

"THE PARTING OF THE WAYS."

A Splendid Tale of School Life. By Frank Richards.

The **Magnet** 1st Library

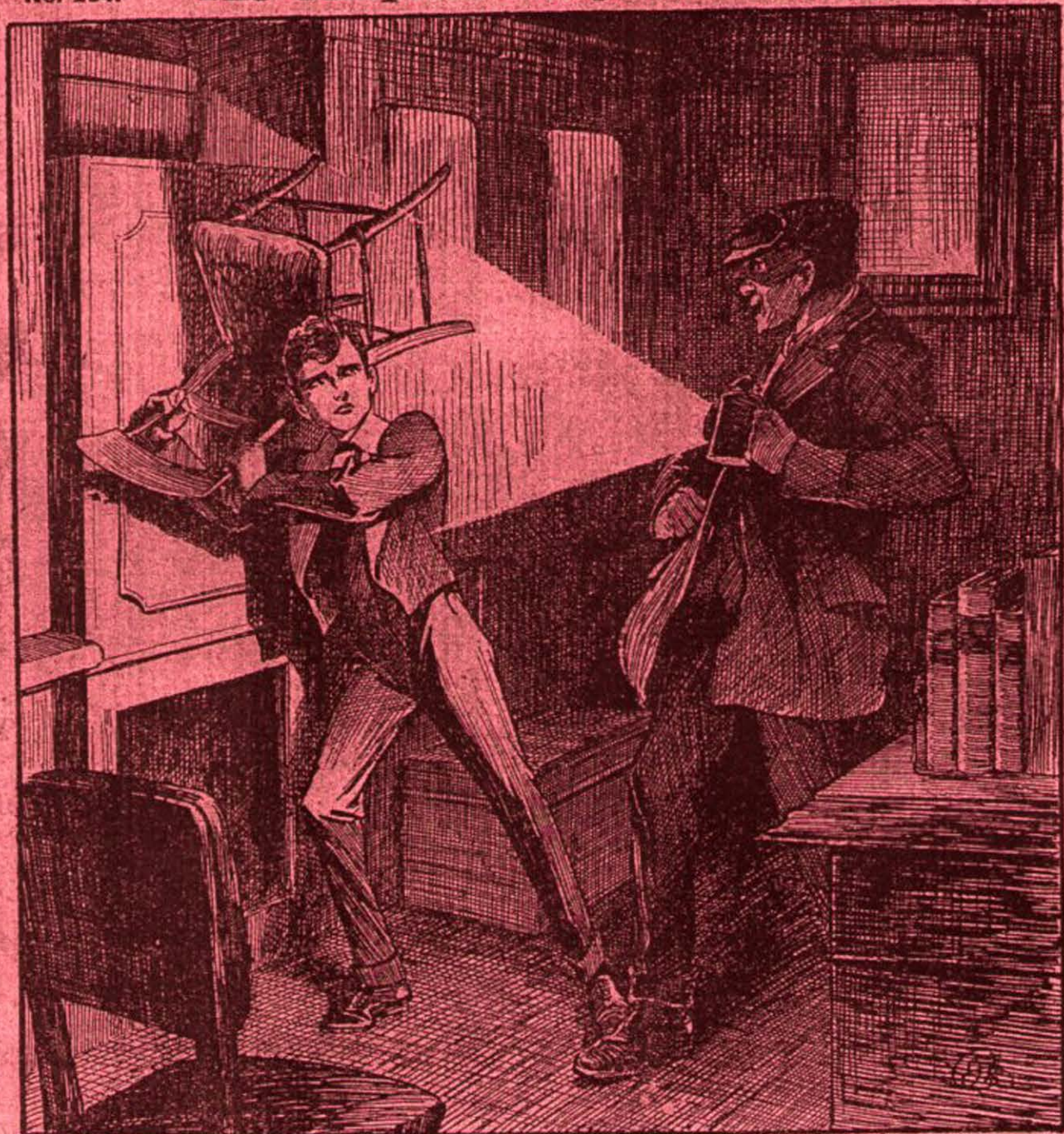
A Companion Paper to
"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
The Popular Thursday
School-Story Book.

Also in this Number:
A Grand Adventure
Story by
**SIDNEY
DREW,**
and a grand
**50-PRIZE
COMPETITION.**

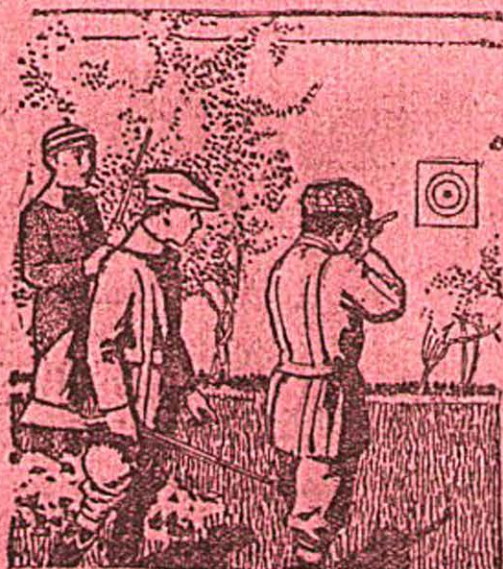
No. 204.

The Complete Story-Book for All.

Vol. 6.



The Greyfriars junior caught up a chair, swinging it above his head with desperate strength.
"You shall not!" he muttered. "Stand back! Stand back! you scoundrel!"



DAISY AIR RIFLE.

Every boy (and every boy's father) should send a postcard to us for a Free Copy of "The Diary of a Daisy Boy,"

written by a man who knows boy nature thoroughly. Sixteen pages of whole-some humour, happily illustrated, and in addition a "Manual of Arms," "A Few Hints on Shooting," and "The Target and How to Score." Of course it tells about the Daisy Air Rifle, a "real" gun for boys, that furnishes endless amusement and at the same time gives that true training and development of hand, nerve and eye that makes for healthy, successful manhood. The "Daisy" is modelled after the latest hammerless rifle and shoots accurately, using compressed air instead of powder. No smoke, no noise, and perfectly safe in the hands of any boy.

"1,000 SHOT DAISY," an Automatic Magazine Rifle - 10/6
 "500 SHOT DAISY," Do. Do. - 7/6
 "20th CENTURY DAISY," Single Shot - 3/6

Sold by Hardware and Sporting Goods Dealers everywhere, or delivered free anywhere in Great Britain and Ireland on receipt of price by

WM. E. PECK & CO. (Dept. B) 71, Bartholomew Close, LONDON, E.C.

RED NOSES

Permanently Cured and Restored to their Natural Colour in a few days by a simple home treatment. Particulars free. Enclose stamp to pay postage. Mr. B. A. Temple (Specialist), 8, Blenheim Street, Oxford St., London, W.

SPORT.—The Sure Shot Catapult, entirely new design, with supply of shot, 1/-, post free.—WICKS BROS., NORWICH.

6d. DEPOSIT.

This Handsome Photograph, with large Flower Horn and Two Records, complete, will be sent to any address on receipt of 6d. DEPOSIT and upon payment of the last of 18 weekly instalments of 6d. Two 1/- Records are given free. Send for Price List of Latest Models.—The British Mfg. Co., P 24, Great Yarmouth.

IF YOU WANT Good Cheap Photographic Material or Cameras, send postcard for Samples and Catalogue FREE.—Works: JULY ROAD, LIVERPOOL.

ELECTRIC POCKET LIGHT.

A 2/6 Model **ELECTRIC POCKET LAMP**, Imitation Crocodile-leather body, with Nickel-silver ends and Bull's-Eye Attachment. **SIZE 21** by 31 ins. **GIVES 6,000 FLASHES**, 1/2, post free. **ELECTRIC TORCH**, Imitation Crocodile-leather body with Nickel-silver ends and Bull's-Eye attachment. **SIZE 61** by 11 ins. Usable as flashlight or continuous light, as required. 1/9, post free. **FREE.** Our two New Illustrated Catalogues, brimful of thousands of Bargains in Xmas Cards and Presents for Adults and Children, sent post free.—**PAIN BROS.**, Dept. 4, The "Presents House," Hastings, Eng.

A WONDERFUL BARGAIN.

Send 4/6 only for my world-famed "**ROBEYPHONE**," with beautifully decorated 17-inch horn, powerful steel motor, 10-inch turn-table, and wonderfully loud tone sound box, which I sell at **HALF** Shop Prices, together with 24 magnificent selections. If you already have an inadequate then I will supply to you brand new **GRAMOPHONE COLUMBIA-RENA EDISON PATHE HOMOPHONE** or **BEKA** records either for cash or on low monthly payments. **STANDARD RECORDS.** Three days free approval. **10,000 TESTIMONIALS.** Write for Lists.

Dept. No. 10.
Robey & Co.
 The World's Provider, COVENTRY.



BLUSHING.

FREE. To all sufferers, particulars of a proved home treatment that quickly removes all embarrassment and permanently cures blushing and flushing of the face and neck. Enclose stamp to pay postage to Mr. D. TEMPLE (Specialist), 8, Blenheim Street, Oxford Street, London, W.

ART FRETWORK

Fretwork is the most fascinating and certainly the most popular of all home hobbies. It is easily accomplished, and magnificent results are obtainable after a few hours practice. As a

SPECIAL OFFER

we have made up a special advertisement parcel of our famous fretwork designs, consisting of eight sheets, which includes about eighteen designs packed in a strong permanent art portfolio. We will send one to each applicant who sends 3d. stamp to cover cost of postage and packing.

HOBBIES LTD.
 Dept. 88, DEREHAM.

6/6 each The "LORD ROBERTS" TARGET PISTOL.

Beautifully plated and finished. May be carried in the pocket. Will kill birds and rabbits up to 50 yards. Noiseless. Ball Cartridges, 6d. per 100. Shot, 1/6 per 100. 100 birds or rabbits may be killed at a cost of 9d. only. Send for list. **CROWN GUN WORKS, 6, Whitton Street, BIRMINGHAM.**

POPULAR BOOKS. [Written by Experts]—"**Boxing**" (illus.), "**Conjuring**," "**Mystery Exposed**," "**Ventriloquism**" (fully explained), "**Thought Reading Exposed**," only 6d. each; 1st 1/4d. each. **Forrit, Publishers, Walmsley Rd., Hury, Lancs.**

TIME WILL TELL

To any person sending Name and Address we send one of our famous "Time Will Tell" Thirty only of Artistic 1d. Postcards. When sold send the 2d. you receive for same, and we send you, post paid, by return, absolutely FREE (no further conditions) one of our Solar Time Watches, suitable for Lady or Gent. You have only Thirty Cards to sell, and we send you, post paid, this Useful Present without any further expense whatever. **Cable Watch Company, 148, Old St., London, E.C.**

REMARKABLE GIFT!! TO ALL FRETWORKERS.

Send 2d. stamps for postage on our Gift Parcel to Fretworkers, which contains: (1) Our Book, "Fretwork"; (2) Large 6d. Design for Handsome Article of Fretwork Furniture; (3) Novel Design for Fretwork Steeplechase; (4) Great Illustrated Catalogue of Penny Designs. **ALL FREE.** The 2d. is for the postage. Apply to-day to

NATIONAL FRETWORKERS' ASSOCIATION,
 (Desk 35), 57, Farringdon Road, London.

In this Thursday's Number of "The Gem" Library, 1d.,

'WINGS OF GOLD.'

By
SIDNEY DREW.

The opening instalment of a wonderful new story.

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

BY FRANK RICHARDS.
PLEASE ORDER EARLY.



A Complete School Story-Book, attractive to All Readers.

The Editor will be obliged if you will hand this book, when finished with, to a friend.



The Parting of the Ways

A Splendid, New, Long,
Complete School Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Not Coming!

"WHERE'S that boulder Clavering?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"He hasn't come down yet."

"The ass! He'll be late for the match."

And Bob Cherry, of the Remove, with a wrathful look, stopped back into the House. Outside the Greyfriars School House a crowd of juniors were collected, with big coats on over their football garb, and scarves wound round their necks. It was a keen, sunny winter's afternoon, and very cold. The Greyfriars Remove were playing Courtfield that afternoon, and they were about to start for Courtfield town,

when Bob Cherry made the discovery that one member of the Remove team had not yet turned up.

It was not far to Courtfield, and the Remove intended to walk the distance. The kick-off was timed for half-past two, and it was now two o'clock, and time to start.

All the members of the junior team were there excepting Clavering, as well as a good many more fellows who were going with them to see the match.

Bulstrode, the captain of the Remove, was looking at his watch.

"Come on!" he exclaimed. "It's time we were off!"

"Hold on a minute," said Harry Wharton, "Clavering's not here."

Bulstrode frowned.

"Hang Clavering!" he said. "Why can't he be ready to time? We can't wait for him."

"Bob's calling him."

Bob Cherry was indeed calling him. His stentorian tones could be plainly heard by the group of juniors in the Close, and by most other persons in Greyfriars School, too. Bob Cherry had a powerful voice when he let it go. He was standing at the foot of the stairs, shouting.

"Clavering! Clavering!"

Bob Cherry expected to see Clavering, of the Remove, come bolting downstairs in answer to his call.

But he didn't.

There was not even a reply. Bob Cherry shouted again, throwing still a little more energy into his powerful shout.

"Clavering! Clav! Clav! Clavering!"

No answer.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and the House was almost deserted. Probably nobody besides Clavering was lingering in the passages above. But Clavering, undoubtedly, was still in his study in the Remove passage, or else in the Remove dormitory, as he had not come down.

"Clav! Clav! Clav!"

Bob Cherry was roaring now. It seemed impossible that anyone within the extensive walls of Greyfriars could fail to hear him. But there came no reply from the junior upon whose name he called.

"Clav! Clav!" bellowed Bob Cherry. "You silly ass! We're waiting! You fathead, we're ready to start! You howling chump, I'll come up for you in a minute!"

Still no reply. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent came into the House again, and joined Bob Cherry at the foot of the staircase. Both of them were looking very puzzled. Clavering was not a fellow who usually played for the Form team, and it was an honour to him to be included in Bulstrode's eleven. It was amazing that he did not turn up in time to walk over to Courtfield. It was still more amazing that he did not answer to his name when Bob Cherry shouted to him.

"He can't be ill, I suppose?" said Wharton.

"I'll be blowed!" said Bob Cherry crossly. "He wasn't ill an hour ago. The ass!"

"Give him another yell," said Nugent. "All together!"

And the three juniors raised their voices in unison.

"Clavering!"

Bulstrode looked in angrily at the door of the School House.

"Leave him alone!" he exclaimed. "If he doesn't want to come, let him stick there. I'll play somebody else in his place."

"Oh, give him a chance!" said Harry Wharton. "We'll run up and see where he is. Another minute won't matter."

Bulstrode growled.

"The cheeky ass! He ought to be glad to be in time. If he isn't here in another minute I'll leave him out of the team."

"Right-ho! We'll fetch him."

Wharton, Nugent, and Bob Cherry ran up the stairs. They were very much puzzled by Clavering's absence. They reached the Remove passage. If Clavering was still changing his clothes, he was more likely to be in the dormitory.

"You cut up to the dorm., Franky, while we look in the study," said Wharton.

"Right-ho!" said Nugent.

He ran up the second staircase, while Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry sprinted along the Remove passage to Clavering's study. They reached the study, and Bob Cherry assailed the door with a terrific kick, which made the whole room shake. The lock was not designed to withstand assaults of that kind, and it snapped open, and the door flew wide. Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton dashed in.

"Clavering! Are you here, you ass?"

"My hat! What's the matter with him?"

Clavering was in the study.

He was a handsome, somewhat slim junior, with dark eyes and dark brown curly hair. As a rule, Clavering looked a picture of health and fitness. But at the present moment he did not. His face was deadly pale, as he sat in the armchair in the study, in a strange, fixed attitude, as if all the elasticity had gone out of his limbs.

He did not move, and did not even look up, as the juniors came abruptly in.

"Clavering!"

"You ass!"

"Are you ill?"

"Gone to sleep?"

Frank Nugent came speeding down the passage.

"I've looked in the dorm. He's not there. My only hat! What's the matter with Clavering?"

And Nugent stared in amazement at the junior in the armchair.

Bob Cherry strode towards Clavering and grasped him by the shoulder, and shook him severely. Clavering started at last out of his deep, strange reverie.

He looked up with startled eyes.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Bob, in angry amazement.

Clavering stammered.

"Nothing."

"Why didn't you answer me?"

"I—I—did you call me?"

Bob Cherry snorted.

"Do you mean to say that you didn't hear me calling you?" he exclaimed.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

"CAPTAIN D'ARCY."

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In Next Thursday's Number of

"The Gem" Library. 1d.

"WINGS OF GOLD."

By SIDNEY DREW.

"Yes—no—yes," said Clavering confusedly. "I—I didn't notice. I suppose I heard you—yes."

Bob Cherry glared at him. Bob Cherry was the best-tempered fellow in Greyfriars, as a rule, but this was certainly enough to try anyone's patience.

"You heard me," he roared, "and you didn't answer?"

"No; sorry. You see—"

"See what?"

"Nothing."

"If you're not dotty, I don't know what's the matter with you," said Bob Cherry. "Look here, the chaps are waiting to start for Courtfield. Have you forgotten that you're playing in the Remove eleven?"

Clavering started.

"Ye-es."

"You—you—you'd forgotten?" roared Bob.

"Yes, I'd forgotten. I—I can't play this afternoon."

"Can't play?"

"No."

"Why not?" demanded the three juniors with one voice.

"Because I—I—I can't. Leave me alone, there's good fellows," said Clavering. "I—I don't feel fit. I've had bad news—I mean I—I can't play. For goodness' sake, leave me alone!"

His voice rose to a cry. The chums of the Remove stared at him blankly. They did not comprehend in the least.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Bulstrode's deep voice came booming up the stairs.

"Are you fellows coming?"

Wharton stepped out into the passage.

"Yes," he called back. "Clavering says he can't play this afternoon."

"Let him stick there, then; I won't have him in the team now at any price," said Bulstrode. "You fellows come at once."

"Right you are!"

Wharton and Nugent went down the passage towards the stairs. Bob Cherry lingered for a moment longer in the study. He was really concerned about Clavering. The junior was no special chum of his; in fact, Bob Cherry knew him but slightly. But Bob had a kind heart, and he could see that there was something very wrong somewhere. His anger evaporated very quickly, as it always did.

"Clavering, old man, what's the matter?" he asked.

"Nothing."

"You're not seedy?"

"No."

"You've had some bad news that's knocked you over?"

"Yes—no—never mind."

"Letter from home, perhaps?" asked Bob Cherry softly. Bob Cherry remembered a letter he had once had from home himself, to tell him that his father had been wrecked and lost in the Red Sea.

Clavering burst into a strange, wild laugh.

"Home!" he repeated.

"Yes; I mean from your people."

"My people? Good heavens!" Clavering turned a white, drawn face upon the astonished junior. "Don't—don't ask me any questions! Leave me alone. I can't play—that's enough. For goodness' sake, leave me alone!"

Bob Cherry went out of the study without another word.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

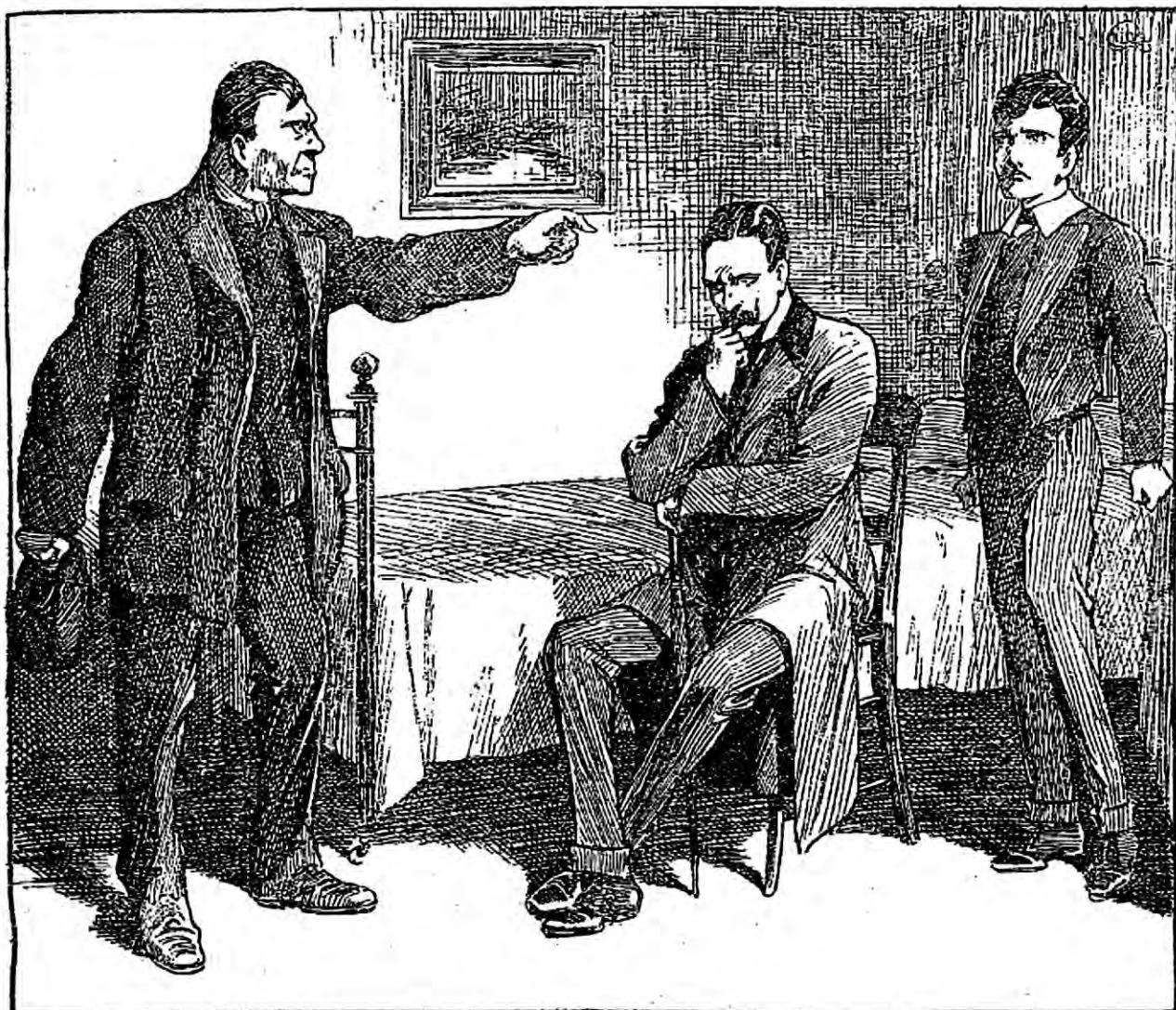
The Courtfield Match.

BULSTRODE frowned darkly as he tramped out of the gates of Greyfriars with the football team for Courtfield. He had really stretched a point in putting Clavering into the team at all; there were several other fellows whom he knew better, and whose claims were quite as good. But Clavering had been doing well in the Form practice, and the Remove captain had decided to give him a chance. Clavering had accepted his offer gladly enough. Bulstrode resolved that the junior should have no second opportunity of neglecting such a chance.

Harry Wharton wore a very thoughtful expression. He had been football captain the previous term, and if this had happened during his captaincy he would probably have felt as annoyed as Bulstrode about it. As it was, he felt considerably puzzled, and a little concerned.

He knew little of Sidney Clavering. The boy had always been very reserved and quiet, and had not taken much part in the matters that most interested the Remove. He appeared to have plenty of money, but he never spoke about his people. He never accepted invitations home, and he never asked anybody to see him in the holidays. Many of the fellows would have suspected from that that Clavering's home would not bear inspection, but for the fact that he was well-dressed, well-behaved, and liberally supplied with pocket-money. Whoever his people were, it seemed pretty certain that they were well-off.

But what was the matter with Clavering? If he had had



"Now, wot do you say?" asked the Gander, looking at Clavering. The boy rose to his feet. "Say!" he repeated. "I say I'd die sooner than become a thief! And you sha'n't pay another penny for me at Greyfriars! I won't touch your stolen money!" (See Chapter 10.)

bad news from home, there was no reason why he should not say so. And it could be no ordinary bad news to upset the junior in this way.

Bob Cherry gave Harry a dig in the ribs, and brought him out of his reverie with a gasp.

"Penny for 'em!" he said.

"Eh? For what?"

"Thoughts."

Harry Wharton smiled.

"I was thinking about Clavering," he said.

Bob Cherry nodded thoughtfully.

"So was I," he replied. "Queer, ain't it?"

"Jolly queer."

"Blessed if I understand it at all," said Frank Nugent.

"He looked frightfully cut up, as if some of his people had died, or something of the sort."

"It wasn't that, or he would have said so."

"Funking the match, perhaps?" said Tom Brown.

Wharton shook his head.

"I don't think so. Clavering has always been a very quiet chap, but he isn't a funk. He stood up to Temple, of the Fourth, once."

"I remember that," remarked Johnny Bull, "and he put up a good fight. I don't think he'd funk a footer match."

"I dare say he's not fit," remarked Mark Linley. "I remember he changed colour very much when I saw him in the hall, when the postman came."

"Oh, he's had a letter, then?" exclaimed Hazeldene.

"Yes; I think so."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

"Oh, it's bad news of some sort, then," said Harry Wharton. "I'm sorry for the poor chap, though I don't see why he couldn't have explained, all the same."

"Here's Courtfield!"

The juniors tramped into the old market town. Courtfield was very busy on a Saturday afternoon. The Remove match was with the boys of Courtfield County Council School, and a Saturday afternoon was the only opportunity the Courtfield fellows had of meeting the Greyfriars juniors.

The football-ground was very near the big, ugly, red-brick building which the Courtfield authorities considered was good enough for a Council school. Near at hand was the grey old ivy-covered church of Courtfield, that had been standing for three hundred years unchanged; and with that beautiful old church under their eyes, it was amazing that the builders could find it in their hearts to erect the hideous brick structure opposite. But of what are not modern builders capable?

On the football-ground, the Courtfield fellows were already waiting, and Trumper, and Grahame, and Solly Lazarus and the rest came forward to meet the Greyfriars party cordially enough. The Greyfriars fellows and the Courtfielders frequently met on fighting terms, but they could be friendly enough, too. Bulstrode shook hands with Trumper, the captain of the Courtfield team.

"I hope we're not late," he said. "We waited for a silly ass who wasn't ready, and came without him."

"That's all right," said Trumper. "It's just time for the kick-off now; but a few minutes don't matter."

NEXT TUESDAY: "THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.
Please order your copy early.

"Thetainly not," said Solly Lazarus, in his soft, lisping voice.

And the boys prepared for the match. Harry Wharton & Co. had forgotten all about Clavering now. Morgan had been put in in his place, and the Welsh junior was quite as good a player as Clavering, if not, indeed, a little better. Bulstrode gave just one snort as he remembered Clavering's ingratitude, and then dismissed the matter from his mind.

It was likely to be a hard-contested match, for Courtfielders were evidently in good form.

The kick-off fell to Greyfriars. There was hardly any wind now. The ball rolled, and the match began.

Around the football-ground a considerable crowd of the inhabitants of Courtfield had assembled to look on. Among them the juniors, who had come over from Greyfriars to watch the match, mingled.

The last match between Courtfield and Greyfriars had ended in a victory for the former team. Bulstrode and his merry men were determined to have a different finish this time. The Greyfriars juniors played up hard from the start.

Their forward play was better than that of the home team, and more than once they broke through the defence, and came sweeping up to goal. But there was one back who seemed to have an almost miraculous power of clearing against the greatest odds, and it was Solly Lazarus. There were two or three fellows in the Greyfriars team who were disposed to sneer at Solly as a "sheeney," but he was not to be despised as a full-back. Time and again the Greyfriars fellows brought the ball right up, and Solly would nip in in the most wonderful way, and clear. The Courtfield crowd cheered the little, keen, nimble Jew schoolboy enthusiastically.

"Go it, Solly!"

"Play up, Lazarus!"

"Well cleared, sir!"

"Hurra!"

Solly grinned serenely. He had a great gift of coolness, and he was never disturbed out of his equanimity. Bulstrode brought the ball down the field, leaving the other forwards behind, and made a rush for goal, having beaten forwards and halves, and both backs being wide afield. It looked as if the goal-keeper was all that stood between Bulstrode and a score; but a nimble figure came sweeping in, and Solly, with his hands in the pockets of his football shorts, cleared, and then dodged out of the way of Bulstrode's heavy rush. He had not even troubled to take his hands out of his pockets, and the Courtfielders yelled with glee.

"Hurra!"

Bulstrode snorted.

"Blessed swanker!" he growled.

Solly chuckled.

"It itn't thwank, dear boy," he said softly.

"Br-r-r-r!" said Bulstrode.

But swank or not, Bulstrode dropped a hint to his men to keep a very careful eye on the little Jew. Solly needed watching, there was no doubt about that. The way he fed the forwards was marvellous. Trumper scored the first goal of the match, taking the ball up in midfield, where a long kick from Solly had dropped it, and bringing it down to goal, and sending it in, in spite of Hazeldene's efforts between the posts.

Then the crowd yelled:

"Goal!"

"Goal! Hurra!"

"My hat!" said Bulstrode.

"Oh, rotten!" said Johnny Bull.

Bulstrode glared at Hazeldene.

"Do you call that goalkeeping?" he demanded.

Hazeldene glared in return.

"How could I help it?"

"Oh, fathead!"

"Hang it all, Bulstrode! Don't rag the goalie with everybody looking on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton impatiently.

"Oh, rats!" growled Bulstrode. He was very ill-tempered and annoyed.

Trumper of Courtfield grinned. He had an idea that Hazeldene could not have stopped that shot, if he had been ever so good a goalkeeper. It was one up for Courtfield, and it was the only score in the first half.

The whistle went for the interval, with the score one to nil. And the Greyfriars fellows were not pleased as they crowded off for the brief rest.

"Never mind," said Bob Cherry, as he sucked a lemon he had extracted from his coat pocket. "Never mind; we'll squash 'em in the second half."

Bulstrode grunted.

"Morgan ought to have stopped Trumper," he said.

Morgan gave a snort.

"I tried!" he said.

"Clavering would have stopped him if he'd been in your place, as he ought to have been," said the Remove captain.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

"CAPTAIN D'ARCY."

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In Next Thursday's Number of

"The Gem" Library, 1d.

"You'd better play Clavering next time, then, look you," said Morgan sulkily.

Harry Wharton held his tongue, though he was very much inclined to speak. Morgan was quite as good a back as Clavering, and he knew it, and Bulstrode knew it. But Bulstrode was not an ideal football captain. Ragging a team while the game is in progress is about one of the greatest faults that a football captain can commit, but it was a fault that Bulstrode was very prone to commit. So long as matters were going well, Bulstrode was all smiles, but when things looked bad his temper was certain to get the better of him. Most of the team had had reason, more than once, to regret the time when Harry Wharton was captain. Harry Wharton had his faults of temper, but he never made the blunder of putting a player off his form by ill-timed grumbling.

Wharton was very much inclined to suggest to Bulstrode that it was time to shut up, but it was no business of his to dictate to his captain. Morgan, like many Welsh boys, had a keenly sensitive nature under an outward appearance of calmness and stolidity, and he was deeply wounded by Bulstrode's sharp criticism, which he felt that he had not deserved. It was quite likely that his play in the second half would suffer in consequence, though Bulstrode, in his heavy-handed way, took no account of considerations of that sort.

"I'd play Clavering now if he were here!" Bulstrode growled angrily. "If I could get him here now I'd ask Trumper to let me change you for him."

"My hat!" exclaimed Ogilvy.

"What's the matter with you?"

"Talk of angels!" said Ogilvy. "Look there!"

He pointed to a figure that had just come in sight of the football-ground, up the lane from Greyfriars. It was that of a boy in Etons, with a Greyfriars cap. Bulstrode uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Clavering!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Three to Two!

CLAVERING did not look towards the football field. He was looking straight before him as he walked on towards the town, and his expression showed that he had forgotten all about the match, and probably even the circumstance that his schoolfellows were in Courtfield at all that day. Morgan looked round at him in his slow way, and then gave Bulstrode a smile that was more than half a sneer.

"There's your man, look you," he said. "You can play him, if Trumper agrees, and I'll stand out."

Bulstrode frowned. He had not meant what he had said to Morgan; but being thus taken at his word he would not back out. He made a step towards the side of the field, and shouted to Clavering.

"Clavering!"

The junior started, and looked round.

"Hallo!" he replied.

"Come here—I want you!"

Clavering halted.

"What do you want, Bulstrode?"

"You!"

"I'm sorry—I can't come."

Bulstrode's face turned red with rage. For a moment he looked very much like Bully Bulstrode of former times.

"Come here, you young cad, or I'll come and fetch you!" he roared. "I want you to play."

"I can't!"

"You've got to. Come here!"

Clavering shook his head.

SANDOW'S BOOK FREE!

Just published, a new book showing how Sandow won Health and Fame, beautifully illustrated, and explaining how every man and woman can obtain robust health and perfect development by exercise.

SPECIAL OFFER.

To every reader who writes at once a copy of this book will be sent free.

Address: No. 18, SANDOW HALL, BURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.

"WINGS OF GOLD."
By SIDNEY DREW.

"Hold on, Bulstrode; it can't be done."
And he began to walk on into the town. Bulstrode ran towards the road, but Bob Cherry caught him by the shoulder.

"Hold on, Bulstrode; it's time."
Bulstrode grunted his teeth.
"Er, Jove!" he exclaimed. "I'll hammer that cad when I get him back to Greyfriars."
"So you want me after all?" said Morgan.
"Yes, confound you."
"You couldn't change a player now, anyway," said Harry Wharton. "I dare say Trumper would agree, but it wouldn't be the game."

"Oh, rot!" replied his captain politely.
"You fellows ready?" asked Trumper, strolling up, and pretending not to notice that there was any warmth of argument proceeding among the Greyfriars fellows.

"Yes," said Bulstrode shortly.
"All there, then," said Solly Lazarus.
The teams lined up again.
"Watch that blessed little Jew!" Bulstrode growled to his men. Solly overheard the remark, and grinned. He intended to require watching!

Wharton was thinking about Clavering, as he lined up with the rest of the team. It was curious that Clavering should be in Courtfield that afternoon, when he had refused to come there with the football team.

But the recommencement of play drove Clavering from his mind. The Courtfield fellows were playing up very hard, determined to make the match a win if they could.

They followed up the kick-off with a resolute rush, and the Greyfriars' players were hard put to it to hold their own.

Again the Courtfield forwards came sweeping down on goal, and once more Morgan failed at back, and Hazeldene in the citadel. The ball went in from Grahame's foot, and Courtfield registered two up.

Bulstrode gritted his teeth. There was no doubt about it. Morgan was decidedly off colour, but Bulstrode had only himself to thank for it. He had thrown the sensitive lad into a state of nervousness by his ill-timed henpecking, and he was reaping the results of it. But Bulstrode was far from recognising that fact. As a matter of fact, Bulstrode's bad temper was interfering with his own play, and his form was not up to its usual standard.

He glared at Morgan and Hazeldene when the ball was tossed out of the goal again. Morgan scowled, and Hazeldene shrugged his shoulders. Bulstrode was in a towering rage when the teams lined up again. Most of the other fellows were beginning to look hopeless now. The enemy were two up, and there remained twenty-five minutes to play, and the whole team had been thrown out of sorts by Bulstrode's bad leadership.

Harry Wharton & Co. made a big effort to equalise. By hard fighting and grim determination they drove their way to the Courtfield goal, and for once Solly Lazarus was beaten.

Harry Wharton sent the leather whizzing in with a quick, low shot that gave the goalie no chance.

Then the Greyfriars fellows round the field shouted.
"Goal! Hurrah! Bravo, Wharton!"

Bulstrode looked a little brighter.
"That's a beginning," he said. "For goodness' sake, keep it up! We can't let them lick us twice running."

For the moment fortune smiled upon the efforts of the visitors. Another goal came, this time from the foot of Bob Cherry, and the schoolboys cheered as the scores equalised.

Five minutes remained to play.

Both sides were making great efforts now, and Trumper & Co. were pushing harder and harder. The leather came up to the Courtfield goal, but Solly Lazarus cleared with a kick that took it past the halfway line, and dropped it fairly at Trumper's feet.

Trumper was speeding down the field with it in a flash.

The Greyfriars forwards and halves were nowhere, and one of the backs was far afield, and could not possibly get up in time. Morgan was there, but Morgan had been put into a flutter by his leader's sharp tongue, and he was over-careful and over-anxious. He rushed to tackle Trumper, miskicked, and stumbled, and rolled on the ground, and the Courtfield captain, amid a rising roar of cheering from the crowd, sped on to goal.

Hazeldene was on the alert, but many a League goalie would have failed to stop the shot that Trumper sent whizzing in. It found the far corner of the net, giving Hazeldene no chance, though he made a desperate spring, and just touched the leather with his finger-tips.

There was a roar.

"Goal!"

"Courtfield wins!"

"Hurrah!"

Phip!

It was the whistle.

The match was over.

Courtfield had won by three goals to two, and Greyfriars

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

NEXT

TUESDAY: "THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

were defeated for the second time. Bulstrode clenched his hands as he strode off the field, hardly taking the trouble to conceal his bad temper.

"Don't scowl with the enemy looking on, for goodness sake!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Look here, Bulstrode—"

"Oh, shut up!"

Johnny Bull was very near to hitting out at that moment, but he restrained himself. The Greyfriars fellows looked glum enough all round. They took their leave of the victorious Courtfielders, and tramped home mostly in silence. Bulstrode spoke for the first time as they neared the gates of Greyfriars.

"It's all that cad Clavering's fault!"

Harry Wharton stared at him.

"Blessed if I see how you make that out!" he said.

"That was the first thing that went wrong," said Bulstrode.

"He ought to have played as he arranged. He had no right to stay out and force me to play Morgan."

"Morgan's quite as good."

"He wasn't so good this afternoon."

"You shouldn't rag a chap while a match is on, then!"

said Morgan sulkily.

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, rats!" said Bulstrode. "It wouldn't have happened if Clavering had played. And I never heard of such cheek as a fellow standing out of the Form match when he's offered a chance to play—after accepting it, too! I'll make him sorry for himself when he comes in!"

And Bulstrode tramped into the Close with a scowling brow.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Clavering's Uncle.

CLAVERING of the Remove walked down the old High Street of Courtfield, crowded with people who came in from the countryside on business on the Saturday afternoon. For a long time he walked on, after he had passed the Council school football-ground, like a fellow in a dream, his hands thrust deep into his trousers' pockets, and his eyes fixed on the path. He was not thinking of the match he had missed, or the anger of his Form captain, but he was certainly thinking deeply of something, for the wrinkle between his brows was deep, and growing deeper, and his lips were hard set.

Suddenly he paused, and looked about him. He had walked almost through the town, and with a gesture of annoyance he stopped, and, turning, retraced his steps. In his deep and painful reverie the junior had evidently walked past his destination. He moved back along the High Street till he came to a corner, where several articles of furniture stood outside a shop on the pavement. In the windows were more articles of furniture, and oleographs, and cheap oil paintings in wonderful colours, and brass fenders, and antiques fresh from the factory at Birmingham. Over the fascia of the shop, in gilt letters, was the name of "Israel Lazarus," and smaller letters announced the interesting fact that "Mr. Lazarus dealt in secondhand furniture, antiques, paintings, foreign stamps, coins, and other articles, all genuine, and of the best quality."

Some of the Greyfriars juniors had sometimes purchased articles of furniture at the shop of Mr. Israel Lazarus. Study furniture in the Greyfriars Remove was, as a rule, short-lived. But it was certainly not to purchase furniture that Sidney Clavering had come there. He entered the little shop, the wrinkle in his brow growing deeper, if possible, and little Mr. Lazarus—whose bright, black eyes and handsome aquiline nose proclaimed his Oriental extraction—bowed to him over the counter, and rubbed his plump hands together as if, like the famous Sir Jacob Kilmansegg, he was "washing his hands with invisible soap in imperceptible water."

"And vat can I do for you to-day, young shentleman?" asked Mr. Lazarus. "Is it a table this time?"

Clavering looked at him.

"Or a pair of handsome windsor chairs?" Mr. Lazarus insinuated. "Worth double the monish, and going sheap."

"Eh?"

"A square of carpet for the study?" Mr. Lazarus suggested. "Really handsome, and scarcely worn—only a hole in the centre—merely noting—"

"I haven't come here to buy anything," said Clavering.

"Oh!" said Mr. Lazarus. But his urbanity of manner did not desert him. "You have somedings to sell, ain't it? The monish was tight. I understand. You sell your crick bat and buy him again in ze summer?"

"I don't want to sell anything," said Clavering.

"Then vas do you want, mein cootness?" said Mr. Lazarus, in perplexity.

"You have a lodger here?"

Mr. Lazarus comprehended.

"Oh, my cootness! You have come to see mein lodger?"

"Yes," said Clavering. "Mr. Brandon."

"You goes to ze side door and rings ze bell, or you goes round trough ze garden," said Mr. Lazarus. And he turned again to the big account-book he had been engaged upon when Clavering entered—an account-book in which Mr. Israel Lazarus kept an account of the profits and losses of his day's trade.

"Thank you," said Clavering.

He left the shop, and the old gentleman glanced after him curiously from under his thick, bushy eyebrows with his keen and glittering black eyes. The worn and white look in Clavering's face had not escaped him, and the dealer wondered what a Greyfriars junior could have to do with his lodger, Mr. Brandon. Mr. Lazarus was a keen old gentleman, and he knew things outside the secondhand furniture business, and he knew that the junior who had spoken to him was in distress. But it was no business of his, and Mr. Lazarus buried himself in his figures again, and dismissed the matter from his mind.

Clavering turned into the by-street, and entered the garden of the house behind the shop. There was a low, wooden verandah behind the house, and a man was standing there smoking a thick black cigar. The moment the sight of Clavering the junior entered the side gate, and removed the cigar from his mouth with a decidedly dirty finger and thumb.

"Ere you are, then?" he said.

Clavering looked up at him.

"Here I am," he repeated. "Is my uncle here?"

"He's inside."

"Very well."

Clavering came up the steps of the verandah, and the thick-set man with the cigar held out a stubby hand to him. The boy hesitated a second, and then took it, and hastily released it again. Momentary as his hesitation had been, it did not escape the keen, light-brown eyes of the stubby man.

"Not getting 'aughty, old pal, are you?" he asked, with a sneering laugh.

"Where is my uncle?"

"Indoors." The stubby man resumed his cigar, and went on speaking with it between his yellow-stained teeth. "No side, young 'un, do you understand? It won't pay you to put on any side with the Gander. Savvy?"

An expression of intense dislike came over Clavering's face, though he did his best to restrain his feelings.

"I came here to see my uncle," he said.

"Teller me," said the man who gave himself the peculiar name of the Gander—perhaps because he may have had reasons for concealing the one he really owned. "This way."

He moved into the house by a half-glass door opening from the verandah. A man was seated in the room, with his feet upon a fender before a blazing coal fire, and with a pipe in his mouth. On the table, at his elbow, stood a bottle half full of liquid, an ash-tray, and a glass.

"Ere you are, old pal!" said the Gander.

The man turned his head.

He was a man somewhat like the schoolboy in features, but like in no other respects. Once he had been handsome, but drink and careless ways of life had deeply marked his face. His eyes, with streaks of red in the white, were uncertain and watery, and his complexion was of a darkly-bronzed colour. His hand, which was shapely enough, shook as he held his pipe in it. Yet there was a kind of good-nature in the face, and the glance he cast at the boy was not unkindly.

Clavering caught his breath as he entered the room. The air was close and heavy with the fumes of tobacco and spirits, but the Gander did not seem to notice it—perhaps he liked it.

"Ah! So you've come, Sidney?" exclaimed the occupant of the room.

"Yes, uncle."

"Sit down."

Clavering came to the table, and stood there, his hand resting upon it. He did not accept the invitation to sit down.

"You had my letter?" asked Mr. Clavering.

"Yes; that's why I'm here."

"Good!"

"You told me to come here and ask to see Mr. Brandon," said Clavering abruptly. "Why did you not come in your own name, uncle?"

The elder man hesitated.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

"CAPTAIN D'ARCY." By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In Next Thursday's Number of "WINGS OF GOLD." By SIDNEY DREW.

"P'raps your uncle knows his own business best," said the Gander, with the same sneering laugh.

Clavering took no notice of the stubby man, and Mr. Clavering made a deprecatory gesture with his uncertain hand.

"Don't be hard on the boy, Gandy."

"I don't want to be 'ard on 'im," growled the Gander; "but I ain't having any side, you mark that—no side."

"I'm sure Sidney does not mean to put on any side towards you, Gandy."

Clavering did not speak, and did not seem to see the almost imploring look his uncle cast towards him, evidently wishing him to confirm this statement.

"Now, don't let us have any disagreement," said Mr. Clavering hastily. "Gandy is a good friend of yours, Sidney—a very good friend."

"Oh! I should say so!" grunted Gandy.

Clavering did not look at him.

"You wanted to see me, uncle?" he said.

"Yes, yes, certainly!"

"Why could you not come to Greyfriars?"

"It was—was better not," said Mr. Clavering hesitatingly, and the Gander laughed. The junior turned fiercely upon the thick-set man.

"You can keep out of this!" he exclaimed, with gleaming eyes. "I came here to see my uncle, not to see you. I don't want to have anything to say to you."

"Ho!"

"I can't understand why my uncle should speak to such a man as you are; but I won't, in any case!" Clavering broke out fiercely. "Mind your own business! Let me alone with my uncle!"

"Sidney, my lad!"

"Let him shut up, then!" said Clavering.

"Shut up!" roared Gandy, his dark, coarse face crimson with rage. "Shut up—eh? Don't you make signs at me, Jim Clavering! I'm going to 'ave this out. Shut up! I'll tell this young spark wot he is—"

"Gandy!"

"I'll 'ave it out, I tell you!" roared the angry Gandy. "I'll bring 'im to his senses. I'll have no lip from the beggar's brat—the pauper who's been living on me for these two years past!"

Clavering turned pale.

"It's a lie!" he exclaimed fiercely.

"A lie, is it?" exclaimed the Gander, flinging the stump of his cigar violently into the grate. "Ask him! Ask your uncle!"

Mr. Clavering was silent, and his hand shook more than ever.

Clavering turned a strange, almost wild glance upon his uncle.

"Uncle!"

"Ask him!" said the Gander. "Ask him who's paid your fees at Greyfriars ever since your father died!"

"Uncle!"

Mr. Clavering was silent.

"Ask him who's sent you your pocket-money; who's paid for your clothes and your books!" exclaimed Gandy.

"Uncle!" said Clavering, in a voice of agony.

But still James Clavering did not reply.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Crushing Blow.

THE Greyfriars junior looked from one man to the other—from the liquor-sodden, weak, shame-stricken face of his uncle to the hard and powerful bulldog physiognomy of the Gander, and back again. His brain seemed to be in a whirl. Why did not his uncle deny what this brute declared so vehemently? There could be only one reason—he did not deny it because it was true!

"Uncle!" said Clavering.

"Ask him?" sneered the Gander.

"Will you answer me, Uncle Jim?"

Mr. Clavering drew a long, weak breath.

"What do you want me to say, my boy?" he asked tremulously.

"Is what that man says true?"

Mr. Clavering did not speak.

"Tell him!" said the Gander.

"Is it true, uncle?"

"Yes!" groaned Mr. Clavering.

Clavering stood quite still.

"That man has paid my fees at Greyfriars?"

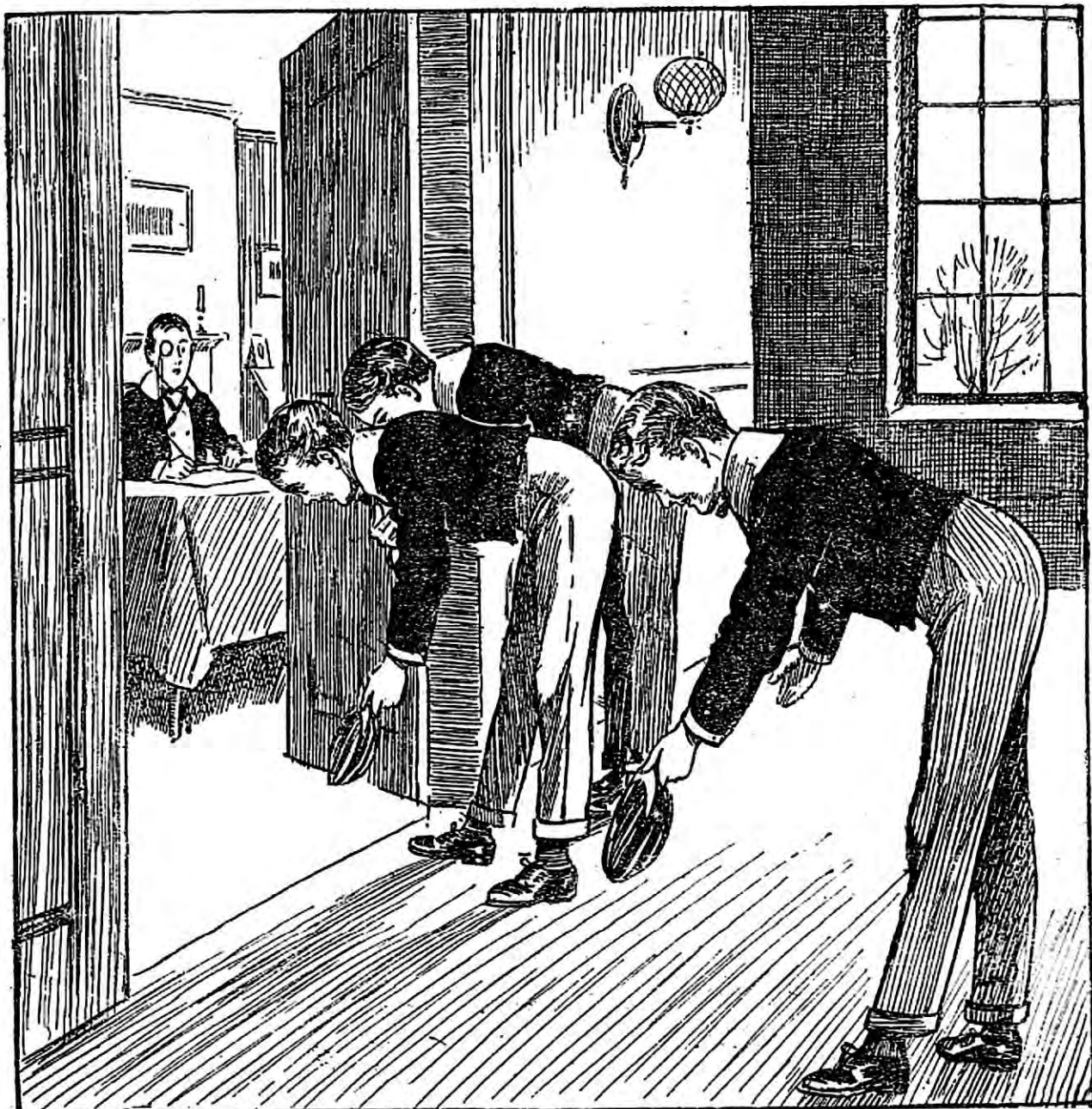
"Yes."

"I owe him all I have?"

"Yes."

"Everything?"

"Yes."



The Terrible Three came along the passage, looked in at the open door, and grinned, and saluted D'Arcy with great respect. "All hail, mighty captain!" "Oh, don't be an ass, Tom Mewwy!" "All hail; long may you reign!" said Monty Lowther, who could never be restrained from making bad puns. (An amusing incident taken from the grand, long, complete school tale of Tom Merry and Co. at St. Jim's, entitled "CAPTAIN D'ARCY," by Martin Clifford. Order your copy of "The Gem" Library well in advance—price One Penny.)

"My heavens!"

Clavering sank into a chair. He did not feel grateful. The discovery had made him almost sick and giddy. There was no room for gratitude; he knew that without thinking about it. If the Gander had done this he had done it with some ulterior motive—some motive that the junior feared to know.

The Gander regarded him with a hard, sneering grin, and lighted a fresh cigar.

"I—I did not know!" faltered Clavering at last. "I—I did not know. I—I thought—"

The Gander laughed in mocking laugh.

"You thought your uncle was paying for you—hey?"

"Yes."

"And where did you think he was getting the money from?" asked the Gander sneeringly. "You know your father died a bankrupt two years ago, soon after you went

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

to Greyfriars. You know you were left without a penny. And you had always heard of your Uncle Jim as the wastrel of the family—hey?"

"It was true enough," said James Clavering.

"You knew your uncle had been in prison," pursued the Gander. "Don't say you didn't know it."

"I knew it," Clavering muttered.

"Where did you think he got the money from to pay for you at an expensive school—hey? What do you think he lived on?"

Clavering made a passionate gesture.

"I never knew!" he cried. "I've thought and thought about it till my head seemed splitting. I never could tell! I feared sometimes that Uncle Jim made his money in some way he couldn't explain; then I felt that I must be wronging him."

Mr. Clavering buried his face in the tumbler. It was clear

NEXT
TUESDAY: "THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.
Please order your copy early.

that the man was quite under the influence of the Gander; that there was only one will where those two were concerned, and that that will was the Gander's.

"Well," said the Gander sneeringly, "Uncle Jim had the money from me. I've paid every penny of it—and more besides. Your uncle would be in quod now if I hadn't kept him out of it. Ain't that true, Jim Clavering?"

"I suppose so," said Mr. Clavering weakly. "Don't be hard on the boy, Gandy."

"Who's 'ard on him?" said Gandy angrily. "Only I don't want any side."

"If you've done all this for me, I—I suppose I ought to be grateful," said Clavering fatteringly. "But—but why did you do it? You're no connection of mine; I've only seen you as a friend of Uncle Jim's, and I never liked you—and you knew it!"

The Gander laughed hoarsely.

"I ain't done it for charity," he said. "Not but what I won't treat you well if you be'ave. But you've got to work for your living."

"I'd rather do that than be dependent on you!" said Clavering.

"Do be quiet, Sidney!" whispered his uncle. "Don't anger him."

"I'm not afraid of him!"

The Gander showed his yellow teeth in an evil grin. "You'd better be, lad. Greyfriars—oh—and go out into the world to work," he asked.

Clavering's heart sank.

Would he like that?

It was all so sudden and so terrible that he hardly knew what he would like; he hardly knew whether he was not dreading it all. It seemed like some dreadful, feverish nightmare.

The Gander watched the changing expressions of his white face with a sneer.

"You be'ave yourself, my boy, and don't put on side," he said, "and you'll be all serene. I ain't a 'ard man. Am I a 'ard man, Jim Clavering?"

"No," faltered Clavering's uncle.

"You 'ear what your uncle says?" said the Gander. "You listen to 'im!"

"What did you do it for?" asked Clavering. "Tell me what you did it for."

"I'd my reasons," said the Gander. "Perhaps I wanted a useful boy, brought up at a good school, to 'elp me in my business."

"Your business?" said Clavering. "What is your business?"

The Gander chuckled.

"Tell him what my business is, Jim Clavering," he said.

Clavering's uncle made an appealing gesture.

"For mercy's sake, Gandy, don't be too hard on the poor boy so suddenly!" he exclaimed. "Sidney will understand; he will like you, he will be grateful to you, when he has time to reflect. Let him down lightly."

"What is his business?" repeated Clavering, in a quivering voice.

"You'll know soon enough!" grinned the Gander. "Never mind now!" Perhaps for a moment there was a throb of pity in the man's hard heart for the miserable boy. "I don't want to be 'ard on you. Don't you put on any side, and we'll get on all right. I don't want to take you away from Greyfriars. I ain't a 'ard man. You can 'ave a talk with your uncle now, and I'll 'ave a smoke in the garden."

And the Gander went out, and closed the door behind him.

There was a long silence in the room. Clavering sat in a strangely helpless attitude, his eyes fixed upon his uncle's face. But Mr. Clavering did not meet his gaze. He kept his eyes turned away, and lighted and relighted his pipe several times with trembling fingers. But he was not smoking. Once he burnt his fingers with a match, and muttered a curse.

It was easy to see that the man was a bundle of nerves; he had been drinking to get up the courage for this interview, but the potent spirit failed of its usual effect, and he could not speak, he could not look at the miserable boy.

Clavering broke the silence at last. It was torture to him.

"Uncle, will you explain this?"

"There's nothing much to explain, Sidney," said his uncle heavily. "It's true what he's told you. I've never had any money. I was always the wastrel of the family. Your father used to send me money, and while he did that I kept pretty straight. But when he died—a ruined man—I had no chance then. I don't defend myself. I've been weak—and worse than weak. But—but—" His voice faltered.

"Sidney, lad, I've always been fond of you; and when I came to see you after poor Sid died I—I meant what I said—that I'd do everything I could do for you. And—and when Gandy asked to find the money to keep you at the school,

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

"CAPTAIN D'ARCY."

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In Next Thursday's Number of

"The Gem" Library, 1d.

"WINGS OF GOLD."

By SIDNEY DREW.

how could I say no? You know what you felt like when you thought you had to leave. If it hadn't been for the Gander, Sidney, you'd have left the school that day, and never gone back. You'd have gone out to work, if you could have got any—or starved!"

Clavering shivered.

"I let the Gander do it," said Mr. Clavering. "I—I knew what he was doing it for, Sidney; but—but—but I hoped for the best. I hoped that something might happen before the time came for him to claim you. But—but nothing has happened. But you've had two more years of good school, Sidney, and two years of good clothes, and good, healthy life, and good education, my lad; and if you want to kick over the traces now you're more fit to look after yourself than you were as a boy of thirteen—a fag in the Second Form. Say that you think I did it for the best, Sidney."

The boy's voice was dry and husky as he replied:

"I suppose you did, Uncle Jim. But—but why did the Gander do it? Why did he do it? What does he want in return?"

"Well, he's—he's entitled to something, Sidney," said the man hesitatingly. "You'll acknowledge that yourself, won't you, lad?"

"I'll pay him back if ever I can——"

Jim Clavering shook his head.

"How'll you pay him, Sidney? If you left Greyfriars without your school money, you haven't been trained for that, as I knew very well when I let him pay for you to stay at school. There's not a street arab in this town who's not more able to support himself, Sidney, than any fellow from a public school if he's really down on his uppers."

"I suppose that's true," said Clavering, with a bitter laugh. "I can't get any wages, I suppose, for construing Virgil, or playing football."

"You can't, Sidney. You're dependent on the Gander—Heaven help you!—and so am I," said Mr. Clavering.

"But why—why has he done it?"

"Because you must be useful to him in return, now you're old enough."

"How can I be useful to him?"

"In his business, I mean."

"What is his business?"

Mr. Clavering did not answer.

There was a long silence. Clavering did not repeat the question; he dreaded to hear the answer.

What business, indeed, was the Gander's likely to be? What business consorted with those keen, cunning eyes, that cunning mouth, that hard heart and cruel tongue?

"I—I tried to break it to you in my letter, Sidney," faltered Mr. Clavering at last. "I wanted to make it come less hard."

Clavering laughed grimly.

"Your letter knocked me over, uncle; but it wasn't so bad as this. You wrote to me that you were a ruined man; that I must never expect anything from you again."

Mr. Clavering nodded.

"It's true, Sidney. It's not new—but it's true. The Gander dictated the letter. He's not really a hard man, Sidney, if you know him. He agreed that the truth must be broken to you gently, and he told me what to write."

"I understand."

"I told you to come here and ask for me in the name of Brandon," went on Mr. Clavering. "I did not want to use my name here, Sidney. If any fellow from Greyfriars should see me, I don't want him to know that I'm a relation of yours. If you're going to stay at Greyfriars, lad, you must keep up appearances."

"Stay at Greyfriars, uncle?"

"Yes."

"On that man's charity?"

The man by the fire made no answer.

"And if I stay at Greyfriars, uncle, how am I to be useful to him—in his business, whatever that is?"

"In the vacation, Sidney, and—and sometimes you can have a day or two away from the school, and help him."

"Help him—in what?"

Mr. Clavering finished the contents of his tumbler. His lips moved, but he did not speak. His eyes avoided his nephew's.

"Will you tell me?"

"I can't!" groaned the man. "Sidney, my lad, I'd have done anything to save you from this. I swear I would. I always hoped that something would turn up; something to make it possible for me to look after you. But I'm a wreck; I'm done for! The Gander holds the whip-hand."

"Tell me what he wants."

Mr. Clavering shook his head.

"I can't! Ask him; he'll tell you himself. But—but my advice to you is to let it rest to-day. Think over the matter,

Sidney, and think how you stand. And—and be civil to the Gander; he holds both of us in the hollow of his hand."

Clavering rose to his feet.
"I—I think I'll be getting back to Greyfriars now!" he muttered. "I feel sick! Good-bye, Uncle Jim!"

"You don't hate me, Sidney?"
The boy shook his head.
"I believe you're fond of me, Uncle Jim, and you did it for the best," he answered. "Heaven knows what would have become of me, else. But—but I feel sick! Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, my poor lad!"
Clavering passed out into the verandah. The Gander was not in sight, and Clavering was glad of it. He hurried through the garden to the gate. Just as he was opening it, it was pushed open from outside, and a boy of about his own age came in, and they met face to face in the dusk.

"All there, then," said a soft, lisping voice, as Clavering started back with an exclamation. "I'm not a thilly ghost."
"Lazarus!" muttered Clavering.

Solly nodded.
"Yeth, rather!" he said cheerfully.
"You young hound! You're spying upon me?" Clavering exclaimed furiously.

Solly stared at him in astonishment.
"My only Uncle Tham!" he ejaculated. "Quite a mith-take, I assure you, dear boy. What on earth should I thpy on you for?"

"What did you come here for, then?" exclaimed Clavering.
"Becaushe I live here," said Solly simply.
"Oh!"

"You're looking rather theedy, my thon," said Solly, peering at Clavering with his bright, black eyes, in the dusk.
"Anything the matter?"

"No!" muttered Clavering. "I—I'm sorry for what I just said; I—I'm rather upset."

"All there, my thon," said Solly.
Clavering passed through the gateway, and hurried down the street, leaving Solly Lazarus standing there in the dusk, looking after him very curiously.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Rotters!

Q UITE a little crowd of Greyfriars fellows were in the Close in the early winter dusk to greet the returning Remove eleven. Coker of the Fifth had come down to the gates with Potter and Greene, and Temple Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth turned out as soon as they heard of the arrival of the Removites. The Remove at Greyfriars thought a great deal of themselves—much more than anybody else did. Indeed, the other fellows did not hesitate to characterise the Remove as swanking duffers, which was unjust, and merely indicates how the other fellows regarded them. They had defeated the Upper Fourth many a time on the football-field; and they had challenged Coker & Co.—promising the Fifth a licking if they accepted the challenge—which the Fifth did not do. The Remove, certainly, had a way of acting as if all Greyfriars, if not the whole county, belonged to them. Hence the crowd of fellows turning out to meet them. For a Fourth-Form fellow had been cycling through Courtfield that day, and he had paused to see the finish of the match, and he had seen the Remove eleven defeated. And he had scorched back to Greyfriars on his bicycle, to carry the news to Temple, Dabney & Co., and prepare a reception for the defeated Removites. Not that the Fourth wanted to triumph ungenerously over a fallen foe. They only wanted to point out to the Remove that pride often goeth before a fall, and that a more humble attitude would well become a Form that could not uphold the Greyfriars colours in the football-field. They had prepared an elaborate joke on the Remove, a "rot" of great magnitude.

"Here the conquering heroes come!" roared Coker, in his stentorian voice.

And the Fourth and Fifth-Formers roared together:

"Hurrah!"
The Removites stared.
Of Fry's scorch home to Greyfriars, and his carrying the news of defeat, they knew nothing. They concluded that the Fourth and the Fifth supposed them to be returning victorious. Even so, it was unusual enough for Fourth and Fifth to turn out like this to greet the Removites on their return. It was a most unfortunate moment for the fellows to choose to do honour to the Lower Fourth team, now that they were returning defeated, and very sore with their defeat.

That was the little joke planned by Temple and Coker and their friends. They knew perfectly well that the Remove had been defeated; and they were affecting to believe that they were returning victorious, as if they naturally assumed, from the manners and customs of the Remove, that they couldn't possibly be beaten. As indeed they might have done; for if the Remove fancied themselves at anything, it was at the great game of football.

"Here they come!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

NEXT

TUESDAY: "THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"Hurrah!"

"Room for the giddy conquerors!"

"Bravo!"

The dusky Close seemed swarming with fellows; all the Upper Fourth, half the Fifth, the Third and the Second had turned out. Even Sixth-Formers were looking out of their study windows. Wingate himself, the captain of Greyfriars, was looking on, grinning.

"Hurrah!"

Bulstrode gritted his teeth.
"Oh, hang it!" he muttered. "The silly asses think we've won!"

"Nice come down for us when we explain!" growled Nugent.

"All young Clavering's fault!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Look here, Bob Cherry—"

"You'd better explain," said Harry Wharton curtly.

But it was not so easy to explain. The roar of voices in the Close, the deafening cheers, made it difficult to make one's voice heard. And the cheerers were determined to hear no explanation.

"Hurrah!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Cheers for the conquering heroes!" roared Coker.

"Hurrah!"

"Cheers for the invincibles!"

"Hurrah!"

"Cheers for the Remove, who've never been licked!" shouted Temple.

"Oh, rather!"

"Hurrah!"

Bulstrode turned crimson. It was really difficult for the Remove players to make their way across the Close to the School House, so dense was the throng of their enthusiastic greeters.

"Bravo, Bulstrode!"

"Good old Remove!"

"Cheers for the victors!"

"Hurrah!"

"Look here, you dummies!" roared Bulstrode, exasperated.

"We haven't won!"

"He says he hasn't one goal against him!" shouted Temple, interrupting.

"I didn't; I said—"

"Hurrah!"

"How did it go, Bulstrode? Seven or eight to nil, I suppose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hurrah!"

"Chair him home!" roared Coker.

"Good egg! Hurrah!"

"Let me alone!" yelled Bulstrode. "I tell you—"

"Hurrah!"

Coker and Temple and Dabney seized the captain of the Remove, and hoisted him shoulder high. In spite of his furious kicking and struggling they bore him across the Close in that elevated position, crimson with rage, and vainly trying to make his voice heard.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "What will they say when they know the facts?"

Wharton flushed angrily.

"They know already!" he exclaimed. "They know—or they've guessed. They're rotting! This is a jape on us."

"Phew! My hat!"

"Room for the giddy conqueror!" roared Coker, as Bulstrode was swept up the steps shoulder-high, and carried into the lighted hall. "Hurrah!"

"Bravo!"

Loder, the prefect, came angrily out of his study.

"What's this frightful row about?" he exclaimed.

"Conquering heroes," explained Coker. "The Remove have beaten Courtfield by nine goals to nil!"

"We haven't!" roared Bulstrode, struggling to get down.

But his supporters held his legs fast, and a big Fifth-Former behind held his hands, and he was helpless.

"Sorry!" said Coker. "I mean ten goals to nil."

"It wasn't!"

"Well, eleven goals to nil."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lemme get down, you idiots!" roared Bulstrode. "We haven't won!"

"They haven't one goal against them!" said Temple.

"We haven't won!"

"Hurrah!"

"Courtfield!"

"Hurrah!"

Loder burst into a laugh. He was not a good-tempered prefect as a rule, but he was glad to see the Remove taken down a peg.

"Oh, stop this rotting!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Courtfield beat us by three goals to two."

"My hat!" exclaimed Coker, apparently in the greatest astonishment. "You don't mean to say that you've been beaten!"

"Yes, idiot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove footballers, with crimson faces, came in into the midst of a roaring crowd. Alonzo Todd, of the Remove, who had not been to Courtfield, but had heard Fry bring in his news half an hour before, made his voice audible.

"My dear Coker, you surely forget! I distinctly heard Fry telling you that the Remove had been beaten, when he came in on his bike."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker.

"Oh, we knew he must be mistaken!" said Temple blandly. "The Remove are an unbeatable team. They wouldn't swank so much if they were beatable. How many goals did you beat them by, Cherry?"

"Oh, rats!" growled Cherry.

"Any of them crippled for life?" asked Dabney.

"Go and eat coke!"

"Cheers for the Remove!" roared Coker. "Cheers for the conquering heroes! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rats!"

And the Removees tramped upstairs, glad enough to hide their blushes in the Remove dormitory, leaving the School House hall rocking with laughter. For once, at all events, the laugh had been turned against the Remove, and the "rotters" laughed and laughed till they could laugh no more.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Wharton's Advice.

BULSTRODE came down, after changing, in an exceedingly bad temper. He knew, although he would not admit it, that his bad management was in a great part responsible for the loss of the Courtfield match. All his anger was directed against Sidney Clavering, and Bulstrode's look showed that there was a lively time in store for Clavering when he returned to Greyfriars. Bulstrode came into the junior common-room with his hands in his pockets and a scowl upon his face.

"Clavering back yet?" he asked.

"Haven't seen him," said Bob Cherry shortly.

"I shall have something to say to him when he comes in!" growled Bulstrode.

Harry Wharton looked round.

"You'd better let Clavering alone, Bulstrode," he said.

"It wasn't his fault."

"I say it was his fault!"

"Then you're talking out of your hat. If you hadn't ragged Morgan, he wouldn't have let that last rush beat him."

"Rot!"

"It's quite true, look you!" said Morgan.

"Bosh!"

Wharton compressed his lips. It was some little time later that Clavering came in. He did not come into the common-room, but went directly upstairs to the Remove passage.

Bulstrode followed him up, and a number of juniors followed Bulstrode. Clavering had gone into his study, and Bulstrode pushed open the door without knocking, and strode in.

Clavering was standing by the window, his brows deeply wrinkled, his face pale. He wanted to be alone, to think over that strange interview with his uncle in Courtfield, and he looked annoyed as Bulstrode came in.

"What do you want?" he asked abruptly.

"I want a word with you!" said Bulstrode angrily.

"We've been beaten at Courtfield!"

"I'm sorry!"

"It was your fault!"

"How was it my fault?" said Clavering.

"You failed us at the last moment, and I played a silly duffer in your place!" said Bulstrode.

"Did you? You could have played someone else, I suppose!" said Clavering. "You had the whole Form to choose from."

"I'll trouble you to come down to the gym."

"What for?"

"For a licking."

"Oh, don't bother!"

"What!" roared Bulstrode.

"Don't bother me now!" said Clavering sharply. "I've got other things to think about! Hang your football match, and you, too!"

"My hat!"

"And get out of my study, please!"

Bulstrode turned crimson with anger.

THE MASTER LIBRARY.—No. 204.

"CAPTAIN D'ARCY."

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"I'll jolly soon show you whether I'll get out of your study!" he exclaimed.

He strode towards Clavering, with his fists clenched. Harry Wharton caught him by the shoulder and pulled him back. Bulstrode turned fiercely upon Wharton.

"Hands off, Wharton, or—"

"Hold on!" said Harry quietly. "Don't play the giddy goat, Bulstrode! There's no need for us to row!"

"Then don't interfere."

"Can't you see that Clavering's not fit? Look at him!"

Bulstrode growled. It was pretty clear, from Clavering's look, that the junior was by no means fit for a physical encounter. The Remove captain hesitated.

"Let him alone," said Morgan. "If you want to fight somebody, Bulstrode, you can come into the gym with me. You called me a silly duffer. It was you who wore the duffer, look you!"

"Oh, don't have any rows over losing the match!" exclaimed Wharton. "I suppose we can take a licking without losing our tempers about it. We'll beat Courtfield next time."

"I'm sorry I failed you, Bulstrode," said Clavering. "I've had some bad news, and it has upset me. I think that's excuse enough."

Bulstrode unclenched his hands.

"Well, if you just let him alone, I suppose I can let the matter drop," he growled. "But you jolly well won't have a chance of playing for the Remove again so long as I'm captain, I can tell you that!"

And the Remove captain strode from the study.

"Will you stay a minute, Wharton?" asked Clavering, as Wharton was following the Remove captain into the passage.

Wharton turned back. "Certainly!" he said.

"Shut the door."

Wharton closed the door, and remained in the study alone with Clavering. There was silence for some minutes.

"Something wrong?" asked Wharton, as Clavering did not speak.

The junior flung himself into a chair.

"Yes."

"I'm sorry!" Wharton spoke very sincerely. "If I can help you—"

"I don't suppose you can," said Clavering miserably. "But—but I should like to ask your advice. I—I feel as if I must talk to somebody about it, and—and you're the only fellow I care to speak to on the subject."

Wharton sat on the edge of the table.

"Go ahead!" he said.

"We haven't been specially friends in any way," said Clavering slowly, "but I think you would help me if you could."

"Certainly I would!"

"I had a letter to-day from my uncle. Up to to-day I believed that my uncle was paying my fees at the school, and providing for me."

"Yes; I've heard so."

"I've found out to-day that it isn't the case. My father died two years ago." Clavering's face wrinkled up for a moment. "After his death, my uncle came to see me, and he took charge of me, and told me that I could stay at Greyfriars. My father died a bankrupt, and I had always understood that my uncle was poor, and I have no other near relations. You may guess how jolly glad I was when Uncle Jim said I could stay here."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Wharton. "It was decent of him."

"I've learned to-day that Uncle Jim is just as poor as I always supposed, and he hasn't been paying for me here," said Clavering. "Of course, what I'm telling you is in confidence."

"Of course!"

"Uncle Jim has nothing. I don't even know how he gets his living," said Clavering, with a slight shiver. "If it depended upon him, I couldn't stay another day at the school. I should have to turn out and look for a situation of some sort."

Wharton looked concerned.

"That's rough!" he said.

"That isn't all. My uncle, you understand, has sent the cheques to the Head for my expenses here, but the money has been provided by somebody else."

"A friend, I suppose?"

Clavering's lips curled bitterly.

"No! A man I've seen several times, and never liked. A man who must be a rascal, if appearances are anything to go by—a man I hate!"

"But why should he pay for you here if he's not a decent chap?" exclaimed Harry, in astonishment.

"I don't know."

"Your uncle—"

In Next Thursday's Number of
"The Gem" Library, 1d.

"WINGS OF GOLD."
By SIDNEY DREW.

knowing that he was paying for me, only"—Clavering paused for a moment—"only he wants me to do something in return. I don't know what it is, but it can't be honest!" the junior groaned. "What can I do, Wharton?"

"Poor old chap!" said Wharton. "It's a horrible position for a kid to be in! But one thing is jolly clear—you must not be dragged into doing anything dishonest. Whatever happens, no chap has a right to be anything but honest. If that man wants you to become a rascal, defy him and face the consequences, whatever they are."

"Beggary," said Clavering.

"That's better than rascality," said Harry. "I know it would be hard to face. But if you allowed him to lead you into some wrong-doing, that would soon put the stopper on your staying here. It would be bound to come out in the long run. You'd have to go all the same, and you'd go then with a guilty conscience."

"I suppose that's true."

"But what does he want you to do?"

"He hasn't said yet."

"Find it out, then," said Harry. "It may not be so bad as you imagine. Anyway, you must know exactly how the facts stand before you can decide."

Clavering nodded.

"I'm afraid to know the truth," he faltered.

"I can understand that, too; but you'll have to face this, old fellow. And when you know exactly what the man wants, if it's something shady, go straight to the Head, tell him everything, and ask his advice."

"Thanks, Wharton! That's what you'd advise?"

"That's it, old fellow. It's the best I can say."

"Thank you! Of course, you'll keep dark what I've told you?"

"You can rely on that."

Wharton waited a minute or two; but Clavering did not speak again, and he quitted the study. He went with a cloud on his brow. He did not wonder now that Clavering had not felt fit for footer, or that he was looking white and troubled. The unfortunate junior had reached a turning-point in the road of life; the parting of the ways was before him, and he had to choose. What would he choose? Harry Wharton re-

solved that, if he could help it, Clavering should not make a wrong choice.

Clavering remained alone in his study. He sat there in silence, his face white and set, thinking—thinking—thinking! But his thoughts were without result—they came to nothing! When he rose, pale and cold and troubled, he had come to no decision. It was necessary, as Wharton had said, to know the facts; but he feared to know them. As long as he could, he would put off the knowledge of what the Gander had to tell him.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Fear of the Unknown!

THE next day was Sunday. Sidney Clavering rose with a pale face and a heavy heart. He marched into the school chapel with the rest of the Remove for morning service; but it is to be feared that he lent but a deaf ear to the Head's sermon. There was a weight upon the junior's mind that would not be lifted.

Harry Wharton spoke to him once during the Sunday, but Clavering hardly replied. It looked as if he already partly regretted his confidence to Wharton, made while he was still in the first anguish of mind that the discovery of his uncle's true circumstances had caused.

On Monday morning, Clavering waited for the postman, with an eager expression upon his face. He expected a letter, and he was not disappointed, though a disappointment would not have been unwelcome to him.

The letter was addressed to him in his uncle's hand, and Clavering carried it away to the Cloisters to read it undisturbed.

It ran as follows:

"Dear Sidney,—Come and see me after school to-day. It is most important.—Your uncle,

"JAMES CLAVERING."

That was all.

Clavering knew very well that he was not going to see his uncle, but to see the Gander, and to hear the fateful announcement that that man had to make.

(Continued on page 13.)

THE BEST 3^d LIBRARY THE "BOYS' FRIEND" 3^d LIBRARY. "THE"

There had a story long ago and no other. In three minutes the study was empty, and the student who had been sitting at the desk, but who had not yet reached the door, was gone.

Harry Wharton, however, remained. He sat at the desk, and he looked at the clock. He was waiting for the student who had been sitting at the desk, but who had not yet reached the door, was gone.

"What's the matter?" said Harry. "It may not be so bad as you imagine. Anyway, you must know exactly how the facts stand before you can decide."

Clavering nodded. "I'm afraid to know the truth," he faltered.

"I can understand that, too; but you'll have to face this, old fellow. And when you know exactly what the man wants, if it's something shady, go straight to the Head, tell him everything, and ask his advice."

"Thanks, Wharton! That's what you'd advise?"

"That's it, old fellow. It's the best I can say."

"Thank you! Of course, you'll keep dark what I've told you?"

"You can rely on that."

Wharton waited a minute or two; but Clavering did not speak again, and he quitted the study. He went with a cloud on his brow.

He did not wonder now that Clavering had not felt fit for footer, or that he was looking white and troubled. The unfortunate junior had reached a turning-point in the road of life.

The parting of the ways was before him, and he had to choose. What would he choose? Harry Wharton re-

solved that, if he could help it, Clavering should not make a wrong choice.

Clavering remained alone in his study. He sat there in silence, his face white and set, thinking—thinking—thinking!

But his thoughts were without result—they came to nothing! When he rose, pale and cold and troubled, he had come to no decision.

It was necessary, as Wharton had said, to know the facts; but he feared to know them. As long as he could, he would put off the knowledge of what the Gander had to tell him.

On Monday morning, Clavering waited for the postman, with an eager expression upon his face. He expected a letter, and he was not disappointed, though a disappointment would not have been unwelcome to him.

The letter was addressed to him in his uncle's hand, and Clavering carried it away to the Cloisters to read it undisturbed.

It ran as follows:

"Dear Sidney,—Come and see me after school to-day. It is most important.—Your uncle,

"JAMES CLAVERING."

That was all.

Clavering knew very well that he was not going to see his uncle, but to see the Gander, and to hear the fateful announcement that that man had to make.

(Continued on page 13.)

There had a story long ago and no other. In three minutes the study was empty, and the student who had been sitting at the desk, but who had not yet reached the door, was gone.

Harry Wharton, however, remained. He sat at the desk, and he looked at the clock. He was waiting for the student who had been sitting at the desk, but who had not yet reached the door, was gone.

"What's the matter?" said Harry. "It may not be so bad as you imagine. Anyway, you must know exactly how the facts stand before you can decide."

Clavering nodded. "I'm afraid to know the truth," he faltered.

"I can understand that, too; but you'll have to face this, old fellow. And when you know exactly what the man wants, if it's something shady, go straight to the Head, tell him everything, and ask his advice."

"Thanks, Wharton! That's what you'd advise?"

"That's it, old fellow. It's the best I can say."

"Thank you! Of course, you'll keep dark what I've told you?"

"You can rely on that."

Wharton waited a minute or two; but Clavering did not speak again, and he quitted the study. He went with a cloud on his brow.

He did not wonder now that Clavering had not felt fit for footer, or that he was looking white and troubled. The unfortunate junior had reached a turning-point in the road of life.

The parting of the ways was before him, and he had to choose. What would he choose? Harry Wharton re-

solved that, if he could help it, Clavering should not make a wrong choice.

Clavering remained alone in his study. He sat there in silence, his face white and set, thinking—thinking—thinking!

But his thoughts were without result—they came to nothing! When he rose, pale and cold and troubled, he had come to no decision.

It was necessary, as Wharton had said, to know the facts; but he feared to know them. As long as he could, he would put off the knowledge of what the Gander had to tell him.

A Companion Paper to "The Magnet" Library.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1st

EVERY THURSDAY,

Contains a Splendid Long, Complete Tale of School Life and Adventure, introducing

Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Get a copy of "The Gem" Library to-day!

He thought of not going, but gave up that idea at once. The Gander was not a man to be denied. If Clavering did not go to him, the Gander would come to Greyfriars; and Clavering shuddered at the thought of the beetle-browed, cunning-eyed ruffian striding into the Close, and demanding to see him.

For the Gander had a right to come if he liked. Clavering could not deny that. The man who paid his fees at Greyfriars had a right to come and see him there.

What did the man want?

Clavering knew that he must obey the summons; but he dreaded the coming interview with a miserable fear.

The cloud upon his face during afternoon lessons attracted more than one curious glance towards him. After lessons were over, and the Remove filed out, Bulstrode tapped him on the shoulder in the passage.

"What's up?" he demanded.

Clavering flushed.

"Nothing," he said evasively.

"You're not ill?"

"No."

"Look here, I'm sorry I was so rough on you on Saturday," said Bulstrode. "If you've had some bad news, I'm sorry. Is there anything a fellow can do?"

"No, thanks," said Clavering.

And he walked away, leaving Bulstrode looking perplexed. Ten minutes later, Clavering stepped out of the School House in cap and coat to walk down to Courtfield. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent were in the dusky Quad, and they called to him.

"Clavering, old man."

"Yes. What is it?"

"A feed!" said Bob Cherry impressively. "I've had a remittance—ten solid bobs. We're going to blue it, and we want you to help us."

"Thank you," said Clavering, "but—"

"You've not had your tea?"

"No; but—"

"Come on, then," said Bob Cherry, taking his arm, "this way to the tuckshop."

"Thanks, but—I say—"

"Don't say anything," said Bob cheerfully. "We're not going to take no for an answer. You are down in the dumps, and what you want to cheer you up is a good feed. We're going to have a good feed, and you're going to feed with us."

"Yes, come on," said Nugent.

"You're very good, said Clavering, "but—"

"Buts are barred. Come on."

"I've got to go out."

"Rats! Nowhere to go after dark. Come on."

"I—I've got to go to Courtfield to see my uncle," said Clavering, flushing.

"Hard up?" said Bob Cherry sympathetically.

"No; but—"

"Then what do you want to see your uncle for? Usual uncle, I suppose—Ikey Solomons, three brass balls—vat can I do for you, young shentleman?" suggested Bob Cherry.

Clavering laughed constrainedly.

"No—really, my own uncle!"

"Send him a wire and tell him to come here," said Bob Cherry. "We'll save some of the jam-tarts for him."

"I must go, Cherry."

"Well, if you must, you must," said Bob Cherry, releasing Clavering's arm. "But I don't like to see you down in the dumps like this, Clavering. You've got something on your mind."

"I say, you fellows—" A fat figure loomed up in the dusk.

"Shut up, Bunter! Look here, Clavering, come into my study when you come back, and I'll have the gloves on with you. That'll put you in better spirits."

"Perhaps I will. Good-bye."

"Got a pass out of gates?" asked Bob.

"No."

"Better get one, if you're walking to Courtfield. Gates will be locked long before you get back," said Nugent.

"It's all right."

"Don't be an ass! Ask Wingate for a pass."

"He might refuse; then I couldn't go, and I must go," said Clavering. "So-long."

And he walked away quickly.

Bob Cherry gave a low whistle. He did not know what Wharton knew; but he was feeling concerned about Clavering.

"That chap seems to be in low water," he remarked. "I hate to see a chap like that. I wish I could do something to buck him up."

"I wish I could," said Harry Wharton.

"Nothing like a feed to buck a fellow up, especially in winter," said Bob Cherry sagely. "I'd stand any chap a feed to buck him up when he's got the blue devils. Poor old Clavering's got something on his mind, that's certain."

There was a sudden sound in the darkness of the Close under the old elms, and it made the juniors start.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

EVERY
TUESDAY.

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that?"

Groan!

"Is that you, Bunter?"

Groan!

"Bunter, what's the matter?"

Groan!

The chums of the Remove, somewhat alarmed, hurried in the direction of the sound.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Right Thing!

BILLY BUNTER was leaning against the trunk of one of the old elms, with his fat features twisted up into an expression of anguish. He blinked through his big spectacles at the chums of the Remove as they approached. They gathered round him in surprise. Billy Bunter was a champion malingerer, and few fellows ever believed in any of his statements, and if he had anything the matter, he exaggerated it so much that the most sympathetic fellow in the Remove was tired of sympathising with him. But the groans he was giving now sounded so realistic that Harry Wharton & Co. feared for the moment that there was something really the matter.

Bob Cherry dropped his hand upon the fat junior's shoulder.

"What's the matter, Bunter?"

Groan!

Bunter, old man—"

A deeper groan!

"Are you ill?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Not exactly ill," gasped Bunter. "I'm in trouble."

"What's the trouble?"

"I—I can hardly explain. I've got something on my mind."

"Your hat?" suggested Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

Nugent knocked Bunter's hat off.

"There you are. There's nothing on your mind now," he said consolingly.

"I—I say, you fellows, I think you might be a little sympathetic. I'm in trouble, and I want bucking up," said Bunter pathetically.

Bob Cherry thought that he understood.

"Oh! You want bucking up—eh?"

"Ye-es."

"I suppose what you need is a feed—a jolly big feed?" Bob suggested.

Bunter's face brightened up wonderfully.

"Yes, that's it," he said eagerly. "A jolly good feed, you know. When a chap's down in the dumps, there's nothing like a good feed to buck him up, is there, Cherry? You said so yourself."

"So I did," agreed Bob Cherry.

"That's just how I am now—awfully down, and I need a good feed to buck me up," said Billy Bunter. "I'm sure you'll do the right thing, Bob Cherry."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Certainly I will," he replied.

"Thank you," moaned Bunter. "A really good feed is what I want. I should feel all right then. Oh, oh!"

The juniors could not help grinning. Billy Bunter had heard Bob Cherry's remarks, and he had immediately assumed an attitude of pathetic suffering. But Bob Cherry, though he was willing to stand any amount of feeds to Clavering, who was really in trouble, was not in the slightest degree inclined to sympathise with Billy Bunter. Billy Bunter had made too many demands upon the sympathy of his Form-fellows, and the supply at his disposal had been long ago exhausted.

"Shall we do the right thing by Bunter, you chaps?" asked Bob Cherry, with a wink at his companions which the Owl of the Remove did not see.

"Certainly," said Nugent.

"I—I'm hungry," said Bunter. "I feel very down, you know. I—I've had bad news!"

"Bad news from home?" asked Wharton suspiciously.

"Well, from one of my titled friends," said Bunter. "And—and I want cheering up. As Cherry said, there's nothing like a good feed to cheer a fellow up when he's down."

"Quite so."

"I—I'm ready," said Bunter. "I—I think I've got strength enough to walk to the tuckshop."

"I'm sure you have," said Bob Cherry kindly. "What would you fancy to eat, Bunter? Rabbit-pie, I suppose, to begin with?"

"Yes, yes."

"And then some pork chops?"

"Oh, ripping!"

"After that, I suppose, a cake?"

"That would be splendid."

"Then some jam-tarts—twopenny ones, and some cream puffs!" Bob Cherry suggested.

Bunter's mouth watered.

"I say, Cherry, that's ripping of you," he said.

"Not at all. You haven't got 'em yet," said Bob Cherry. "You think if you had these things you'd be all right?"

"I'm sure of it, Cherry."

"Good! Then I'm sure I hope you'll get 'em," said Bob Cherry politely. "Good-bye!"

"Eh?"

"Come on, you chaps!"

"I—I say, you fellows—"

Harry Wharton & Co. strolled away in the dusk. Billy Bunter blinked after them, in amazement at first, and then in fury. He found strength to leave the tree he was leaning upon, and dashed after the juniors as fast as his fat little legs would carry him.

"I say, you fellows—" he bawled.

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter!"

"Look here, you fellows—"

"Buzz off!" roared Bob Cherry.

"But what about that feed?"

"What feed?"

"The feed you're going to stand me—"

Bob Cherry looked astonished.

"I'm not going to stand you any feed," he replied.

"What put that idea into your head?"

"Why, you—you said—"

"Oh, rats!"

"You said jam-tarts and cream-puffs and pork chops!" yelled Bunter.

"I was asking you what you'd like!" said Bob Cherry blandly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you—you rotter!" shrieked Bunter. "You said you'd do the right thing, and—"

"So I will," said Bob Cherry, catching the Owl of the Remove by the shoulders. "There you are!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter sat down on the cold, cold ground, with a shock that took his breath away.

"Ow!"

"That's the right thing for a worm like you!" said Bob Cherry pleasantly. "Don't tell any more lies, and don't make up silly yarns, and you won't get bumped! That's the moral of the story for you! Br-r-r!"

"Ow!"

And the chums of the Remove walked off.

"Oh! Beasts!" yelled Bunter. "Beasts! Ow!"

The Owl of the Remove scrambled up. The three chums were gone, and the fat junior did not feel inclined to follow them any further. He rolled away towards the lighted doorway of the School House, grunting. Alonzo Todd, the junior who was distinguished by the honourable title of the Duffer of Greyfriars, was standing in the doorway, blinking out into the dusk, and Bunter groaned as he came up. Todd looked concerned immediately.

"My dear Bunter!" he exclaimed. "What ever is the matter?"

"Ow!"

"I hope you are not ill, my dear Bunter?" exclaimed Todd. "If you are, you should go to bed at once, and I will sit by your bedside, my dear Bunter, and read you a chapter from the volume my Uncle Benjamin presented to me when I returned to Greyfriars, entitled 'The Story of a Potato.'"

Bunter shuddered.

"I—I say, Todd, I'm frightfully ill, and I've just been knocked down and jumped on by Bob Cherry and Wharton—"

"Dear me!"

"They took me unawares!" groaned Bunter. "I was hurled to the ground, and Cherry jumped on me in the most ferocious way!"

"Goodness gracious!"

"If I don't have a—little refreshment to buck me up, I think I shall very likely be seriously ill!" said Bunter, in a faint voice.

"My poor, dear Bunter—"

"My poor, dear Bunter—"

"My poor, dear Bunter—"

"My poor, dear Bunter—"

"My poor, dear Bunter—"

"My poor, dear Bunter—"

"I'm expecting a postal-order this evening!" moaned Bunter. "Would you mind advancing me a few shillings off it, Toddy?"

"I should be delighted, my dear Bunter—"

"Hand it over, then!" said Bunter, in a much more lively voice. "The postal-order is certain to come this evening, and—"

"That is a matter of but small moment," said Todd, in his solemn way. "That does really not matter at all, my dear Bunter. But—"

"Well, hand over the cash, old man!"

"I'm so sorry—"

"Eh?"

"You did not allow me to finish my remark, my dear Bunter," said Todd mildly. "I was about to say, when you interrupted me, that I should be delighted to advance you some shillings, but at the present moment I am out of funds."

Bunter glared.

"You—you—you—"

"I am sure, however, that you will take the will for the deed, my dear Bunter—"

"You fathead!" roared Bunter.

"My dear Bunter," exclaimed Todd, very much surprised and shocked, "I trust—"

"You—you silly ass!"

"My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted—if he heard you use those expressions, my dear Bunter—"

"Br-r-r!" said Bunter.

"My dear— Oh!"

The patience of Job had its limits, and the patience of Billy Bunter was not nearly so extensive as that of the patriarch. A round, fat fist came up, and was plumped with considerable force upon the prominent nose of the Duffer of Greyfriars. Alonzo Todd gave a little squeak, and sat down in the passage. Bunter glared at him, and walked on.

Todd was left sitting there, in a state of the greatest astonishment, which he did not recover from for at least ten minutes.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Villain's Victim.

"HERE you are—hey?"

It was the Gander who spoke.

Clavering had entered the little smoky room by the door from the verandah. The winter dusk was thick upon the garden, and the gas was lighted. There were fumes of tobacco and fumes of whisky in the stuffy little room, of which the window was tightly closed. Clavering coughed as he entered. He could not help it, but it did not escape the keen observation of the Gander, who translated the cough into an expression of "side."

"Not good enough for you, p'raps?" he asked.

"Don't be hard on him, Gandy," said James Clavering, in his feeble, good-natured way.

The Gander sniffed.

"Who says I'm 'ard?" he demanded.

"I'm sure Sidney doesn't," said poor Mr. Clavering.

"Well, don't let us 'ave any side, that's all!" said the Gander.

Clavering sat down.

"You told me to come," he said.

"I did!" said the Gander. "Ave you thought over what you was told on Saturday?"

Clavering nodded. He was under great obligation to this ruffian; he owed all he had to him. At a word from this man he would have to leave Greyfriars—go forth alone and face cold and hunger and work and misery. Yet he could hardly restrain the expression of scorn and contempt from his face.

He had never detested the Gander so much as he did at that moment, when he realised that he was entirely dependent upon him.

"Do you want to leave the school?"

"No," said Clavering, in a low voice.

"You want to stay on here?"

"Yes."

NEXT TUESDAY:

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Please order your copy early.



Again the ball came up to the Courtfield goal, but the back cleared with a kick that took it past the halfway line.
(See Chapter 3.)

"You want me to go on payin' for you?"

Clavering flushed.

"I suppose it amounts to that," he said miserably.

The Gander lighted a cigar.

"Well," he said, "I ain't a 'ard man. I never was. If you're willing to make yourself useful, you're safe to finish your time at Greyfriars, and to go on to Oxford arter."

Clavering looked astonished.

"You think I ain't got the money?" asked the Gander, with a laugh. "I can lay my 'ands on more money than that, my boy; and them as is with me in the game, they could find more than I want. It's going to be worth our while, you see."

"I don't see how. I—I may do something decent in the world, if I have a chance," said Clavering. "But that's a long way off yet—"

The Gander burst into a rude laugh.

"Ha, ha, ha! I ain't thinking of livin' on you when you become Prime Minister or an Archbishop!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! That ain't my investment at all."

"You— What do you mean?"

"You're going to make yourself useful to me in my line of business," said the Gander. "When Jim Clavering 'ere first told me about you, me and my pals knew how useful you would be—at Greyfriars—and at college arter. It will be a good thing for you, and a better thing for me, or I shouldn't 'ave took it up."

"But what can I do?"

The Magnet Library.—No. 204.

"You can 'elp me and my pals."

"How?"

"You can explain to him, Jim Clavering," said the Gander.

Clavering's uncle groaned.

"I can't!" he said.

The Gander shrugged his shoulders, and lighted a cigar.

"Very well; I'll put it to 'im," he said. "Me and my pals are in business, young feller. Our business is to make money, and we make money by transferring it to our pockets from people who has too much. Savvy?"

Clavering turned pale.

"Do you mean stealing?" he asked.

The Gander winked.

"You can call it that," he said. "Never mind what you call it—it comes to the same thing. But there's many a job we've 'ad to drop, or 'ave mucked up, because we wanted a feller to 'elp us who was class enough for the business. Savvy? A 'andsome, well-dressed feller of good class, that people would 'ave confidence in at once. That's the kind of lad we wanted in the business, and that's what you're going to do."

"Become a thief!"

Clavering's teeth grated over the words.

"If you like to put it like that—yes," said the Gander. "A sort of young Raffles, you know. F'rinstance, you get an invitation home from school with some rich young cove. When you're at his house, you let us 'ave a plan of the place,

you find out and tell us where the vallybles are kept, and you leave a window open on a certain night."

"Good heavens!"

"That's all! You stay in bed and sleep through it all. When you wake up in the morning, you're as surprised as anybody to hear that there's been a burglarly overnight," said the Gander. "Savvy?"

"Oh!"

"When you're at Oxford, it's the same—only you fly at bigger game. Your college will be burgled—that's the first. You learn things about the other swells—all the grist that comes to the mill. There's a burglary at every 'ouse you're invited to—it's all serene; you couldn't be suspected."

"Are you joking?" faltered Clavering.

"You'll find that I ain't!"

"Can you imagine that I, or any decent chap, could be so horribly base?" said Clavering. "It's impossible!"

The Gander laughed sneeringly.

"You'll 'ave to find it possible, or it will be the worse for you!" he said. "I've mapped out what you're goin' to do—and you're goin' to do it!"

"I cannot!"

"Sidney!" murmured Mr. Clavering.

"Uncle, did you know this?"

"Know it!" burst out the Gander, with an angry laugh. "Know it! Ain't your Uncle Jim and me been pals for years in the same business—yes, and afore you was born, too!"

"Is that true, uncle?"

James Clavering bowed his head.

"I've been a bad lot, Sidney!" he muttered. "I always meant well, but—"

"Is what that man says true?"

"Yes!" groaned the wretched man.

"You knew this was what he intended when you allowed him to find the money to pay my fees at Greyfriars?"

"Knew!" ejaculated the Gander. "It was his idea. He was the first to say that you'd be a likely lad for the gang when you was a little older."

"I—I hoped that something would turn up," muttered James Clavering.

Clavering seemed turned to stone.

"Now you know what you've got to do!" said the Gander. "You'll do it! I've mapped out the programme! You'll stick to it, young fellow-me-lad!"

"Is that all?" asked Clavering dully.

The Gander reflected.

"No," he said; "it ain't all. Sometimes I shall want you to get a day or two off from school and 'elp me in jobs in different parts of the country—places where a young swell can get in and get information."

"Anything more?"

"No, that's all—or about all. You'll start at Greyfriars."

"At Greyfriars?"

"Yes. The school plate is worth over a thousand quid. We've got accurate information about that," said the Gander coolly. "I've 'ad that information from an old boy—your Uncle Jim there."

James Clavering cowered from his nephew's glance.

"What you've got to do," resumed the Gander, "is to gimme a plan of the 'ouse, and make sure exactly where the stuff is kept, and let me in. Then you can go back to bed and leave the job to me. And I'll see that you 'ave fifty quid out of the loot. I ain't a hard man, and I believe in fair play. Your uncle has always found me fair and squar'. Ain't that so, Jim Clavering?"

"Yes—yes," said the other man, nervously. "I'm sure—"

"Now, wot do you say?" asked the Gander, looking at Clavering.

The boy rose to his feet.

"Say!" he repeated. "I say that I'll see you hanged first! I won't help you! I'd die sooner than become a dirty thief! And you sha'n't pay another penny for me at Greyfriars! I won't touch your stolen money!"

"Sidney!"

The Gander sneered.

"Let 'im run on!" he said. "Let him rip! He won't touch my stolen money, won't he! Why, you young cub, every penny that's been paid for you at Greyfriars was stolen money, as you call it! Every penny was made out of swag!"

"Oh, Heaven!"

"It's too late for these mighty fine ideas!" jeered the Gander. "You've been sharing in the swag for two years now!"

"I—I didn't know!" gasped Clavering. "You villain!"

"Hey?"

"Sidney! Sid! Be quiet, for mercy's sake! Don't make him angry!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 204.

"CAPTAIN D'ARCY."
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

[In Next Thursday's Number of
"The Gem" Library, 1d.

"WINGS OF GOLD."
By SIDNEY DREW.

"I'll say what I think!" shouted Clavering, with blazing eyes. "He's a villain—a plotting, cowardly villain, and I'll have nothing to do with him, or with you, either, Uncle Jim, if you don't kick that man out!"

"Sidney—"

"Kick me out!" sneered the Gander. "It's 'ard to kick a man out of his own room! I'm paying the money 'ere, young fellow-me-lad! So you'll have nothing to do with it—hey?"

"No, you hound!"

Clavering turned towards the door.

The Gander was crimson with rage. But he controlled his passion with a great effort, and spoke calmly.

"Old on a minute!" he said. "If you go like that, kid, you're done! We'll settle this now, or it won't be settled at all!"

"It's settled!" said Clavering, turning for a moment at the door. "I'll have nothing to do with you and your rascally thieving! You're a villain and a blackguard! Do your worst! I won't have a word to say to you!"

"You'd rather be expelled from Greyfriars?" sneered the Gander.

"Expelled!"

"Yes, expelled—as a young thief—and driven out into the world branded for life!"

Clavering swung back into the room.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

At the Parting of the Ways.

THE Greyfriars junior was deadly pale, and his eyes gleamed. His hands were clenched. It was evidently as much as he could do to keep them from the hard, mocking face of the Gander.

"What do you mean?" he said, between his teeth. "What have I done? Why should I be expelled from Greyfriars?"

"Because I shall go and see the Head and show you up," said the Gander coolly.

"I have done nothing!"

"You'll 'ave to prove that," said the Gander coolly. "I shall make it quite clear to the schoolmaster that you're in the gang."

"You will lie to him?"

The Gander shrugged his shoulders. A lie was not very much to the man who had lived a life of crime for twenty years.

Clavering rested his hand upon the edge of the table and tried to think.

Whichever way he turned he seemed to be in a horrible tangle. He was caught on every side like a hapless fly in the web of the spider.

It was not only leaving Greyfriars. It was leaving the school in black shame and disgrace, then, that he had to fear. It was leaving amid the scorn and disgust of everybody he knew, to start life alone, unfriended, with an ineffaceable stain upon his name!

How was he to face that?

The Gander watched the varying expressions of the boy's face, coolly, through the blue smoke of his cigar.

Clavering was silent for a long time. The smoky, foul room seemed to be swimming about him.

James Clavering sat silent, drinking. In the burning liquor, that was deadening his senses and his last rag of self-respect, and slowly killing him, he found a refuge from the stings of conscience.

"You couldn't be such a villain!" gasped Clavering at last.

"Try me and see."

"You hound!"

"Do you think I've kept you at school for two years for nothing?" said the Gander contemptuously.

Clavering pressed both hands to his throbbing temples.

"The Head wouldn't believe you!" he muttered.

The Gander laughed.

"He would believe me, when he saw my record and saw your uncle's!" he replied. "He would want to know what you fancied your uncle was doing for a living all the time."

Clavering groaned.

"You'd better make up your mind to it," said the Gander coolly. "It's a good offer I'm making you. I'm not a 'ard man, I ain't. You've 'ad a run for two years, and now you've got to begin earning your keep. That's all."

Clavering did not reply.

"I'm coming to the place to-morrow night," went on the Gander. "I can't stay too long 'ere. I get too much attention in a country town—and 'aides, I've business in London. I ain't wasting any more time over you! You'll let me into the school to-morrow night!"

"I can't!"

"You can, and you will! And 'ere and now you'll give me

a sketch of the place—draw it up in pen and ink afore you go!"

"I won't!"

"You know what to expect if you don't."

Clavering stood motionless.

The Gander made a sign with his cigar to James Clavering, and the wretched old man rose, and laid pen and paper on the table. The Gander pointed to a chair, and Clavering sat down.

"I want time to think," he muttered.

"You can think arter you've done the plan," said the Gander coolly.

"I—I—"

"Do as he tells you, Sidney," muttered James Clavering.

"That won't commit you to anything, you know."

"Take the pen!" said the Gander.

Clavering hesitated, and took up the pen. His brain was in a whirl. He did not know what to think, what to decide. To gain time, to get time to think, that was what he wanted. He would never do what this villain wanted, but he must put off the evil hour of disgrace and ruin.

He dipped the pen in the ink. Clavering was a clever draughtsman. It was easy for him to do what the Gander wanted, so far.

Under his pen the plan worked up slowly but surely. He dotted down walls, passages, windows. The Gander watched him at work.

"Where is the silver kept?" he asked.

"In the Head's safe."

"Where is that?"

"In the wall in his study."

"Put the study in, then."

Clavering obeyed.

"Any dogs kept at the school?"

"One—Gosling's mastiff."

"Who's Gosling?"

"The school porter."

Clavering found himself answering the questions, dully, mechanically. To refuse meant defiance to the Gander, and to answer them, after all, committed him to nothing, so far. It was still in his power to refuse the service the cracksman demanded.

"Where does Gosling sleep?"

"In his lodge."

"And the mastiff is there?"

"Yes."

"Chained of a night?"

"Yes."

"Good! Is it easy to climb over the wall from the road?"

"Yes—if you have somebody to buck you up."

"You've done it yourself many a time, I dessay!" grinned the cracksman. "Well, I shall 'ave somebody to gimme a leg up—eh, Jimmy?"

"Yes," muttered Mr. Clavering.

"Inside the wall," pursued the cracksman, "wot about that? Which winder will you open for me?"

"None!"

The Gander smiled.

"We'll agree on a spot to meet," he said. "At half-past twelve to-morrow night, my lad, you come down to the school wall. You can sneak outer the dormitory while the other boys are asleep."

"I—I cannot!"

"You'll meet me at the wall," pursued the Gander, as if Clavering had not spoken, "say at the first tree along the wall, counting from the gate. You see, I've spotted the place from the outside pretty well. That's where you'll see me."

Clavering did not reply.

"I'll be there at exactly half-past twelve, and so will you," said the Gander. "Your uncle will bunk me up on the wall, and you'll meet me inside, and take me into the 'ouse. Then it will be all plain sailing."

"It's impossible!"

"That's all settled, then," said the Gander, still taking no notice of Clavering's replies, and he rose to his feet. "Now you can go, and your uncle an' me'll 'ave a little game of billiards at the Red Cow down the street."

"I cannot do it!"

The Gander's brows contracted, and he raised his hand and pointed at the miserable boy. In his left hand he crushed the paper Clavering had drawn up at his order.

"You'll do it," he said, "or you'll leave Greyfriars in disgrace!"

"I will not!"

"I've got this 'ere paper now," said the Gander, with a cruel grin. "If I show that to your headmaster—"

Clavering gave a cry.

"Oh, you villain—you villain! Give it back to me!"

The cracksman laughed.

"I reckon not!" he said. "You young fool, even without that you're in the 'ellow of my 'and! You'll be where I've told you at the time I've told you, and you'll do what I've told you, or you know what to expect! Now you can go!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

NEXT TUESDAY: "THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

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

Clavering gave the Gander one wild look, and staggered from the room. He went blindly down into the darkness of the garden, and stumbled to the gate. A hand dropped on his arm, and he gave a startled cry. Already it seemed to him that every shadow held a policeman—that eyes watched him from every corner, suspecting that he was a thief and the accomplice of thieves.

"Oh! Who—who is that?"

"All therene!" said a soft voice.

It was Solly Lazarus.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Solly Knows What to Do.

SOLLY LAZARUS peered through the gloom at the white, startled face of Clavering of the Remove. Clavering was silent save for his hurried, scared breathing. As yet he had done nothing of what the Gander demanded, but the terror of guilt was upon him, and the soft touch in the gloom had made his heart beat like a hammer.

"What—what do you want?" he muttered, at last.

"I don't want anything, my thon," said Solly, in his soft voice; "but I should like to speak a word or two to you. Shall I walk down the street with you?"

"Yes, if you like," said Clavering.

He was anxious to get away. He passed through the gateway into the side street, and Solly walked down the street with him. The old High Street of Courtfield was not well lighted, but it was lighted enough to show up the white face of the Greyfriars junior. The keen, black eyes of Solly Lazarus turned upon him keenly more than once.

Clavering did not speak. He did not know what the Jew lad wished to say, and he did not care much. He left it to Solly to speak.

"You're in trouble, my thon," said Solly quietly.

Clavering compressed his lips.

"I don't see that that's any business of yours," he replied shortly.

Solly grinned.

"No bithneth of mine at all," he agreed; "only I'm a good-natured chap, dear boy, and I don't like to see anybody in trouble. You have been to see my father's lodger?"

"Yes."

"If you'll take a chap's advice you'll keep away from both of them," said Solly. "The lodger, and that man who comes to see him, are a pair of blighters, dear boy. They won't do you any good."

Clavering laughed bitterly. He knew that already.

"Do you think I'd see them if I could help it?" he said.

Solly started a little. He had observed James Clavering and the Gander, and he had read their characters pretty keenly, and he had decided to speak a word of warning to the Greyfriars fellow out of sheer kindness and good nature. He had only imagined that Clavering was a weak lad who was being led into bad associations. But he perceived now that there was something more than that in it.

"You can't help it?" he asked.

"No."

"But why?"

Clavering was silent.

"Of course, it's not my bithneth," said Solly quickly; "but if those rathcals have any hold over you, dear boy, the sooner you buck up against it the better."

Clavering breathed hard. He felt the need of somebody to speak to, to confide in, and he already felt that he must say no more to Harry Wharton. If Wharton had the slightest suspicion of the intentions of the Gander he would insist upon the Head being told at once, and Clavering was not ready for that yet. It came into Clavering's mind to confide to this keen, sharp-witted Jew lad, who had ten times his own power for dealing with a difficult situation. He hardly knew Solly, having only met him half a dozen times, but he felt that the Courtfield fellow wanted to help him.

"The man's my uncle," he muttered.

"Mithter Brandon?" asked Solly.

"Mr. Clavering," said Sidney. He had forgotten for the moment that his uncle was passing under an assumed name in Mr. Lazarus's house.

"Oh!" murmured Solly. "Then his name is Clavering! He lookth like a man who has theferral names, too. And the man he calls Gandy—"

"I don't know his name."

"Uncle or not, they're a bad lot," said Solly, after a pause.

"Are you bound to see him, my thon?"

"Yes."

"It's hard cheese, then. Look here," said Solly shrewdly.

"You are looking frightfully upset, and I can see that they

are giving you trouble. Do they want you to do something or else that you're afraid of?"

"Then keep a stiff upper lip, and don't do it," said Solly. "Bad always leads to worse, my thon—remember that. That rathcal Gandy looks a fearful blighter, and he might be capable of anything. Don't let him lead you into anything."

"Suppose I can't help it?" muttered Clavering.

"You can help it. You can say no."

"And be ruined."

"My only Uncle Tham! Is it so bad as that?"

"As bad as that—and worse!" Clavering paused. "I

don't know what I'm jawing to you like this for, Solly Lazarus. I'd better hold my tongue, I think."

Solly shook his head.

"You'd better tell me about it, and let me advise you,"

he said. "I know more of the world than you do—I've

knocked about a bit. A chap picks up knowledge serving in

a thop, you know. Does that man threaten you?"

"Yes."

"If you don't do what he wants?"

"Yes."

"And what is that, dear boy?"

It was upon Clavering's tongue to tell Solly everything,

and perhaps if he had it would have been better for him.

It was a terrible problem he had to solve, and the cool, keen

brain of the Jew boy would have solved it better than his

own confused and terrified mind. But he checked himself.

After all, what did he know of Solly? What a fool he was

to blab his affairs to strangers? If he resisted the Gander

all would be known, true, and it would not matter. But if

he acceded—and that possibility, alas, was already in the

back of the unfortunate junior's mind.

"What is it?" repeated Solly softly. "I'll keep it a thecret

if you tell me."

Clavering shook his head.

"It's nothing," he said. "I've talked too much already."

"But I thay—"

"It's nothing. Good-night!"

And Clavering walked away quickly before the Courtfield

fellow could speak again. Solly Lazarus looked after him

with a peculiar expression.

"My only Uncle Tham!" he muttered. "There is thome-

thing very wrong with that kid, and I wonder what that

rathcal is trying to make him do? Perhaps Tholly Latharus

will be able to help him out after all, without his telling

anything. I'm going to try."

And Solly walked back to his home in a very thoughtful

mood. He found his father in the shop, and Mr. Lazarus

greeted his hopeful son with an affectionate nod. Then, as

he marked the expression upon Solly's face, his own grew

graver.

"Anything wrong, Tholly?"

"Not with me, dad," said Solly, sitting on the counter,

and speaking in a low voice. "Have you seen a kid belong-

ing to Greyfriars who comes here to thee your lodger?"

Mr. Lazarus nodded.

"A kid came here on Thatursday and asked for Mr.

Brandon," he said.

"Did you notice anything about him?"

"He looked as if he was in trouble, Tholly, that's all. It

was no bithneth of mine."

"His name is Clavering, father."

"Is it?" said Mr. Lazarus indifferently.

"And Mr. Brandon's name is Clavering, father, and he's

that kid's uncle."

"How do you know, Tholly?"

"He told me. And those two men are trying to get the

kid to do thometling or other that he doesn't want to do,

father."

"It's his own bithneth, Tholly."

"It's ours, too, dad," said Solly cheerfully. "If there is

going to be any trouble, we don't want to have it happen

here. It doesn't do a shop any good to be mixed up with

the polithe."

"The polithe!" ejaculated Mr. Lazarus, in alarm. Mr.

Lazarus was a respectable and law-abiding citizen, but he

did not love the police.

"That's what I thaid," replied Solly. "Both those rathcals

look as if they live on bad termth with the polithe, dad.

And what are they doing here, anyway?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Tholly. They pay all right."

Solly laughed.

"If they're up to any thieving bithneth, father, they'd do

that here. What are they mixed up with a Greyfriars kid

for, trying to make him do something he won't do? Clavering

looks as if he's having a tooth out, they've upset him so.

There's something rotten had in this, father."

Mr. Lazarus made a gesture with his large fat hands.

"I can't help it, Solly. I can give Mr. Brandon notice to

quit."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

"CAPTAIN D'ARCY."

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In Next Thursday's Number of

"The Gem" Library, 1d.

"WINGS OF GOLD."

By SIDNEY DREW.

"That's no good. If those rathcals are here for any rotten

bithneth it won't take them long," said Solly shrewdly.

"Look here, dad, I'm going to keep an eye on them, and

if there is any shady bithneth going on it will do you good

to let the polithe know."

"Quite tho, Tholly—quite tho."

"I feel quite thorry for that kid," said Solly musingly.

"I don't know what those two rathcals are after, but I

know it's some low-down villainy, or the kid wouldn't look

so white and rotten."

"Very likely, Tholly. But—"

"I'm going to keep an eye on them," said Solly deter-

minedly; "and you know I've got a sharp eye, father."

Mr. Lazarus grinned. He knew that.

"Yeth, Tholly. But mind you don't get into any trouble,"

he added anxiously.

"What-ho!" said Solly.

The Gander would not have played his game of billiards

with Mr. Clavering quite so coolly and easily if he had

known of Solly's determination, and had known something

of Solly's nature. But he did not know.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Nothing to Say.

CLAVERING found the gates of Greyfriars locked when

he arrived there—he was long past the time for calling-

over even. In his agitation of mind he had forgotten

calling-over. He rang the bell, and Gosling, the porter,

came down to the gates with a frowning face. Gosling did

not like being disturbed. He peered at Clavering through

the bars of the gate, and gave a sort of snort.

"Oh!" he ejaculated. "Nice goings hon, Master

Clavering!"

"Open the gate!" said Clavering quietly.

"Wot I says is this 'ere!" growled Gosling. "These are

nice goings hon, I says! You are to report yourself to Master

Wingate for missing call-over."

"Very well."

Gosling opened the gate, and Clavering entered. The porter

was still growling to himself as he re-locked the gates and

retired to his lodge. Clavering walked on to the School

House. For the punishment for missing call-over he cared

little, but he was worried at thus having attracted attention

to himself. If he decided to yield to the Gander—always that

black thought—the less attention he attracted the better.

Whether he would surrender to the tempter or not he did

not know. He wanted time to think it out clearly. He knew

that he stood at the parting of the ways—with honesty and

poverty on one side, on the other side ease and shame—and

he did not know yet which he would choose. It was a terrible

position for the lad, yet to many a lad comes such a choice

once or twice in a lifetime, and upon the good or bad choice

depends the current of life ever afterwards. There are few

who do not, at some time in their lives, stand at the parting

of the ways, with the choice of good or evil, and fortunate

are those who have the strength and the determination to

choose the right, and abide by it, in spite of temptations and

sufferings.

Clavering went slowly through the dark, misty Close

towards the glimmering windows of the School House. As

he passed into the hall, some of the juniors spoke to him.

"You're late!" said Bob Cherry.

Clavering nodded.

"I suppose you know you've got to see Wingate," said

Harry Wharton.

"Yes."

"Come to the study afterwards; there's some of the tommy

left," Bob remarked. "Have you had your tea in Court-

field?"

"No."

"Then you'll come to the study?"

"Thanks; yes!"

Clavering passed on to the captain's study. He knocked

and opened the door. Wingate and Courtney of the Sixth

were in the study, talking football. The captain of Grey-

friars turned a grin look upon Clavering.

"So you've come back?" he said.

"Yes," said the Removite.

"Where have you been?"

"I've been to Courtfield."

"Without asking for a pass out of gates?"

"Yes."

"Well, you're pretty cool about it," said Wingate, taking

up a cane. "What did you go to Courtfield for?"

Clavering was silent.

"Come, if you've got any good explanation to give, I may

let you off," said the Greyfriars captain good-naturedly.

"I've nothing to say," said Clavering heavily. "You may

as well lick me; I don't care."

Wingate looked at him.

GREAT NATIONS OF HISTORY.

By Eugen Sandow.

Every boy knows that in all periods of the world's history there have been certain nations which have been so superior to their neighbours that they have earned the title of "Great Nations."

Did you ever trouble to think why one nation out of many should come to the front and rule the world for a time? The problem is very interesting, and the boy who thinks about it will find it by no means a "dry" subject.

More than that, I promise that he will find the result interesting to himself personally, for reasons which I will presently show.

Every boy should read history. I know some boys look upon it as a "school" subject, and avoid it accordingly, but in reality there is nothing more profitable to read than history. Not only the history of your own country, but the history of other countries, too. There is a lot to be gained, and, apart from the interest and value of the subject, a knowledge of history will prove useful to you throughout life.

The Greeks, the Romans, the Vikings, the Spaniards, the French, and the English have each in turn been masters of the world. How did they attain their power, and why did the first five nations lose it?

In every case we find the nation which rose to power was one which devoted great care to the culture of physical strength and health, and that loss of power always followed when this training of the body was neglected, and easy, luxurious living was adopted.

Now England is the world-wide power, and it is every true English boy's hope that she will remain so; but whether she does or not depends upon the interest which you boys—the coming manhood of this great Empire—take in your health, strength, and fitness.

You can make yourselves strong, able men, worthy of the wonderful British Empire, the future of which is in your hands. No boy that takes a pride in the name of "Briton" can afford to be careless about himself; he must do his best to make himself healthy, strong, and successful.

Health and Strength are so greatly dependent upon food that my first piece of advice to any boy is "Feed wisely."

See that your food is of the right kind; this is all-important.

Avoid foods and beverages that are useless to your body; prefer those which will help you to be well and strong. Cocoa is admirably suited to the needs of you growing lads, and my new "Health and Strength Cocoa" (of which you can now obtain wonderful value in a 3d. packet) is a perfected form of this wonderful brain-and-body builder, which is being drunk by hundreds of thousands of young fellows.

I know the value of Cocoa as a help to physical development; because I used it when I was a young fellow, and found it wonderfully useful to me. That is why I advise you now to drink "Health and Strength Cocoa" regularly for breakfast, tea, and supper. I know every cup will help you onward to vigorous, splendid manhood, because every drop of this delicious food-drink helps to build healthy tissue, strong bone, active brain, and steady nerves.

My "Health and Strength Cocoa" is more nutritious, more digestible, and far more delicious to the taste than any cocoa you have ever tried before.

There is no other breakfast beverage which gives you so much nutriment for your body and your brain and nerves as my "Health and Strength Cocoa."

The Cocoa will furnish your system with the rich materials for growth and muscular development, will feed the tissue of your brain, and help you lay the foundation of success by assisting you to sound health and manly strength.

7d. is the price of a full-weight quarter-pound tin of this delicious, wholesome, and nourishing cocoa, and 7d. cannot be spent to better advantage in any other direction.

All Grocers, Chemists, Provision Dealers, and Stores sell Sandow's "Health and Strength Cocoa," in 3d. packets, and in 1lb., 1lb., and 1lb. tins, at 7d., 1s. 3d., and 2s. 6d.; but if you have the least difficulty in obtaining it you can secure a supply direct and post free by sending the necessary amount to Mr. Eugen Sandow, Elephant and Castle, London, S.E.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

NEXT TUESDAY: "THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

By FRANK RICHARDS. Please order your copy early.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"Nothing. Lick me, and let me go, for goodness' sake! I'm tired."

"My hat!" ejaculated Courtney. "I never heard a junior talk like that before! What's the matter with you, young Clavering?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"There is something the matter with you," said Wingate, looking at him keenly. "You look very seedy. Are you ill?"

"No."

"Have you been smoking?"

Clavering smiled faintly.

"No."

"Then what's the matter?"

"Nothing."

"That won't do," said Wingate quietly, his eyes still keenly upon the face of the junior. "What have you been doing in Courtfield?"

Clavering did not answer.

"Whom have you seen there?"

No reply.

"Do you refuse to answer me, Clavering?" Wingate exclaimed, his voice rising.

"I've nothing to tell you," replied Clavering. "I've broken bounds, and missed calling-over. If you lick me, it's all right."

"I jolly well shall lick you, if you don't explain," said Wingate.

"I'm ready."

"Queer young beggar!" said Courtney. "I suppose he's been up to some mischief—fighting with the County School chaps, perhaps. Have you seen any of the Courtfield boys, Clavering?"

"Yes; one."

"Why didn't you say so before, then?" said Wingate angrily. "Hold out your hand."

Clavering held out his hand. Wingate was under a mistaken impression from his reply, but the junior said no more. He took the caning with calmness, and left the study. Physical pain was little compared with the pain he was feeling inwardly—the grinding, unresting misery and anxiety.

"Now buzz off, and don't miss calling-over again," said Wingate.

And he closed the study door behind the junior.

Clavering went down the passage rubbing his hands. Clavering had earned his punishment, certainly; fellows generally were caned for going out of bounds without permission; but a group of sympathetic juniors met Clavering with condolences. There was always sympathy for any fellow who had been unfortunate enough to "catch it."

"Bad?" asked Johnny Bull.

Clavering smiled.

"No; Wingate never lays it on too heavy," he replied.

"I'm all right."

"You're hungry?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Ye-es."

"Then come up to the study."

And Bob Cherry marched Clavering off up to the Remove passage, with Wharton and Nugent and Mark Linley and Johnny Bull. Clavering went without demur, and his face brightened up a little as he entered Bob's cheerful study, with a blazing fire in it, and the curtains drawn, the tea-table still set, with plenty of good things left for the latest-comer.

"Here you are," said Bob Cherry. "Sit down."

He pushed Clavering into the armchair before the fire, and Clavering had to sit down.

"Now, then, make the tea, Franky."

"Right you are," said Nugent.

"Carve the ham, Johnny."

"Right-ho!"

"Begin with ham and beef, I suppose?" said Bob Cherry, flourishing a carving-knife over the beef, in a way that made Frank Nugent and Mark Linley dodge quickly out of danger.

"Yes, thanks!" said Clavering.

A good meal was quickly set before the junior. But he did not do it justice. He was hungry, but his appetite was rather sickly than keen, as it should have been after his walk in the sharp, winter air. It was evident to the other fellows that Clavering was out of sorts, and they tried to cheer him up. But it was a hard task. Bob Cherry did his best to play the part of "agreeable rattle," but Clavering's low spirits began to infect even him at last, and his flow of language grew less plentiful.

There was a tap at the door while Clavering was having his late tea, and a fat face adorned by a pair of large spectacles looked in.

"I say, you fellows—"

Bob Cherry picked up a jug.

The fat face dodged back behind the door immediately. Bunter's voice was heard round the door.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Buzz off!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Of course, I know you were only joking, in the Close, Cherry—"

"Of course I was," said Bob.

"You really meant to ask me to tea all the time—"

"Oh, no! I was joking when I biffed you over," said Bob; "and I'm such a humorous chap that I have a way of repeating my jokes, ad lib. I'll give you the same joke over again now."

And Bob Cherry rushed to the door. A sound of pattering footsteps was heard in the passage, and Bunter was turning the corner at the end by the time Bob Cherry looked out. Bob grinned and closed the door again.

Clavering rose to his feet.

"I think I'll be getting off now," he remarked.

"But you haven't finished yet," said Mark Linley.

"Yes, thanks, I have!"

"Rats! You haven't finished the ham," said John Bull.

"I—I've had enough."

"What about the jam-tarts?" asked Nugent.

"I—I don't care for them now."

"Well, stay and have a jaw," said Bob Cherry.

"Thanks, but I—I've got my prep. to do, you know."

"Right you are," said Bob, seeing that Clavering was bent upon going. "I'm blessed if I know what's the matter with you, Clav. Is it the bad news you told me about?"

"Yes," said Clavering, with a ghastly smile.

"Can't you tell a fellow what it is?"

"You wouldn't understand."

"Well, good-night, if you must go."

Clavering left the study. Harry Wharton followed him down the Remove passage, the other fellows remaining in Bob's study.

"Hold on a minute, Clavering," said Wharton, in a low voice. "You've been to keep that appointment, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"You've seen that man?"

"I've seen him."

"And has he told you what he wanted?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"It—it's nothing I can tell you," stammered Clavering.

"Don't ask me any questions, for goodness' sake."

Wharton's face was very grave.

"I won't ask you any questions, if you don't want me to, of course," he said. "But you confided the matter to me of your own accord, you know; and if I know the whole business I might be able to help you."

"I can't tell you anything more," said Clavering.

"Do you mean that it's too bad to tell me?"

"I—I— Don't ask me."

Wharton nodded.

"Very well," he said. "Tell me nothing, only—Clavering, old man, for goodness' sake, think what you decide to do. If that man wants to drag you into anything rotten, don't let him do it—don't think of it! You've got friends who will stand by you. The Head would be kind, and—"

"Thank you, Wharton! I know you mean well," said Clavering heavily. "But—but you don't understand."

He went into his study and closed the door. Wharton remained in the passage, very much troubled and disturbed in his mind.

He realised only too clearly that Sidney Clavering was in danger—that he was in danger of falling into some abyss of wrong-doing and trouble; but he did not know what it was. He could not save him.

Clavering's salvation depended upon himself.

He stood at the parting of the ways. What choice would he make?

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Clavering's Choice.

ALONE!

Clavering had locked his study door, and he was alone. He was alone in every sense of the word. In all the wide world there was no one he could speak to with freedom; no one who could counsel him.

If his father had lived—

The hot tears started to the boy's eyes at the thought of that. If only his father had lived! But his father was dead—he was alone in the world—and the only near relation he had was worse than none—a mere tool and weakling in the hands of a desperate scoundrel. James Clavering was fond of his nephew, there was no doubt about that. He had hoped, in his weak, irresponsible way, to be able to help him, to save him from the hands of the Gander. But he was not the kind of man to realise such wishes. He had been helpless; he had been, in his folly, the cause of the unfortunate lad being placed in this position.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

"CAPTAIN D'ARCY." By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In Next Thursday's Number of "The Gem" Library, id.

"WINGS OF GOLD." By SIDNEY DREW.

In his uncle there was no help. In his friends— He had no close friends, but even so, how could boys of his own age help him? Wharton and Solly Lazarus both meant well by him. But even if he had told them all, what could they do?

Only advise him to stand firm in the path of right and honesty; and he knew that that was his duty, without being told.

The question was, not what was right and what was wrong, but whether he had the strength to do what he knew to be right.

That was the grand question.

Upon the answer he made to that question depended his whole future. The anger and indignation with which he had first heard the Gander's villainous terms had died away. He did not seem to have sufficient energy left to feel angry about anything. He could only feel wretched, miserable, undecided.

Always in the back of his mind was the thought that he could purchase ease and safety by yielding to the demands of the ruffian who held him in his power.

Why not?

There were reasons why, and reasons why not.

If he surrendered, what was the danger? If the school were robbed, no one would dream of suspecting him of complicity in the robbery. He was perfectly secure, so far as that went.

It was his own conscience that he had to fear. He remembered the doctor's text in Sunday's sermon—a simple text from the Commandments.

"Thou shalt not steal!"

It came strangely into his mind then. He had not listened to the sermon. His mind had been too preoccupied by his troubles. But the text came back into his mind now, and he seemed to hear the deep, strong voice of the doctor. Thou shalt not steal! And the accomplice of a thief was as bad as the thief himself. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? What, indeed? To be safe, and respectable, and successful and rich, and to know that he was a thief—that he was of the basest of humanity. What would it profit him?

He could not do it!

Then he thought of the reverse side.

To leave school, and face the world alone, pursued by the malignity of the man he had defied, and whose hatred he had provoked! Even if the Gander did not succeed in branding him as he had threatened, even then, what prospect had he to look forward to? Poverty, work, want, misery—the loss of everything that he had hoped for and expected in life!

Clavering paced his study in miserable thought.

Where could he turn for guidance? To whom could he turn for aid? There was One! But he could not pray. With that thought of surrender in his mind, with the growing feeling that he dared not quarrel with the Gander, he dared not kneel and pray for guidance. The thought came miserably into his mind that he was only wasting time—that when the hour came, he would do as he had been ordered.

He knew it!

As he realised that more clearly, he threw himself into a chair with a bitter laugh. If only he could drown his consciousness, and cease to think—if only he could still the wild throbbing of his brain! He began to understand why it was that his uncle was the slave to drink that he had become. To a man with a rag of decency left, a life of crime was too terrible to be borne without that aid, the stabs of conscience were too sharp to be borne, unless they could be thus deadened.

What was he to do?

He rose to his feet. The room was cold. He had no fire, but he felt suffocated; he wanted air. He threw open the window, and leaned out into the cool darkness of the Close. It was keen, cold, quiet—the sharp breath of the wind revived him, and cooled his fevered forehead.

In the silence of the night, a sound of voices came to his ears. He recognised Wharton's clear, low tones, and then, with a start, the lisping voice of Solly Lazarus. What was Lazarus doing at Greyfriars? He wondered whence the voices came, and then he realised that the next study window was open. Wharton and Lazarus were talking in Harry Wharton's study. From the open window a shaft of light streamed out into the Close. In Clavering's study was deep gloom. He had no light there; he preferred the darkness in his present mood.

Wharton and Lazarus were talking of him. He knew it, even before he heard his own name mentioned. He leaned from the window, his burning forehead pressed to the cool stone to still the throbbing, and as he did so the voices came low but clearly to his hearing.

"What do you think about it, Solly?"

It was Wharton who spoke.

"Very little, my hon," came in reply the soft tones of the Jew lad. "But the kid's in trouble, I know that. His uncle

is staying in my dad's house in Courtfield. He's lodging there, you see."

"I see,"
"I've been thinking it over," went on Lazarus. "His uncle's a rascal and a drunkard, and the other man is a thoundrel. The man they call Gandy, he's a rathcal, and he's trying to lead the poor chap into something, and the kid can't intand against him, I think. I don't know that it has anything to do with you, Wharton; but I thought I'd speak to thome friend of his about it, and I thought of you. I believe you're a friend of his."

"Yes, certainly. I only wish I could help him."
"I don't know what the trouble is, excepting that he's mixed up with a couple of awful rathcals, and theems to be in a bad way. But my idea is that you should keep an eye on him, and keep dark what I've told you, of course. I don't want the fellow to think I'm meddling. But thomething ought to be done."

"Thank you very much, Lazarus. I'm glad you've come and told me, though I don't see what I can do. But I'll keep an eye on him, and help him if I can, you may be sure of that."

"All therene, then."
Clavering drew back from the window, and quietly closed it.

He hardly knew whether to be displeased or not. He hardly cared for anything now. A quarter of an hour later, from the window, he saw the figure of Solly Lazarus emerge from the lighted portal of the School House, and Wharton walked down to the gates with the Jew lad.

Clavering throw himself into a chair again.
Wharton and Lazarus meant kindly by him, but in them there was no help! There was no help for him anywhere. He was weary and exhausted with the mental conflict. He had no strength left for resistance—for anything.

He sat in the darkness, with misery and surrender in his heart. At half-past twelve that night, he knew, he would be at the appointed place, as the Gander had ordered him. He knew it—the Gander knew it! He was weary of the struggle. He had not made the choice—the choice had been made for him, and he resigned himself to his fate.

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

dear Todd, I should advise you never to attempt to grow potatoes in the appendix."

"The chap who wrote that book is simply dangerous," said Bolsover. "Don't you ever try anything of the sort, Toddy."

"My dear Bolsover—"

"Bed-time, you young rascals," said Wingate, laughing. "You can leave the story of the potatoes over till to-morrow."

The Duffer of Greyfriars blinked at him.
"My dear Wingate, perhaps you would not mind if we stayed down till ten o'clock to-night," he said. "The fellows are very interested in this book, and I am taking the opportunity of reading it out to them. I am going to see my cousin Peter next week, and I am going to lend him the volume. Therefore—"

"Buzz off to bed."

"Under the circumstances, my dear Wingate—"

"You'll be under my fist in a minute, Toddy."

"I consider—"

"Oh, come on," said Bob Cherry, seizing the Duffer of Greyfriars by the shoulder, and jerking him towards the door. "Come off to the dorm."

"My dear Cherry—"

"Lend a hand, Franky!"

Frank Nugent grinned, and lent a hand. Alonzo Todd was rushed upstairs, and arrived in the dormitory in a somewhat breathless state, but still with Uncle Benjamin's valuable volume under his arm. He sat on his bed, and gasped.

"Back in five minutes," said Wingate grimly. "You'd better be in bed by then. Are you all here?" he added.

"Where's Clavering?"

Clavering had not come up with the rest.

"I think he's in his study!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, I'll see!"

Wingate descended to the Remove passage, and tried

"WINGS OF GOLD."

By SIDNEY DREW.

The First Chapters of a Wonderful New Serial Story in

"THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1^D. OUT THIS THURSDAY.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Todd is Too Good.

I N the first place, the potato seed is planted in the ground!"

Wingate of the Sixth grinned as he looked into the junior common-room. It was bed-time, and Wingate had looked in to remind the Remove of that fact. In the midst of a circle of juniors, Alonzo Todd was standing with a book in his hand. It was the great volume presented to him by his Uncle Benjamin, and Todd was bestowing its stores of knowledge upon the Removites—or, rather, attempting to do so. For although Bulstrode and Ogilvy and several other fellows had requested him to read it aloud, they did not allow him to proceed further than the first line. By judiciously-timed interruptions they prevented Todd from getting further than that.

"In the ground," resumed Todd.

"What ground?" asked Bulstrode.

"Any ground, my dear Bulstrode," said Todd. "Practically any ground would do. You will find the whole history of that succulent vegetable in this volume, 'The Story of a Potato.' There are also hints for growing potatoes in the appendix—"

"Never heard of potatoes being grown in an appendix before," said Bulstrode, with a solemn shake of the head.

"Is it a new dodge, Todd?"

"You mistake me, my dear Bulstrode. I do not mean that the potatoes are grown in the appendix of this book, but in—"

"Not in a chap's own appendix, surely!" exclaimed Bulstrode, in astonishment. "That would be bound to cause appendicitis."

"My dear Bulstrode—"

"Then an operation would be wanted," said Ogilvy. "My

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

NEXT
TUESDAY: "THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

Clavering's door. It was locked, and the Greyfriars captain knocked on it sharply.

"Who's there?" called out Clavering.

"I am. Open the door at once."

Clavering unlocked the door, and opened it. Wingate looked at him sharply.

"What the dickens are you doing here, with your blessed door locked?" he exclaimed. "It's past bed-time. Get up to the dormitory."

"Yes," said Clavering dully.

He went up without another word. There was a buzz in the Remove dormitory when he entered. Alonzo Todd turned towards the junior as he came in, with his kind and benignant smile.

"My dear Clavering, Bolsover says you are seedy, and that it might calm your nerves if I should read you a chapter from my Uncle Benjamin's book—a very interesting treatise on the potato."

"No, thanks," said Clavering.

"My dear Clavering—"

"Don't bother."

"No bother at all," said the obliging Alonzo. "I should be very pleased. I will read you to sleep, when you are in bed."

"You won't be long going to sleep if he does, Clav,"

grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Clavering did not reply. He began to undress in silence. The mood of the Form jarred upon all his nerves, but the juniors had no knowledge of what was passing in the unhappy boy's mind. That night he was to meet the crackman at the school wall—when the other fellows were asleep—and he had already made up his mind to do it. He was in no mood for jesting and laughing.

"Best cure for insomnia known," said Hazeldene.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.
Please order your copy early.

"My dear Hensdene—"
"Better get into bed before Wingate comes back," said Bob Cherry.

Todd took his advice. The Remove turned in, Todd with his valuable book under his pillow. The Greyfriars captain came in, and turned out the light, and departed. Then Alonzo Todd sat up in bed.

"My dear Clavering, I will now read you a chapter, and I am sure that you will find it soothing to the nerves."

"Oh, shut up," said Snoop.
Todd struck a match, and lighted a candle he had placed ready beside his bed. Then he took out his great volume, and opened it at the first page.

"In the first place—" he began.

"Dry up!"

"The potato is planted in the ground—"

"Or in the appendix?" asked Bolsover.

"In the ground, my dear Bolsover."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But some fall on stony ground, don't they?" asked Ogilvy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And besides, are you referring to new potatoes or old potatoes?" asked Russell.

"Both, my dear Russell. You see—"

"Suppose," remarked Ogilvy thoughtfully—"suppose you knew potatoes to be old potatoes—"

"My dear Ogilvy—"

"In that case, would you hold potatoes to be new potatoes?"

"I do not quite understand, my dear Ogilvy. I think

"What's the difference—" went on Ogilvy.

"The difference between old potatoes and new potatoes? That is fully enlarged upon in the thirty-ninth chapter, entitled—"

"No, no! The difference between potatoes and a botanist."

"Eh?"

"Why, one's planted in the ground, and the other's grounded in the plants."

"My dear Ogilvy—"

"Great Scott!" said Bulstrode. "Ogilvy's puns are rot-tener than Todd's book. Would you mind shutting up and letting a chap go to sleep?"

"I am going to read you to sleep, my dear Bulstrode. In the first place, the potato seed is planted in the ground—"

"I guess you'll be planted yourself soon if you don't shut up!" growled Fisher T. Fish, the American junior.

"My dear Fish—"

"Shut up!" roared the juniors.

"But I am going to say— Yaroooooh!"

Biff!

A boot hurtled through the air and caught Todd upon the chest. He settled back quite unintentionally upon his pillow, and his book crashed upon the floor.

"Ow! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Bolsover—"

"It's all right!" said Bolsover. "That's part of the Story of the Boot. In the first place, the boot is chucked at a silly ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door opened, and Wingate looked in, with a frown upon his face. He strode to Todd's bed, and picked up the lighted candle.

"What do you mean by having a light in the dormitory after lights-out?" he demanded angrily.

"My dear Wingate, I was going to read the 'Story of a Potato' to my friends—"

"Your friends can jolly well wait till to-morrow for it," grinned Wingate; "and you'll take fifty lines for lighting a candle in the dorm. And I'll take the book away with me. You can come to my study for it to-morrow."

And Wingate walked to the door with the candle and the book.

"I—I say, my dear Wingate, take care of the book, will you?" said Todd anxiously. "It was a present from my Uncle Benjamin, and I wish to lend it to my Cousin Peter next week."

"Yes, you ass."

"And, I—I say, Wingate, you may read it if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thanks awfully!" said Wingate sarcastically.

"Not at all, my dear Wingate! The volume is quite at your service. I should only recommend that, in the great interest of tracing the history of the potato from the seed to the saucepan, you do not stay up late, reading in bed, and perhaps injure your eyesight."

"Ha, ha, ha! I can promise you that, Todd! Good-night!"

"Yes, you ass."

"And, I—I say, Wingate, you may read it if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thanks awfully!" said Wingate sarcastically.

"Not at all, my dear Wingate! The volume is quite at your service. I should only recommend that, in the great interest of tracing the history of the potato from the seed to the saucepan, you do not stay up late, reading in bed, and perhaps injure your eyesight."

"Ha, ha, ha! I can promise you that, Todd! Good-night!"

"Yes, you ass."

"And, I—I say, Wingate, you may read it if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thanks awfully!" said Wingate sarcastically.

"Not at all, my dear Wingate! The volume is quite at your service. I should only recommend that, in the great interest of tracing the history of the potato from the seed to the saucepan, you do not stay up late, reading in bed, and perhaps injure your eyesight."

"Ha, ha, ha! I can promise you that, Todd! Good-night!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

"CAPTAIN D'AROX."

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In Next Thursday's Number of

"The Gem" Library, 1d.

"WINGS OF GOLD."

By SIDNEY DREW.

And Wingate shut the dormitory door, and could be heard laughing as he carried Uncle Benjamin's valuable book down the passage.

"My dear schoolfellows," said Todd, blinking round in the dusky dormitory, "I know a considerable quantity of that volume by heart, through continual study, and if you like I will recite it to you—"

"You'll get another boot if you do!" growled Bolsover.

"Shut up, and let's go to sleep!" howled Bull.

"Oh, very well! But—"

"Shut up!"

And that unanimous roar from all the Form convinced Todd at last that the Remove were not in the least interested in following the adventures of that valuable vegetable, the potato, from the seed to the saucepan. Todd's valuable information was falling upon stony ground; and the Duffer of Greyfriars gave it up and settled down to sleep.

The Remove followed his example—with one exception.

One pale face looked wakefully from bed, two heavy eyes were fixed upon the glimmering square of the window, two restless ears heard the clock strike again and again. There was no sleep that night for Sidney Clavering!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Solly Takes a Hand.

"ARE you ready?"

James Clavering raised a white and wretched face, into which the strong liquor he had been consuming had been unable to bring a vestige of colour. The Gander stood looking at him, with a sour and sarcastic grin.

"Yes, I'm ready," faltered the man.

"Get your courage up, for the dickens' sake!" growled the Gander. "You're trembling. Take another pull at the bottle."

"I've had too much already. It makes no difference; there's no fire in it now. I'm cold all through."

"You've been over-doing it all day, that's what's the matter with you!" growled the Gander. "But you have precious little to do to-night. You've only got to help me over the school wall, and wait there to take the sack as I come back."

"I know."

"Then keep a stiff upper lip!"

"Gandy, old man!" faltered Jim Clavering.

"Well?"

"Won't you let the kid off? We've been pals for a good many years now. I've done you more than one good turn, Gandy," said Mr. Clavering entreatingly. "Let the kid off!"

"How can I get into Greyfriars without him?"

"Let the school alone. There are other cribs to crack. Let him and his school alone."

"Hush! You fool!" said the Gander savagely. "You might be heard!"

"There's no one to hear. Old Lazarus is down in his room, and the Jew boy's gone to bed," said Mr. Clavering.

"It's close on twelve. Look here, Gandy, let this one job slide, and—"

"And what about the other jobs?" sneered the Gander.

"Not that I'm inclined to let a thousand pounds' worth of swag go, to please a whim of yours! But what about the other jobs? Do you think that I've paid to have this boy brought up to be useful to me to let him go at last—to please your fancies?"

"For my sake, Gandy—"

"If you've done babbling, you may as well get your coat on," said the Gander.

"You won't let him off?"

"Not much!"

James Clavering rose slowly and heavily to his feet. His white, wretched face seemed strangely old and lined. The liquor he had consumed had made his legs unsteady, but it had not brought warmth to his heart or courage to his mind.

"Perhaps there was a weak and irresolute strain in the Clavering blood—the same strain perhaps had made James Clavering the weak tool of a gang of cracksmen, and was now about to make the same of his nephew."

"If you're going to be so hard, Gandy—"

"I ain't a 'ard man," said the Gander. "I'm goin' to give 'im an easy way of makin' a livin', and cuttin' a good figure in the world at the same time. Look 'ere, 'nuff said! Are you ready to start, Jim Clavering?"

"Yes," muttered Clavering.

The Gander opened his overcoat and took from an inner pocket a leather case, which he unfastened under the gas-jet. It contained a set of cracksmen's tools; and the Gander looked over each of them with a keen and experienced eye.

Clavering watched him in silence.

The Gander grunted as he restored the case to his pocket, and buttoned up his coat and drew a muffler about his neck. "Nothin' like makin' sure that the tools are in order!" he remarked. "Now then, if you're ready we'll start!" "Very well," said James Clavering heavily.

The Gander lingered behind his companion to turn out the gas, and then followed him upon the verandah and down into the garden.

Neither of them noticed a diminutive figure in the deep gloom of the verandah.

The figure remained motionless, hardly breathing, till the two men had passed out into the street and the gate clicked shut behind them.

Then it emerged from the shadows, and a gleam of starlight fell upon a pale and excited face and revealed the features of Solly Lazarus.

"My only Uncle Tham!" muttered Solly, in suppressed tones. "My only Uncle Tham!"

He stole quietly down from the verandah and entered a back door and made his way to his father's bed-room. He knocked on the door and opened it.

A deep sound of breathing, relieved at intervals by a heavy snore, announced that Israel Lazarus was sleeping very soundly after the labours of the day.

"Father!"

Snore!

"Father!"

There was a sudden ejaculation in the darkness.

"What's that? Who's there?"

"It's me, father!"

"Tholly!"

"Get up!"

"Mein cootness!" ejaculated Lazarus senior, sitting up in bed, hunching up his knees, and peering at his son through the gloom. "Vater's the matter, Tholly?"

"Get up!"

"But vat—"

"It's those precious lodgers of yours, father!"

"Vat are you doing out of bed, Tholly?"

Solly chuckled.

"Keeping an eye on your lodgers, father, and saving you from being mixed up in a burglary case," he replied.

"Burglary!" gasped the elder Lazarus. "My cootness!"

"Jump up!"

"But vat—"

"You've got to buzz down to the police-station at once, father. Your lodgers are gone out to burgle Greyfriars School."

"Oh, my cootness!"

Solly lighted the gas. His father tumbled out of bed and began to dress himself, with his hands shaking and trembling from cold and excitement.

"Are you sure, Tholly?" he gasped. "How do you know?"

"Because I heard 'em say so; and I saw the Gander's tools, too, through the crack in the door," said Solly.

"My cootness!"

"Never mind your goodness now, dad!" said Solly, with perfect coolness. "If you don't get the police on 'em in time they'll burgle Greyfriars; and they'll very likely bring the loot here. If it's found in this house you may be suspected of having had a hand in it."

"Oh, Tholly!"

"You don't want to be charged with receiving stolen property, father, do you?"

"My cootness!"

"Buck up, then!" said Solly.

"My thon," gasped Mr. Lazarus, "if this is true, you have thaved me from getting into trouble. Tholly—"

"No time for talk, dad!" said Solly. "You mustn't lose a minute. The burglary will be over before the police get there, anyway; but they may be in time to catch the rathcals. Anyway, it will make it clear that you're not in the gang if you go to the politie-station at once and give information."

"You're right, my thon!"

Mr. Lazarus dressed himself with feverish haste. He had no doubt about the accuracy of Solly's information. He knew his son. He was content to wait till afterwards for more detailed information.

In ten minutes or less father and son had quitted the house and were hurrying through the dark and windy streets towards the police-station of Courtfield.

Meanwhile, James Clavering and the Gander were tramping down the shadowy lane towards the school, the cracksman in high spirits, and Clavering in gloomy but submissive silence, neither of them dreaming of the storm they had left brewing behind them.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

At the Eleventh Hour.

BOOM!

It was the first stroke of twelve!

Sidney Clavering sat up in bed, shivering.

It was not with the cold. It was cold in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars, but the junior did not feel it.

In half an hour he was to meet the Gander at the school wall.

He knew that he must do it!

He had made up his mind to that. But his heart was beating almost to suffocation as he sat up in bed, and listened to the deep tones of the clock striking the hour of midnight.

Twelve!

Clavering still listened.

There was no sound in the dormitory, save the regular breathing of the sleeping juniors and the steady snore of Billy Bunter.

All was silent.

Greyfriars slept.

The last light had been extinguished, the last window had ceased to gleam upon the dark shadows of the Close.

Clavering waited a few minutes after the final stroke of twelve had died away. Then, with cautious, silent movements, he stepped from his bed.

He had left his clothes ready, with a pair of rubber-soled shoes. He dressed quietly, taking his time, and put the rubber shoes on his feet.

No one in the dormitory was awake.

The junior, with his heart beating like a hammer, moved cautiously towards the door, and opened it.

A cold wind came from the passage, and struck him with a chill. He leaned his head from the doorway, and listened.

Not a sound from below!

The whole of the vast pile of Greyfriars was buried in silence and slumber.

Clavering stepped out into the passage, his rubber shoes making no sound, and drew the door softly shut behind him.

He crept down the passage towards the stairs.

A faint sound in the darkness startled him, and he paused, his heart beating almost to suffocation, suppressed excitement giving him a feeling almost of sickness.

But it was only a rat that scuttled behind the wainscot.

He passed on his way. Little time as he had lost, the quarter after twelve was chiming out as he reached the ground floor.

All was pitchy dark! The great door of Greyfriars was locked and bolted and barred. Not a gleam of light came from the curtained windows.

But the Greyfriars junior knew his way about. At any time he could have picked his way through the old house blindfolded.

He reached the window of the hall beside the door, and raised the blind. It was a spring blind, and, in his agitation, he allowed it to escape from his hand, and it shot up with a loud click.

He stood trembling. The sound was sharp. To his terrified ears it was like a peal of thunder in the deep silence of the house.

Had it been heard?

What if he were discovered now?

He groaned in spirit at the thought, and stood shaking and shivering, like a criminal awaiting his doom.

But there was no sound of alarm. The dreaded echo of an opening door did not reach his straining, buzzing ears.

He breathed deeply with relief. With more cautious hands he opened the hall window, and the cold wind from the Close blew upon his face.

More than once, in some reckless but innocent boyish jape, Clavering had climbed through the window into the dusky Close, with Wharton or Nugent, or some other comrade of the Remove. It was changed now. Now he stole through it silently, with guilt in his heart, like a thief in the night.

He dropped lightly into the quad.

The night was fine and cold, but very dark. A keen, wintry wind rustled the twigs on the leafless branches of the old trees.

Clavering stepped away from the house, and made his way to the appointed spot at the school wall.

It was too dark for him to see his watch, and he dared not strike a match. But he waited. He knew that he had not long to wait, and the chime from the clock-tower would warn him when the hour for meeting the Gander had come.

Musically through the night it came.

Half-past twelve!

The hour had come!

ANSWERS

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

NEXT TUESDAY: "THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

By FRANK RICHARDS. Please order your copy early.

Even up to this moment Clavering had not fully made up his mind. He knew what he must do, yet he had a feeling that, until he actually met the cracksman, he was at liberty to change his mind.

But now—

There was a sound of scraping on the outer side of the wall, and a grunt. Someone was climbing from the road, with the assistance of another standing below. A dark shadow loomed on the top of the school wall.

A voice came hoarsely through the darkness.

"Are you there?"

"Yes," muttered Clavering.

The Gander chuckled softly.

"I reckoned you would be," he replied. "Take this bag, and stand clear while I jump down."

Clavering caught the bag that was tossed to him. The Gander glanced back into the dusky road, and muttered a word to James Clavering.

"You wait there!" he said.

"I understand!" muttered the other.

"If there's any danger, whistle!"

"Right!"

The Gander dropped lightly down inside the school wall.

"Lead the way!" he muttered hoarsely. "Keep close to me!"

"Here I am!"

"You'll get fifty quid out of this, young 'un!" said the cracksman, in a whisper. "I ain't a 'ard man! I do the fair thing."

Clavering did not reply.

His very soul was sick within him. His uncle, standing outside the school wall, waiting for the plunder to be passed to him, was a type of what he was to become, after this first surrender to the Gander.

He knew it!

But the alternative! To raise his voice and give the alarm, and then— If he had been going to resist, he should have done so earlier. He had made everything too black against himself by yielding so far to think of resistance now.

That was very clear. If he gave the alarm now, it would be supposed that he had fully intended to be an accomplice in the burglary, and that his courage had failed him. That was all! He should have resisted in the beginning! He should have refused to dally with sin for one moment. It was too late to stand firm now!

These thoughts thronged wretchedly through his mind as he led the way towards the School House. He stopped his companion outside the open window in the hall.

"Good!" breathed the Gander.

He climbed into the window, and took the sack from the boy. Tom Clavering followed him in.

"The safe!" muttered the cracksman.

"This way!"

"My word! You're born for the life!" whispered the Gander. "We'll be proud of you yet, my lad. Lead the way!"

With sick disgust and misery at his heart, Clavering led the way. He wondered whether it was not all some evil dream, from which he would presently awaken. But the steady breathing at his elbow, the glittering, cunning eyes that met his if he turned his head, were real enough.

"This is the room!" he muttered.

"Good!"

The door was locked, and the key was gone. But that did not delay the Gander more than one minute. He picked the lock, and opened the door, and passed into the Head's study, the boy before him.

The cracksman closed the door behind him.

He turned on the light of his lantern, and a shaft of light shot to and fro in the shadowy room.

"Where's the safe?"

Clavering pointed.

"Good! Hold the lantern for me. That kind of safe won't take me long."

The burglar selected the tools from his case.

Clavering stood motionless.

What had he done?

At that final, that fearful moment, the scales seemed to fall from the eyes of the unhappy boy.

Had he been in a dream, led on to this by some strange trance, in which he had no control over his actions? It seemed so to him, in the sudden clearness of vision that came to him, as the cracksman bared his tools.

He could not do it! What a madman he had been to dream for one moment that he could do it. To become a thief, the accomplice of thieves, to help to rob the doctor! Oh, what folly he had been guilty of! Better anything—death itself—than that!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

"CAPTAIN D'ARCY."

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In Next Thursday's Number of

"The Gem" Library, 1d.

"WINGS OF GOLD."

By SIDNEY DREW.

He made a quick step towards the cracksman.

"You must go!" he muttered thickly.

The Gander looked up.

"What?"

Clavering pointed towards the door.

"Go!" he said.

"Are you mad?" muttered the Gander, his lips drawn tight across his teeth.

"I have been, I think," said Clavering wildly. "But I mean what I say now! Ruin me, if you like, you shall not rob the doctor."

"Quiet!"

"I cannot do it! I tell you I cannot do it! Go!"

"You—you fool!"

"Get out!"

"Quiet!" muttered the cracksman, livid with rage. "You'll wake the house! Quiet, I say!" He advanced towards the safe.

Clavering looked round wildly for a weapon. There was none to hand; but he caught up a chair, swinging it above his head with desperate strength.

"You shall not!" he muttered. "Stand back—stand back, you scoundrel, or I'll brain you!"

The Gander started back.

There was no doubt that the boy was in fearful earnest, and for a long minute there was silence, a terrible pause, in the shadowed room.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Gander's Last Haul.

CLAVERING did not falter.

The mist had cleared from his mind. He was firm as a rock now.

He faced the cracksman dauntlessly. The Gander looked at him with eyes that scintillated with rage under his beetling brows.

"Will you put that chair down?" he muttered, at last.

"No!"

"What do you want—a bigger share than I've promised you?"

Clavering's lip curled with scorn.

"No!"

"What then? What is it?"

"You shall not rob Greyfriars."

"You fool! You young fool!"

"Go!" said Clavering.

"I—I—" The cracksman gritted his teeth. "Do you understand what this means to you, you beggar's brat?"

"I understand," said Clavering, with quiet despair. "I am ruined here—I am ruined for life. Better that than become a thief. Get out, you cur!"

The Gander's teeth ground together with rage. But he kept his temper under control. A rich prize was to be had, and he would not lose it if he could help it.

"Go back to bed!" he muttered. "I can do the rest of the job by myself. A hundred pounds for you to-morrow."

"Not a penny!"

"Two hundred pounds."

"Go!"

"Very well. You'll repent this!"

The cracksman turned towards the door, defeated. Clavering, with a gasp of relief, lowered the chair. Like a flash the ruffian turned, and with the spring of a tiger he was upon the boy. His surrender had been only a pretence to deceive the junior, and poor Clavering had been deceived by it.

"Now then!"

Before the boy could struggle, before he could utter a cry, a savage blow had been struck, and Clavering lay senseless in the grip of the burglar.

The Gander, with a deep breath, lowered the unconscious junior to the carpet. His hand gripped the jemmy for a moment as if he were inclined to strike again. But he did not. He took a cord from his pocket, and bound the boy hand and foot, and then stuffed a handkerchief into his mouth to stifle his cries when consciousness should return.

Then, safe from alarm, he fell to work upon the safe.

It did not take him long. In five minutes Clavering's eyes opened—consciousness had returned, but he could neither move nor cry out. He lay with wide-open, despairing eyes, watching the cracksman at work.

The Gander had the safe open, and he was stowing away his plunder in it, and from the gleam of greedy satisfaction in his eyes, he was pleased by his haul.

He finished his task and fastened up the bag, and then looked at Clavering, and his eyes met those of the junior.

He grinned cruelly, but did not speak. He shut off the light of the lantern and quietly left the study, drawing the door shut behind him.

Clavering struggled madly with his bonds. Black despair was in his heart. His repentance had come too late. He had not been able to save the doctor's property. He had repented, but his repentance had been delayed too long, and it was in vain. The robbery had taken place all the same.

The boy's anguish of mind was terrible as he lay there writhing in his bonds, striving to get his lips free to cry out. But it was in vain. The cracksmen had done his work too well. Clavering lay silent, save for a faint gasping sound—the bonds cruelly tight upon his limbs, and a thin stream of blood oozing over his temple where the ruffian had struck him.

The Gander, triumphant, laden with his booty, reached the window. It had been left open, and the Gander peered out cautiously into the quad.

For a moment he thought he heard a sound, and then he set it down to the wind whistling in the trees and round the old roofs. The alarm had not been given, and there could be no enemy in the grounds.

He dropped the bag quietly outside the window, and climbed out.

With a light catlike tread, he dropped quietly beside the bag. Then there was a sharp exclamation in the darkness, a rush of feet, and two pairs of hands grasped him.

"Seize him!"

"Got him!"

A terrible oath escaped the lips of the cracksmen. He struggled violently, furiously, desperately. But two powerful constables were bearing him down, and he had no chance.

He was borne to the ground, and the handcuffs clicked on his wrists. Then he ceased to struggle, and lay gasping, panting, palpitating. The light of a bullseye-lantern was turned upon his face.

"Got him!" said Inspector Taylor, of Courtfield. "There were only two, and we had the other in the road, so it's all serene now!"

And the inspector proceeded to knock up the school.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

The Right Path I

GREYFRIARS was in an uproar. The discovery of the burgled safe, and Clavering lying bound and gagged beside it with blood upon his face, rang through the school. All the Forms were awake—from the Head to the youngest fag. Greyfriars thrilled with excitement.

Part of the story was clear at once—that Solly Lazarus, in Courtfield, had gained information as to the cracksmen's intentions, and laid it before the police; that the police had hurried at once to the school, had captured the man who was waiting outside the wall, and had then entered the grounds just in time to capture the chief cracksmen as he emerged from the window with his plunder. But what had Clavering had to do with it? Had he heard the burglars enter, and descended alone to encounter them, or—or what? It was a puzzle, and there was no explanation from Clavering, for the boy had fainted when he was released, and he had been taken to bed at once, and now he lay there unconscious.

Of all the fellows at Greyfriars, Harry Wharton was the only one who had any suspicion of Clavering's connection with the cracksmen.

From what Clavering had told him, Harry could not help suspecting it. Yet he was puzzled. For if that was what the Gander had demanded of Clavering, how was it that Clavering had gone so far, and no farther? It looked as if he had admitted the cracksmen to the house, and then turned against him.

Had he repented at the last moment? That was what it looked like, and Wharton was glad to know that, however near he had gone to a terrible fall, Clavering had had the strength of mind to resist at the eleventh hour.

There was little more sleep for Greyfriars that night. And in the morning, the one topic was the attempted burglary, and the capture of the cracksmen, who, it was now discovered, were members of a well-known gang, much to the satisfaction of the Courtfield police. It was not often that the local police had an opportunity of distinguishing themselves in this way.

Wharton was puzzled by the strange circumstances, and the other fellows were more puzzled still, and they were anxious to see Clavering and get some explanation. But their wish was not granted. When Sidney Clavering left his bed and came down, it was to be taken directly to the Head's study.

Clavering was very pale, but very firm. He knew that all must come out now; if he did not tell it, the Gander would. But he had resolved in any case to make a clean breast of it to Dr. Locke. He knew that he must leave Greyfriars now, and he meant to tell everything before he went.

Dr. Locke looked kindly at the lad as he came in.

"I wish to hear your story of what happened last night, Clavering," he said gently. "I think I must ask you for a full explanation, and I urge you to be quite frank with me. The captured burglar has made some allegations that require clearing up."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

NEXT TUESDAY: "THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

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

"Yes, sir," said Clavering firmly.

And the Head listened with keen attention as the junior told his tale—of the news he had received that meant ruin to him, of the choice that had been offered him, of how he had struggled in miserable indecision—and almost fallen to crime, and how repentance had come at the last moment.

He told it all in a low but firm and shaken voice, and then stood with bowed head to hear his sentence.

The Head had not interrupted him once. When he spoke now it was in a soft and kindly voice.

"My poor, poor lad! If you had come to me at first, all this misery might have been saved. You should have trusted me as a friend, as well as a schoolmaster, Clavering."

"I wish I had, sir," faltered Clavering. "I was afraid."

"Thank heaven," said the Head, "that you repented in time, Clavering, and that you did not become a thief! That atones for all! I fear, my lad, that it would be too unpleasant for you to remain at Greyfriars, but it is only for your own sake that I shall send you away. But you shall not go to the fate that wretch threatened you with. You shall go to another school, where you will have every chance of getting on in life, and that wicked man will be in prison for many years to come, and unable to harm you. You have proved that you have honest stuff in your nature, Clavering, in spite of your waverings, and while I live you shall never want a friend."

Clavering did not reply; he could not. The tears were running down his cheeks, and nothing but a sob would come from his throat. But that night, ere he went to bed, on his knees he thanked God that he had, though at the eleventh hour, chosen the right path when he stood at the parting of the ways.

THE END.

(Next week's grand, long complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars will be entitled "THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!" To avoid disappointment, order your copy of "THE MAGNET" Library now. Price 1d.

If you want any of these—

Penknife, Fountain-Pen, Mouth Organ, Box of Chocolates, Brooch, Pencil Box, Magnetic Compass, Scout Billican, Scout Knife and Fork, Scout Semaphore Flags, Scout Haversack, Jar of Sweets, Cigarette-Card Album, Picture-Postcard Album, Cuff-Links, Telescope, Nail Scissors, Electric Torch, Stamp Album, Hatpins, Photographic Dark-room Lamp, Photograph Album, Dog Collar, Dog Whip, Clothes Brush, Hairbrush, Story-Book, Box of Paints, Kite, Steam Vertical Engine, Doll's Tea-Set, Harmless Pistol, Amusing Game (taken from a large assortment of novel table games), Box of Draughts, Set of Chessmen, Bicycle Bell, Bicycle Repair Outfit, Bicycle Oilcan, Bicycle Lamp, Fishing-Rod (three joints), Spirit Level, 2ft. Four-fold Boxwood Rule, Hatchet, Fretwork Saw, Cricket-Ball, Serviette-Ring (with initial engraved).

—get "THE GEM" Library. Price 1d. Now on Sale.

By FRANK RICHARDS. Please order your copy early.

"BEYOND THE ETERNAL ICE!"

A Thrilling Story of the Amazing Adventures of Ferrers Lord, Millionaire, Ching-Lung, and Rupert Thurston.

By **SIDNEY DREW.**



A cry broke from the prince's lips, as he saw the crevasse yawning before him. He had not time to check himself—for he was travelling like a hare—and his pursuers saw the lithe figure leap into the air; and Ching-Lung was across! (See page 27.)

THE OPENING CHAPTERS

When Professor Hugley, the renowned American scientist, startles the world by announcing that he is off to find the North Pole in his wonderful air-craft, the Cloud King, there is only one man who dares to enter the lists against him on behalf of Great Britain, and that man is Ferrers Lord, the famous millionaire and inventor. Lord pits his wonderful submarine, the Lord of the Deep, against the Cloud King in the most amazing race the world has ever seen; the goal is the North Pole, and the prize a million pounds!

The preliminaries are soon settled, a judge is appointed to accompany each of the competitors, and the great race commences.

With Ferrers Lord are Ching-Lung, Rupert Thurston, and Gan Waga, an Eskimo, while Hugley is accompanied by Paraira, a Cuban, and Esteban Gacchio, a huge negro. These latter soon show themselves in their true colours, and the Cloud King no sooner reaches the region of ice than Hugley, and such of the crew as are loyal to him, are murdered, and Paraira and Gacchio assume control of the airship.

Ferrers Lord wins the race by 14hrs. 28mins., and finds at the Pole a beautiful city called Shazana, inhabited by a strange race of people, and governed by a king named Vathmoor.

When the airship arrives, the papers certifying that the race has been truly and fairly won are signed. Esteban Gacchio, who is a bitter enemy of the Chinese prince, captures Ching-Lung and takes him on board the Cloud King. When Ferrers Lord hears of his friend's disappearance, he sets out, alone, to rescue him. He reaches a cave in the ice peaks, which surround Shazana, and is there besieged by bears.

(Now go on with the story.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

"CAPTAIN D'ARCY"
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

In Next Thursday's Number of
"The Gem" Library, Id.

"WINGS OF GOLD."
By SIDNEY DREW.

Gan's Quest.

The most miserable person in the whole world was Gan Waga, the Eskimo, when he heard the news of Ching-Lung's disappearance. His round face lengthened dolefully, and turned from a healthy yellow to a sickly green. He was Ching-Lung's slave and adorer. Without his idol, life was not worth living. Broken-hearted, miserable, and depressed, Gan Waga took refuge in the half-emptied swimming-bath. He paddled about moaning sorrowfully. Then he emerged, shook himself, and went on deck. Maddock, with the launch towing behind, was pulling the boat towards the Lord of the Deep. Every eye was fixed on the solitary figure of Ferrers Lord.

Gan Waga slipped overboard without a splash.

Gan Waga was going to find Ching-Lung. He had not a scrap of food, and his only weapon was his knife.

At length he scrambled up on the shingle. The Lord of the Deep was not in sight, but, searching the sea, his sharp eyes made out the wake caused by her conning-tower, as the vessel churned towards Shazana. She was full of anxious hearts that day.

Then, and not till then, did Gan Waga feel his utter helplessness. Tears started into his little eyes. Where should he go? What could he do? He flung himself down on the shingle.

"Oh, Ching," he wailed, "where yo' goned? Bad 'nough—bad 'nough! P'r'aps dead! Oh, oh, oh!"

Then he sat up, a pathetic picture of woe, and searched his pockets. He found a much-bitten end of a tallow-candle, and began to munch it. It tasted exactly like soft-soap, and the blubberbiter spat it out.

It was Gan Waga's first experience of grief, and he could not understand what made him feel so empty and aching inside. He thought it must be hunger. He began to look about him tearfully, and soon discovered that there were plenty of limpets attached to the larger stones.

Gan Waga was passionately fond of this species of shellfish, but the few he opened with his knife had the same soft-soapy flavour as the candle.

"Oh, wot bad 'nough wrong?" he moaned. "Where ole Ching gonod?"

He sprang round, his eyes rolling with terror. He heard a wild cry that was hardly human. And yet no wild beast this son of the land of snow had heard could utter such a cry. It was Paraira's delicious scream, and it rang out again, seeming to come from mid-air.

The superstitious dread of the semi-savage leapt into Gan Waga's heart. To him it was the yell of some ice-demon. He raced away over the shingle as hard as he could run.

After a mile of rock, capped with ice, and jutting out to sea, barred his way. He had recovered from his first shock of fear. In vain he strained his eyes in search of the conning-tower of the Lord of the Deep. Then he remembered he had come to find Ching-Lung. The thought strengthened him. Full of dogged purpose, he faced the jagged peak to find an opening.

He was back close to the spot where he heard the terrifying cry before he found one. Like Ferrers Lord, he looked out of the tumbled chaos of ice, and watched the strange darkness beyond. Like Ferrers Lord, he saw the entrance of the cave.

But Gan Waga did not enter it. Instead, he began cautiously to descend, dropping like a cat from ledge to ledge. Ice and snow came as natural to the Eskimo as water to a duck. His clothes began to freeze hard, but that was only a slight inconvenience to Gan Waga. He reached the ice-field below.

Not that way! Hunger and death alone brooded over that wild solitude, that horrid waste—at least, for man. It was the haunt of bears and Arctic wolves, but not their feeding-ground. They lived on the harvest of the sea, on seals and fish, and even weed. More than once, when food had failed, they had invaded Shazana.

The upward climb was not inviting. It was beginning to snow a little, and clouds were rolling towards the peaks, threatening a storm. The breeze grew bitterly cold.

"Bad 'nough!" muttered Gan Waga drearily. "No find Ching. Bad 'nough. Awful! Go in here!"

He had found another cave in the ice. It would at least shelter him from the cutting wind. The moment he entered he felt, as Maddock would have put it, a couple of pea-jackets warmer. There was some dry lichen on the floor, and Gan Waga always carried a flint.

He chose a few of the driest pieces of moss, and struck sparks from the flint with his knife. Only a savage could have ignited the lichen without proper tinder, and more than once Gan Waga almost abandoned the attempt. He persevered doggedly. At last the little mass of moss sent up a thin curl of smoke.

Gan Waga took it in his hands and blew it softly. It burst into flame, and the rest was easy. He soon had a fire, smoky but warm, built on a thick heap of damp moss to keep it off the ice.

He squatted down to warm his chilled limbs. Then he bounded up, and, running to the entrance, listened with strained ears. Crack, crack! came the sound of rifles. And then silence.

Gan Waga went back to his fire wonderingly. The air was full of snowflakes.

At that very moment Ching-Lung was running to shelter.

The Reunion.

The excitement brought Ching-Lung new strength. Except for the death of Cashel, his escape had been more than a triumph. He felt that he had struck a blow of stunning weight against the Cloud King and her crew of desperadoes.

The shot he had fired, though, perhaps, bloodless, must have at least carried away the wheel and the steering gear. The Cloud King was crippled. The alert little Lord of the Deep had her at her mercy. A hot shell fire from the sea would quickly bring about an unconditional surrender.

Ching-Lung's aim was now to reach the sea by some round-about path. It was a ten-mile swim to Shazana, but the prince, as we know, was like a seal in water. The problem was to gain the shore without bringing himself within range of Paraira's rifles.

He remembered the second ravine leading to the icy basin, where the bears had been shot. That was miles further along the shore. He might reach it without risking

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 204.

NEXT TUESDAY: "THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE!"

EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

himself by breaking through the peaks and skirting their bases.

His only chance seemed to be to wait for darkness. Though it was early morning, a great storm was shrouding the peaks, and whirling snow filled the air. And yet behind him the sky was bright and clear. No storm seemed ever to come near the white city of Shazana and the fairy isle on which it stood.

Would there be a pursuit? Jose and his comrades knew more about the peaks than he did. Would they follow? Unless they were mad there must be a pursuit.

They dared not allow him to escape with the secret that would be their ruin, for their utter ruin would only be a matter of hours, once Ferrers Lord learned of their helpless plight. He could only learn that through Ching-Lung, and Ching-Lung alone could point out their cunning hiding-place.

The darkness deepened; the snow lay half an inch deep already. Its treacherous surface would betray him. He turned back, and uttered a whistle of delight as he saw the mouth of the cave.

Standing under the shelter of the ice archway, Ching-Lung craned his neck to listen. He was thinly clad to endure such cold as this, and his teeth began to chatter. He wrapped his pigtail round his neck like a muffler.

"There's a curse on that vessel," he thought, "if there is such a thing as a curse at all. Death lives in it. Two men dead and one wounded in a few hours. That poor youngster! I'm sorry for him. There was a lot of good in the fellow, and I think we could have made a man of him. But I got home that time."

Ching-Lung laughed, and well he might. He was thoroughly confident of making good his escape now. All his sufferings had been amply recompensed. His return to the Lord of the Deep would be a triumph.

Hark! The snow fell too fast for him to see far down the ravine, but he had heard a voice. He shrank back.

"Hang the day! I'll go no further."

"Nor I, amigo."

Then came a volley of blasphemous Spanish oaths, and the lazy voice of Jose. "Carajo!" he said. "You are a pack of drunken fools! Rouse yourselves for your lives! Do you all wish to hang over yonder, like crows and hawks on a barn door? If we don't catch that yellow pig, all our necks will be stretched as sure as fate. He can't escape. On with you, Miguel! Juan, on with you! You know my temper, senior, and I come last. I'll blow the brains out of any man who lingers."

Four dark figures loomed through the snow and gloom. For the first time Ching-Lung examined the revolver he had taken from Cashel. It was loaded in two chambers.

He backed into the dark cave, slipped, and came headlong down. There was a shout. Miguel had seen him.

"Shoot, shoot!" he yelled. "Here is the yellow imp! Shoot, shoot!"

Miguel's rifle exploded. He was half intoxicated, but the bullet came unpleasantly close. Ching-Lung was too wise to waste one of his precious cartridges. He was up at one bound, and flying down the cave.

Bang! He felt the wind of the bullet. His flight was one of the most amazing things Ching-Lung had ever done in all his amazing history.

Never for an instant did he keep a straight line. He dodged to the right and left, turning somersaults and hand-springs, rolling forward curled into a ball, rolling sideways, jumping, diving, yet never slackening speed.

They emptied their rifles, but they might as well have tried to shoot a will-of-the-wisp. He never once gave them a chance of sighting him or taking aim. Shouts, curses, deafening reports rang behind him, as the pursuers slipped over the treacherous ice.

Ching-Lung had no shoes. He looked back. Jose alone could hold the pace; the others, sodden with drink, were dropping behind.

A cry broke from the prince's lips. The crevasse yawned before him. He had no time to check himself, for he was travelling like a hare.

Jose saw the little figure leap into the air like an arrow from a bow. Ching-Lung was across; he was gone. The astounded Spaniard halted at the edge of the crevasse, and shivered. Ching-Lung's leap appalled him. The chasm from edge to edge was nearer twenty-four feet than twenty-three across.

The others came panting up, uttering shouts of triumph.

They expected to see Ching-Lung's mangled body lying at the bottom of the crevasse.

"He has jumped it!" said Jose hoarsely.

The pursuit was over. Not one of them was man enough to try the perilous descent Ferrers Lord had made, and face the equally treacherous ascent the other side. Cursing, they turned back.

"He will die like a rat in a hole!" snarled Jose. "Two of us must go and bring a tent and blankets, while the others guard the entrance. Hang him! Has he wings? At least we have him netted!"

They tramped away.

Ching-Lung had not gone far. Though Gacchio had robbed him of his cigarette-case, he had a couple of cigars and a box of matches in his pocket. He could hear their hoarse voices as he smoked. He was proud of his leap, but he did not mean to face it again if he could find another means of crossing the ravine.

The storm was abating, and the light came stronger through the icy roof. Creeping forward, he saw his foes retreating. He waited for a time, for he had plenty of time to waste. He was sure they would watch the entrance of the cave, and there was no chance of running the gauntlet until nightfall.

"I'll do a bit of exploring," he thought; "but I must first doctor my feet."

He heard a dull roaring.

"Bears!" he muttered. "Well, even bears are better company than—"

He stood like a statue, listening. Was he dreaming? Had any other revolver the same crisp, metallic ring?

He broke into a run, his slanting eyes big with amaze. And then he stopped, with a grin. Twenty feet above him was a bear, its back towards him. Higher up still was a second bear, one great paw placed on a dead seal. And midway between them, seated on a ledge of rock, was Ferrers Lord, calmly eating sandwiches.

"Hello, old chap!" said Ching-Lung. "Come down and shake hands."

"What, Ching!" cried the millionaire.

Then came a yell, and the fat figure of Gan Waga bounded down the path.

"Ching! Ching! Ching!"

Reunited.

In his delight Ferrers Lord had dropped his kask, which struck the joyous Eskimo on the head, and sent a stream of Scotch whisky down Ching-Lung's neck.

Both bears scuttled away, in opposite directions, quite disgusted. The bear above happened to give the seal a push with its hind legs as it retreated, and the seal, slipping over the ledge, thudded down on Gan Waga's shoulders. The weight brought the blubberbiter to his knees. The next moment Ching-Lung was clasping hands with Ferrers Lord.

"By Jove," said the millionaire, "this is a strange affair! I set out to find you, and you have found me. And that disgraceful Eskimo! How on earth did he come here? Gan, you rascal, what are you doing here?"

"Skinnin' seal," said Gan Waga promptly. "Butterful fat seal, too! Eat him soon."

"How did you get here?"

Gan Waga looked up, his fat, oily face shining like the sun.

"Come find ole Ohingy. Find him easy. Good 'nough, hunk. Butterful, butterful!"

Gan explained how he had found another entrance to the cave, and told them he had a fire there.

"Then trot out your fire," said Ching-Lung. "A fire is just the thing I want to be introduced to. I shouldn't mind getting my teeth into seal steak, as beef steaks don't grow in these parts. Oh, this is joy too, too much!"

The fire of moss was still smouldering. Gan Waga set to work collecting more of the dry lichen, and after replenishing the fire he formed three comfortable shakedown beside the blaze.

"What's in the larder?" asked Ching-Lung. "I'm as peckish as a fighting cock."

Ferrers Lord had a few sandwiches, biscuits, and pepper and salt left. Three slices of seal were soon impaled on a ramrod and spluttering merrily. They were somewhat coarse, dry, and tasteless; but both Gan Waga and Ching-Lung declared them magnificent, and they were certainly satisfying.

They lounged beside the fire, smoking.

Suddenly Ching-Lung and the millionaire rose quickly.

Crack! came the report of a rifle-shot, and a fierce growl followed.

A voice shouted:

"Fire, Jose—fire! I've hit him hard!"

Another grand, long instalment of this thrilling adventure serial will be contained in next week's number of "THE MAGNET" Library. Order well in advance—Price 1s. Do not miss reading the opening chapters of Sidney Drew's great new serial story in this Thursday's issue of "The Boys' Friend" Library.)

My Readers' Column



NEXT TUESDAY'S COMPLETE STORY.

The title of Frank Richards' splendid complete tale of Greyfriars for next week is:

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE."

and it is one of those titles which are self-explanatory. Those who have followed the adventures of Alonzo Todd, the Remove duffer, will not need to be told that

"THE DUFFER'S DOUBLE"

will be a grand story, full of fun and schoolboy "japes."

OUR MINIATURE "MAGNET" COMPETITION.

Our new and original competition is booming, and readers from all over the country are writing to tell me how pleased they are with a competition of such a novel and unique interest, so far removed from the stereotyped lines of ordinary competitions. The enthusiasm which the tiny pages are arousing is wonderful, and it is evident that very many of my readers are determined to save two sets of the midget pages, so that they may each send one bound number of the Miniature MAGNET in to me, in competition for the Fifty Money Prizes, and still retain another copy as a unique souvenir.

SPECIAL NOTE.

Owing to the complaint of one or two of the readers that the width of the white margin left between each pair of miniature pages for folding is inadequate, I have this week made the margin wider. If any difficulty is experienced in binding the pages evenly and neatly together, competitors can always separate the pages by cutting down the white margin with a pair of sharp scissors, and join the pages together again by means of a piece of white paper of the required width being pasted over the backs.

CORRESPONDENTS FOR MISS AND MASTER LEE.

Will those readers who have written to express their willingness to correspond with Miss and Master Lee, whose letters were published in this column a week or two back, kindly write to them direct?

A TYPICAL POSTCARD MESSAGE.

The following postcard message from a Walthamstow reader is typical of hundreds I have received this week.

"48, Buxton Road, Walthamstow.

"Dear Editor,—Thanks for giving your readers such a good competition—I think it is jolly fine. I will be pleased to see our Indian chum back, and also Harry Wharton captain again.—Yours,

"ARTHUR BLACKBURN."

If my chum will follow closely the future course of events at Greyfriars, I think I can promise him that his wishes will not be disappointed.

TO ALL MY READERS.

During the festive season just past I have been inundated with beautiful Christmas cards and with letters conveying my readers' good wishes. This spontaneous expression of my chums' regard and good will has touched me deeply, and I am almost at a loss how to thank my many friends. To acknowledge them all separately is impossible, so that I can only take the opportunity afforded by this short paragraph to thank personally all my good reader-friends for their kind thoughts, and to wish them one and all the very happiest and most prosperous of New Years.

THE EDITOR.

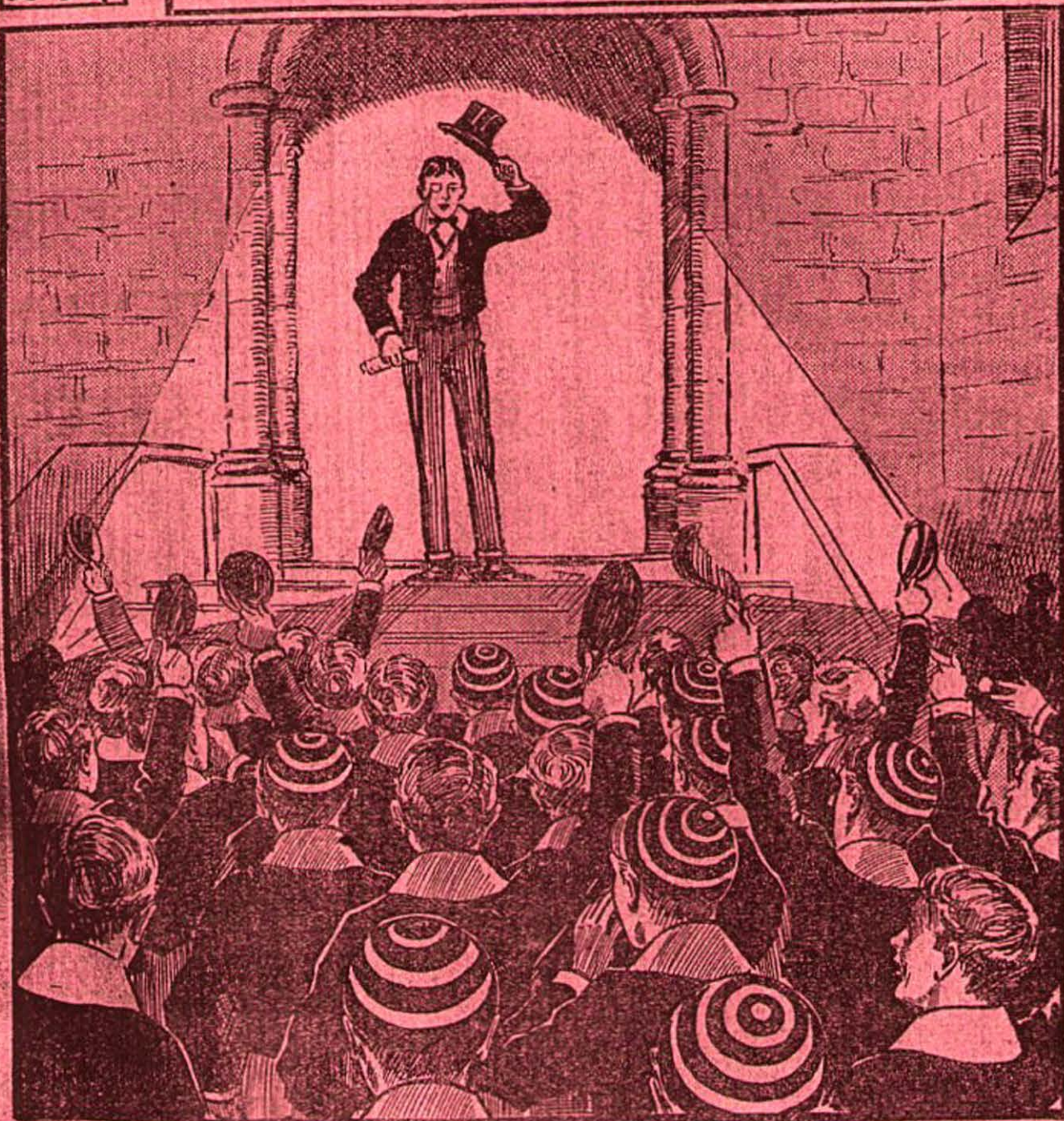
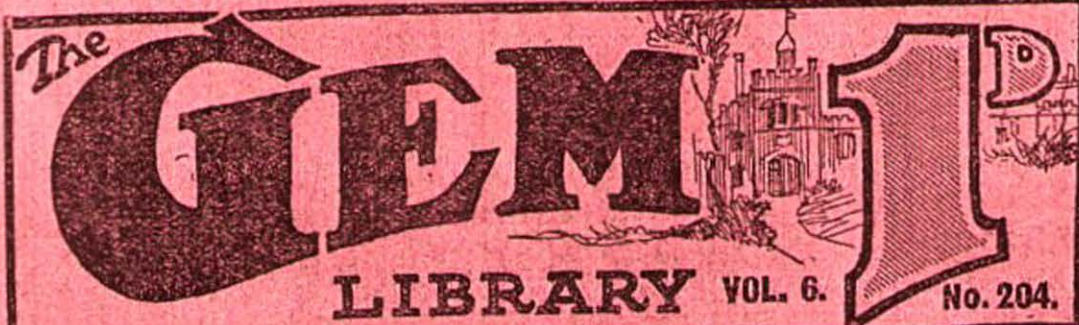
This Thursday's Number of "The Gem" Library, the cover of which is reproduced below, contains:

"CAPTAIN D'ARCY!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Also, "WINGS OF GOLD." The first instalment of a wonderful new story. By SIDNEY DREW.

Gem
No 204
"PRESENT
COUPON"



ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY—CAPTAIN OF ST. JIM'S.

NEW BOOKS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Three New Additions to the "BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. Library

OUT THIS WEEK!

No. 178: "Pete's Emigrants."

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete Tale dealing with the thrilling adventures of the famous comrades—Jack, Sam, and Pete. By S. CLARKE HOOK.

No. 179: "Under the Southern Cross."

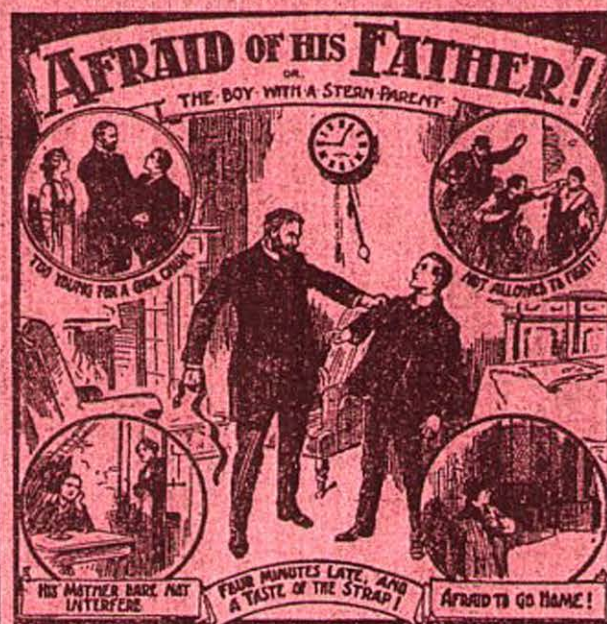
A Grand, Complete Adventure Tale, introducing "The Three R's." By REGINALD WRAY.

No. 180: "Paddy Leary's Schooldays."

A Splendid, Complete Tale of School Life. By T. C. BRIDGES.

ASK
ALWAYS FOR

THE "BOYS' FRIEND" 3^d. COMPLETE LIBRARY.



The First long absorbing instalment of this dramatic and powerful story appears in the

BOYS' FRIEND

Now on sale.

1d. Everywhere.

PENSLIPS.



£5

offered in a fascinating and simple competition just starting in the

PENNY PICTORIAL.

There is NO ENTRANCE FEE.