boots! I—I'll—"

Bang!  
"Whoop! Leave off!" yelled the footpad desperately. "Ow! Oh, my 'ead! Yes, I'm sorry—sorry—anything you like! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," said Bob. "This sportsman having expressed his regret, I think we may as well let him rip! You're quite sure you're sorry, Tired Tim?"

"Ow! Yes! Leave a bloke alone! Ow, my 'ead!"

"Then we'll love you and leave you!" said Bob cheerily. "Next time you go on the prowl, mind you don't catch a tartar. You're liable to get hurt, you know. I'll just stuff your cap down your back—"

"Ow!"

"And a fistful of snow—"

"Groooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And now you can mizzle! Glad we've made you sorry. And if we meet you again, we'll make you sorrier! Come on, you men!"

And the Famous Five, chuckling, tramped on their way, leaving the footpad sitting in the snow, gasping.



spluttering, and swearing luridly, as he strove to extract his cap from the back of his neck.

He was soon lost to sight and sound, however; and the silence of the dark woods surrounded the juniors.

Several times they glanced back, lest the ruffian should have followed them; but there was no sign of him. It was pretty certain that the handling he had received had satisfied him that the Greyfriars party were better left alone.

The juniors emerged from the foot-path at last, into a narrow lane, where there was a glimmer of light from a steely sky. The snow was still coming down in thick flakes.

"How far now, old bean?" asked Bob.

"Four miles yet," answered Wharton, with a laugh. "Getting tired?"

"Not in your lifetime! Put it on!" said Bob. "Shan't be sorry to get to Wharton Lodge, though."

"The gladfulness to arrive at the esteemed lodge will be preposterous and absurd," said Hurree Singh, through chattering teeth. The junior from India's coral strand was not enjoying the snow and the biting January wind.

"Hallo, there's a light!" said Johnny Bull, as he caught a flicker of ruddy flame from the darkness ahead. "Somebody's got a fire!"

"Gipsies, perhaps!" said Harry.

It was a coke fire in a perforated tin pail that threw a ruddy gleam into the night. Evidently somebody was camping out that snowy, windy evening, under the leafless trees at the side of the lane.

As the Greyfriars fellows drew nearer, they saw a small hand-cart parked beside the lane. Close by it was a tiny tattered tent—a mere canvas shelter, open at the front.

In front of the tent the fire-bucket glowed red, spreading a warmth through the chilly air that was grateful and comforting in the bitter January cold.

Just within the opening of the tent, seated on what looked like a bundle of rags, was a boy. He was eating bread-and-cheese with a clasp-knife.

The juniors regarded him with some curiosity as they came up.

Their footsteps made no sound in the carpet of snow, and the lad in the tent, busy with his supper, did not observe them at first.

With a chunk of bread in his left hand, the clasp-knife in his right, he seemed very busy, taking alternative bites at the bread and at lumps of cheese which he impaled on the end of the knife.

It could not be called an elegant mode of taking a meal, but the lad seemed to be enjoying it.

A shabby old coat, made for a full-grown man, was hunched round him, ragged trousers showing below, and a pair of boots much too large for him, and held together with odds and ends of string and whipcord.

His face, in the glow of the firelight, was rather good-looking—but even at a distance it could be seen that it was very badly in want of a wash. A battered bowler hat, obviously a man's hat, was stuck on the back of a shock of curly hair.

The satisfaction with which the tattered youth was devouring his supper made the juniors smile. It reminded them, too, that their own supper was due, though still a good many miles away.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" called out Bob Cherry suddenly, as the Famous Five came up to the little camp.

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The tattered youth gave a start, and jumped to his feet.

The happy satisfaction in his unwashed face vanished instantly, giving place to a look of fear and alarm.

But that was only for a moment. As he stared across the glowing fire-bucket at the five cheery young faces, his expression changed to surprise.

"Cripes!" he ejaculated. "I thought it was Tinker Wilson for a minute. Wot do you blokes want?"

Harry Wharton smiled.

"Nothing," he answered. "But if you don't mind, we'll warm ourselves at your fire for a few minutes before we go on."

The tattered youth eyed them dubiously for a moment. Then he stepped out of the tent, and stared up and down the lane in the falling flakes. Then he nodded.

"He ain't coming back," he said. "You squat down if you like, and warm your toes! 'Orrid night, ain't it?"

And he sat down in the canvas shelter again, and resumed operations on the bread-and-cheese.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Tatters and the Tinker!

**H**ARRY WHARTON & Co. exchanged a glance, and then accepted the invitation of the tattered youth. It was weary work tramping through thick snow, and they were glad of a rest. And the warm, cheery glow of the bright red fire in the bucket was very welcome. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh drew close to it, and the boy in the tent blinked at his dusky face as it shone darkly in the firelight. There were several boxes and sacks about, and the juniors made shift with them for seats. As soon as they had sat down, with the warm glow of the fire on their faces, they realised that they were more tired than they had supposed.

"I say, this is jolly," remarked Bob Cherry, as he stretched his hands to the fire.

"Think so?" asked the tattered lad, with his mouth full.

"Yes, rather."

"The jolliffulness is terrific, my esteemed, hospitable young friend," said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

The tattered one gave a start, and almost swallowed a chunk of cheese. He coughed, and the juniors grinned. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's weird and wonderful English often had a startling effect on strangers.

"Cripes!" said the unwashed one. "Wot did you say?"

"I remarkably observed that the jolliffulness was terrific, my esteemed and ridiculous friend," answered the nabob.

"Bust my buttons!" said the boy in the tent.

"On your travels, kid?" asked Harry Wharton, wondering a little at finding a lad no older than himself alone in that solitary place. "On your own?"

"No fear! I'm travelling with Tinker Wilson. That's his outfit." The boy gave a nod towards the hand-cart. "I wheel the cart, and Tinker Wilson goes round to the back doors to ask for kettles to mend, and sneaks the washin' off the line and the chickens that's running loose."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'm Tatters!" added the boy, with a grin.

"Tatters?"

"That's me!" The boy eyed the

juniors meditatively. "You blokes 'ungry? I got some more bread-and-cheese, and I don't care if you scoff the lot. I got to go through it, anyhow."

Harry Wharton & Co. were, as a matter of fact, ready for their supper, but provisions from Tinker Wilson's outfit did not quite appeal to them. So they shook their heads politely.

"Thanks, we shall be getting in to supper soon," said Harry. "But what do you mean by having to go through it?"

Tatters chuckled.

"Tinker's gone," he explained. "Looking for a chance to pinch something, I dassay. Well, while he's gone, I'm scoffing the grub. I tell you, I was hungry. But won't he kick up a shine when he comes back and finds I've scoffed the bread-and-cheese! My eye!"

And Tatters bolted another chunk, as if in hot haste to get as much as possible stowed away before the redoubtable Tinker returned.

Johnny Bull frowned.

"Mean to say your governor keeps you short of grub?" he asked.

Tatters stared at him.

"Don't be just," he answered. "Not 'arf."

"What do you stand it for, then?"

"You ain't seen the Tinker," answered Tatters. "When you see him you'll know why a bloke stands it! When he lays a knobby stick round a cove, I can tell you, it 'urts."

And Tatters wriggled reminiscently.

"But the man has no right to beat you," said Bob Cherry indignantly. "You could leave him if you liked, kid."

"Where'd I go?" said Tatters. "Bloke's got to live. I did cut and run once, but he found me agin, and I tell you, he didn't 'arf bash me! My word!"

The juniors were silent.

"He's not your father, I suppose?" asked Harry, after a pause.

"Ain't got a father, nor nobody," said Tatters. "I spose I had one, like other blokes, but I ain't ever seed 'im. Tinker says he picked me up under a hedge, which is a bloomin' fib, because he ain't the man to do it. But I've always been with Tinker." He gobbled food fast while he talked, and one eye was constantly on the shadowy lane. "I 'ope he won't butt in afore I've finished. I ain't had a feed like this 'ere for weeks. 'Cept one—that was a pudding!" A gloating look came over Tatters' face. "I spose you blokes has all the puddings you want!" he added.

"Well, yes, I suppose so," said Harry.

"Bet you don't enjoy 'em like I did that one!" said Tatters. "It was given me at Christmas, and it was a real Christmas pudding—no error! I tell you, it was prime! Cook at a big 'ouse give it to me—big 'ouse Reigate way, close by Wimford! Folks was away for Christmas, and the cook she let me sit by the kitchen fire, and the maids turning up their noses at my rags!" Tatters grinned. "Fat old bloke comes in and says, 'Why, whatever's this?' he says, staring at a bloke. 'It's a pore boy, Wells!' says the cook, 'and I'm sure if the colonel was at 'ome,' she says, 'he would not object,' she says. The fat old cove—butler, I reckon he was—stares at me 'ard, but he gives me 'arf-a-crown. I got it now—you bet I ain't letting on to Tinker."

And Tatters grinned and munched.

"My hat!" said Harry. "That must be my home—my uncle's house—where



they gave you the Christmas pudding, kid. I'm jolly glad they did."

Tatters looked at him. "Ouse on the Wimford road, red tiled roof, stuck back in a park," he said. "That where you live?"

"That's it," said Harry. "You're one of the lucky ones, ain't you?" said Tatters cheerfully, and without a trace of envy in look or tone. "Well, it's a good thing some blokes are lucky; it would be a 'ard world if they waen't."

The juniors looked at Tatters, and looked at one another. How a fellow could keep cheerful, leading such a life as Tatters led, they could hardly imagine. But he seemed cheerful enough; though the cheery expression died off his face whenever he looked up the lane into the shadows, to watch for the coming of the tinker.

"But look here, kid," said Frank Nugent, "you don't really mean that Wilson will wallop you when he comes in, for bagging a supper?"

of every month, he has a bunch of notes from somewhere. Then he gets drunk as a lord for days on end, and I 'ave a bit of a rest."

"You ought to leave him," said Bob. Tatters shrugged his shoulders.

"Look here, kid," said Harry Wharton, "you remember the house where they gave you the Christmas pudding—you could find it again?"

"Course I could."

"Well, if your governor ill uses you, and you want to cut, you head for that house," said Harry. "My uncle is at home now, and he will protect you."

Tatters shook his head.

It was the footpad who had attacked them in the road.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Hands Off!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry cheerily.

"That scoundrel!" growled Johnny Bull.

"That rotter!" said Nugent.

Tinker Wilson came nearer, his narrow, beady eyes glittering at the schoolboys under his shaggy black brows.



As the enraged ruffian sprang at him, Tatters struck hard with the heavy iron!

"Won't he just!" said Tatters. "Is he too big for you to punch?" Tatters stared.

"Wot to!" he answered. "He's a big cove, strong as a 'orse. I've seed him knock out two men at a time in a row in a pub."

"Like us to hang on and see him when he comes home?" asked Bob Cherry. "We'll lend you a hand, and give him a taste of his own stick, what?"

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull. Tatters chuckled.

"I'd like it, but what's the good?" he said. "He would only take it out of me all the more arter. P'r'aps he'll come back drunk, and go to sleep. He will, if he's got any money. I've seen him with money," added Tatters thoughtfully. "I don't know where he gets it, but he has it sometimes—pound notes in a bunch."

"I asked him once, and he hit me in the eye," Tatters rubbed his eye. "I ain't asked him again. Course, he's always pinching; but re'glar, the first

"Nothing doing!" he answered. "Fancy me butting into a 'ouse like that! Me in my rags! I can't do no job, except lend a 'and tinkering, and push the cart. Your uncl' ain't a tinker, is he?"

"Oh, my hat! No!" gasped Wharton. "But he might be able to find you a job of some sort; anyhow, he would see that you are protected from that brute you've described."

Tatters jumped up. "Look out! He's coming!" he exclaimed. "You young gents better clear off—Tinker don't like people round."

The juniors rose to their feet. From the darkness of the lane a burly muffled figure tramped into the glowing radius of light from the fire. A stubbly, scowling face glared at the Greyfriars fellows. And a suspicion that sprang into the minds of the juniors was confirmed by the first words uttered by Tinker Wilson.

"You! You young 'ounds!"

Evidently he recognised them as the party of schoolboys he had attacked on the footpath, and who had handled him so severely.

It was, doubtless, the recollection of that handling which kept him from violence at the present moment.

His look showed plainly enough how he would have liked to rush at the juniors, hitting out right and left.

Tatters looked at the schoolboys, and looked at the tinker. All the ruddy cheerfulness had gone out of his face now. An expression of hopeless dread and trouble had settled there instead; an expression that went straight to the hearts of the Greyfriars fellows.

The tinker eyed them evilly.

"Wot you doin' 'ere?" he demanded. "This here is my camp. You get out, see? Get out afore you're hurt."

Wharton gave the ruffian a glance of contempt.

"We shall please ourselves about that, Mr. Tinker Wilson," he answered. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,195.



scornfully. "If you want any more trouble there's lots ready for you."

"Lots!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "The lotfulness is terrific, my esteemed and disgusting tinker."

"You young gents better go," muttered Tatters uneasily. "If you cheek him he'll only take it out of me."

"You talking with them young 'ounds, Tatters," said the ruffian, with an evil look at the boy. "Ain't I told you often enough not to talk with strangers? Ain't I walloped you for it, many a time? You look out!"

"I ain't done no 'arm, Tinker," muttered the boy. "These 'ere young gents jest stopped to warm at the fire and—"

"That's enough from you," snarled the ruffian. "I'll attend to you presently, 'you young limb!" He glared at the juniors. "Ain't you going?"

"We're going," said Harry Wharton quietly. "But I've got something to say to you before we go, Tinker Wilson."

"Stow it!" "You tried to rob us, on the footpath yonder," said Harry. "You can be sent to prison for that, and you know it."

"I ain't never seed you before," growled the ruffian. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"You can say that before the magistrates, if you're taken up," said Harry. "And I warn you, that if you lay a finger on that lad, I'll have you taken into custody and charged with robbery with violence. I mean what I say—every word of it. Tatters!" He turned to the ragged youth. "You know where my home is. If that man touches you, come along to Wharton Lodge at once, and I'll see that he's

sent to prison. He will get six months, and that will give you a chance to get clear of him."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Tatters. "Who's going to 'urt the kid?" blustered the tinker. "I ain't laying a finger on 'im, am I?"

Harry Wharton's threat, spoken in a tone of quiet determination, had evidently cowed the ruffian.

"Mind that you don't!" said Wharton. "Tatters, you've got sense enough to do as I tell you—come to Wharton Lodge. Ask for Harry Wharton, and I'll take you to my uncle, and he will see that the brute is prosecuted. Keep to that, and the brute won't dare to touch you."

"I'll remember it, sir!" muttered Tatters; but his look at the hulking ruffian was very uneasy.

"Good-night, kid!" "Good-night, sir!"

The juniors turned away. They were feeling a kind and friendly interest in the nameless Tatters; but now that Tinker Wilson was there, they had to go. They tramped away down the lane, Tinker Wilson's savage scowl following them till they disappeared in the darkness and the falling flakes.

Tatters watched them out of sight with wistful eyes; and drew a deep, deep breath when they were gone.

The cheery schoolboys had come into his dingy life like beings from another world. It seemed to him as if they had brought a ray of light with them into the darkness of his dingy, dismal life, which vanished with their departure.

He turned his head, to look uneasily and fearfully at the scowling tinker.

"You young 'ound!" muttered the ruffian between his teeth.

Tatters made no answer. It was

evident that the brute found it hard to control his savage temper; that he was longing to lay hands on the boy. But for the present, at least, he dared not. Harry Wharton's quiet words were still in his ears; and he knew that Wharton would keep his word. So long as he was within reach of Wharton Lodge, Tatters was safe from his brutality.

"It'll keep!" muttered the tinker hoarsely. "It'll keep! We'll go on the road again in the morning, you young 'ound, you! We'll be in another county by to-morrow night! It'll keep!"

And the ruffian went into the tent without another word to Tatters. Tatters mended the fire; rolled himself in an old rug, and lay down to sleep under the hand-cart.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. were tramping on through the winter night. For some time they talked as they went, discussing the strange encounter with Tatters; but as the long miles passed under their tramping feet they fell into silence.

Even Bob Cherry was tired by the time they came, at long last, in sight of Wharton Lodge.

"Dear me, you are late!" said Miss Amy Wharton, when Wells admitted the five tired juniors.

"The latefulness is terrific, esteemed madam!" said Hurree Singh. "But the latefulness is superior to the neverfulness, as the English proverb remarks."

"You've surely not walked from Cavandale Abbey in this weather?" exclaimed Colonel Wharton.

"Only the second lap, sir," said Bob. "The car found trouble in the snow. But we've had a jolly nice walk, haven't we, you men?"

"The niceness was preposterous!" "There is a nice warm supper ready!" murmured Miss Wharton.

And the nice warm supper made the chums of the Remove feel better. After supper the colonel was told of the incident of the footpad and the meeting with Tatters and the tinker. The old military gentleman frowned grimly as he listened.

"I'm rather sorry you let the rascal off!" he grunted. "If you are certain that this tinker is the man who stopped you in the wood—"

"Well, there isn't much doubt about that," said Harry. "But we gave him a jolly good ragging."

"The ragfulness was terrific!" Colonel Wharton smiled.

"Well, let it go at that," he said. "But if the boy should come here, as you advised him, Harry, I will certainly see that he is protected and that the ruffian is sent to his proper place."

The juniors, when they went to bed, wondered whether they would ever see Tatters again. They would have been surprised could they have peeped into the near future.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Extraordinary!

"NONSENSE!"

"But—"

"Nonsense!"

The voice spoke sharply, or rather, barked.

It was a couple of days since the return of Harry Wharton & Co. to Wharton Lodge, and a fine, clear, frosty afternoon.

The chums of the Remove were walking to Wimford, the little country town a few miles from the lodge. By the roadside a large and handsome car was halted. A chauffeur stood by the

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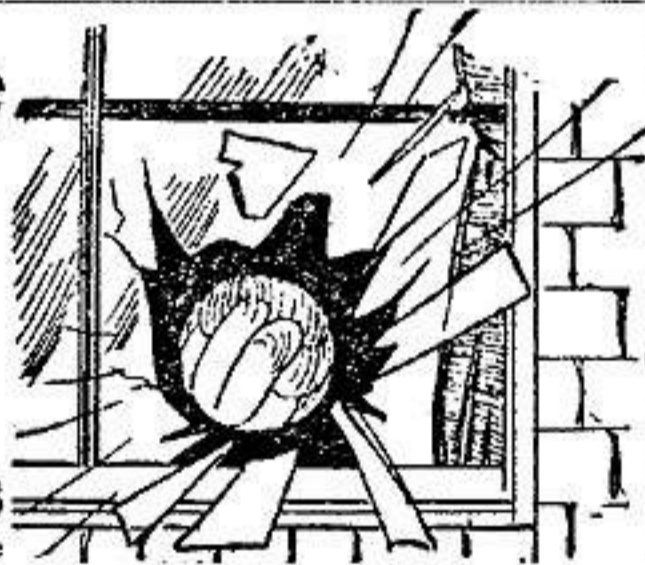
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bonnet, erect and expressionless, while a young man stood by the open door of the car, addressing an old gentleman who sat within.

It was the old gentleman who barked. The juniors glanced at him as they came along. Old as he was by his looks, age had not diminished the power of his voice. His expressive bark could have been heard at a considerable distance.

At a glance, he was obviously a wealthy old gentleman. The car was the last word in cars, the chauffeur was the very best thing in chauffeurs. The old gentleman was enveloped in a fur coat that might have cost hundreds of pounds. He wore a silk hat which reflected the gleam of the wintry sun, jammed down over rather shaggy, grey brows. Over his coat-collar little of his face was to be seen—chiefly his nose, which was prominent, curved, and a good deal like a beak; a lofty and aristocratic nose, full of character.

"Nonsense!" he barked again. The young man at the door of the car murmured something. His manner to the old gentleman was deeply respectful. If he disliked hearing his remarks described as nonsense, he did not betray his dislike. But his cold, clean-cut face did not indicate that patience and good temper formed part of his character, all the same. Perhaps he had his own reasons—and strong reasons—for keeping in the good graces of the irascible old gentleman.

Harry Wharton & Co. had to pass within a few feet of the halted car, and could not, therefore, help hearing what was said, though it was of no interest to them. The young man spoke in a respectful tone.

"But, Sir George——"  
"Nonsense!" Sir George rapped it out really like the bark of a dog. "No doubt you would be glad to get back to town, Cyril?"

"Not at all, sir. But——"  
"Nonsense!" This agreeable word seemed to form a considerable part of Sir George's vocabulary. "If you are tired of my company, Cyril, I will give you a lift to the nearest railway station, and you can return to London."

"My dear sir——"  
"My dear grandson," barked Sir George, "why did you offer to come with me if you are going to throw cold water on the search all the time—what?"

"You do me injustice, sir!" said the young man in a hurt tone. "I came because I desired to help. But——"

"But!" barked the old gentleman. "But, really, it seems like searching for a needle in a haystack, sir. And, after all, your inquiry agents are paid to do this work."

"Nonsense!"  
"Really, sir——"  
"We have definite news of the boy!" barked Sir George. "If you are tired, return to town. I shall not return till I have found him. I have my duty to do, sir. That is my duty. Cholmondeleys, sir, do their duty, whatever the Rackstraws may do!"

The young man coloured.  
"You are unjust, sir!" he said. "I have done, and am doing, my best. But——"

"Nonsense!"  
Cyril Rackstraw said no more. Sir George Cholmondeley did not seem in a mood for argument.

Harry Wharton & Co. had passed the car by this time. They did not take heed of the little scene, having no interest in what was apparently a family dispute.

But as they passed, the old gentleman leaned out of the open door and beckoned to them.

"Stop a moment, please!" he barked. "Stop!"

There was an imperious note in Sir George's voice. Evidently he was an old gentleman accustomed to instant obedience, and did not, perhaps, realise that the whole world was not at his orders.

But the Greyfriars fellows stopped politely. They were nice youths, with a proper respect for age. They turned to the car, suppressed their smiles, and raised their hats to Sir George.

"Come here!" barked Sir George. Harry Wharton approached the car. The young man stepped aside with a clouded face.

Wharton felt a little sorry for that young man. He felt that he would not have liked very much to be Sir George's grandson himself.

Sir George jammed a gold-rimmed eyeglass under one grizzled eyebrow and stared at the Greyfriars junior.

"Do you live in this part of the country?" he asked

Harry Wharton smiled.  
"Yes, sir," he answered.

"Then it is possible that you have seen the man of whom I am in search," rapped Sir George.

"Possibly, sir," assented Wharton. "If there is anything I can do——"

**URGENT!**

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If it's a good 'un you'll get A DANDY LEATHER POCKET WALLET FOR IT.

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Claude Hoskins once patiently sa  
Composing a tune in D Flat.  
He thought it absurd  
That fellows who heard  
Should ask who had trod on the  
cat!

Get busy right away, boys!

"A man named Wilson," barked Sir George. "You may have heard the name?"

"Oh, yes!" said Harry. "A Mr. Wilson keeps the post office at Wimford."

"Nonsense!"  
"Wha-a-at?"

"Who is talking about the post office at Wimford?" barked Sir George testily. "Confound the post office at Wimford!"

"Oh!"  
"The boy does not understand, sir——" began Mr. Rackstraw mildly.

"Nonsense!"  
Mr. Rackstraw was silent again.

"The person I am looking for," resumed Sir George, "is a tinker."

"A—a tinker!" ejaculated Wharton.

Why that magnificent old gentleman in that magnificent car should be searching the Surrey highways and by-ways for a tinker was a mystery. Nobody would have guessed, to look at him, that he had any interest in tinkers.

"Yes, a tinker. You know what a tinker is, I presume?" barked Sir George.

"Oh, yes!" gasped Wharton. "Certainly!"

"Well, perhaps you have seen a tinker named Wilson. He was in this part of the country. I have positive informa-

tion that he was in this part of the country——"

"Not exactly positive, sir!" Mr. Rackstraw ventured to interject.

"Nonsense!"

The young man relapsed into unhappy silence again.

"Positive information!" rapped Sir George. "The man was here! He can be found! He shall be found! It is very probable that these boys, walking about the countryside, may have seen him. Very probable indeed! Boy, have you seen a tinker named Wilson?"

"Yes, rather!" said Harry.

A tinker named Wilson, evidently, was the ruffian the juniors had seen on their way from Cavendish Abbey that snowy night. That this superb old gentleman could want to see Tinker Wilson was astounding; still, there could be little doubt about the identity of the man he sought.

"You have seen him?" exclaimed Sir George Cholmondeley.

"Certainly, sir! A tinker named Wilson——"

"That is the man! Was he alone? Or was there a boy with him?" demanded Sir George.

"There was a boy with him, sir."

Sir George gave Mr. Rackstraw a triumphant glare. The young man bit his lip.

"What did I tell you, Cyril? What? What? With the help of this boy—this very intelligent boy—we shall find him! What?"

"I hope so, sir——"

"I hope you do, Cyril! I hope you do!" Sir George turned to Wharton again. "Where did you see this—this tinker?"

"In a lane about five or six miles from here," answered Harry. "It is called Oak Wood Lane."

"When?" rapped Sir George.

"The night before last."

"Oh! You have not seen him since?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know whether he is still in the neighbourhood?"

"I can't say, sir."

"Humph! Perhaps some of your friends have seen him?" Sir George stared round at four other faces.

The Co. shook their heads. They had not seen anything of Tinker Wilson since that meeting at his camp two nights ago; and had, indeed, almost forgotten the existence of the frowsy gentleman.

"Well, well! You are sure that there was a boy with him?"

"Quite, sir!" said Harry, with a smile. "We stopped and talked to the kid for some time."

"Oh! Very good! Did he tell you his name?"

"He was called Tatters, sir!"

"Tatters! Tatters! Absurd! Nonsense! How could he be called Tatters? Tatters is not a name! Nonsense."

"Well, he told us he was called Tatters, sir!" said Wharton mildly. He was feeling more and more compassionate towards Mr. Rackstraw. It could not have been exactly jolly to be this fierce old gentleman's grandson.

"How old was he?" rapped Sir George.

"I didn't ask him, sir."

"Nonsense! You are not a fool, I suppose?"

"I hope not, sir!" said Wharton demurely; while his comrades grinned. They were beginning to be entertained by this extraordinary conversation.

"Well, then, you can judge a boy's age! How old would you suppose him to be?" demanded Sir George.

"About fourteen or fifteen, I think."

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Sir George Cholmondeley nodded. That answer seemed to satisfy him.

"We are on the track, Cyril," he said. "We are certainly on the track. We shall find them."

"I hope so, sir—"

"Huh! Thank you, boy—thank you very much for the information you have given me. Spencer!"

The chauffeur, who had stood like a graven image all this time, apparently deaf and dumb and blind, came to attention.

"Sir George?"

"Are you acquainted with Oak Wood Lane, five or six miles from this spot?"

"No, Sir George."

"Boy! Can you give my chauffeur directions for finding this spot?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Pray do so—pray do so at once. I am much obliged to you—much obliged! You are an intelligent lad!"

Sir George sank back into his seat. Mr. Rackstraw, his face more clouded than ever, climbed into the car and sat down. Harry Wharton gave the chauffeur explicit directions for finding Oak Wood Lane. The man resumed his seat at the wheel, and the car leaped into life.

Sir George Cholmondeley—a courtly old gentleman, with all his fierce ways—raised his shining topper to the juniors in acknowledgement of their existence, and they capped him respectfully in return as the car shot away.

It vanished in a few moments, going at a great speed.

The Greyfriars fellows stared after it and then looked at one another with grinning faces.

"Well," remarked Bob Cherry. "That jolly old gent is a bit of a coughdrop! I shouldn't love to be his grandson!"

"No fear!" chuckled Nugent.

"The no-fearfulness is terrific!"

"But what the thump can a jolly old millionaire like that want with Tatters?" said Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton shook his head. He was deeply puzzled.

"Blessed if I can make it out!" he said. "He may be a kind old gent who's heard of the kid somehow, and wants to take him up and give him a chance in life—"

"He doesn't look a very kind old gent!"

"Nunno; he doesn't! But he wants that kid Tatters—that's a cert! I hope he'll find him—it's bound to be for the kid's advantage, I suppose."

"I fancy Tinker Wilson is far enough away, by this time," remarked Nugent.

"Yes, very likely; but I suppose he can be found if the old sportsman's determined. And he looks determined."

"Ha, ha! He do—he does!"

"Well, I hope he'll have luck," said Harry. "It would be a good thing for young Tatters to be taken away from that brute Tinker Wilson, if that's what the old gent intends."

"Yes, rather!"

And the Famous Five walked on to Wimford considerably perplexed and very much interested in the strange quest of Sir George Cholmondeley.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### The Worm Turns!

PING! Ping! Pong!

The tapping on the tin-kettle was incessant.

Tatters listened to it with a clouded face and a heavy heart.

Tinker Wilson, squatted at his task, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,195.

gave the boy an occasional scowling stare as he worked.

It was seldom that the tinker worked. He had a tinker's outfit in the hand-cart which Tatters had to push. But tinkering was more a blind than anything else with Mr. Wilson.

"Kettles to mend" was often on his lips; but it was seldom that he mended kettles or anything else.

Mr. Wilson's real trade was that of a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. His profession of tinkering gave him an excuse for getting to back doors and back yards. Often and often the tinker found opportunities. Nothing was beneath his notice—from a terrier, a chicken, or a garden rake, to a pair of socks pegged on a clothes-line.

Still, there were times when the tinker had to work.

Apart from his gains as a sneak-thief, and occasionally as a footpad, Mr. Wilson had other sources of income, as Tatters knew; for sometimes he saw the man with a bunch of currency notes, which certainly he had not earned and which he could hardly have pinched. Where the money came from, Tatters had not the faintest idea.

But all Tinker Wilson's money went the same way—in drink and backing horses. However much he had, it did not last long; and he was soon reduced to petty pilfering again; and—in extreme cases—to work.

It was an extreme case now—for Mr. Wilson actually was mending a kettle. Tatters watched him dully.

The boy's life had been a hard one; ever since he could remember, he had been the companion, or rather the slave, of the ruffianly tinker. How he had learned to read and write, he hardly knew.

Once, when the tinker had been settled in a village for a period, a school inspector had dropped on him, and Tatters had gone to school for a few months. But the tinker had gone on his travels again and that was all the schooling that Tatters had ever had.

Generally, the boy was cheerful enough. In summer weather it was pleasant to wander by highway and by-way. In the winter it was harder and grimmer. But hard life had developed Tatters' muscles and he was strong and hardy. The tinker was always brutal, almost always surly; but Tatters was so used to that that he hardly thought of any other existence as possible.

Only once he had made up his mind to bolt; and on that occasion the tinker had tracked him down and recaptured him, and thrashed him unmercifully. Why he had taken the trouble was rather a mystery to Tatters; the man had had to hunt him for days and days before he found him; and Tatters had never dreamed that he was so valuable as all that to his task-master.

But brute as the tinker was, little as he seemed to like the boy, he was evidently determined not to part with him.

And Tatters had not, till of very late, thought of bolting again. It was a hard life, but it was, after all, a living, of sorts. During the days that he had fled from the tinker, he had almost starved. Begging was his only resource, and he liked it little. There was something in the boy's nature that sickened at the thought of stealing; never, by the savagest beating, had the tinker been able to make him steal. And it was of little use for a lad in rags and tatters and dirt to look for a job. Apart from lack of a character, appearances were against him—indeed, more than once a dog had been set on him at sight. He

was judged by his looks, and his looks were dirty and ragged and forlorn.

Tatters had dismissed from his mind the thought of bolting again—till now! Somehow that talk with the Greyfriars juniors in the camp in the snowy lane had made a strange difference.

They had been kind, genial, friendly, talking to poor Tatters as if there was no difference between them—a strange experience for the tinker's boy. Except in the way of occasional charity, he had not been accustomed to much kindness from what he called "toffs." That meeting with Harry Wharton & Co. had opened a vista into a new world to his eyes for the first time—he had been ashamed of his rags and his unwashed face.

"Bolting" was no longer the hopeless prospect it had been. That kind-hearted fellow he had talked with—Wharton—had told him that he could find protection from the tinker. That fellow's uncle was a "toff," and might possibly give him a job. That uncle must be the colonel of whom the cook had spoken on the occasion when Tatters had eaten the Christmas pudding in the kitchen at Wharton Lodge. Probably he was a terrifying old toff, but he was not likely to be so terrifying as the tinker.

As he tramped the roads, after breaking camp at Oak Wood Lane, Tatters had thought more and more of it.

Perhaps the tinker suspected, for he kept a very sharp eye on the boy as they tramped out of Surrey into Sussex.

Now, however, they were more than sixty miles from Wharton Lodge, and the tinker's vigilance had relaxed once more.

Feeling safe from interference at that distance, the tinker had wreaked his pent-up savage temper on Tatters, giving him such a thrashing as he had seldom had before.

Poor Tatters was still aching with it. Tap, tap! Ping, ping, pong!

Tinker Wilson worked savagely and sullenly. He hated work, and he was a bad and clumsy workman. But his money had entirely run out and he was hard up, and work was the only resource for a time.

Savagely he scowled at Tatters over the kettle.

"If you pinched that bike—" he muttered between his discoloured teeth. "As easy as easy it was! I'd 'ave sold it for two quid. Easy!"

"You won't make me steal, tinker!" answered Tatters.

Tinker gritted his teeth.

"Look at me—'ard up!" he snarled. "Mending a blooming kettle for a shilling! And I'd have got two quid for that bike if you'd pinched it when I told you! Burn my body and boots!" Tatters made no reply.

It was an old and sore point with the tinker—always an excuse for cursing and beating.

"Now shove that there soldering-iron in the fire, you lazy young 'ound!" snarled the tinker.

Tatters rose and picked up the soldering-iron. He approached the fire-bucket, in which a few embers burned. Crash!

In sheer brutality and ill-temper the tinker reached out and brought the kettle against the side of the boy's head. Tatters gave a cry and staggered.

"P'r'aps you'll pinch a bike next time I tell you!" snarled the tinker.

Tatters spun round at him, his eyes ablaze. Often and often he had been through it before—he was used to it. But he was feeling different now. The kind friendliness of the Greyfriars fellows, the promise of help and protection, had made a difference—a greater



difference than the tinker dreamed. Long-simmering rebellion boiled up in Tatters' breast.

"You beast!" he yelled.

He gripped the heavy soldering-iron by the wooden handle and glared defiance at Tinker Wilson.

"What's that?" roared the tinker.

"You beast! That's the finish!" panted Tatters. "I'm going! Do you hear? I'm chucking you, you beast!"

Tinker Wilson scrambled to his feet. His bloodshot eyes gleamed at the defiant face of the boy.

"Chucking me, are you?" he snarled. "You tried that on once, and you was sorry for it. By gum!" He grabbed up a stick. "You won't be feeling like going when I'm done with you!"

"Hands off!" said Tatters between his teeth. He flourished the heavy iron. "Hands off, you brute, or—"

Tinker Wilson rushed at him, the stick in the air.

There was a crash as the soldering-iron met the stick, sending it flying from the tinker's hand.

Wilson spat out a curse.

"Hands off!" panted Tatters.

But the enraged ruffian was springing on him, with hands outstretched, his eyes glaring with rage. And Tatters struck, and struck hard, with the heavy iron.

It crashed on the tinker's brawny chest.

Tinker Wilson staggered back with a bellow of rage and pain. Tatters had struck with all the force of a strong young arm.

The tinker staggered, and fell backwards, knocking over the fire-bucket as he fell and scattering the glowing embers.

Tatters gave him one look. The murderous rage in the ruffian's face sent a chill to his heart.

One look was enough. Then Tatters turned and ran up the road with the fleetness of a hare.

Tinker Wilson scrambled to his feet. His hoarse, enraged voice bellowed after the fleeing boy.

"Stop, you young 'ound! I'll limb yer. Come back!"

He was already running hard in pursuit.

Tatters ran on. He tossed the soldering-iron away into the hedge, and ran as if for his life.

Behind him panted the furious tinker, abandoning his camp and his few wretched possessions in his fierce pursuit of the escaping boy.

Tatters glanced over his shoulder.

His heart sickened at the sight of the flushed, infuriated face, the bloodshot eyes, the gritting yellow teeth. The tinker was gaining on him!

The boy set his teeth, and ran desperately. He turned at the first corner, turned again, and yet again.



"The bath is ready, sir!" said Wells, glancing curiously at the forlorn figure of Tatters seated nervously on the edge of the chair.

The tinker was out of sight now, screened by hedges and trees. But that he was still in fierce pursuit the hapless Tatters knew, and, panting hard, he raced on and on.

### THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

#### Bunter Picks Up a Passenger!

**B**ILLY BUNTER leaned back on the soft leather cushions, and smiled. The Owl of the Remove was enjoying life.

That lordly abode, Cavandale Abbey, was still honoured by Billy Bunter's continued residence.

Harry Wharton & Co. had left, but Bunter had no intention of leaving till the last day of the vacation. So long as Lord Cavandale's patience held out Bunter was certain to hold on.

Such an experience was not likely to be repeated. By a strange chance, Bunter had placed his lordship under an obligation, and he was taking the fullest possible advantage of it. Possibly he realised that his welcome was wearing thin. But Bunter did not mind that so long as he was not actually shown the door. Indeed, he would not have minded being shown the door so long as a boot did not help him through the doorway. Bunter, for once, was a guest of a noble lord, living, as it were, in a land of milk and honey, and he was bent on making the most of it, and making it last as long as possible.

Now the fat junior was sprawling luxuriously in one of the Cavandale cars. He was fifty or sixty miles from Cavandale Abbey. Bunter liked joy-rides—when there was nothing to pay. Here there was nothing to pay—not even a tip for the chauffeur. If the chauffeur expected a tip he was

welcome to expect. His expectation was never likely to be realised. Billy Bunter did not believe in tipping. Likewise, he was rather short of the necessary coin of the realm for the purpose.

That morning, Bunter had ordered the car to be brought round. He had ensconced himself in it, and told the chauffeur to "let her out."

Thoughtfully, he had taken a well-packed lunch-basket in the car.

He had enjoyed a run of a hundred miles or so to the westward. He had stopped the car while he ate his lunch, warmly wrapped in rugs. The chauffeur had walked about stamping his feet to keep warm, while the Owl of Greyfriars ate and drank. Bunter forgot his existence, till his lunch was over. Then he told the man to drive home; not too fast, as Bunter intended to have a little nap in the car on his homeward way.

Leaning back luxuriously on soft leather, Bunter smiled.

This was something like!

The car glided along the highways of Sussex, heading homeward. It went at a moderate pace now, as instructed. Bunter sat in a state of dreamy satisfaction.

He was falling into a gentle doze, when he was awakened by the car stopping. Brakes had jammed on.

Bunter sat up and took notice.

He blinked at the chauffeur through his big spectacles. The car had come to a standstill.

"I say, what are you stopping for?" grunted Bunter.

Then, blinking past the driver, he discerned a figure in the road. A strange-looking figure it was—a lad no older than Bunter, in ragged trousers,



a man's coat cut short, and a bowler hat much too big for him.

That queer figure had bolted out of a lane into the high road, and held up an imploring hand to the car.

As he was standing directly in the way of the car, the chauffeur had had no choice about stopping.

"What the dickens—" snapped Bunter.

The tattered youth ran up to the car, the chauffeur staring at him curiously.

"What did you stop me for?" he demanded gruffly.

The ragged lad panted.

"I want a lift! Please give me a lift—a quarter of a mile will do—there's a man after me—" he gasped.

"Better ask the young gentleman," said the chauffeur, indicating the fat junior in the car.

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly at the ragged youth.

"What the thump do you mean?" he demanded. "What? Think I'm taking a ragged robin like you into my car? My hat!"

Tatters staggered against the car, and leaned on the door; panting, breathless—almost sobbing for breath. He had run hard, and could not stand steadily on his feet.

"For goodness' sake, sir!" he panted. "There's a brute after me—he'll half-kill me—maybe quite kill me this time! Give me a lift far enough to leave him behind, sir!"

"Of all the cheek—" said Bunter.

He was deeply indignant. Lolling in Lord Cavandale's car, feeling almost as if it was his own car and he was a lord himself, Bunter was greatly shocked by the cheek of a tattered tramp in asking for a lift. Tatters had come between the wind and his nobility, as it were; and he was annoyed.

The chauffeur's look was compassionate. He could see that the boy was exhausted, and in a state of terror. Indeed, it was pretty clear that only desperation could have induced such a "ragged robin," as Bunter called him, to stop a luxurious motor-car on the road and ask for a lift.

"I'll take him up beside me, sir!" said the chauffeur.

Bunter snorted.

"I—I know it's a cheek, sir!" gasped poor Tatters. "Well I know it's a blooming nerve, sir! But that man'll nearly kill me!"

"Why don't you call a policeman?" snapped Bunter. "Blessed if I ever heard of such a nerve."

Tatters gave him a look; and moved back from the car. But at the same moment, through an opening in the trees by the roadside, a running figure came into sight—Tinker Wilson, panting with rage, and running hard. He was not fifty yards away.

Bunter gave the tinker a startled blink.

"Oh orrikey!" he gasped.

Even Bunter's obtuse brain understood the state of affairs now; and his fat heart was sensible to compassion.

"Get up!" he said. "Quick! Drive on, Watson."

"Thank you, sir!" gasped Tatters.

He did not wait to be told twice. He tore open the door of the car and bolted in.

Tinker Wilson came racing out into the road. He gave a yell as he saw Tatters plunge into the car. He was hardly a dozen yards away now; and he put on a spurt.

"Stop!" he yelled.

"Quick, Watson!" shouted Bunter. The savage brutality in the ruffian's

looks rather alarmed the Owl of the Remove.

Watson stamped on the gas. The car shot forward like an arrow. Tinker Wilson rushed desperately after it, brandishing the stick.

"Stop! Put down that boy! You 'ear me? That's my boy! Stop!"

Watson grinned and let the car out.

Billy Bunter blinked back at the tinker. The ruffian raced on fifty yards or so, and stopped, panting for breath. He brandished his stick furiously after the vanishing motor-car.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter. "What an awful-looking beast! He ought to be run in!"

Tinker Wilson vanished into space, and Bunter settled down on soft cushions again. The car raced on.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Benevolent Bunter!

TATTERS panted for breath.

Cold as the day was, perspiration was running down his face, making furrows in the grime.

Billy Bunter blinked at him curiously, and a little contemptuously. He hardly wanted that ragged, tattered, unwashed kid in his luxurious car. Still, Bunter could be kind-hearted. One glimpse of the tinker had been enough to show that the "ragged robin" had ample reason for getting to a safe distance from him.

"You can sit down, kid!" said Bunter condescendingly.

"Thank you, sir!" gasped Tatters.

"Not beside me," added Bunter hastily. "Pull out a seat there—that's right. Don't come too near."

"Yes, sir! No, sir!" said Tatters.

He sat down, still pumping in breath. "This is blooming kind of you, sir!" he said. "I know it was a cheek to stop a gentleman's car and ask for a lift, sir! But I was fair desperate, with that brute close behind me, sir. He'd have had me."

Billy Bunter nodded graciously.

Bunter had an aristocratic prejudice against low persons; but so long as they were properly respectful, he could be kind to them. And the tattered lad was both respectful and grateful. Bunter liked gratitude. He seldom received any—not so much because it was an ungrateful world, as because he never did anything to inspire it. Still, he was getting some now, and it was quite agreeable.

"That's all right," he said. "I'll protect you, kid! Who is he?"

"He's called Tinker Wilson, sir!"

"You his son?" asked Bunter.

"Oh, no sir! I been with him, but I don't belong to 'im," said Tatters. "He wouldn't let me leave him, sir, and now I've cut and run for it. But if he'd caught me—" Tatters shuddered.

"What's your name?" asked Bunter.

"Tatters, sir!"

Bunter grinned.

"Call that a name?" he asked.

"It's all I've got, sir," said Tatters humbly. "I never had any other name, sir! Jest Tatters, meanin' rags, sir."

"Well, my hat!" said Bunter. He sat comfortably back against soft cushions, and blinked at the tattered lad. "That's jolly queer! What are you—a tinker?"

"I've 'elped him with the tinkering, sir," said Tatters. "Mostly I pushes the cart, and cooks the grub, and makes the fire."

"And where are you going?" asked Bunter. "I can give you a lift in my

car as far as you like, if you're going my way."

"I don't care what way I goes, sir, s'long as I get away from that brute," said Tatters. "I can tramp the rest when you drop me, sir! I'm trying to get back to Surrey."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

He blinked dubiously at the tattered lad.

The car was heading for Surrey, to return to Cavandale Abbey with Bunter.

There was no reason why Tatters should not be given a lift all the way. But Bunter doubted whether he could tolerate such low and unwashed company for so long. He wanted to be kind; but there was a limit.

"Put me down as soon as you like, sir!" said Tatters, perhaps reading the fatuous thoughts in the fat head. "I can walk it, sir, now I'm safe from that brute, sir."

"Oh, stick where you are!" said Bunter. "I'm going back to Surrey, as it happens, and I'll take you all the way."

Tatters' grimy face beamed.

He was prepared to tramp the long, weary miles to Wharton Lodge, now that he was clear of Tinker Wilson. But covering the distance in a high-powered car was a much more attractive proposition.

"Oh, sir!" he said. "That's good of you, sir! I know I ain't a fit object to be in this here car, sir, in my rags."

Bunter smiled genially.

"Well, that's a fact—you're not!" he said. "But it's all right. I'll take you along. What part of Surrey?"

"Wimford, sir, if you go near it."

"Well, I'm going within a few miles of Wimford," said Bunter. "Have you got friends at Wimford?"

Tatters shook his head.

"No, sir; but there's a place—p'r'aps you know it, sir, if you come from Surrey—called Wharton Lodge—"

Bunter jumped.

"Oh, my hat! You're not going to Wharton Lodge?"

"Yes, sir!" said Tatters. "The young gentleman told me to come there if Tinker beat me again, and he did beat me 'ard! He's got a uncle, sir, and p'r'aps the old gent will give a bloke a job."

"Well, my hat!" said Bunter, in amazement. "Where the thump did you come across Wharton?"

"You know him, sir?"

Billy Bunter grinned.

"Well, rather! We're at school together," he said. "I've had him staying with me for Christmas, in the mansion of one of my titled friends. How did you come across him?"

Tatters told his tale.

"My hat!" said Bunter. "That was the night I sent them home in one of my cars. I remember they had a spill. Well, look here, kid. My titled friend, where I'm staying for the vac, is about fifteen miles from Wharton Lodge. I'll take you as near as that."

"That's prime, sir!" said Tatters gratefully.

"Dash it all," said Bunter generously. "I'll run you right up to the Lodge—why not? It won't take me long, and I'm in no hurry. It's all right so long as I get back in plenty of time for dinner. That's rather important. I'll take you to Wharton Lodge, and chance it!"

"You're very good, sir," said Tatters. "But—but won't it seem like a cheek, sir, me going to the 'ouse in a car like this, sir, me a poor bloke in rags?"

Bunter smiled genially.

(Continued on page 12.)



# "Half-Time" Gossip!



In doubt over any soccer problem? Then write to "Old Ref" for his expert opinion. He's only too pleased to help you soccer enthusiasts.

**O**NE of my readers is rather disturbed over the experiences of certain footballers. He has been noting how men are transferred from one club to another, and he has also been reading a rather horrifying article on this transfer business which calls it "trafficking in human flesh and blood."

Let me admit quite readily that there are certain aspects of this transferring of players from one club to another with which I am not in agreement, over which I myself am disturbed. On the other hand, I don't think there is any necessity for followers of the game to lose sleep over an imaginary and wholly untrue picture of footballers being sold by auction; held up, and then knocked down to the highest bidder.

What you have to remember in the first place is that the footballer who goes from one club to another when a transfer fee is paid gets a part of that fee. Another most important point is

*that a player cannot be "sold" unless he is perfectly willing for that to happen to him. In other words, he cannot be compelled to go from one club to another unless he wishes to do so.*

**L**ET me just quote one particularly interesting case which drives home this latter point. Two or three seasons back a player of the Arsenal club—Jack Lambert—could not get a regular place in the Arsenal side. There were other clubs which thought they could use the services of Lambert to a much greater extent than Arsenal were using them. So overtures were made for the transfer of Lambert.

Strangely enough—as it seems in the light of after events—Arsenal were quite prepared to transfer Lambert, and everything—terms, etc.—was arranged so that he could go from the London Club to Birmingham. But Lambert, to the surprise of the Arsenal management, said:

*"No, I don't want to go to Birmingham. I am quite happy with the Arsenal club, and quite content to run the risk of never getting into the first team regularly."*

As the player took up this attitude there was an end to the negotiations. Arsenal were willing to sell Lambert, but Lambert wasn't willing to go—so he stayed. Incidentally, how Arsenal must have rejoiced since then over the decision of the player. As you are probably well aware, Lambert, as centre-forward for Arsenal, has been one of the big successes of the present season; has been at the head of the goal-scorers on more than one occasion, and with his sharpshooting and general play has had much to do with the rise of the Arsenal to their present prominent position in the game. Incidentally, by staying with the Arsenal, Lambert has a Cup-winner's medal, gained at the end of the season. It looks as though the player know best, doesn't it?

**T**HERE are many similar cases to that of Lambert, proving beyond all question that the player is a free agent so far as this transfer question is concerned.

*Of course, players who refuse to be transferred run a risk, and the risk they run is that of not being offered a renewal of their engagement at the end of the season.*

I am very pleased to have got my readers in the habit of writing to me when things which they do not quite understand happen at matches at which they attend. Two questions, the replies to which I think will be of general interest, have been sent to me concerning incidents in recent big games.

The first one comes from Grimsby, and concerns a match between Grimsby Town and Leeds United. In the course of

the game the referee awarded to Grimsby a free kick just outside the Leeds penalty area. The kick was taken once, and ordered to be re-taken. It was taken a second time, but still the referee was not satisfied. Before the kick was taken for the third time, however, the referee, so I am informed, said a few words to the players of Leeds. "What do you think he could be saying to them?" is the form in which the question has reached me.

It is not difficult to imagine what the referee was saying to the players of Leeds. The rules say that

*when a free kick is awarded, the players against whom it is given must stand at least ten yards away from the ball until it is actually kicked.*

When that free kick happens to be comparatively near to goal, it is natural that in their anxiety to prevent a goal players of the defending side get as near as possible to the ball. In their enthusiasm they are not always keen to stand the necessary distance away.

In this case the players of Leeds moved to within ten yards of the ball before it was kicked. When this happened, the referee quite properly ordered the kick to be re-taken. The same thing happened again, and after the second time the referee told the Leeds players quite plainly that if they persisted in getting nearer to the ball than the rules allowed, he would have to send them off for ungentlemanly conduct. That is what the particular referee was talking to the players about.

**L**ET me add, that although I do not know personally the referee who had charge of that particular game, I do admire him for the stand which he took. This rule, which says that players must stand ten yards away from the ball on free-kick occasions, is one that is frequently broken with impunity; without the referee taking any notice of the breach of rule.

What I want to impress on all referees is that it is not their business to decide whether rules are good or bad. Their job is to see that the rules are carried out as laid down by the law-makers.

**T**HE other question with which I want to deal this week comes from a London reader who was present at a recent game on the Tottenham Hotspur ground. He states the case rather quaintly:

*"I saw every kick of the match," he says, "and kept a careful count of the score. I came away thinking that the Spurs had won by six goals to nothing, but when I picked up an evening paper I was surprised to find that the result was not six—nothing but five—nothing in favour of the Spurs. Later, the explanation was given that a goal scored with the last kick of the match was not allowed because time expired as the ball was on its way to the net."*

It is, of course, funny that a fellow attending a match and watching carefully shouldn't know the score, but it has happened before. The referee in this particular case blew his whistle after the ball had left the foot of the Tottenham player, and before it entered the net. You might call that a bit of ultra-accurate timekeeping, but though it was rather hard lines on the fellow who was in the act of scoring not to be allowed to count a goal because time was up, the referee was quite right.

Personally, I think the rules of the game ought to be altered in this respect. It would be better if, when time was up, referees were instructed not to sound the final whistle until the ball went out of play. There is such a rule associated with the Rugby game.

"OLD REF."



## THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME!

(Continued from page 10.)

"That's the proper spirit," he said. "Never be cheeky, and always keep your place, and you'll be all right. But I'll take you to Wharton Lodge, all the same—don't you worry."

"Thank you, sir."

Bunter spoke to the chauffeur. "Make for Wharton Lodge, Watson, and stop at the gates."

"Yes, sir."

"Now I'm going to sleep," said Bunter. "Sit quiet, and don't make a row, or disturb me, and you can stay in the car."

"I won't make a sound, sir," said Tatters.

"That's right."

Billy Bunter leaned back on the soft leather, shut his eyes, and opened his mouth, and slumbered. Tatters, as he had promised, did not make a sound; but there was plenty of sound from William George Bunter. His deep and resonant snore mingled, more or less harmlessly, with the throb of the engine.

Tatters sat in contented silence. It was a wonderful experience for the tinker's boy, to be whirled along in a luxurious car. He stared round at the handsome interior with awestruck eyes. He stared out at hill and dale that flashed past the windows. He grinned as he thought of Tinker Wilson, left hopelessly behind. This was a wonderful stroke of luck for Tatters—with every mile covered by the flashing wheels his heart was lighter.

Accustomed to the slow progress of the tinker's hand-cart when he was on the road, Tatters could hardly believe that he was covering the ground at such a rate now.

Sussex was left behind, and the car ate up the miles on the Surrey roads. It seemed like a dream to Tatters, when he saw the old chimneys and red roofs of Wharton Lodge showing through leafless trees. He had a feeling such as the traveller on the magic carpet in the Arabian Nights might have had.

The car halted.

Bunter was still snoring. Tatters ventured to touch him, to awaken him. Bunter snored on.

A bunch of cheery-looking fellows, with faces redly from a tramp in the keen wind, arrived at the gates from the direction of the village, and glanced at the car. Then there was a shout:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Bunter!"

"Tatters!"

"My hat!"

"What the bump—"

Billy Bunter opened his eyes behind his big spectacles, and blinked at the Famous Five. Tatters grinned at them joyously.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Looking After Tatters!

**H**ARRY WHARTON & CO. came up to the car. Bunter blinked at them, and gave them a rather lofty nod.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Where on earth did you pick up this kid?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Tatters, old bean, is it really you?"

"Yessir!" grinned Tatters. "Jest me, sir!"

"Glad to see you again," said Harry.

"The gladfulness is terrific, my lord Tatters!"

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The chauffeur opened the door, and Tatters stepped down. Billy Bunter waved a fat hand to the chums of the Remove.

"I gave the kid a lift," he explained.

"Watson, get back to the abbey."

"Yes, sir."

"Thank you kindly, sir, for what you've done, sir!" said Tatters, taking off his battered hat respectfully.

Bunter's fat hand waved again.

"That's all right, kid!" he said condescendingly. "So long as you're properly grateful, that's all right. I'd give you a quid to help you on your way, but I object on principle to charity. Find a job! Work hard! Be respectful to your betters, and never forget your place. Good-bye!"

The car glided away with William George Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled.

"Well, here you are, kid," said Harry. "Come on! I've mentioned you to my uncle, and I hope he will be able to fix up something."

"Where did Bunter pick you up, kid?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Fifty or sixty miles from here, sir, in Sussex," said Tatters. "I'd bolted from Tinker Wilson, and he was after me. It was very kind of the young gent, sir. Friend of your'n, ain't he, sir?"

"Oh, no end!" said Bob. "Anyhow, it was decent of Bunter to give you a lift. You've left Mr. Wilson a long way behind?"

"More'n fifty miles, sir," grinned Tatters, "though"—his face fell—"I dessay he'll come 'ere arter me!"

"We'll give him jip if he does!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yes, rather!"

"The jipfulness will be terrific!"

"The man's got no claim on you, kid," said Harry. "If he has, he will have to prove it. Come in and see my uncle."

There was a slight reluctance in Tatters' manner, as the juniors walked him in at the gates, and up the drive towards the house. In sight of Wharton Lodge he hesitated and stopped, with a crimson face.

"Come on!" said Harry.

"Oh, sir!" gasped Tatters. "I ain't fit to come into the 'ouse, sir! Me in my rags, sir! Oh, sir!"

"We'll fix you up in something better soon," said Harry. "But you must come in and see my uncle."

"What—what sort of a cove is he, sir?" faltered Tatters. The hapless outcast had headed hopefully for Wharton Lodge, but now that he was there he was stricken with thronging doubts and fears.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"He doesn't bite!" he answered.

"P'raps he'll be wild, sir, at you bringing me in, sir?" faltered Tatters. "It might get you into a row, sir."

"Not likely," said Harry, laughing. "Come on!"

"Hold on a minute, though," said Frank Nugent. "It might be a good idea to fix Tatters up a bit, Harry, before your uncle sees him. He might get a bit of a shock—"

Harry Wharton paused.

Poor Tatters looked anxiously from one face to another. Only too painfully was he aware of his unfitness to enter the Lodge.

Rags and tatters and dirt did not matter when he was pushing Tinker Wilson's cart by muddy roads and lanes—he was used to them. But he felt very different among these well-dressed fellows, and with the handsome facade of Wharton Lodge before his eyes.

"If I could get a wash, sir—" he mumbled.

"You're right," said Harry. "Look here, kid, my uncle's all right—a real sportsman, and the best man breathing. Still, we may as well fix you up before you see him. Let's go round to the back."

The juniors went round the house in the falling winter dusk. By a door in the rear, Harry Wharton led them in, Tatters following in trepidation. Wharton led the way up a back staircase. No one was encountered until, in the corridor on which the juniors' bed-rooms opened, they came suddenly upon Wells, the butler.

Wells almost fell down at the sight of Tatters.

"Master Harry!" he ejaculated.

He gazed with bulging eyes at the tinker's boy.

"Oh cripes!" mumbled Tatters. "It's the bloke what gave me 'arf-a-crown when I was scoffing the Christmas-pudding in the kitchen."

Wells started.

"Oh! I—I have seen this—this boy before!" he exclaimed. "Master Harry, what—"

"All serene, Wells," said Wharton reassuringly. "We're going to give him a wash and a change, and take him to my uncle. You turn on the water in the bath-room and shove out some towels, there's a good chap."

Wells gasped.

"If the master knows this—this boy is here, sir—"

"He will know as soon as the kid's had a wash," said Harry. "You can see he wants one, Wells."

Wells smiled faintly.

"Yes, sir. Quite so, sir. I will prepare the bath."

Wells rolled away, and the Famous Five took Tatters into Harry's room to wait for his bath to be ready. Wharton sorted out comb and brush and other needful things.

Tatters looked round Wharton's den, and glanced through the open doorway into the spotless bed-room beyond. He seemed almost overcome.

"Oh, sir!" he gasped.

"We can easily fix up some clobber," said the captain of the Greyfriars Remove. "You're just about my size, kid."

"Just about," said Bob Cherry.

"But look here, we're all going to have a hand in this. Tatters is a pal all round—ain't you, Tatters?"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Tatters.

"The all-roundfulness is terrific!" declared Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "Let us all sort over our absurd and ridiculous possessions, and find the necessary idiotic articles for the esteemed and execrable Tatters."

"Hear, hear!"

And the juniors dispersed to their rooms, to sort out various articles that could be spared.

"Sit down, kid!" said Harry, pointing to an armchair before the fire.

Tatters eyed the chair and his own rags dubiously, and sat down on the edge.

"I dare say you're hungry!" added Wharton.

Tatters smiled faintly.

"I'll get Wells to fix up something while you're getting a bath!" said Harry. "I'll have it brought up here. You'd better be feeling your best when you see my uncle."

"Anything you like, sir," said Tatters. "I don't know why you're doing all this for me, sir, and you a blooming toff."

"Fathead!" said Harry. "I mean—" He realised that Tatters might not understand the free-and-easy



mode of address in the Greyfriars Remove. "I mean, that's all right. Don't you worry."

Wells tapped at the door. "The bath is ready, sir," he said, with a curious stare past Wharton at the forlorn figure on the edge of the chair.

"Right-ho!" said Harry. "This way, Tatters! Wells, old bean, I want you to fix up a snack for the kid and put it in my room—cold chicken or something."

"Yes, Master Harry."  
 "Where's my uncle now, Wells?"  
 "In the library, sir, with Miss Wharton."

"Not a word till we're ready, you know, Wells."

Wells smiled.  
 "Very well, sir!"

another fellow, with a clean-washed face.

Evidently Tatters preferred to be clean if he could. He had fairly wallowed in hot water and soap, and rubbed and scrubbed, and scrubbed and rubbed, till not a speck was left.

He had pared his nails and cleaned them assiduously; the black rims that had adorned them were quite gone. His thick, curly hair had been combed and brushed, and it looked very nice now that it was clean and tidy; a rich brown, with gleams of gold in it.

The change in Tatters was indeed startling.

old—fitted him almost as if it had been made for him. Shirts and other things fitted as well as could be expected.

Tatters grinned with glee as he dressed, and gasped at the sight of his own reflection in a glass.

On his white skin—white since his bath—there were signs of many bruises and weals—evidently the handiwork of Tinker Wilson. And all the Co. wished that they had handled the ruffian a little more severely on the occasion when he had been in their hands.

"Hallo, hallo hallo! What on earth's that?" asked Bob Cherry, as he was handing Tatters a shirt. He



As Wharton and Tatters sauntered along neither suspected that a pair of glinting eyes watched them from the frosty under-woods beside the lane!

"Come on, kid!" said Wharton, and he led Tatters along to the bath-room.

The clean and shining interior of that apartment struck the tinker's boy with awe. Steam rose from the hot water in the bath.

"Now, tumble in," said Harry. "And when you're finished, shove on this dressing-gown and come back to my room. See?"

"Yes, sir."  
 And Tatters was left to plunge into hot water, and to be as extravagant as he liked with soap for the first time in his life!

**THE TENTH CHAPTER.**

**In Clover!**

"RIPPING!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

There was a change in Tatters when he reappeared in Harry Wharton's room.

Wrapped in Harry's dressing-gown, his face showed bright and clean and shining, spotless now, and decidedly good-looking. He looked like quite

His features were good—the nose nicely shaped, the mouth well cut, the chin handsome. Even in dirt and rags he had looked rather good-looking. Now it could be seen that he was really handsome.

"The ripfulness is terrific," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The esteemed washfulness was a ridiculous sine qua non."

Tatters grinned rather sheepishly. "I feel better now, sir," he said. "You young gents wouldn't understand how 'ard it is for a cove to keep clean, tramping the road. And tinker used to wallop me for washing."

"Nice man!" said Bob. "I wish we'd given his head another bang or two the other night."

"Well, here's the clobber, kid," said Harry. "Jump into it."

"Yessir."  
 Tatters had quite a collection to choose from. All the Famous Five had contributed. He dressed with evident satisfaction, seeming to revel in the contact of clean clothes.

An old suit of Wharton's—not very

stared at a mark on the boy's right arm just above the elbow.

It was a strange mark, in shape like the head of an ancient battleaxe. It was deeply imprinted.

Tatters glanced down at it. "Dunno," he answered. "It's always been there, sir."

"Must be a birthmark," said Bob. "But it's jolly clear for a birthmark. Any of your relations got it?"

Tatters grinned. "Ain't got any relations that I know of, sir," he answered.

"Might be able to find some, with that mark to go on," said Johnny Bull. "It's a birthmark plain enough, and a rather queer one. You must have some relations somewhere, kid."

"I s'pose so, sir," assented Tatters. "But I ain't never 'eard of them."

He finished dressing, and, standing before a pier-glass, surveyed his well-dressed reflection almost in awe.

"Bust my buttons!" he ejaculated. "S'long as I don't open my mouth

(Continued on page 16.)



## THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME!



(Continued from page 13.)

anybody might take me for a toff, like you coves!"

The juniors chuckled.

There was a tap at the door, and Wells came in with a well-laden tray. Wells almost dropped the tray at the sight of the transformed waif. The change in that youth's aspect fairly made Wells jump.

Tatters sat down to a meal, which he evidently needed badly. The fact that he used a knife to convey food to his mouth was unfortunate, but not to be wondered at. Anyhow, he enjoyed the meal thoroughly. A cold chicken and other things vanished almost as rapidly as if Billy Bunter had operated on them.

Tatters sighed with satisfaction when he had finished.

"Ain't that prime!" he remarked. He wiped his mouth with his sleeve; which did not improve the sleeve.

"Now we'll go down and see my uncle," said Harry.

At that announcement Tatters' uneasiness seemed to return. But he looked in the glass again, and drew comfort and courage from the well-dressed reflection that he saw there.

"Ready, sir!" he said.

The chums of the Remove went down, and Harry piloted the waif to the library, the other fellows remaining in the hall. Wharton opened the library door, and pressed Tatters' arm reassuringly, as he hesitated and lingered.

Night had fallen now, and the library was lighted by a shaded reading-lamp, where Colonel Wharton sat, with the Wimford paper in his hands, reading out items of local interest to Miss Wharton, who was busy with knitting-needles.

The colonel ceased to read, and glanced towards his nephew with a smile, and turned his glance inquiringly on Tatters.

Miss Amy Wharton smiled benignly at the two boys, though her busy needles did not cease to tick.

"A friend of yours from school, Harry?" asked the colonel, his eyes resting on the handsome, well-dressed, rather shy lad at his nephew's side.

"Not from school," answered Harry. "This—this is the kid I mentioned to you, uncle, the other day."

Colonel Wharton looked puzzled. He did not think of connecting this well-dressed fellow with the tinker's boy his nephew had told him about.

"I don't seem to remember," he said.

"Who?"

"Tatters!" said Harry.

Colonel Wharton started.

"Tatters!" he repeated.

"The tinker's boy," said Harry.

The colonel stared, as well he might. Tatters looked like anything but a travelling tinker's boy.

"We've fixed him up a bit, uncle," added Wharton. "We—we thought we'd better—"

"Oh!" said the colonel. "Quite!"

Very thoughtful of you, my boy! Come here, Tatters, if that is your name."

Tatters came shyly forward, with a deep colour in his cheeks. He was feeling better in clean and decent clothes, but not wholly at his ease; the change was rather too great. And the handsome library, with the book-lined walls, the log fire glowing in the old-fashioned hearth, the softly-shaded electric lamp—awed and almost frightened him. The bronzed face of the old military gentleman was kindly, but awe-inspiring.

But Tatters drew courage from the kind and gentle face of Miss Wharton. He came forward into the light.

"So you are called Tatters, my boy?" said the colonel.

"Jest Tatters, sir!" mumbled the waif, in a voice that was hardly in keeping with his good looks and well-fitting clothes. "Ain't never 'ad any other name as I knows of, sir."

Miss Wharton started a little, and her needles ceased to click. The colonel looked more keenly at the boy, and tugged at his grizzled moustache.

"Dear me!" murmured Aunt Amy.

"Well, if Tatters is your name, we must call you Tatters for the present," said Colonel Wharton. "Sit down, my boy."

Tatters sat uneasily on the edge of a chair.

Colonel Wharton sat down again.

"Now tell me all about yourself, Tatters, and we will see what can be done," he said.

And Harry Wharton retired from the library, leaving Tatters to the colonel. It was evident that Tatters had made a good impression on the old gentleman—so far as looks went, at least.

"All serene?" asked Bob Cherry, as the captain of the Remove rejoined his chums.

"Yes, I think so," answered Wharton. "My uncle will do something for the kid, somehow; and he will see that that brute Wilson does not get hold of him again, anyhow. I'm glad he came here. He seems a decent sort of kid!"

"The decentfulness is absurd and preposterous," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a nod of his dusky head.

All the Co. were agreed on that. Tatters had made a very agreeable impression on all of them. They had taken a liking to the waif—a feeling founded chiefly, perhaps, on compassion.

"There's that old sportsman who was looking for him—the old johnny who asked us questions about him on the Wimford road yesterday," added Wharton. "He seemed rather a fierce old beggar; but he must take some interest in Tatters. He may mean to be a friend to the kid. I'll speak about that to my uncle, after he's had a jaw with Tatters. Anyhow, the kid's done with tinkering along with Tinker Wilson. And if we happen on that brute again—"

"We'll jolly well scrag him!" said Bob.

"The scragfulness will be terrific!"

"I fancy he won't dare to come here looking for Tatters, though," said Harry.

"Not likely!"

But on that point the chums of the Remove were in error. Tinker Wilson had stronger motives than they dreamed for holding on to Tatters; and even while they were speaking, a tinker's cart was trundling along the Sussex roads, pushed by Mr. Wilson—still many a long mile distant, but heading in the direction of Wharton Lodge.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER,

### A Meeting on the Road!

"STOP!"

Sir George Cholmondeley barked out the word. Spencer braked.

It was the day after Tatters' arrival at Wharton Lodge, a fine, frosty day, and Sir George's car was whizzing along a road on the borders of Surrey and Sussex.

Mr. Cyril Rackstraw sat beside the old baronet in the car; his face clouded and unhappy whenever Sir George's eye was not on him. Mr. Rackstraw assumed an expression of forced cheerfulness when he found himself under observation.

Whatever might be Sir George's object in scouring the roads in his car, searching for a travelling tinker, it was certain that his grandson, Cyril Rackstraw, did not enjoy the quest.

But Mr. Rackstraw had excellent reasons for keeping in the good graces of his irascible grandfather.

Sir George was an extremely wealthy gentleman; while Mr. Rackstraw had little in the world beside an allowance from his grandfather, and great expectations from that testy old gentleman. And Mr. Rackstraw, though short of cash, was a young gentleman of expensive tastes.

It did not need a very keen eye to read the signs of dissipation in his face. Sir George's eye, though old, was very keen—keen as an eagle's, and he read his grandson's character fairly clearly; which was, perhaps, the reason why he had no very strong affection for him. Night clubs, races, and bridge filled up most of Cyril Rackstraw's leisure, and his looks betrayed the effect of late hours, dissipation, and idleness.

Mr. Rackstraw was bored to extinction by the company of his grandfather. He was not wholly successful in hiding that fact.

He seemed sunk in moody reflection now; and he came out of it with a jerk as Sir George barked to the chauffeur, and the car slowed and stopped.

"What is it?" he asked, glancing round.

"Look!" barked Sir George.

He gave a nod towards a far from prepossessing figure on the road. It was that of a burly, hulking, unwashed travelling tinker, pushing a hand-cart, with a black pipe upside-down in his mouth, gripped by yellow teeth.

Rackstraw started, and a deadly paleness overspread his face. He stared at Tinker Wilson as if that gentleman had been the grisly ghost of a tinker.

"Oh!" he stuttered.

"It may be the very man we want!" said Sir George. "At least, he answers to the description given me."

"My dear sir"—Mr. Rackstraw's voice was husky—"if we are goin' to stop every tinker we meet on the road—"

Snort, from Sir George.

"Every one!" he barked. "Every one, Cyril! Every one till we find the right one! Rely on that!"

"This—this man is alone!" stammered Rackstraw. "You—you are looking for a tinker with—with a boy."

"I shall question him."

"But really, sir—"

"Nonsense!"

Spencer stepped down and opened the door of the car. He signed to the tinker to draw near.

Tinker Wilson stared at him surlily. "What's this game?" he grunted. "If you don't know your blooming way, ask



somebody else! I ain't got no time to waste on you!"

Spencer looked him over. "You're wanted," he said. "Come here! Sir George wishes to speak to you."

"Ang Sir George, whoever Sir George may be!" retorted Tinker Wilson. "I don't give a rap for Sir George, and you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, Mister Shover."

Sir George Cholmondeley leaned from the car.

"Come here, my man!" he said. Tinker Wilson gave him a stare of impudent defiance. Then, as his eyes fell on Cyril Rackstraw, the tinker gave a violent start. He stared blankly at the young man in the car.

"Burn my body and boots!" he ejaculated blankly.

Rackstraw compressed his lips. "Come here, my man!" he said. "Sir George wishes to ask you a question. It will be worth your while to answer."

A slow, evil grin overspread the tinker's face. He left his hand-cart, and came up to the door of the car.

Sir George Cholmondeley eyed him, and then turned suddenly to his grandson.

"Have you seen this man before, Cyril?" he barked.

"No! Oh, no! Certainly not!" stammered Rackstraw.

"It seemed to me as if you recognised him."

"Not in the least! I—I thought that he was rather like the description given by your inquiry agent, that is all."

"I ain't never seen the young gentleman before, sir," said Tinker Wilson, in a more civil manner. "P'r'aps you'll tell me what you want with me, sir."

The old gentleman's keen eyes, glittering under his white brows, fixed on the tinker.

"Is your name Wilson?" he asked.

For a second the tinker hesitated. Then his answer came:

"No, sir. Name of Smith, sir."

"Where is your boy?"

"What boy, sir?" asked the tinker.

"You generally have a boy with you, I think?"

"No, sir!" answered the tinker cheerfully. "I work alone, sir! I ain't no use for a boy, sir! Lazy young rascals they is."

"Did you ever live, for a time, in the village of Oakshott, in Kent?"

"Never 'eard of it, sir."

"Did you, at that time, have a boy with you, who was found by a school inspector and sent to school for a time?"

"Never 'ad a boy at all, sir."

"This cannot be the man, sir!" said Mr. Rackstraw.

"I have a very strong suspicion that he is the man!" barked Sir George.

"He certainly answers to the description I have received."

"But he denies——"

"Probably he would deny anything, especially the truth, if he is the man of whom I am in search."

"That what you call civil, sir, speaking to a respectable and 'ard-working man?" asked Mr. Wilson impudently.

"Silence, sir!" rapped out the baronet. "You look a rogue; it is written all over you."

"But really——" murmured Mr. Rackstraw.

"Nonsense!"

"Well, I ain't a rogue, sir," said the tinker. "A honest, 'ard-working man, sir, and I ain't got a lot of time to waste, neither."

"You will answer my questions!" barked Sir George. "And if you give me any impudence, you will be sorry for

it, my man. Are you not the tinker who was camped in Oak Wood Lane, near Wimford a few days ago?"

Wilson started a little.

"Ah! I see that you are!" exclaimed Sir George. His keen old eyes lost nothing. "Tell me the truth!"

"Never 'eard of Wimford, sir," said the tinker stolidly. "Where is the blooming place, sir?"

"In Surrey!"

"I ain't been in Surrey for years, sir."

"I do not believe a word of it!" rapped Sir George.

"Please yourself, old gentleman!" answered the tinker.

"Listen to me, my man!" said Sir George impressively. "I desire to find the boy who has travelled in company with a tinker named Wilson. It is very important. A large reward will be paid to anyone who helps me to find that lad."

**The Office Boy's Smiled,  
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN**

to laugh at the following storvette,  
which has earned for Charles Hare,  
of 22, Melbourne Terrace, New-  
town, Bristol, one of this week's  
**USEFUL PENKNIVES.**



**Old Gent:** "Your father is entirely bald, isn't he, Johnny?"  
**Johnny:** "Yes, I'm the only heir he has left!"

Look lively with your efforts,  
chums. You really **MUST** win  
one of these useful prizes.

If you can place that boy in my hands, I will pay you one hundred pounds."

Tinker Wilson's eyes snapped with greed.

"A 'undred pounds!" he repeated. His eyes travelled past the baronet, to the white, set face of Cyril Rackstraw.

"A 'undred pounds!"

"Yes! Now what can you tell me?"

"Why, sir," said the tinker slowly, "I'd do a lot for a 'undred pounds, sir, being a poor man, and trade in a bad way. Me being on the road, sir, I desay I could get in touch with that man Wilson what you want to find, sir, and let you know, if you'll give me an address, sir. I'd certainly do my best, sir, for a 'andful of money like that."

Sir George eyed him dubiously.

"Sir George is very anxious to find this man Wilson," said Mr. Rackstraw quietly. "He has reason to believe that the man has ill-treated the boy in his charge, and desires his punishment."

"Oh!" ejaculated the tinker. "Does he?"

"Certainly. And probably the man

will be charged with kidnapping," went on Mr. Rackstraw. "Unless he can prove that he has a right to the boy——"

"Oh!" said Tinker Wilson.

"You need say no more, Cyril!" barked Sir George angrily. "I suppose it is not your intention to defeat my object; but certainly that is likely to be the result of your remarks."

"Really, sir——"

"Nonsense!"

Mr. Rackstraw was silent again. But there was an evil gleam in the tinker's eyes as he looked at the old baronet.

Mr. Rackstraw's words had evidently given him food for thought.

"Put me in touch with this man Wilson, and you shall receive a hundred pounds reward," said Sir George. "You may communicate with me at Cholmondeley Castle, Hampshire."

"I'll remember, sir," said the tinker. "I'll surely do my best, sir, me being a poor man, and trade bad, sir."

"If you are Wilson——"

"I ain't, sir!" said the tinker stolidly. "I fancy I can lay 'ands on him—I believe he's in the North now, sir. I'll find him if I can, and let you know, sir, taking your word about the reward."

"Very well!" snapped Sir George, and he sat back, his keen eyes still lingering dubiously on the stubbly face of the tinker.

"Take this for your trouble, my man!" said Mr. Rackstraw, and he tossed a pound note to the tinker.

"Thank you kindly, sir!" said Mr. Wilson, with a very peculiar glance at the young man in the car. He stowed the pound note in his pocket, touched his battered hat, with more impudence than respect, took the handles of his cart, and trundled on.

Mr. Rackstraw drew a deep breath. He could hardly disguise his relief when the tinker departed.

Sir George leaned from the door again, and cast a glance after the tinker.

In a few minutes, however, Tinker Wilson turned out of the road into a by-lane, and disappeared from sight.

"I believe that man was lying!" barked Sir George. "I have a strong, a very strong, suspicion that he is Wilson himself. If a boy had been with him, I should have been certain. But I shall not leave it at this. I shall telephone to Sharpley's at once, to find that man and keep a watch on him. Spencer!"

He barked at the chauffeur. "Drive to the nearest town at once—stop at the first hotel where there is a telephone."

"Yes, Sir George."

The car rolled on its way again. Sir George Cholmondeley sat in deep thought, while Mr. Rackstraw seemed plunged deeper than ever in moody reflection.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Blow Falls!

"H-O-P-E—'ope!" said Tatters.

"'Hope!" murmured Harry Wharton.

"That's what I said—'ope!" said Tatters cheerfully.

Harry Wharton smiled.

Tatters had been at Wharton Lodge a couple of days. Colonel Wharton had quite decided that something must be done for the lad, and Miss Wharton fully agreed with him. The question of what was to be done, however, was not so easily decided, and on that subject the colonel was ruminating.

In the meantime, Tatters remained. It was agreed on all hands that, whatever his ultimate destiny, a few days

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of rest and regular washing and good food would do him a world of good.

That he was a decent sort of lad, and that, in spite of his training—or want of training—there was no harm in him, Colonel Wharton had soon satisfied himself. So, as the Greyfriars fellows seemed disposed to make the waif welcome, the old gentleman left Tatters in their hands.

He gave his nephew a hint that he might spend a few useful hours in helping the boy to make up for the neglect of his education, and Harry was quite willing to oblige, and his friends to help him.

Tatters, fortunately, was willing to learn.

So the chums of the Remove took it more or less in turns to give the tinker's boy a little instruction, and Tatters received it kindly and with appreciation.

Now, he was strolling along the lane near Wharton Lodge with the captain of the Remove, it being Wharton's turn to instruct. Wharton was giving him some spelling, and he was selecting words beginning with an H, for the purpose of impressing that aspirate a little on Tatters. Tatters had a rockless disregard for the aspirate—in fact, he hardly seemed to be aware that there was one.

"Ain't I got it right, sir?" asked Tatters, gathering from Wharton's smile that something was amiss.

"Not quite," said Harry. "Make it hope."

"Ope!" said Tatters. But at a second attempt he repeated: "Hope! I get you, sir! I got it!"

"Good!" said Harry.

"Course, there's a blooming haitch!" said Tatters. "Ain't never bothered about sich things afore. Old Tinker Wilson didn't go much on haitches."

"I suppose not," said Wharton, laughing.

"It's very good of you, sir, to take this 'ere trouble with me," said Tatters. "I mean this here trouble. See? I got it again! Why, if I was with you a few weeks, sir, I'd begin to talk like a toff myself."

"I wish you could be," said Harry. "But we go back to school in a few days now, so we must make the most of the time we've got."

Tatters' face fell a little.

"Course, you'll be going back to school," he agreed. "But I dessay I'll see you again some time, sir, when you ain't at school."

"Yes, rather!" said Harry.

"You see, sir," said Tatters ingenuously, "I ain't never talked to a bloke like you afore—in this 'ere friendly way, I mean. It don't seem real to me now, neither. This mornin' when I woke up I thought I was back with Tinker Wilson; and it was jest like a dream, looking round a clean room. Jest like a blinking dream!" repeated Tatters meditatively. "I'm blowed, sir, if I feel sure that I shan't wake up and find I dreamed the 'olo bally thing, sir!"

Harry Wharton nodded, and they walked on in silence for a few minutes. But it was the hour of instruction, and lessons began again. Word after word, each beginning with an H, Tatters wrestled with, and there was no doubt that he was attentive, quick, and intelligent.

They strolled on while they were conversing, combining healthy exercise with instruction. Tatters, doubtless owing to his early life, preferred the open air on all occasions; and Harry Wharton certainly preferred the peripa-

thetic mode of instruction to sitting over a desk indoors.

It did not occur to either of them as they sauntered along the frosty lane that hostile eyes watched them. Harry Wharton had almost forgotten the existence of Tinker Wilson, and he was sure that the ruffian would never dare to molest Tatters while he was under Colonel Wharton's protection.

Tatters assuredly had not forgotten his tyrant; but even in Tatters' mind Tinker Wilson was growing dimmer, and seemed very far away. Tatters, too, doubted whether the tinker would dare to attempt to recapture him from such a place as Wharton Lodge. He had no doubt that the tinker would guess where he had taken refuge; but coming to such a place after him was quite a different matter.

Neither of the boys suspected that a scowling face and a pair of glinting eyes under knitted, shaggy brows watched them from the frosty underwoods beside the lane.

Tinker Wilson breathed an oath of satisfaction under his breath.

It was true that the ruffian dared not venture near Wharton Lodge. But he had been hanging about the place at a little distance, watching for a chance to ascertain whether Tatters was there.

Now he knew!

Creeping like some lurking animal in the underwoods, the tinker kept the two boys in sight as they sauntered along the lane. They were going away from the lodge, which was less than a quarter of a mile behind them, however. The farther away they were the better it suited the tinker's purpose.

But presently they turned and began to stroll back. Then Tinker Wilson flattened himself behind a tree close to the lane and waited for them to pass.

As they came abreast of the tree the ruffian suddenly leaped out into the lane.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton.

Tatters gave a startled cry.

"It's the tinker! Oh cripes!"

They stopped and backed away as the ruffian blocked their path, a thick stick in his hand.

Tinker Wilson gave them an evil look.

"So I've found you, Tatters!" he said between his yellow teeth.

Tatters did not answer. All the cheery brightness faded out of his face at the sight of his old tyrant.

Wharton stepped a pace in front of the waif.

"Stand back, you rascal!" he said quietly, his eyes gleaming at the tinker.

"Keep your distance!"

The tinker laughed hoarsely.

"You're coming alonger me, Tatters!" he said.

"I ain't!" muttered Tatters miserably.

"You are, you young limb!"

"Nothing of the kind!" broke in Wharton. "And if you know what's good for you, Mr. Wilson, you'll go while the going's good! The minute I get in I shall tell Colonel Wharton that you are here, and the police will be looking for you."

"You got a lot to say, ain't you?" sneered the ruffian. "And s'pose I give you a crack over the 'ead with this 'ere stick?"

Wharton clenched his hands. It was plain that the ruffian meant mischief. But Wharton faced him resolutely.

"Stand by me, Tatters," he said. "We can handle the brute, stick and all! Stick to it!"

"You bet, sir!" said Tatters.

Harry Wharton cast a swift glance round. His comrades were out on their bicycles that afternoon, and there was

a chance that they might come in sight. Never would the sight of them have been so welcome!

But Tinker Wilson understood what that glance implied, and he lost no time. He came on at a rush, whirling up the stick.

Harry Wharton jumped aside, dodged under the uplifted arm, and ran in close; and there was a yell from Tinker Wilson as an upper-cut jarred every tooth in his head. Tatters rushed in to back up the Greyfriars junior.

But the tinker was desperate. He shortened his arm, and the stick came crashing on Wharton's head at close quarters.

It was a savage blow, and the captain of the Greyfriars Remove fell like a log under it. Almost stunned, he lay on the ground. The next moment Tinker Wilson had his grasp on Tatters.

Tatters struggled frantically.

"You beast!" he yelled. "You've 'urt him!"

"I'll 'urt you, too, if you don't come quiet!" growled the tinker, and by main force he dragged the boy from the lane into the wood.

Harry Wharton sat up dazedly; but his senses were swimming, and he reeled over and fell again.

Tatters, resisting fiercely, was dragged into the wood; and the tinker, with a curse, struck him over the head with the stick.

"Now be quiet, 'ang you!" he snarled.

"Elp!" shrieked Tatters.

Another brutal blow silenced him.

The tinker lifted the almost senseless boy in his sinewy arms and bore him bodily away through the wood.

Up one path and down another he went, tramping swiftly, the hapless waif in his arms still resisting feebly.

Half a mile from the spot where Wharton had been left, the tinker stopped. There, in a cart-track under the trees, was his handcart. He slammed Tatters down. The boy stood unsteadily, staring at the ruffian with scared eyes.

Tinker Wilson made a gesture with the stick.

"Now then, I got you ag'in, Tatters!" he said hoarsely. "Take them 'andles and shove that there cart along."

"I won't!" muttered Tatters.

"Won't you?" hissed the ruffian.

He grasped the boy by the collar with his left hand, and thrashed him with the stick in his right. Tatters yelled with pain.

Not till his arm was tired did the ruffian cease that cruel beating. Then he flung the boy down again.

"Take them 'andles!"

His voice came in a savage growl.

Tatters groaned. He was at the mercy of his old tyrant once more, and the old habit of submission came back. In silence, with a wretched face, poor Tatters took the handles of the cart and wheeled it away.

"That's better!" snarled the ruffian. "You keep on, see? 'Urry! I'll give you a lick with this here stick if you slack! I got you back now, you young limb, and I'll make you 'op if you don't toe the line! See?"

Tatters, in miserable silence, tramped on with the tinker's cart. Tinker Wilson tramped with him, an evil eye on him. Picking out lonely lanes and by-paths, the tinker kept on his way as the early January dusk fell thicker and thicker over the Surrey landscape.

Tatters tramped on with a heart like lead. He had told Wharton that his life at the lodge seemed like a dream,



Turning back his sleeve, Tatters, amazed and bewildered, bared his arm; displaying a mark like an axe-head above the elbow. Sir George stared at the birthmark.



and now it seemed to him that he had awakened from the dream and was back in reality. And the reality was terrible.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Vanished!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Wharton—"

"My esteemed chum—"

There was a clanging of bicycles as four juniors jumped down. At the corner where the lane joined the Wimford road, the cyclists had suddenly sighted Harry Wharton. Wharton, with an unsteady step, and his hand to his head, was coming out of the lane into the road.

Frank Nugent, leaving his machine to run whither it would, caught his chum by the arm.

"Harry, what's happened?" His grasp steadied the captain of the Remove.

Wharton panted.

"That scoundrel—Wilson—he's got the kid! He knocked me on the head! Ow! I've got a bump! That doesn't matter; but he's got Tatters!"

"Great pip!"

"I was knocked out!" gasped Wharton. "The brute had a cudgel, and he gave me a fearful rap." He pressed his hand to his head. His face was white and drawn with pain. "Help me to the house, Franky. I'll get my uncle to telephone to the police station at Wimford."

"Come on, old fellow. Look after my bike, Inky."

"Where did it happen?" asked Bob Cherry.

Wharton pointed up the lane.

"Nearly a quarter of a mile—"

"We'll get on and look for the rotter," said Bob. "Come on, Johnny! You get Wharton in, Frank."

Without waiting for a reply Bob

Cherry leaped on his machine and shot away up the lane. Johnny Bull pedalled after him swiftly. Hurree Singh had picked up Nugent's bike, and he now handed it to Nugent.

"I had better follow our esteemed chums," he remarked. "If they meet with that estimable and execrable rascal, the morefulness will be the merrier."

And the nabob shot away after Bob and Johnny Bull. Nugent leaned his bike on a fence and gave his arm to Wharton.

Wharton's head was still spinning from the effects of the savage blow he had received from Tinker Wilson.

He hardly knew how he had managed to stagger so far from the scene of the attack.

Leaning on Nugent's arm, he made his way back to the lodge, and up the drive to the house.

Colonel Wharton was at home, and Harry lost no time in reporting to him what had happened.

The old military gentleman frowned grimly.

"I will see to it at once," he said. "The rascal can hardly get away, especially as he has the boy with him."

Miss Wharton took her nephew in charge, bathing and bandaging the bruise on his head. Colonel Wharton rang up the police station at Wimford, and was assured that no time would be lost in looking for Tinker Wilson. After which the colonel ordered his horse to be brought round, and rode away to search for the tinker personally.

Harry Wharton, with a fearful ache in his head, remained resting in an arm-chair before the fire. He would have been glad to join in the pursuit of Tinker Wilson, but he was in no state for exertion. Frank Nugent remained with him. Wharton was not feeling quite easy in his mind about his comrades, who were looking for the

brutal tinker. He was rather glad when they came in at last in the dusk, though they came unsuccessful.

"Feeling better, old bean?" asked Bob.

Wharton smiled faintly.

"Not so bad," he said. "You saw nothing of that brute?"

Bob shook his head.

"Nothing! He must have cleared off without losing time! I suppose poor old Tatters couldn't put up much of a tussle against that hefty brute."

"Not likely! The poor kid!" said Harry. "But he will be found; he's sure to be found. That villain can't dodge the police for long, I should think."

"I fancy he's making tracks for the next county about as fast as he can," said Johnny Bull. "That's what he did before, only Bunter somehow happened on Tatters and gave him a lift. But goodness knows in what direction he may have gone this time."

"I can't make it out," said Nugent. "What is the brute so keen on keeping Tatters for? The kid can't be much use to him."

"Goodness knows! He's got some motive, I suppose," said Harry. "But the police will round him up sooner or later, I should think."

It was an hour later that Colonel Wharton came in, with a grim brow. He had seen nothing of Tatters or the tinker.

The chums of the Remove could only hope that the police would be more successful.

But the next morning there was no news.

That day the Famous Five gave up all other occupations and spent the whole day scouring the countryside on their bicycles, hunting for the tinker and asking questions up and down and



round about. But no one seemed to have seen the man.

That he had cleared off at once, and probably travelled all night, was likely enough; and it was impossible to guess in what direction he had gone. Possibly he had reached some hiding-place at a safe distance, and was lying low till the search for him slackened.

At all events, he was not seen, and the police inspector at Wimford could only report that no trace of him had been discovered.

Another day passed, and there was no news of Tatters.

It was a blow to all the Greyfriars fellows. They had taken a liking to the waif; and they had hoped, when they went back to Greyfriars for the new term, to leave him in safety, safe from his old tyrant. They could guess how poor Tatters was likely to fare now that he was in the ruthless hands of Tinker Wilson once more.

And the new term was near at hand now, and the Famous Five agreed that it was too utterly rotten to go back to Greyfriars without knowing what had become of Tatters.

"But he will get away from that brute sooner or later!" said Harry Wharton confidently. "It was different before, but now that he knows he's got friends here he will get away, and sooner or later he will show up. Once he gets out of the hands of that scoundrel he's sure to head for here, and my uncle will take care of him."

"After all, the brute can't keep him a prisoner!" agreed Bob Cherry. "He can give him the slip sooner or later."

Searching further for Tatters was obviously no use; it was certain that he was far away from Surrey by this time. But Harry Wharton & Co. still hoped to hear news of him before the new term began at Greyfriars.

That hope proved to be well-founded, though they little dreamed what strange news they were to hear of Tatters.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### The Man Behind the Scenes!

"YOU goin' to run?" Tinker Wilson growled out the words, in a tone like that of a savage bulldog.

Tatters made no answer.

But he crouched away, as the tinker made a movement towards him. Four or five days in the tinker's company had reduced the hapless waif to all his old submission, and more.

Bruises—black and blue—marked Tatters all over. Tinker Wilson had "taken it out" of him, as he expressed it. He had always been brutal, but never so brutal as now.

Twice Tatters had attempted to escape; and each time he had been stopped and savagely thrashed. Now he was sunk in a kind of lethargy; and the misery and despair in his pinched face might have touched a heart of stone. The tinker's heart seemed to be harder than stone.

Camped by a muddy cart-track, among the fields of Hampshire, under the lee of a group of willows, the tinker smoked his black pipe, while the keen wind blew sparks from the fire in the tin bucket. Tatters crouched against a tree, desolate and dismal.

Wilson eyed him evilly.

Tatters was still wearing the clothes he had donned at Wharton Lodge, but they were sadly frayed and torn and soiled now. He was shabby and dirty and forlorn. But the misery in his looks only seemed to intensify the dislike and animosity of the ruffian.

"Why can't you let me go?" muttered Tatters. "What do you want to keep me for, tinker?"

"Not because you're any use, nor any ornament, neither!" snarled the tinker. "I'm fed-up with your long face, and so I tell you!"

"Let me go, then!"

"Aw, stow it!" growled the ruffian. "You think you're a toff, because you got among some young toffs and got some clothes on your back. I'll make

you learn what you are, I will. You're jest a tinker's boy, that's what you are; and that's what you're going to stop. And I tell you this, Tatters—you 'ear what I say! I'd rather knock you on the 'ead for keeps than let you clear! I got my reasons, and there's them as'll make it worth my while, too. So you take care, you young 'ound, and don't ask for it."

The tinker rose to his feet. Darkness was falling; and the fire in the bucket made a spot of crimson in the gathering gloom.

"You goin' to run?" he repeated threateningly.

Tatters made no reply. Cowed as he was by ill-usage, his mind was made up to run as soon as he had a chance. Matters were not as they had been before he had met the Greyfriars chums. He had a refuge now and kind friends, if he could only escape the brutal tinker.

Wilson eyed him savagely. Apparently he had to leave the camp, on some business that did not require Tatters' presence. But he was uneasy about leaving the boy alone.

"I ain't going fur!" he said, at last. "I got to see a man about some business—but I ain't going fur. But I reckon I got to make you safe afore I goes."

He took a couple of straps from the hand-cart. Tatters made no resistance, as the tinker strapped his wrists together, and then strapped his ankles; resistance was hopeless.

Having thus secured the boy, the tinker dragged him into the midst of the willows. He had picked a lonely spot for his camp, and passers-by were unlikely to appear; but he was not taking chances.

"Let me 'ear a sound from you!" he muttered threateningly. "I ain't going fur, as I said! Let me 'ear a sound, and I'll come back, and I won't leave a 'ole bone in your body."

And, leaving Tatters in the willows, the tinker tramped away.

He followed a path across the fields, a path he seemed to know well. It led him to an old, tumble-down cottage, in the last stage of decay. The windows were broken, and there was no door in the doorway. Obviously the place was not tenanted; but there was a sound within the dilapidated ruin as the tinker approached; and he caught the glow of a cigar and a whiff of the scent of Havana.

He whistled softly.

A face appeared for a moment in the doorway, looking out into the deep winter dusk. It was a young man's face, half hidden by a soft hat pulled low down over the brows.

"O.K., sir!" muttered the tinker. "Only me!"

"Get inside!"

The face disappeared.

Tinker Wilson stepped into the dismantled room. Part of the roof was open to the sky, and there was a pile of snow in one corner. The tinker peered at the young man, with an evil, impudent grin on his stubbly face. Wrapped in a long, thick coat, with a muffler round his neck, pulled up over his chin, and the hat low over his brows, the man would not have been easily recognised by anyone that knew him. But the tinker evidently knew him well.

"I've been waiting for you!" snapped the young man, taking the cigar from his mouth.

"I reckoned I'd better leave it till arter dark, Mr. Rackstraw," answered

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the tinker. "You don't want to be seen talking to me."

"Mention no names, you fool!"

"There ain't anybody within a mile to 'ear!" answered the tinker sullenly.

"You cannot be too careful! You have the boy again?"

"Like I wrote," answered Tinker Wilson. "And the young 'ound ain't getting away ag'in."

Cyril Rackstraw drew a deep, deep breath.

"It was fortunate, perhaps, that he had left you, when my grandfather chanced on you the other day on the road in Sussex," he said. "If he had been with you then—"

"You fancy the old gent would have knowed him?"

"At a glance," answered Rackstraw harshly. "His face—his features—unmistakable. He is a Cholmondeley from top to toe."

"The old codger would 'ave keen eyes to see what he was like with all the grimo on his face!" grinned the tinker. "I don't reckon he'd have known him, sir."

"He would have known him at once. Fortunately, he was not with you. Even if he had not known his features, he would have questioned any boy he found with you. And then there is the birthmark—once the old fool's eyes were set on that—"

"Well, he won't see 'im," said the tinker. "'Sides, the old bloke never knowed I was Tinker Wilson. I was took aback, sir, seeing you along with him, in that blooming car! Lucky you'd warned me I was being looked for, too. I ain't using the name of Wilson no more."

"You have the boy safe now?"

"What do you think?"

"If you have left him, he may bolt again."

The tinker chuckled.

"He's welcome to bolt, if he can bolt with straps buckled on his arms and legs," he answered.

"Oh!" ejaculated Rackstraw.

"I got him safe!" said the tinker reassuringly. "Don't you worry about that, sir."

"There is no need to ill-use the boy, muttered Rackstraw. "I have paid you liberally to keep him—I never desired you to ill-use him, or to give him a hard life. So long as he does not leave you, and—and finds friends who might—might—"

He broke off.

"You leave that to me, sir," said Tinker Wilson. "I got my own ways. It's a 'eavy 'and he wants to keep him quiet."

Rackstraw was silent for a few minutes. The tinker eyed him curiously in the deep gloom.

"This cannot go on," said Rackstraw, breaking the silence abruptly. "The old fool is spending money like water on inquiry agents—and, against all probability, they succeeded in getting on the track of the boy. It is like him to take a hand in the search himself—and I have been dragged up and down the country with him."

"I reckon you wanted to keep an eye open, in case the old codger had any luck!" chuckled the tinker.

"Never mind that!" snapped Rackstraw. "I tell you, this cannot go on. Sooner or later you will be traced, and the boy taken from you. At present there is still doubt of his identity—but once he is in the old fool's presence the truth will be established. You must leave the country with him, Wilson."

"That ain't so blinking easy!" said the tinker.

"Easy or not, it is the only way," said Rackstraw. "I tell you, the old man knows—knows for a certainty, or almost a certainty—about the boy. He cared little enough while there were others to inherit the Cholmondeley title and succeed him in the estate; but now there are no others, and he will move heaven and earth rather than allow the title to die out and the estate to go to a man of another name. I am his daughter's son, but that is nothing to the old fool. The estate must go to a Cholmondeley, even if he has to find one on the roads in a tinker's rags. I tell you, the boy must be taken out of his reach."

"You leave him to me, sir," said the tinker. "I'll take care of him. He won't get away from me ag'in!"

Rackstraw made an impatient gesture.

"I tell you the old fool will find him if he remains in England! He must go—you must go. At this very minute the old fool has gone in his car to some place where he fancies you have been seen. He is keener than a paid detective in the search for the boy. I tell you he has a dozen agents or more hunting for you since he learned that the boy was with you. Listen to me! I have formed a plan, and you must carry it out."

Tinker Wilson lighted his pipe and leaned on the wall while the young man went on speaking in low, hurried tones. It was long before the two parted and went their different ways, neither dreaming of the surprise that awaited him.

(Continued on next page.)

## COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of "The Magnet," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

IT'S a pity that it takes such a long time for the mail to get from England to Australia and vice versa, because it frequently means that some letters are out of date before they reach me. Such a letter is that which comes from W. Larsen, of Melbourne, Victoria. He is a most enthusiastic reader of the MAGNET, and he was looking forward to our Christmas Number. In fact, he asked me if I could publish it earlier, in order that my Australian readers should get it at the proper time!

I am afraid that was too big an order for me! As it is, we go to press a considerable time before Christmas, and I am sure my British readers would want to "kick" if I brought out a Christmas Number about the end of the summer! However, W. L. should remember that our topping Annuals are always on sale in time for Australian readers to get them at Christmas!

HE has several questions to ask me, all of which are interesting. The first one refers to

### SOUND EFFECTS ON THE "TALKIES."

How do producers manage to get the sound of a shell bursting? Do they explode real shells? No! The burst of a real shell would send the microphone and the operators sky-high, and that would be an end of the "talkie." Remember that a microphone amplifies sound, so that it is only necessary for a small explosion to take place near it for the sound to be magnified to any extent.

Rifle shots are sometimes produced by means of canes beating on canvas, while in one film, wishing to get the noise of an iceberg crashing into a ship, the producer merely smashed a matchbox alongside the microphone—and the result was all that could be desired! Sometimes "fake" effects sound much better than the real thing, and I know of one studio which employs a man to imitate the roar of lions and other wild beasts. He does it better than the animals could themselves!

He also wants to know

### MORE ABOUT THE MARIE CELESTE.

Regular readers know that I have already devoted a great deal of space to this unfortunate vessel, which was found an abandoned derelict under circumstances that were most mysterious. The true facts are always in dispute, and all the

tales told about her, conflict with one another. It is generally put down as an unsolved mystery of the sea, and no one can say with any truth what are the actual facts concerning the disappearance of the whole ship's company!

Glad to hear you like our old paper, and our companion journals, W. L. Write again as soon as you like!

CAN you answer this question, which comes from "Monks," of Bloemfontein, Orange Free State?

### WHAT IS A NEBULA?

It is a cloudy patch of light in the heavens, produced either by a group of stars, or by a mass of gaseous matter. But you must not jump to the conclusion that, because it is produced by a group of star authors, there is anything nebulous about the MAGNET. Not on your life!

My next letter comes from "Critic," of Liverpool, and I must say that he is a very kindly critic, indeed! He thinks the MAGNET is the best book he has ever come across! Agreed! He also thinks that Frank Richards' stories are "the goods." Also agreed! And he wants to know if he can have another serial by George E. Rochester before long!

Yes, by all means. In the meantime I have arranged for another serial treat from an old favourite—Stanton Hope. No author has had more experience of foreign climes or travelled as much as Mr. Hope and he has put all his knowledge and imagination into "The Island of Slaves!" Look out, then, for the opening chapters the week after next; they'll take you by storm as they did me.

NOW for next week's feast of fiction, "CHUMLEY FOR SHORT!"

is the title of the second yarn in the grand new series of Greyfriars stories Frank Richards is writing for us. I'd spoil the whole treat if I were to divulge the plot here, so I will keep mum and leave you to find things out for yourselves. When you've finished this yarn you can turn to the final instalment of "Up, the Rovers!" while the "Greyfriars Herald" is guaranteed to bring a smile to the face of a brass image. "Old Ref" will smooth out a few more soccer difficulties, while I shall be in the "chair" as usual. Cheerio till next week,

YOUR EDITOR.

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## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

## Home!

"ELP!"

Sir George Cholmondeley glanced from the window of the car in the thick winter gloom. Spencer was driving slowly.

The car was threading its way along a rutty lane. The old baronet sat with a deep frown on his brow. Once more he had met with a disappointment, though his determination to find the boy for whom he searched was not diminished. He was on his way back to Cholmondeley Castle when that faint cry came from a group of willows by a cart-track that branched off from the shadowy lane.

"Elp!"

"Stop!" said Sir George.

Spencer halted the car.

"Did you hear a cry, Spencer?"

"Yes, Sir George," answered the chauffeur. He stared at the dusky willows at a distance. "Somebody was calling 'Help,' sir."

Again from the darkness came the cry.

"Elp!"

"Go and see what is the matter, Spencer," said Sir George. "It sounds like some tramp's voice. But go and see."

"Yes, sir."

Spencer left the car and walked up the cart-track towards the willows. Sir George waited in the car impatiently. The voice that called for help was uncultured. It was probably that of some miserable tramp whose dingy existence was hardly worthy of his notice. Still, if some hapless wretch was hurt in the cold and darkness, he did not feel that he could pass the call for help unheeded. But he was irritated and impatient as he waited for the chauffeur to return.

He had to wait more than ten minutes, growing more irritated with each passing minute, and almost regretting that he had stopped the car. But the chauffeur came back at last.

He did not come alone. A boy in clothes that had been good, but that were torn and muddy and untidy, limped after him. An unwashed face glimmered in the light from the car, and Sir George frowned at it.

"What was it, Spencer?" he snapped.

"It's very queer, sir," said the chauffeur. "This boy was lying yonder in the willows, calling for help. He was strapped up hand and foot."

"Good gad!" Sir George stared at the waif. "Well, as you have released him, we may proceed."

"Skuse me, sir," gasped Tatters, coming closer to the car as the chauffeur took his seat, "if you'd let me 'ang on a few minutes, sir—"

"What?" barked Sir George.

"Oh, sir, let me 'ang on!" panted Tatters. "He will be arter me ag'in! Oh, sir, give a bloke a chance to get away! He left me strapped up, sir, so I couldn't move. And if he'd 'eard me calling for 'elp, sir, I don't dare to think what he'd have done! Oh, sir, I can tell you my 'eart was in my mouth every time I called! I thought some bloke might be goin' 'ome by the lane and might 'ear me and come and let a cove loose, sir. Give me a lift for 'arf a mile, sir, for mercy's sake, afore he comes back, sir!"

Tatters' voice was husky with fear and anguish.

"Good gad!" said the old gentleman, staring at him. "This is—is extraordinary! If you are in danger from someone, I suppose I can give you a lift for a mile or so. Who are you?"

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"I'm called Tatters, sir."

"What?"

"Jest Tatters."

"Great gad!" The baronet leaned from the car. "Boy, who is the man you are afraid of?"

"Tinker Wilson, sir."

"Good heavens! Boy! Let me see your face!"

In his agitation the old gentleman reached out, grasped Tatters by the shoulder, and almost dragged him into the doorway of the car. The light shone clear on the unwashed face.

Sir George stared at it with fixed, searching, eager eyes. Tatters, startled and frightened, blinked back at him.

"The boy!" breathed Sir George Cholmondeley. "It is the boy! My son's face over again! Boy, turn back your sleeve—the right sleeve."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Tatters, in bewilderment. He was wondering whether this strange old gentleman was sane.

"Do you hear me?" barked Sir George. "Do as I tell you! Listen! Is there a mark on your arm above the elbow—a mark like an axe-head?"

"Yes, sir!" panted Tatters.

"Turn back your sleeve."

Tatters, amazed and bewildered, bared his arm. Sir George stared at the birthmark.

"Get into the car!" he barked.

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

Tatters clambered into the car.

"Home, Spencer!"

The door closed, the car glided on. Tatters, uneasy, scared, wondering, sank into a seat facing the old gentleman.

"At last!" said Sir George. "At last! Unmistakably the boy! Good gad, and by the merest chance! Boy, do you know what your name is?"

"No, sir," mumbled Tatters. "I've always been called Tatters, sir—jest Tatters."

"Your name is Cholmondeley—Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley!"

"Oh, sir, is it?" gasped Tatters.

"Ow'd you know, sir?"

"I am your grandfather."

Tatters fell back in his seat, his eyes wide. He was sure now that this imperious old gentleman was not sane.

Sir George stared at him. There was not much affection in his look at the grandson he had found, but there was deep and intense satisfaction. His expression was almost gloating.

"So I've found you at last!" he barked. "Where is that scoundrel Wilson? He must be found and punished."

"I dunno, sir," said Tatters. "He left me to go and see a bloke, sir, and strapped me up, 'cause he knew I'd run if I could, same as I did afore. If he'd 'eard me calling for 'elp—" Tatters shuddered.

"He shall be found!" barked Sir George. "He must know—he cannot fail to know—that you have been searched for, and he has deliberately kept you. By gad, he shall pay for it! But never mind that now. You are found. Do you remember your father, boy?"

"No, sir," faltered Tatters.

"He was my son."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Tatters.

If his days at Wharton Lodge had seemed like a dream to the waif, this seemed more like a dream—the wildest of dreams. This old "toff" with the white moustache and the eyeglass declared that the tinker's boy was his grandson! Tatters had never seen him before or heard of him. It was difficult to believe that the old gentleman was sane.

"He was my son," repeated Sir George. "A disobedient young rascal,

whom I cut off for his disobedience, and who went to the bad. He went to the dogs, by Jove! I had other sons then, but they are gone, and they have left no one to carry on my name. Do you understand?"

"No, sir!" gasped Tatters. Tatters was too bewildered to understand anything just then.

"You alone remain," said Sir George. "You are the last to bear the name of Cholmondeley in our branch of the family. Don't you understand? The others have died—and for years I have been searching for Arthur's boy—and you are Arthur's boy. Don't you understand?"

Tatters could only gasp.

Sir George leaned back in his seat and was silent for some time while Tatters stared. The waif was trying to get his bearings; but it was not easy. Miles glided under the wheels.

Tatters looked from the window.

"I'll be safe now, sir," he ventured.

"That beast won't be able to nab me, if, if I get down 'ere."

"Are you a fool?" barked Sir George.

"Oh, sir!"

"Cannot you understand me, when I tell you that you are my grandson? You are coming home with me."

"Oh, sir!"

"In a few minutes now we shall be at Cholmondeley Castle. That will be your home."

"This 'ere is a dream!" muttered Tatters.

Sir George's face softened. No doubt it dawned upon his mind how utterly bewildered the boy must be by this strange and sudden change in his fortunes.

"Pull yourself together, Arthur!" he said. "It is no dream—but reality! Forget your old life—it is over—forever! You are my grandson—I am Sir George Cholmondeley. You are heir to my title and a large estate. You will be rich—happy—you will go to a good school—you will soon forget that you were ever a tinker's boy! Try to understand."

"I'll try, sir!" stammered Tatters. "But—but it don't seem real, sir. You sure Tinker Wilson won't get arter me ag'in, sir?"

"Good gad! Try to understand!" barked Sir George. "If the rascal should ever venture near you I will have him whipped away like a dog."

"Oh!" gasped Tatters.

If this old gentleman was sane—which Tatters still doubted a little—there was a great change in store for him. He sat trying to think it out.

The car rolled in at a great arched gateway. It rolled up a drive to a mansion four or five times as large as Wharton Lodge—an ancient building that had once been a feudal castle and still retained many of the old walls, gateways, and battlements. Tatters stared round him like a fellow in a dream.

In a dazed state he left the car, and tottered by the baronet's side into a vast doorway. Sleek servants—whom poor Tatters, for the moment took for "toffs"—seemed to swarm. What they thought of Tatters did not seem to matter to Sir George in the slightest. Probably the Lord of Cholmondeley Castle had never realised that servants thought at all. Tatters, sure now that he was in a dream and would wake up presently in the tinker's camp, followed Sir George blindly.

"Cyril!"

A young man rose from an armchair in the apartment Sir George entered, and turned towards him.

"I have just returned," he said. "I



have been inquiring—" He broke off at the sight of Tatters.

"No more inquiries will be needed, Cyril," said Sir George. "I have found the boy."

Cyril Rackstraw did not answer. He stood as if rooted to the floor, his eyes almost starting from his head as he gazed at Tatters.

"Come here, Arthur!" barked Sir George. "Boy! Come here! This is your cousin Cyril—Cyril Rackstraw."

"Oh cripes!" gasped Tatters, quite overcome.

Sir George winced.

"That—that—that is the boy!" Rackstraw found his voice. "But—but—are you sure? If—if— You may have been—been deceived—"

"Nonsense!"

"But—"

shall soon change all that! I shall send him to my old school—Greyfriars—"

"You will send that—that outcast to Greyfriars! He would never be taken in there—"

"Nonsense!" barked Sir George. "I shall send him to Greyfriars—they will scarcely refuse my grandson, at Greyfriars or any other school! He shall enter at the new term."

Rackstraw bit his lip until there was a spot of red on it. It was difficult for him to keep his self-control as he saw all his hopes, all his schemes, dashed to pieces. The hatred he felt for his newly-found cousin burned in his eyes, and Tatters, though he did not understand it, read it there, and shrank from it. This elegant young toff hated him, hated to see him at Cholmondeley Castle—why, he could not guess.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Letter From Tatters!

HARRY WHARTON stared. "My only hat!" he ejaculated.

The captain of the Greyfriars Remove stood in the hall at Wharton Lodge, with a letter in his hand.

It was close on the new term now, and still no news had been received of Tatters at Wharton Lodge. Harry Wharton & Co. had almost given up hope of ever hearing from him again.

But there was news at last!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Some jolly old news?" asked Bob Cherry, as he heard Wharton's astonished exclamation. "What's up?"

"Tatters!" answered Harry.

"News of Tatters?" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Yes, rather!"

"Oh, good!"

"The goodness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The absurd anxiousness on the esteemed account of the ludicrous



"This is your cousin Cyril—Cyril Rackstraw!" barked Sir George. "Oh cripes!" gasped Tatters, quite overcome, while Cyril Rackstraw's eyes almost started from his head as he gazed at the wail.

"Nonsense!" barked Sir George. "This is the boy! This is Arthur's son and I have found him at last! You do not look pleased, Cyril!"

Rackstraw looked at him. If his grandfather expected him to look pleased, when a large fortune was slipping from his grasp, the old gentleman was expecting too much. A grim look came over the baronet's face.

"At all events, this is the boy!" he said. "This is my grandson, Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley! That is beyond doubt."

"That—that tattered beggar—" Rackstraw could not restrain his bitterness—"that—that wretched wail—"

Sir George Cholmondeley knitted his brows.

"My grandson, sir!" he barked. "Your cousin!"

He glanced at the boy and smiled rather grimly.

"Certainly he does not look, at present, like a Cholmondeley of Cholmondeley Castle!" he said. "But we

Sir George Cholmondeley stared grimly at his elder grandson. Cyril Rackstraw was making an obvious effort to pull himself together—to hide the rage and bitterness that ran riot in his breast.

"Cyril! I have told you that this boy, Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley, is my grandson—and your cousin! Shake hands with your cousin and welcome him home!"

Rackstraw panted. He dared not disobey! With an effort he calmed himself.

"Of—of course, if—if no mistake has been made, I—I am glad," he said. "I have done all I could to help you in the search, and if it has been, at last, successful, I am more than glad."

"Give your cousin a welcome, then!" barked Sir George.

Rackstraw advanced, and held out his hand to Tatters. His fingers were like ice as Tatters touched them.

And the wail knew, though he could not guess the reason, that he had an enemy in Cyril Rackstraw.

Tatters has been preposterously terrific!"

"That letter from Tatters?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Yes." Wharton held it up. "It rather takes the oake, I think! Read it, you fellows."

And the Famous Five proceeded to read the letter from Tatters together. They read it in amazement. It ran—in a scrawling, sprawling hand and a strange spelling:

"Dear Arry Wharton,—You and your friends aving been so kind to me, I think you'd like to ear that I'm in luck. I aint along with that beast Tinker Wilson no more—not arf! I done with im for keeps.

"A old gent as took me, which he is my grandfather. I thort he was cracked when he told me so first, but it turns out O.K. I know you'll be glad to ear that I'm in clover.

"But I can't tell you a lot, cause the

(Continued on page 27.)



# UP, *the* ROVERS!



## Back to Railton.

**P**HILIP BRENNAN, however, had not escaped. Jimmy could hear him gasping in a quaver, hoarse, whistling fashion, while the detectives bent over him by the light of an electric torch.

Snatches of their conversation drifted up to the white-faced youngster.

"Glass, sir—long, jagged bit—throat—clean through!"

Philip Brennan's breathing grew worse.

Up in the room above, Jimmy, piecing the words together, set his teeth hard and retreated from the window to where Tony, handcuffed and gagged, cursed him with his eyes, and Charles Thurgood rocked to and fro on a chair, nursing his hand and weeping. After a long interval, Tim and one of his men returned alone. For once in a way the young Scotland Yard man looked downcast and worried.

In answer to Jimmy's swift question he shrugged moodily, and laid an irritable hand on Thurgood's puffy neck, while his hefty subordinate marched Tony Brennan through the door, making short work of the latter's sullen resistance.

Outside on the dark drive, which at one time he had never thought to see again, Jimmy saw the gang's sleek car, empty and unguarded. The two prisoners were bundled inside without delay, and Tim, very silent all at once, went in with them to act as guard.

"Poetic justice!" thought Jimmy grimly, as he sank into the front seat beside the driver. It was his turn to ride there now, while the enemies who had kidnapped him rode in the back, themselves as pinioned and helpless as he had been.

But his thoughts, in spite of the turn of fortune, were heavy. Uncle Phil—and Tony! He closed his eyes momentarily to shut out a bitter picture.

Of the other C.I.D. men and his uncle there were no signs. Only, his ears caught the sound of another car,  
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already far away and racing through the night at top speed. Puzzled, Jimmy flung up his head to listen more intently. The plain-clothes man, settling down at the wheel beside him, caught the gesture and grunted an explanation.

"That's our bus, running your uncle to Railton hospital, sir. He's hurt, I'm afraid!"

"Railton!" gasped Jimmy. "But we're miles away, aren't we?"

"No, sir, only two. You were taken for a fair joy-ride round the country. Your uncle'll be at the hospital in a few minutes now!"

The self starter whirred busily under the pressure of his foot.

"And still he won't be in time!" he

## TIM OSBORNE'S GOT TWO IRONS IN THE FIRE—

To score goals for Railton Rovers and to round up a bunch of crooks.

### HE DOES BOTH!

concluded. But he said it softly to himself, and all Jimmy heard as he huddled wearily into his seat was the purr of the car, running down the drive—running back to Railton, away from the house of evil.

### In Bill Nye's Parlour!

"**H**EY, lazybones! Wake up! Snap out of it!"

Through a great depth of sleep, a hand seemed to be reaching down, jerking Jimmy Brennan back to earth; he could hear a familiar, amused voice calling him from a long way off.

"Rouse yourself, dopey!"  
He stretched out sleepily, opened heavy eyes after a struggle; and frowned in drowsy astonishment to see,

not "Mother" Nye, but Tim Osborne, steaming cup of tea in hand, grinning down at him. Several minutes passed before he could collect himself. He wondered what the deuce Tim was doing there, and why his limbs ached with stiffness. Then memory came back with a rush and he sat up jerkily.

"Gosh! Hallo, Tim! I—I've been asleep!" he mumbled. "What's the time?"

As a matter of fact, it was three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, and Jimmy had slept for nearly fifteen hours—thanks to Bill Nye. When, under police escort, the youngster had landed home in the small hours of that Sunday morning, the veteran trainer had wasted no time in futile questions. Expert handler of men that he was, he had taken one searching look at the boy's haggard face, slipped certain white pellets into a hasty cup of cocoa, and packed him off to bed right away. Not until Jimmy was breathing peacefully in drugged slumber did Bill stir from his side to listen to Tim's report with a thunderous brow. And his timely action had certainly saved Jimmy from a mental fever.

Pushing the cup of tea nearer, Tim laughed.

"Never mind the time, old dear! How d'you feel?"

Jimmy shook his head. The events of the previous night were crowding in on him fast now, and his eyes were dark and troubled.

"Putrid!" he said simply.

The youthful C.I.D. man patted his shoulder.

"I'll bet! Awf'ly sorry I let you in for that rough time, Jimmy"—he apologized again—"but—"

"Oh, rot! That was nothing. You're a callous beast, Tim, but it was a neat scheme and I'm glad I was in it. It's Uncle and Tony turning out like that! They acted so decently all through—I thought they were my best pals. And they'd have murdered me by torture! It's—"

"I know!" Tim's voice was very gentle. "But they're plain crooks all



right, and Tony's the worst young thug I've met for years. You want to forget they're your relations now, old son!"

Jimmy set his jaw. The advice was good. His face seemed to have grown suddenly older as he looked up at his friend.

"You're right. What's happened since this morning?" he asked quietly.

"Lots! The news is all over Railton now and the town's fairly off its head. I didn't know you were so popular, my giddy hero. It was bad enough when they found out what treacherous hounds your pleasant-mannered uncle and cousin had been; but, by gosh, when people learnt that the great Charles Thurgood, of the bank, was the ring-leader—well, it's lucky he and Tony were safe behind the bars. There's a mob shouting its head off even now in front of the police station. If they could get in I reckon they'd lynch the pair of 'em. Railton's gone clean balmy over you—and that's a fact!"

He clapped Jimmy on the shoulder.

"But, come on—you've had a wonderful sleep. A cold tub and a meal, and you'll be O.K. Afterwards, if old Bill will let me use his parlour, I'll tell you the whole yarn. Up you get!"

Half an hour later, still downcast, but clear-eyed and calm, Jimmy sat in Bill Nye's armchair while Tim Osborne spread a queer assortment of articles on the table before him; a long, wicked knife, double-edged and pointed, two large photographs, and a slip of pink paper. Jimmy started in astonishment at sight of his late father's well-known handwriting; then flushed as he realised he was staring at the cause of so much trouble—the mysterious forged cheque, his uncle's handiwork. It was the first time, too, that he had seen the murderous blade Tony had threatened him with on the night of the fire. He waited on tenterhooks for Tim to begin.

And Tim did so. His usual, whimsical smile had vanished; the "mask" had dropped completely from his face now as he leaned back in his chair.

"I'll start at the beginning, Jimmy. You know now what Thurgood's scheme was; to grab the Rovers' ground at all costs. You'll see why in a minute.

"Right from the start, Thurgood was the leader. He needed money desperately, because he'd been milking the bank for years and was liable to discovery at any time. He'd tried various schemes for raising the wind and they'd all flopped. So he tried to get your father's property—and that meant downing your father first!"

"But—" interrupted Jimmy quickly; only to be silenced by Tim's uplifted hand.

"Let me tell it my way, son. As I was saying, Thurgood wanted your father out of action—not killed; that was an accident—but crippled financially and forced to sell out. Well, somehow, he found out that if your dad had one enemy in the world who hated him like poison, it was your uncle. And the two joined forces!"

"Uncle hated my dad, you say?" muttered Jimmy. "Why? I can't believe it!"

Tim leaned forward.

"It's true, though. Sorry, Jimmy, but I'm afraid your uncle was pure skunk, right through. And like all skunks, he loathed the honest, white man who'd done him nothing but good turns all his life.

"Two years before you were born, your dad and your uncle both fell in love with the same girl, Mary Paget—your mother. She had the good sense to take your dad; and Philip Brennan, who even then was weak and rorty, went bad! He finally got into a bad

forgery scrape, from which your dad rescued him at tremendous cost and sent him out to the Colonies with enough money to make a fresh start.

"Well, he fooled around till he was broke; and at last drifted into Cape Town, South Africa, with a wife and year-old son, Tony. Being a skunk, as I say, it wasn't long before he was on the crook again—more forgery. Only this time, although your dad helped him once more, he got it in the neck—fourteen years in gaol!

His wife, as far as we can find out, came of decent folks; and when she died, just after Philip Brennan went to prison, they took charge of Tony and educated him till his father came out. Then, to show his gratitude, Brennan grabbed the boy and vanished with him up-country.

"After that, it was difficult to trace 'em for a time; but eventually Brennan started trading in Masailand in a big way. By all accounts, he got into some pretty scrapes with the niggers and what little law there was in that wild country, but Tony became as big a scamp as his old man, and the two did well.

"At last, however, things became too hot. They got mixed up in rum-selling to the natives, and even slave-dealing; and they had to scat. So, having made a tidy sum, instead of going elsewhere, Brennan came back to England to settle down, or so he said. Anyway, as you know, your father welcomed him back, made things smooth here in Railton and looked upon his brother as a reformed citizen, especially as Tony was sent up to Cambridge to study a good profession. But my opinion is that Philip Brennan came back here only to work some dog's trick on your father, to repay the obligations that had rankled in his yellow soul all these years; and when Thurgood came along with his scheme, that was the opportunity he'd been waiting for!"

Tim's fist banged the table. He went on quickly:

"Well, the pair started. Thurgood, of course, knew just how your father's money affairs stood and Philip used his old talent to forge the cheque that emptied his bank account. And"—Tim's voice deepened—"it was he who killed your father when he crept in to recover the forged cheque that night!"

#### A Tale of Villainy.

**A**T the words, the last vestige of blood drained slowly from Jimmy's white face. But he only nodded in silence, and after a painful pause, Tim continued:

#### WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

*James Brennan, owner of the Railton Rovers F.C., is robbed of his savings and then fatally injured by some unknown assailant. Further disasters follow, until Jimmy Brennan, the dead owner's son, is forced to sell his house to Charles Thurgood, manager of the Railton Bank, in order to carry on. Determined to find out who is at the back of the plot to wreck the Rovers, Scotland Yard convinces that Tim Osborne, of the Secret Service, should play for the Rovers. Tim proves a great asset to the team, and the great day comes when the Rovers succeed in gaining the leadership of the League. That same night, however, Jimmy is daringly abducted from his bed-room by three masked figures and taken to a sinister-looking house with a view to forcing him to sign an agreement to sell the Rovers' ground. Tim, accompanied by a strong police force, arrives at the crucial moment, and Jimmy's assailants are unmasked. They prove to be Mr. Thurgood, the bank manager, Mr. Philip Brennan, and Tony, Jimmy's uncle and cousin respectively. Although handcuffed, Jimmy's uncle makes a frantic attempt to escape by leaping through the window. (Now read on.)*

"Recovering that cheque was the one big risk Thurgood and Brennan had to run; the one weakness in a deep-laid scheme. They knew your dad, knowing his brother's past, would suspect the truth the moment he discovered the forgery; and to counteract that and baffle the police, Thurgood was ready to swear it was you, or someone impersonating you, who had presented the cheque at the bank and received the £3,000. Remember?"

Jimmy nodded again. Bit by bit the cloud of black villainy that had surrounded him was being dispelled. His big fists clenched till they ached.

"You were to have been the goat. But in the meantime, in case things went wrong, that cheque, the one fatal piece of evidence in the case, had to be destroyed as quickly as possible. Thurgood couldn't do it, naturally—big cheques aren't 'lost' in banks—so Philip Brennan had to take it on. If it was stolen from your house, they reckoned, so much the worse for you!"

"They knew your father had sent you to the bank for his books; and you can bet your uncle stuck around pretty close to find how the land lay. Luck was with him up to a point. Your dad was terribly busy all day and didn't go through the books till long after the bank had closed; perhaps your uncle thought he'd forgotten them till the next morning. Anyway, no alarm was raised and Philip Brennan made up his mind to break into the Firs that night. Which is where his luck petered out!"

"Now, of course, we shall never know if your father had discovered the forgery, although I have a feeling he did. It's strange he should have hidden the cheque and his bankbook in that mantelpiece instead of locking them in his bureau as, apparently, he usually did with business papers. That's all in the air, though. All we know is that your uncle was caught in the act, a fight took place, James Brennan died and your uncle bolted—empty-handed! And the cheque could not be found!"

"Your dad tried hard to tell you where it was, Jimmy, but you misunderstood him—quite naturally! Philip, of course, scooted for his life, and by the time you'd attended to your father and phoned the doctor, he was at home and ready to speak to you over the wire. What happened afterwards you know.

"Well, that was that. Your dad was dead and you owned the Rovers' ground. Things looked rosy for Thurgood. You were only a kid and broke at that. They couldn't see you running a darn rickety professional club on your own, with nothing behind you, so they made a small but honest offer for the ground through your solicitor, all legal and proper. Henry Sylvester advised you to negotiate, because he really believed he was acting for the best. He always maintained that football ruined your father, and didn't want you to go the same way. He also got very sore when you refused—and to tell you the truth he thought for a time you were mixed up in the forgery. But that doesn't matter now.

"Unfortunately for Thurgood & Co. you proved obstinate—very. Presently it dawned on 'em, too, that you were waking up the Rovers and might even win through yet. So they got rough!"

"They tried smashing you, too. First Tony fired your 'main stand.' You tackled him, but he was masked and got away, leaving only his knife, the silly fool. Having the nerve of Satan, he came back afterwards, as you know, and watched the fire with you.



"But even that disaster didn't stop you. You still went ahead, they couldn't get your ground—and all the time they knew that forged cheque must be somewhere in your house and you might stumble on it any day. So Thurgood bought the house, in his 'friendly' way. It took all the money he could dig up, but he had to offer a fair price in case he raised any suspicions.

"Of course, the moment the house was his, he ransacked it. But he didn't find what he wanted so badly!" And Tim chuckled reminiscently.

"Then the gang, getting desperate, struck a bright idea. If you were dead, your property would come to Philip Brennan, as your next-of-kin. That meant the ground. Therefore, they tried to kill you.

"They failed, as you know. And that failure gave them a very bad attack of cold feet. They guessed someone they didn't know had butted in to save you. But, thanks chiefly to that hard case, Tony, they recovered their nerve and staked everything on one big, bold throw—and came unstuck.

"It was Tony who planned this last stunt—incidentally, it was he who impersonated you at the bank, although that wasn't difficult, as the cashier was out at lunch and Thurgood himself cashed the cheque. Tony had left Cambridge two days before your father died—not the same evening, as he told you at the time. I made a special journey to his college to find that out, and also found he'd been 'sent down' for piling-up racing and other debts, and general wildness. He's a tough-un, all right, and he envied you like sin!

"For some time before making the last attempt, he and his father had been fighting like dogs over money. Tony wanted to settle you and leave England with his share; he'd got into more trouble in here Railton, and things were getting hot. Thurgood was frantic for cash, too—if he didn't get the Rovers' ground soon, it would be no good to him at all. So between them they overrode your uncle, who was still windy over that Blackholt business and—well, you know what happened.

"That old house they took you to is out Farmholt way, and belongs to one of Thurgood's clients at the bank, who is abroad. They had everything cut and dried, including that diabolical agreement. But so had I. Letting them get you was my big chance to make a clean-up; to get them altogether, red-handed—and I did. That's all!"

#### Enter Henry Sylvester!

JIMMY gave a long, deep sigh as Tim lay back, his face a-grin from ear to ear. Somehow the youngster felt like one who has been dragged back from the brink of a yawning abyss.

"You're a wonder, Tim!" he said feelingly. "But I still don't see how you worked it out. And why did they want my ground?"

Tim grinned shyly.

"Oh—I tumbled 'em various ways!" he shrugged.

Affectionately he picked up Tony's knife and made it whistle through the air.

"This was our best clue—only it took some time to follow up. To cut the yarn short, one of the 'Yard' experts recognised it as the sort of machete supplied by traders to the niggers, in

parts of Africa where the 'bush' is very dense; Masailand, for instance. The natives use the point for hunting and killing, and the double razor-edge for hacking through jungle. Tony must have brought this one back with him among other African mementos, and being a wild-cat, armed himself with it that night in case he was tackled.

"Well, it was just a chance shot on Inspector Daniels' part, but he sent me down here to look for someone who might be interested in downing your father and you, and who had been connected with Africa at some time or other. Naturally, I found your uncle, the 'retired Colonial trader,' as everyone knew him.

"I made a few inquiries, that interested me; sent out to Africa for full details of his career complete with photos; and also dug up his earlier life here in Railton—which wanted doing, 'cause your dad had hushed up that old scandal well and truly. By the time I'd got all the information, however, I knew who'd forged James Brennan's name and who'd burnt your stand!

smiled Tim, while Jimmy flushed. "The loss of the forged cheque and Thurgood's clever acting held me up. I watched you for a while and washed you out. I had several chats with Sylvester and knew he was innocent. And just then Charles Thurgood came along and bought your house—and the trail got warm.

"I went back to London, got Daniels to have a little official look at Mr. Charles Thurgood and his affairs; and when we'd found out this and that, I knew he hadn't beggared himself to buy your house for fun. Your old servants told me that Thurgood spent all his time searching and searching for something—and it could only have been for that missing evidence. And then I found out the mysterious motive.

"Henry Sylvester, who's been a good pal to you in spite of his crabby ways, made a queer discovery one day about the Dalmeny Land Society. He asked you to come to his office, but you, in your grand, pig-headed style, James, refused. So he came to me; and there and then, we got the real reason why your uncle and Thurgood had committed forgery, manslaughter, and attempted murder, to get possession of the Rovers' ground!

Jimmy leapt from his seat as though by a spring.

"At last!" he cried. "What was it, Tim?"

Then someone tapped lightly on the door. Tim called out cheerily: "Come in!"

And Henry Sylvester himself stepped quietly into the room.

#### One Hundred Thousand Pounds!

"GOOD-AFTERNOON, gentlemen!"

The door clicked; an awkward silence followed, as the Railton solicitor inclined his head in greeting. In the clear light from the window, his lined face showed up stern and cold as ever, yet—Jimmy noticed with a pang—his sombre eyes held a twinkle in their depths.

Tim's lips curved humorously; he was enjoying the situation. But before he could speak, Jimmy squared his shoulders and stood up. He had amends to make to this elderly man for months of suspicion and bitter opposition. And he made them then. Striding clumsily forward, he met the solicitor with outstretched hand.

"I—I'm sorry, Mr. Sylvester. I've acted like an unlicked cub towards you. I—apologise!"

Sylvester grasped the proffered hand warmly. The light in his eyes grew brighter. The friction and dislike of the past vanished for good, there and then.

"The fault was mine, Jimmy!" he answered gently. "Had I not been a crabby, stiff-necked old fool, we should have trusted each other better and got along together. Your father's death upset me greatly, and, at the time, I—well, let it go at that. I was your dad's great friend, my boy!" he concluded with a wry, little smile.

"And I hope you'll be mine, sir!" was Jimmy's frank reply.

They shook hands again. Tim's sly voice struck in, relieving an embarrassing moment.

"And now, peace is declared!" he grinned, pulling up a third chair. "You've come at the right moment, Mr. Sylvester. I was just going to tell

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"But there was a lot hidden yet. The chief thing to find was the motive behind it all. And another that set me thinking was: Why your uncle risked forgery, with the certain knowledge that he'd be tumbled, just for £3,000? Your father was supposed to be wealthy—so why not ten or twenty thousand; something worth while?"

"The answer seemed to be that the forger knew your dad's financial strength almost to a penny; and who could have told him? Your dad wasn't the sort to gas about his money affairs to everybody, therefore someone in the know put Brennan wise. And only three people could have done it; your dad's solicitor, his banker, or—as you sometimes fetched his books—his son!

"That's as far as I got for a time!"



Jimmy the dark secret of the Rovers' ground. But as you found it out—tell him yourself, please!"

A fleeting look of distress darkened Sylvester's face.

"I hoped you had explained that already, Mr. Osborne!" he said. "However, as you haven't—I must!" He turned to the interested youngster, his voice sincere and forcible. "Jimmy, thank Heaven you had grit enough to go your own way and disregard my advice to sell your ground. I deserve the severest punishment for my lack of vision. Thurgood would have robbed you of a fortune!"

"Gummy!" murmured Jimmy. "How?"

The solicitor's eyes studied him for a moment.

"I'll tell you. First, as I say, the fault was mine. I want you to think of the ground. It is a huge one—as large as any of its kind anywhere. It is also right in the best part of Railton. Fifty yards away is the railway station; within easy reach is the Great North canal. In short, although like a fool, I did not realise it at first, the land you own is the finest—factory-site in the Midlands!"

He rapped the table sharply.

"And as a commercial proposition in these overcrowded days, the Rovers' ground is worth a hundred thousand pounds to—anyone who can use it!"

That was a bombshell for Jimmy.

"A—hundred—thousand—Ye gods!"

Sylvester lifted his hand.

"But only to the people who can use it!" he said quickly. "And, unfortunately, Charles Thurgood discovered those people. Unfortunately, also, he knew your father and his obstinacy where the Rovers were concerned. Nothing on earth would have induced my old friend to part with his beloved football ground—unless he was forced to. So Thurgood tried to ruin him and steal it!"

"But—but who on earth would want to pay that vast sum for the ground?" gasped Jimmy.

"One of the largest and most famous motor companies in the United States!" replied Sylvester simply.

"Great Scott! Are they in the dirty work, too?"

Tim laughed, and even Sylvester smiled.

"Good gracious, no! They merely want the land—who sells it to them is no concern of theirs, providing he can do so legally.

"What happened is this. They intend manufacturing their cars in England—to escape the Import Duty, of course—and they sent scouts over to find a suitable spot for a huge factory. Thurgood met one of these. He offered them your land. The American representative saw it and approved it; and the upshot was that he gave Thurgood a written promise to purchase the ground at the price I told you—pro-

viding Thurgood was in a position to sell it by the end of this month. That was the time limit. After that the company would either approach your father direct or look for another site.

"Had Thurgood been more honest, and your father less keen on the football club, the deal might have been settled last August. As you know—it wasn't!"

Henry Sylvester examined his fingernails attentively.

"By pure accident, I discovered a few weeks ago who was really behind the Dalmeny Land Society—the directors' names, of course, were false. The moment I found out that, it was not long before I found what they were after, also. I—er—tried to warn you but—"

"But I was rude to you!" growled Jimmy penitently.

"And so, my keenest suspicions aroused, I sought the police and they introduced me to Mr. Osborne here!"

"And that's when we tumbled Thurgood's little game completely!" chuckled Tim.

Jimmy was silent. The Rovers' ground—stolen away from him to be destroyed and turned into a clanging factory, operated by foreigners to drive another nail into British trade! So that was the reason for it all. His fingers suddenly itched to close round Charles Thurgood's fat neck.

Quietly Henry Sylvester went on:

"Armed with the agreement they tried to force you to sign; Thurgood would have rushed the deal through with these Americans—"

"Split the loot and bolted!" cut in Tim briskly; and the solicitor nodded mournful agreement.

"I should never have forgiven myself, I think!" he said gravely.

Another silence fell, broken only by the solemn tick of the grandfather clock in the corner. After a while, Jimmy abruptly raised his head. The expression on his rugged face gave his companions a shock.

"What punishment will these—these scum get?" he snapped in a voice like a whiplash. "All of them, I mean!"

Tim and the solicitor exchanged a brief glance.

"Thurgood, the ringleader, about fifteen years, I should think!" murmured Tim. "And Tony, as he's younger—five!"

Jimmy's eyes blazed.

"And what about my precious uncle?" he demanded.

Once again his two friends looked at each other, but this time their glances lingered and each waited for the other to speak. At last Tim shrugged and got up.

"Philip Brennan has escaped!" he said quietly. "He died in hospital this morning!"

(For the concluding chapters of this stirring yarn see next week's bumper issue of the MAGNET!)

## THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME!

(Continued from page 23.)

old gent don't want nobody to know I was ever a tinker's boy, and he won't let me say nuffin. Being as he's my grandfather, I got to toe the line, though I think it's jest rot. But I'm doing like he tells me, like I ought.

"So, thanking you and the other blokes a undred times for your kindness, and all you done for me, no more from "TATTERS."

"Well, my only summer bonnet!" commented Bob Cherry. "It does take the cake! If he's found a grandfather, he must have found a name along with him. Why can't he sign his name?"

"It's queer!" said Nugent.

"The queerfulness is preposterous," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But the esteemed news is good. The worthy Tatters is safe from the execrable tinker."

"He's all right, anyhow," remarked Johnny Bull. "Blessed if I see why he can't tell us any more. But he's all right, and that's really all that we wanted to know."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"That's so," he agreed. "If Tatters is safe from that brute Wilson, and in clover, as he says, I'm jolly glad! I'd have liked to see the kid again; but so long as we know he's all right—"

"He sounds jolly pleased in that letter," said Bob. "Looks as if he's had some jolly good luck. Anyhow, he's all right."

"Right as rain!" agreed Wharton.

And Colonel Wharton, when he was shown the letter, wrinkled his brows over it in a rather perplexed way; but agreed that it was all right, and expressed his satisfaction.

Tatters, evidently, had found a home somewhere, and a relative, and was safe and apparently prosperous; and though it was rather puzzling that he gave no more particulars, that was really all that his friends wanted to know.

As there was no address on the letter, there was no question of replying to it. Tatters, obviously, did not expect a reply.

That the chums of the Remove would ever see him again, appeared very unlikely. And as the opening of the school term drew near, the waif had rather faded from their minds, though they had not forgotten him.

The chums of the Remove were far from guessing the surprise that awaited them when they arrived at Greyfriars for the new term.

THE END.

(Don't miss the sequel of this topping yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "CHUMLEY FOR SHORT!" You'll find it in next week's MAGNET. See that you order your copy WELL IN ADVANCE!)

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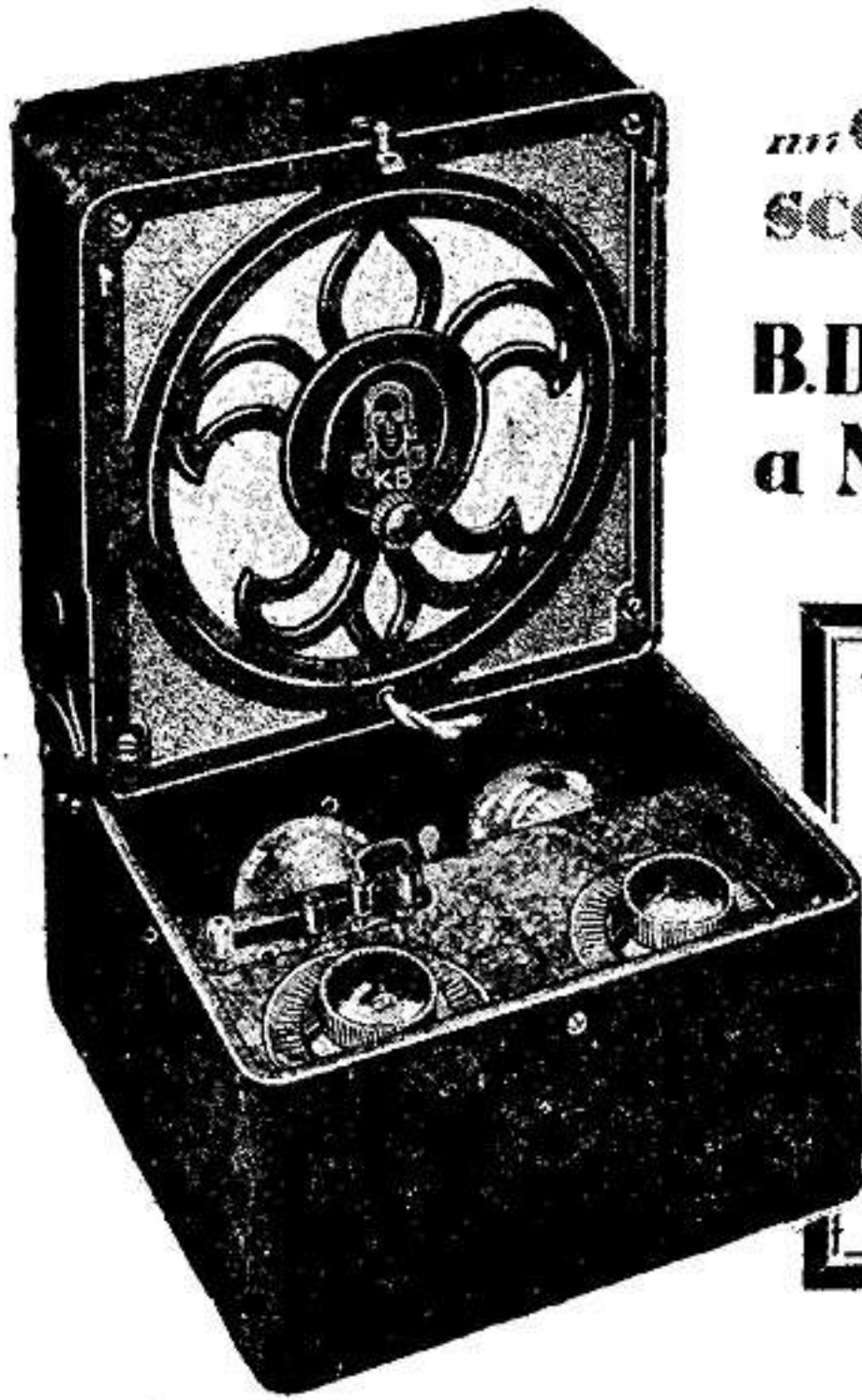
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JACK FROST AT GREYFRIARS

THUMPING NUISANCE

COCKER COPS A PACKET

'SNO' FUN

Jack Frost, the chilly old gont from the North Pole, has just paid a visit to the Greyfriars district, and for several days the old School has been frost-bound. Needless to say, the Remove have taken full advantage of the welcome visitor's presence, and some first-class sport has been enjoyed. A summary of the chief events is given below.



SLIDING.—We constructed a lip-top slide, extending halfway across the quad. All went well until Coker decided to patronise us; then the balloon went up! Nobody wanted Coker; his sliding is on a par with his football, and anyway, he's a thumping nuisance. But when Coker found he wasn't wanted, that only made him more determined to stay. There was only one thing for it—to give the great man of the Fifth a spill that would choke him off sliding for the rest of the day! So as Coker started from one end, half a dozen volunteers started from the other. Coker and the volunteers met in the middle with a crash, and for a few seconds, all we could see was a whirling kaleidoscope of arms and legs, hissing up in a fearsome heap of struggling humans. From out of that heap, eventually, emerged Coker! His collar had gone, his clothes were torn, his right eye was closing rapidly, and the claret was streaming from his nose. What Coker said can't go into a respectable family paper like the "Greyfriars Herald," so we refrain. The main point is, anyway, that after this little incident, Coker gave a very wide berth to the Remove slide!

TOBOGGANING.—The Junior Tobogganing Championship was contested on Friars Hill, just outside the School, and some keen racing was watched by an enthusiastic crowd. The preliminary heats resulted in the triumph of the Fourth, and Vernon-Smith and Wharton of the Remove, meeting in the final. Lord Maulverer, the presiding umpire, managed to get the three rivals off together in a perfect start. Wharton took the lead in his speedy-looking craft, "Snow King," with Vernon-Smith's "Speedy Demon" close behind him. Templo, who seemed to be chiefly concerned with keeping his elegant trousers out of the snow, soon came to grief and shot through the air to land, neck high, in a snowdrift, from which he was rescued with his trousers looking the reverse of elegant. Meanwhile, Wharton and Vernon-Smith were going it neck to neck; but with only a dozen yards to go, the "Speedy Demon," true to its name, shot ahead of its rival and finished up at the bottom of the hill, a grand winner. The Bounder, who was dressed with loud colors, was awarded the Alpine Club's button and given the right to place after his name the letters "J. T. C."—Junior Tobogganing Champ!

FROSTY WEATHER

A COMPLETE FROST

BOB CHERRY

BILLY BUNTER

Mr. QUELCH.—Frosty weather is healthy and invigorating, and should be conducive to hard work in the class-room. But I find, to my surprise, that the Remove seem to be not a bit more interested in P. Vergilius Maro than they were before!

BOB CHERRY.—This is the best time of the year for home, my infant. The only drawback is that we still have to grind at Virgil and the other old drunks! Why don't they give us a holiday till the thaw sets in!

BILLY BUNTER.—In frosty weather I find that my delicate constitution needs twice as much nourishment as in the midsummer heat. Yet Quelch gave me fifty lines after I'd had only six helpings of porridge for breakfast! Beggat! Those cheeky fags who bowled me over on the Remove slide! B-r-r-r-r!

EDUCATION BY FILMS

"Life of a Worm"

CUSTAR BEATON MASTERPIECE

A DANGER TO THE COMMUNITY

THE DANGER TO THE COMMUNITY

W'o in the Remove were bucked to a man last week when Quelch announced that by way of an experiment he proposed to exhibit an educational film in the Form-room one afternoon. But our joy was short-lived. In the next breath he informed us that the afternoon in question would be Wednesday—our usual half-holiday! We came out of class fairly raging.

"Gentlemen, claps, and fellows!" said Vernon-Smith. "Something must be done!" "Strikes me we're being done, anyway!" growled Johnny Bull. "Fancy watching a blessed nature film when we might be playing football!"

"Some nature film, too!" snorted Bulstrode. "The Life of a Worm, you know. Might as well call it 'The Life of a Removite' for all the difference there is!" "Something must be done!" repeated Vernon-Smith. "But what?" demanded Wharton. "We can't go on striking about it. After all, a giddy Form-master must be given his head to a certain extent."

TUCKLESS & LUCKLESS

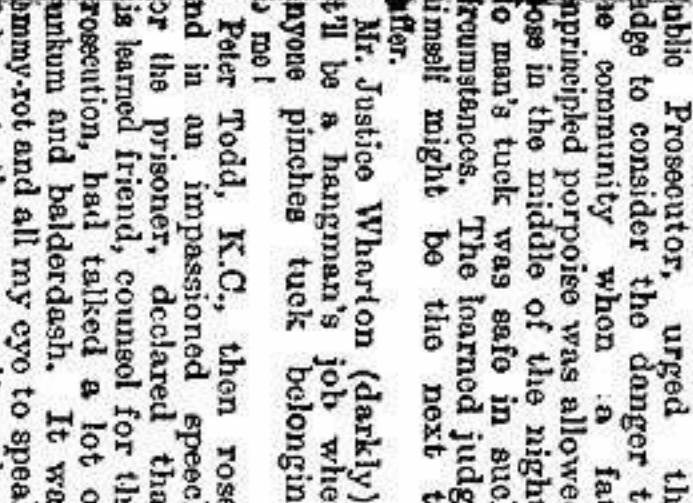
THE DANGER TO THE COMMUNITY

ALL-IN "Wrestling and Hacking"

DIARY OF QUELCH'S ASHLANT

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To settle an argument as to whether is brutal or not, Bolsover, major of the Remove and Coker of the Fifth have just met in a fight-to-a-finish contest under American "All-In" rules. Our wrestling expert writes as follows: Before the start the promoter, H. Vernon-Smith, Esq., announced that as no copy of the "All-In" rules was available, the contestants had agreed to accept the newspaper versions of same, which meant that there would be no restrictions whatever.



In the Tuckshop Sessions, William George Bunter, described as "gambler," of no fixed abode, was charged with wandering of the Fifth have just met in a fight-to-a-finish contest under American "All-In" rules. Our wrestling expert writes as follows: Before the start the promoter, H. Vernon-Smith, Esq., announced that as no copy of the "All-In" rules was available, the contestants had agreed to accept the newspaper versions of same, which meant that there would be no restrictions whatever.

BLOODTHIRSTY BOXING BOUT

ALL-IN "Wrestling and Hacking"

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MONDAY.—Started the week's work on the palms of Bob Cherry, who had flung a snowball at Coker by mistake! Nice chap, Bob; let him off as lightly as I could; but the Boss keeps a firm hand on me!

WEDNESDAY.—Busy day, today; Boss in the tanninums. Not in the middle with a crash, and for a few seconds, all we could see was a whirling kaleidoscope of arms and legs, hissing up in a fearsome heap of struggling humans. From out of that heap, eventually, emerged Coker! His collar had gone, his clothes were torn, his right eye was closing rapidly, and the claret was streaming from his nose.

THURSDAY.—Great excitement today. Was having a cut at Vernon-Smith, when he turned and wrenched me out of a Boss' hand. Thought for a moment the Bounder was going to use me on my own lord and master, but he mercifully refrained from such sacrilege. Heard afterwards from Cousin Ashplant that Uncle Birch had a rare old goat at him in the Head's study.

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