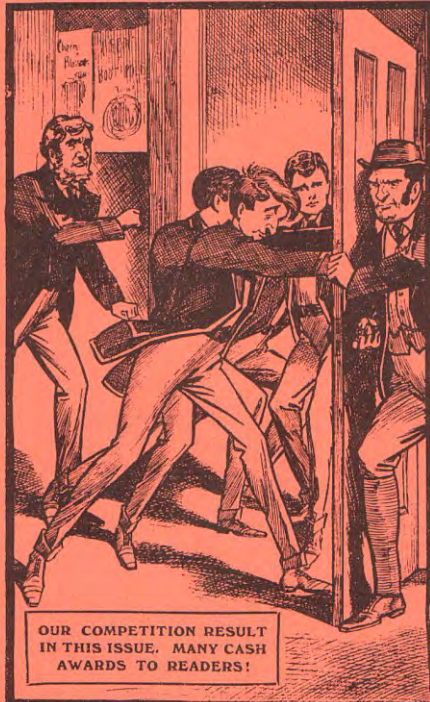


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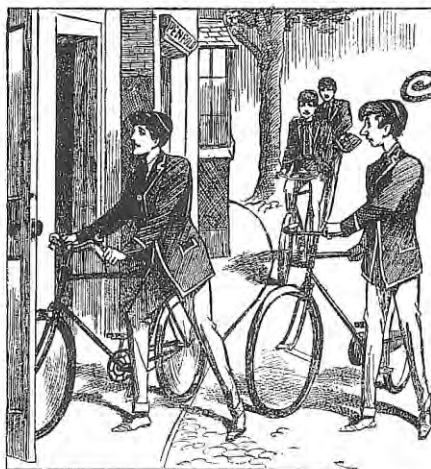
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By FRANK RICHARDS.



THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Visitor for Penfold.

THERE was a buzz in the Remove Form-room at Greyfriars.

The juniors were curious.

The Remove—the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars—had gone into the classroom as usual for morning lessons, and lessons were pursuing their usual hundredth course till the interruption came.

Mr. Quelch, the Form-master, had had his usual struggle with Billy Bunter's stupidity. He had given Bunter up in despair, and assigned to Penfold, the scholarship boy, the task of explaining a perfectly simple point in Latin syntax to the obtuse Bunter. Mr. Quelch had emerged from his usual tussle with Bunter with a sharpened temper, and the Removes were very much on the alert not to catch their Form-master's eye. Then came the knock at the Form-room door.

Mr. Quelch did not like being interrupted during lessons. And he was already a little "edgewise." Consequently his tone was considerably snappish as he rapped out:

"Come in!"

Trotter the page put his head in at the door. Trotter

was grinning; but the grin died off his face like magic as he caught the glint of Mr. Quelch's eyes fixed upon him.

"Well!" rapped out the Form-master, the monosyllabic popping out very much like a pistol-shot.

"If you please, sir, would you step out 'ere a minute to see a gentleman want has called, sir?" and Trotter.

There was a peculiar inflection in the page's voice as he spoke the word "gentleman." Evidently Trotter was putting it like that merely as a form of expression, and didn't regard the unknown caller as a gentleman at all. Which was nothing against the caller, as a matter of fact, for Trotter's opinion in such matters was not at all reliable. In Trotter's opinion, a gentleman's chief attributes were a silk hat and a gold watch-chain, and he had no eye for more subtle distinctions.

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips, showing that he was very much annoyed; but he nodded, and stepped out of the Form-room into the broad flagged passage.

It was there that the gentleman—whom Trotter evidently considered was no gentleman—was waiting to see him.

Then there was a buzz in the Remove-room.

Any interruption to lessons was, of course, welcome. There were probably members of the Greyfriars Lower Fourth who would have welcomed an earthquake or a flood as a refuge from Latin syntax. And the juniors were curious about

this ungentlemanly gentleman who had called to see Mr. Quelch during class.

Most of the Removites began to talk at once. Penfold ceased his instruction to Billy Bunter. Bunter had been very restive under it. Pen was doing his best to enlighten the Owl of the Remove, but Billy Bunter was the most troublesome kind of a dunce—the kind of dunce who is perfectly satisfied with himself and doesn't want to be enlightened.

And Bunter was annoyed, too, at Penfold being given the task of enlightening him. Penfold was a scholarship "kid," and was, in fact, the son of the village cobbler, and had made his way to Greyfriars and in Greyfriars by sheer grit and brains. Grit and brains were not in Bunter's line at all. As Bunter sometimes said, he wasn't a snob, but a fellow was bound to draw the line somewhere, and he drew it at cobbler. And so, excepting upon the rare occasions when Penfold had money to lend, Bunter declined to have anything to do with him.

"You can shut up that rot now, Penfold," said Bunter. "Quechly will have forgotten me by the time he comes in. I don't see why I should be picked on like this. And I don't understand the ablativ absolute, and don't want to." "Very well," said Pen quietly. "I was only doing as Mr. Quelch told me."

Bunter granted.

"Like your cheek!" he said. "Greyfriars is coming to something when a blessed scholarship cobbler sets up to teach gentlemen's sons."

"But Pen hasn't done that," said Bob Cherry. "He hasn't taught anybody but you, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Bogad, you are an awful cad, Bunter, you know," remarked Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove. "I should regard you as a rotten snob, you know, only I'm blessed if I can see that you've got anything to be snobbish about, bogad!"

"Who the dickens can that chap out there be?" said Nugent, as a faint murmur of voices came from the passage through the open doorway of the Form-room. "Did you notice Trotter's chivvy when he said it was a gentleman?"

"Somebody who doesn't come up to the Trotter standard of gentility, I suppose," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Some tramp, perhaps, begging," remarked Johnny Bull. "No fear! Quechly wouldn't stay there talking to a tramp. He'd snap his head off."

"I'm jolly well going to see," said Billy Bunter, who never could mind his own business, under any circumstances whatever. And he rose.

"Sit down, you ass!" said Bob Cherry. "If Quechly sees your fat head round the door he'll spot you at once, and lick you—and serve you right!"

"I suppose there's no harm in going over to the ink-bottle to refill my inkpot, is there?" said Bunter. "I want some more ink."

And Bunter took the inkpot out of the receptacle in his desk, and, with that as an excuse for leaving his place, opened the Form-room to the corner cupboard where the ink-bottle was kept. There he had a good view of the passage, and could see Mr. Quelch and the man he was talking to. Bunter blinked out of the Form-room, and gave a start, and he came back without refilling his inkpot in his excitement.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Well, seen him?" asked Bulstrode.

"Yes! I say, you fellows—"

"Well, who is it?"

"It's old Penfold!"

Penfold started. It was evidently his father whom Billy Bunter was alluding to in that disrespectful manner. Pen's face flushed with anger.

"Mr. Penfold?" asked Harry Wharton, with some

emphasis on the "Mr.," as a hint to the Owl of the Remove to be a little more respectful to his elders.

"Old Penfold?" said Bunter.

"Do you mean my father?" asked Pen, very quietly.

Bunter nodded.

"Yes. Old Penfold, the cobbler— Yarcrooh!"

Smack!

Penfold's open hand caught Billy Bunter across his fat cheek, and the Owl of the Remove sat down in his seat so suddenly that the shock jarred him all over.

"Good for you, Pen," said Bob Cherry. "Now give him another!"

"Yass, bogad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Ow! You rotter!" yelled Bunter. "You—you clobbering beast! You cad!"

"You can call me what you like," said Pen contemptuously. "But when you speak of my father, you'll speak respectfully, you fat cad!"

"I'll say what I like!" roared Bunter. "You beastly cobbler! You—"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bob Cherry. "You make me ill, Bunter."

"Look here, Bob Cherry—"

"Cave! Here comes Quelchly!" said Bulstrode.

Mr. Quelch's gown rustled in the doorway. The juniors became silent as the Form-master came in. Mr. Quelch's face was very grave.

"Penfold!" he said quietly.

"Yes, sir!" answered Pen.

"Your father has called to see you. You may have class."

"Thank you, sir!"

Penfold, with a troubled face, left his place, and went out of the Form-room, closing the door behind him. The juniors exchanged glances. What had Penfold's father called to see him for—during lessons, too?

Mr. Penfold, the cobbler of Friardale, was well known to the juniors, who had often seen him at work in his little shop in the ancient High Street. He was a somewhat rough-and-ready, cheery and good-natured old gentleman—not what Trotter or Billy Bunter would have considered a gentleman at all, certainly. But Lord Mauleverer, who was perhaps a better judge, had a great liking for him. The snobs of the Remove had had quite a shock on one occasion when Lord Mauleverer went home to tea with Penfold. All the Remove knew that business was in a bad way with "Old Penfold," and it was no secret that he had been narrowly saved from a visit from the bailiffs, Pen having found the money at the last moment to pay the landlord's agent, Mr. Snooks—having been helped to do so by the great ingenuity of Peter Todd of the Remove.

And Pen's friends—and he had more friends than *fora* in the Lower Fourth—looked worried as the Form-door closed behind him.

"It means trouble for poor old Pen!" muttered Bob Cherry.

Wharton nodded.

"I'm afraid it does," he said; "and he won't let a chap help him."

"Bogad, it's rotten that a chap like Pen should be worried for want of filthy money," said Lord Mauleverer. His lordship had never known what it was to want for money, and he had a noble contempt for that useful article.

"Rotter!" agreed the juniors.

Mr. Quelch glanced round.

"Please do not talk in class," he said.

Mr. Quelch's voice was unusually gentle as he made the remark. The Form-master, hard and cold as he usually seemed to the eyes of the juniors, was probably very sorry for poor Pen, too.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Father and Son.

"FATHER!"

Pen's voice trembled a little as he greeted his father.

The wide, flagged passage was quite deserted during lessons, and the village cobbler and his son had it to themselves.

Mr. Penfold turned a troubled countenance towards his son.

He had a steady, strong face, lined with many years of hard work and care. His beard was turning grey; his strong, broad back had a little with long leaning over the cobbler's bench.

"Dick had, I'm afraid I've got bad news for you," he stammered.

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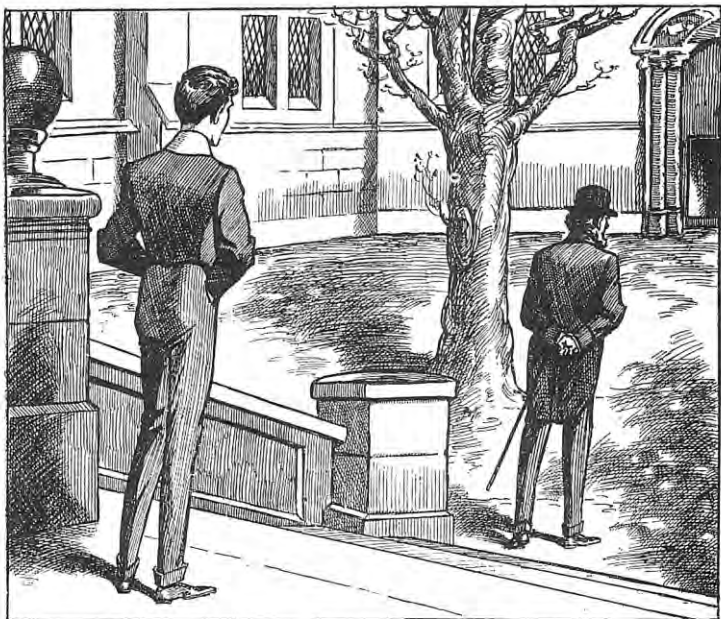
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Penfold watched his father go from the doorway—the kind old man who had done so much for him, and for whom he could do nothing in the hour of his need. It was a bitter thought to the lad. He was helpless—helpless to aid—and the shadow of ruin hung over his home. (See Chapter 2.)

"I guessed so, dad, when I heard you'd come," said Pen.

"What is it?"

"It's come at last, Dick."

Pen's face went a shade paler.

"I wouldn't have come to tell you, Dick," said Mr. Penfold. "But you made me promise to do it. Not that you can help me, lad, and it's a shame to worry you with it, and you getting on so fine in the school. But you made me promise to come and tell you when it happened, Dick, and I've kept my word."

"Is it Mr. Snooks again?"

"Yes."

"The rent?"

"Yes. Mr. Snooks is a hard man," said the old gentleman, with a sigh. "He says it ain't him; he's only Sir Reginald Brooke's agent. He's bound to collect the rents, and—his come down heavy. There's the arrears that have been standing over, and the rent that's due. I couldn't expect to get much more time on it. And now—"

"Now, father—"

"Now, there's going to be a man in possession."

"Oh!"

Pen sat down on the long wooden bench in the passage. He had been expecting it, and it had come at last. His scholarship had seemed to him a wonderful thing when he had won it, and his father had seemed to grow years younger in his pride in his boy's success. But it had had its drawbacks, that great stroke of luck. It had taken Pen from his father's side when the old man needed his aid.

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"Times had changed in the old village; people no longer came to the cobbler, who did good and durable work at a fair price; they went over to the big, brand-new bootshop at Cornfield, where they bought cheaper boots of a much more fashionable appearance which did not last them so long, certainly, but were much smarter to look at when they were new."

Old age and failing business were coming together to Mr. Penfold, and Pen's dreams of helping his father when he had finished his education at Greyfriars were too far off to be of any use. In a few years' time, Pen was confident that his father should not know want or worry, but those few years—they were not to be granted him. Poverty was invading the old home, like the sea creeping on and on, and eating away an old cliff.

A man in possession!

There were a good many fellows at Greyfriars who had never heard of such a thing; and most who had heard of it had heard of it only as a thing that happened far out of the range of their experience, like wrecks at sea or earthquakes in the tropics.

But it was very real and very close to fellows like Penfold, born to a grim and never-ending battle with the gaunt giant of poverty.

A man in possession!

It was the end of all things.

"Oh, father!"

There was a sob in Pen's voice. His father looked at him with grim misery in his face. He looked round the long,

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flagged passage; he heard the hum of a class-room near by. His poverty and his work seemed strangely out of place in that ancient seat of learning. His world should never have come into the world of Greyfriars. What had his son to do with these boys, some of whom spent in pocket-money, in a single term, as much as would have kept the Penfold home in comfort for three months.

"It's hard, my boy," said the old man; "hard on you. I could stand it. But but I couldn't have kept it dark from you long, Dick. I knew you'd be over to see me this evening, and then the man will be there."

"He's not there yet?"

"Not yet."

"When is he coming?"

"At five o'clock, if the money ain't paid—with the costs, too. You wanted me to come and tell you, Dick, though it ain't any good. You can't do again as you did before. That was a stroke of luck that don't 'appen twice."

Pen passed his hand across his brow.

The bright sunshine of the early summer's morning was blotted out for the scholarship boy of Greyfriars.

"Keep a stiff upper lip, Dicky," said his father. "We've come down pretty low, but it ain't the worst yet."

"Where's mother?"

"She's away. I sent her away, to your Aunt Eliza, knowin' this was comin'," said Mr. Penfold. "She won't know yet."

Pen brightened a little.

"That's good, dad. Something may be done—something may turn up. I may be able to think of something. I can—I must."

His father smiled sadly.

"I'm afeared you can't, Dick. You can't think something out of nothing, and you can't take 'elp from your friends. I know you wouldn't think of such a thing, Dick; but in case you was tempted, remember I'd rather go to the union than let you sponge on your friends who've got money. Not a siver, Dick. It's always in a man's power to keep his self-respect, whatever else he loses, and you couldn't keep your self-respect if you let a fellow give you money."

"I know that, dad. You can trust me."

"Yes, I know I can, Dick. Time I was goin'," said Mr. Penfold. "I come and told you, Dick, as you made me promise; but it ain't any good, and it's only worried you sooner than was necessary. You said perhaps you'd be able to think of some way out of it; but you can't, Dick, and it's a shame you should have to think of such things at all. You'd better get back to your lessons now."

Pen rose.

"Don't give in yet, father. It's a half-holiday here to-day, and I shall be free after twelve. I'm going to think of some way out."

"Good luck to you, Dick."

And Mr. Penfold went his way, with his head bowed. Pen watched him from the doorway—the kind old man, who had done everything for him, and for whom he could now do nothing in the hour of his need. It was a bitter thought to the lad. He was helpless, helpless to aid, and the shadow of ruin hung over his house. Mr. Penfold disappeared through the old stone arch of the school gateway, and Pen turned back to the Form-room.

Lessons again!

Lessons, at such a time? What did Latin signify neither to him now, with his old home, the only home he had ever known, on the point of being sold up by a hard and grasping man.

And it was useless turning his bitter thoughts with hatred towards Mr. Snooks. Mr. Snooks, hard as he was, was only the agent. The real that was paid so handsomely and with such efforts by the old shoemaker, went to swell the huge income of a man who owned half Friar-church, and never saw the place, probably had never seen it in his life.

The wealthy baronet lived on the Riviera, and under the sunny southern skies he had no thoughts to waste upon the drudges of an English village who provided his income with their labour. Pen had never seen him. He wondered dimly what the man was like, and whether Sir Reginald Brooke ever reflected that his expenditure in a week at Mentone or Monte Carlo represented a year or more of toil to some other Englishman at home in the Old Country.

But there was no hatred in Pen's breast even towards the distant and unknown landlord. He had had experience enough to know that men were much the same, whatever class they belonged to, and that it would be unjust to blame anyone for following the manners and customs in which he was brought up.

Pen opened the door of the Form-room.

The Remove fellows looked at him as he came in. Pen was very calm and quiet, but the pallor in his face told its own tale.

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He went quietly to his place, and sat down, and took his usual part in the Form work. Mistortunes were no excuse for slacking.

But the rest of morning lessons passed like a black dream to Dick Penfold.

At twelve the class was to be dismissed.

As it was Wednesday, and a half-holiday, he would then be free—to think of some means, if he could, of averting the ruin that threatened his father and his home.

He would have five hours to act in,

Five hours!

Five days or five weeks, it would have made no difference. He knew that he could do nothing. The struggle had been long, but it was over now, and he had come to the finish.

And at that thought the boy's eyes grew dim, in spite of his pluck, and the Form-room swam for a moment in a mist.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Penfold's Problem.

HARRY WHARTON clapped Penfold on the shoulder as the Remove came out of the Form-room after morning lessons.

"Cheero, kid!" he exclaimed. "I suppose you know what's happenin' this afternoon, don't you?"

Pen stared at him blankly. How could Wharton know already about the man who was coming to take possession at five o'clock in Mr. Penfold's house?

"Yes!" Pen stammered.

"Well, we shall want you," said Harry.

"Eh?"

"You are going to have for us."

"Eh! What are you talking about?" asked Pen, in bewilderment.

It was Wharton's turn to stare.

"About the match with the Shell," he replied. "What do you think I was talking about, you young ass?"

"Oh!" said Pen. "I—I was thinking of something. I forgot that the Remove were playing the Shell this afternoon."

"Forgot!" chimed in Bob Cherry indignantly. "Forgot a Form match, when you've been selected to play in the team! Well, my hat!"

"I—I'm sorry," stammered Pen. "I shouldn't be able to play."

"Rate," said Harry Wharton. Wharton was captain of the Remove, and his word was law in cricket matters. "You're playing, of course. I've had quite an argument with Bolsover major, because he thinks he ought to play instead of you."

Pen smiled faintly.

"Better give Bolsover major a chance," he said.

"But you must play."

"I—I can't, Wharton."

"I understand," said Harry sympathetically. "Your pater brought you some bad news this morning, I suppose, and you're feeling out of sorts."

"Yes."

"I understand! What you want is a good game of cricket to cheer you up; you'll feel ever so much better after it."

"Yes, rather," said Bob Cherry. "Not another word! you're playing. Cricket is the best thing going for boy spirits and blue devils and things."

"Begud, I've been looking for you, Pen," said Lord Maulverer, slipping his arm through Penfold's, and leading him away. "I want to speak to you, you know."

"Go ahead," said Pen, shrinking a little. He thought that he would guess what was coming.

"Your pater came this morning," said the schoolboy sark.

"Yes."

"Bad news?"

"Yes."

"You wouldn't tell me any more," said Lord Maulverer. "I know what the matter is. Now, I'm a pal of yours, Pen."

"A good pal, too," said Pen, with a sigh. "You're friendship has made things much better for me here, Maulverer."

"And I'm sticking to you, Pen. What's the good of a pal if he doesn't stick to you in time of trouble?" demanded his lordship. "Now, Pen, I know what the trouble is, and I've got fifty quid in my desk."

Pen flushed crimson.

"Don't speak of that, Maulverer. You know I can't take your money."

"I've thought about that," said Lord Maulverer cheerfully. "I think you're rather an ass, you know, but I dare say you're right. I know you've got a better head for thinking things out than I have, Pen. Let it go at that. But I've thought of a dodge."

"A—what?" asked Pen.
"A dodge," said Lord Mauleverer. "I'm not going to give you any money. I'm going to lend it to you."

Pen shook his head.
"Now, all the fellows raise little loans from one another in hard times," urged Lord Mauleverer. "Why shouldn't you? Don't be an obstinate pig, Pen."

Pen smiled.
"I can't take it, Mauly. I couldn't pay you back, you see, and that makes all the difference. Wharton has borrowed of you in hard times, but he wouldn't have borrowed a shilling if he hadn't been certain of getting up—you know that."

"Yess, that's so," agreed Lord Mauleverer, after a pause. "But—but you're going to earn a lot of money later on, Pen. You're going to do all sorts of things when you've left Greyfriars. You'll know more in a couple of years than I shall know all my life—you've got the head for it. Now, when you're rolling in money—as you will be some day—you shall repay this little loan. See?"

"No, I don't see, Mauly. I'm much obliged to you, but I'm not going to take your money. Loan or gift, it's all the same to a chap who's got nothing."

"But don't you see, my dear chap—?" said Mauleverer, cudgelling his brains for some argument to convince his chum.

"I see that you're a good chap, Mauleverer, and want to help me, but that's all I see," said Pen, with a sad smile. "Don't mention it any more, there's a good fellow. I suppose I was an ass to come to Greyfriars at all—that's the real trouble."

"Oh, rot!" said Lord Mauleverer.
Pen nodded to his chum, and went into the School House. He went up to his own study, and shut himself in. He wanted to be alone to think. But he was not alone for long. The door opened, without a knock, and the fat face and glistening spectacles of Billy Bunter came round the door. Pen gave him a worried look. He was not in a mood to be bothered by the Owl of the Remove just then.

"I say, Penfold, what's the news?" asked Bunter. Bunter had not forgotten that slap in the Firm-room; but iniquities came before every other consideration with William George Bunter. "What did old—ahem—what did your pater have to say this morning?"

"Mind your own business," said Pen curtly. Bunter blinked at him.

"I'm speaking as a friend!" he exclaimed. "It's not many fellows in your position who'd speak in a friendly way to a rotten cobbler. I've heard that your pater's going to have the bailiffs in. Has he got 'em yet?"

"Will you leave my study?"

"I don't see why you can't answer a civil question," said Bunter sullenly. "I might be able to lend you some money, perhaps if a postal order I'm expecting arrives in time."

"Please get out!"

"Look here, you rotten cobbler—"
A pouter came down the passage behind Billy Bunter, and a strong hand was laid upon the fat Remove's shoulder. He swung back from the doorway in a powerful grip, and was flung along the passage with a bump.

"Ow!" roared Bunter, as he landed on the floor. "Ow! Linley, you beast— Yow!"

Mark Linley did not give him a second glance. He entered Penfold's study and closed the door behind him.

"I want to speak to you, Pen," said the Lancashire lad. "Excuse me if it's about your private affairs—you know I'm your friend. I know you're in trouble at home—owing to shortness of money. Don't get huffy. I've been through it myself, the same as you have. I'm a scholarship chum, the same as you. I worked for my living in a factory before I came here, and I'm not ashamed of it."

"No need to be ashamed of it, that I can see," said Pen. "I'm not ashamed of having mended boots. I still mend 'em sometimes on half-holidays, when my father's away."

Mark laughed.
"Good!" he said. "Now, I know you won't let any of your friends help you—and quite right, too. You don't want to sponger."

"That's it," said Pen.
"But I want to help you. I'm in the same boat as you are, and so it would be different. The poor always help the poor, you know."

"You!" said Pen.
Mark laughed again.

"You don't think I'm in a position to help anybody," he said. "As a rule, that's so—I have a hard enough trade to help myself. But I won the ten-pound prize for Latin prose last week, and I want you to take half of it."

The tears stood in Pen's eyes. Mark Linley's position at Greyfriars was very much the same as his own; he had the same struggles to go through. Linley had had to learn, by bitter enough experience, the value of money; and Pen knew very well what it would cost the Lancashire lad to hand him half the money prize he had won by hard work.

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

"You're jolly good," said Pen. "But—"
"You'll take it?" said Mark. "Honestly, I think you can. I'm in a different position from the other chaps, and I'd take help from you in a similar case. You see, we're in the same boat."

"Yes, I know; but—"

"Then let me help you."

"It can't be done!" said Pen. "If that kind of thing began, there'd be no end to it. I can't let Mauly help me. I know it's different with you; but I can't take money that your own people need. And I've promised my father that I won't let any fellow here give me any money."

Mark looked disappointed.

"I'd have liked to help you, Pen," he said.

"I know you would, old fellow."

"Is it very—very serious at home?"

Pen nodded.

"I'm sorry, Pen."

And Mark Linley, with a clouded face, quitted the study.

Pen was left alone again, and Billy Bunter did not return to trouble him. The cobbler's son thought the matter out, and thought it over and over again. What was he to do? How was he to help his father? It was a terrible problem for the unhappy lad, and it was a problem to which he had found no solution when the dinner-bell rang, and he went downstairs again, with pale face and heavy heart.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Friends in Need.

BOB CHERRY stood on the steps, and looked out into the old Close.

Bob's face was very bright and cheerful.

It would have been really difficult not to be cheerful that afternoon.

It was an afternoon in early summer, one of those perfect days which are only to be found in England—much as we complain of our climate.

Bright sunshine poured down upon the grey old buildings, the shady Close, and the wide green playing-fields. Fluffy clouds floated lightly across deep blue heavens, and a light, cool breeze stirred the leaves of the old oaks and elms.

Bob Cherry was in flannels, and he had a bat under his arm. The only thing that afternoon needed to make it quite perfect was a cricket match; and Bob was going to play cricket. So everything in the botanical department, as he would have said, was lovely.

"You fellows ready?" Bob Cherry called out, turning round from the sunny steps to the cooler and duskier interior of the house.

"Here we are!" said Harry Wharton.

"The herculeans is terrific, my worthy and ludicrous chum," said Nurree Jamsat Ram Singh, the Nabob of Blamparn.

"The Shell chaps are on the ground already," said Bob.

"Holson is putting on all the airs of a giddy Fry and a Jessop combined. He's got a queer idea in his head that the Shell are going to walk over us this afternoon."

"Queer idea some fellows do get into their heads, don't they?" said Frank Nugent, laughing. "The Shell will be rather tougher than the Fourth, though. Where's young Penfold, Harry— isn't he playing?"

Wharton wrinkled his brows for a moment.

"He said he isn't, but he is," he replied. "He wants to mope, but he's jolly well not going to mope. Anybody know where he is?"

"In his study!" said Mark Linley.

"Wait here, you fellows, and we'll fetch him down!" said Bob Cherry. "If he won't come peaceably, we'll carry him."

"Blessed if I see why you can't leave him where he is, and play me!" growled Bolsover major.

"Lots of things you can't see," remarked Nugent. "You can't see a cricket-ball coming, for instance, till it knocks your hats down."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry ran up-stairs to the Remove studies. Wharton knocked at Pen's door and opened it. Penfold had gone back to his study after dinner; he was still wrestling with his problem—no nearer the solution of it than he had been before. He gave the juniors a worried look, then coloured.

"Come out!" said Wharton.

"Come home!" said Bob Cherry, still more emphatically.

"You're not going to stay moped up here. Moping never did anybody any good. Care killed a cat, you know. Come and play cricket!"

Pen shook his head.

"I can't," he said.

"You can, will, must, and shall!" said Bob.

"I should play a rotten game," said Pen, "a fellow can't play a good game with a beastly worry on his mind. I don't want to bother you fellows with my troubles. Cut off and leave me alone. You can find a chap better than I am to put in the team, Wharton. I should be in rotten form."

"But it would buck you up," urged Wharton.

"You don't want me to let the side down, do you?"

"Well, no; I don't want that," Wharton admitted. "If you feel that you really couldn't play up to your form, you'd better stay out!"

"I know I couldn't!" said Pen.

"Come down and see the match, then!"

"Yes; you're in good form enough to yell," said Bob Cherry.

"I—I'd rather not."

"Look here," said Harry. "Tell us what the trouble is. We shan't gas it all over the school, you know. Can we help you?"

"No! I don't mind telling you," said Pen, with a sigh. "It will be all over the school soon—I know Bunter has gone down to Friarale to spy already—and he'll pick it up soon enough there."

"What is it, then?" asked Bob Cherry, uneasily.

"My father's having the bailiffs in to-day."

"Oh, my hat!"

The two juniors understood well enough what that brief communication meant. It meant the ruin of Pen's home, the despair of his father, and the great probability that he would have to leave Greyfriars. There was a short silence in the study. Pen's face was white and hard. The juniors knew that he was hard put to it to keep the tears back from his eyes.

"Oh, I say, that's rotten!" said Wharton at last. "No wonder you don't feel inclined to play cricket. Pen, old man, you ought to let your friends help you at a time like this."

Pen shook his head without replying.

"But something ought to be done," said Bob.

"I shall have to get out of here," said Pen restlessly. "I ought never to have come. I might have saved my father from this, if I'd stuck to him and worked; but he wanted me to come here, more than I wanted to myself. When he's sold up, I shall have to go with him—we shall get out of the neighbourhood—we couldn't look people in the face again after this."

"Nothing to be ashamed of in being hard up!" said Bob Cherry warmly.

Pen smiled miserably.

"That's true enough," he said. "Only—only one can't help being ashamed of these things. Don't let me keep you fellows. I can hear Tom Brown calling."

Wharton put his hat on the table.

"Lots of time!" he said. "It won't take us long to lick the Shell, anyway. Look here, Pen, Peter Todd helped you once out of a fix something like this—not with money, but with advice—"

"Yes—it can't be done again!"

"I don't know; perhaps I can do it, when I've had a think. I've got nearly as much brains as Peter Todd," said Wharton, with a grin.

"There's nothing to be done, you see."

"Wait a bit. I'll tell you what—we'll speak to Peter," said Harry. "His father's a solicitor, and he knows brags about the law. There may be some way of getting out of the fix—chaps who know the law can think of things, you know. Do you mind Peter knowing?"

"He's bound to know when Bunter gets back to Friarale, anyway," said Pen.

"Then I'll call him in, and we'll hold a giddy council of war!" said Wharton. "We'll get you out of this somehow."

Pen did not look hopeful. Whatever knowledge of the law Peter Todd might have picked up from the circumstance that his father was a solicitor, he was not likely to know anything that would help Mr. Penfold. The case was a straightforward one—the rent was unpaid, and the bailiffs were to be put in—and the place sold up. There was no preventing that excepting by paying the money—and that was precisely what was impossible.

But Wharton hurried away hopefully. Bob Cherry remained in the study.

"You'll be late for cricket!" said Pen.

To which Bob Cherry responded:

"Blow the cricket!" which was certainly an unexpected remark to come from so keen a cricketer.

A general shout from the waiting cricketers hailed Harry Wharton as he came downstairs.

"Ready, you boulder?"

Hobson has just been along to know whether we're going. THE MAGNET LIBRARY, No. 277.

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to play this afternoon or not?" said Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior.

"Go ahead!" said Harry. "I can't come now—"

"What?"

"You know it's a Form match, you see—and the Shell have been waiting—"

"The Shell can go and eat coke. Something's turned up that I've got to attend to. Go down to the ground. If you win the toss, bat first, you can play Bolsover major instead of Penfold—"

"Oh, good!" said Bolsover major.

"And Ogilvy and Hazeldene instead of Bob and me—"

"You're standing out?" exclaimed Nugent, in astonishment.

"Yes, unless we bat first—and perhaps then. There's something I must do," Harry explained. "You chaps buzz off now, or the Shell will be having fits. You can beat the Shell without me!"

"Yes, rather!" said Bolsover major.

"I don't know so much about that," said Johnny Bull doubtfully. "Look here, Wharton, it ought to be something jolly important to keep you away from a Form match."

"Well, it is something jolly important, as a matter of fact."

"I know what we'll do," exclaimed Nugent, "we'll ask Peter Todd to play."

"He won't play for the Form unless we play the rest of his study—Bunter and Dutton and Alonzo Todd," grinned Bulstrode.

"Oh, rats! We'll bump him till he does!"

"Can't be done!" said Harry. "I want Peter Todd."

Hobson, the captain of the Shell, came along, with a bat under his arm, and an exasperated expression on his face.

"Look here, are you fellows going to play, or are you not?" he demanded.

"They're just coming!" said Wharton.

The Shell fellow stared at him.

"Ain't you coming?" he demanded.

"No; I'm standing out!"

"Well, it won't make any difference to the result," said Hobson, with a grunt.

"I hope it won't," said Harry. "It doesn't really matter whether we lick you by a hundred, or only a dozen runs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Hobson. "Look here, if you're going to play, for goodness' sake come and play, and don't waste time!"

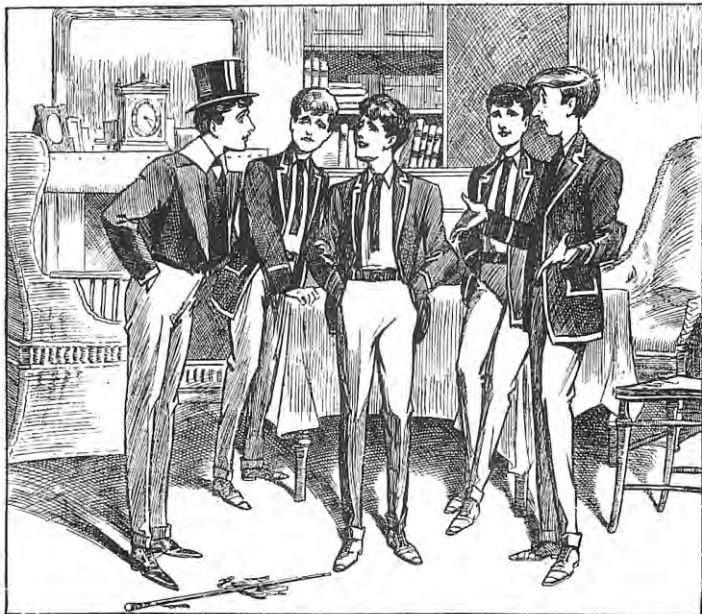
"Cut off!" said Harry.

And the Remove cricketers followed Hobson of the Shell down to the cricket-field, where Tom Brown of Tarnack, temporary captain of the team, tossed with Hobson, and won the toss. The New Zealand junior selected to bat first, thus giving Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton a chance to come along later and bat for the team, if their important business—whatever it was—was finished in time.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Bad Luck for the Remove!

PETER TODD of the Remove was in the school cloakshop—the little establishment belonging to Mrs. Mimble, in a corner of the old Close behind the elms. From the open doorway of the cloakshop Peter had a partial view of the cricket-field, in the far distance, and his eyes were eager as they rested on the white-clad figures. Greyfriars First were playing away that afternoon; but a match was in progress on the Fifth-Form pitch, and the Remove were about to play the Shell. Peter Todd, who had proved himself one of the best junior cricketers at Greyfriars, could have been in the Form team if he had liked. But Peter had peculiar and unpopular ideas on that subject. Although a new boy in the Remove, Peter had declared his fixed intention of making his study, No. 7, the top study in the Form—and he wanted all No. 7 Study to be played in the Form team. Whatever the Remove grumbled. Tom Dutton, the deaf junior, was an average cricketer. Alonzo and Billy Bunter were terrific sufferers at the great game. Peter Todd was slugging away at training them, determined to make cricketers of them. He said that it was either kill or cure; and the general opinion was that they would be killed before they became cricketers.

Peter Todd was seated on a high stool at the counter sipping lemonade in the intervals of looking out towards the cricket ground. Alonzo Todd was blinking dreamily at the sky, and thinking poetic thoughts—for among Alonzo's many weaknesses was a leaning towards poetry. Tom Dutton was eating jam tarts. Billy Bunter, the fourth and fattest



Lord Mauteverer dropped his gold-headed cane with a crash to the floor, and stood regarding Pen open-eyed. "Begad!" gasped his lordship. Pen looked at him in astonishment. "What's the matter?" he asked. (See Chapter 6.)

member of the Co., was not present. Which was really remarkable, for whenever Billy Bunter saw an acquaintance making for the tuckshop he always rolled in the same direction.

"You chaps know where Bunter is?" Peter Todd asked.

Alonzo came back from dreamland with a start.

"No, my dear Peter," he said.

"Do you know, Dutton?"

Dutton smiled.

"I'll eat how I please!" he replied.

"What?"

"I'll eat how I please!" snapped Dutton. "What do you mean by telling me not to eat so. Like your duck?"

"I didn't tell you not to eat so!" roared Peter Todd. "I asked you if you knew where Bunter was, you fathead!"

"Eh?"

"Have you seen Bunter?"

Tom Dutton looked round him carefully on the little counter among the dishes of cakes and jam tarts.

"I can't see any green on the counter," he said. "What on earth do you want greens for?"

Mrs. Minble, behind the counter, smiled. Peter Todd

groaned. He did not pursue the question. Getting information from Dutton was rather too much like work.

"I'm going to take you fellows through some cricket practice this afternoon," he said. "Sooner or later, I'm

going to get the whole study into the Form team. It's up

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Clubs of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled

to the top study in the Remove to play for the Form! What?"

"I think Bunter has gone out," said Alonzo mildly. "I saw him go down to the gates just after dinner."

Peter Todd grunted.

"You should have yanked him back by the ear," he said.

"The fat blunderer sneaks out of cricket practice whenever he

gets a chance. But I'm going to make a cricketer of him, if

it costs him a leg. My hat! Look at that!"

A wicket had fallen on the distant cricket field. Bulstrode

of the Remove had been clean bowled by Benson of the Shell

for a duck's egg.

"Dear me!" said Alonzo, who did not know much about

cricket. "I observe that Benson has bowled, my dear

Peter, but the batsmen do not appear to be running."

"No, see; the wicket's down!"

"Does that make any difference?" asked Alonzo innocently.

Peter groaned.

"And I've got to make a cricketer of you before I play

in the Form team, or else break a solemn swear!" he said.

"Oh, my hat!" Peter's glance wandered to the cricket

field again. "It's like the cheek of the Remove taking

on the Shell at all; and Hobson & Co. have been training

hard to make them sit up over it. I fancy the Remove will

get it in the neck this time. Hello, here's Wharton!"

Harry Wharton came into the tuckshop a little breath

lessly.

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"Not playing to-day?" asked Peter, in surprise.

"I may be battling later," said Harry. "I've been looking for you, Todd. I suppose you're Peter, and not Alonzo. Blessed if I can tell!"

Peter grinned.

"I'm Peter," he said. "What do you want me for? If you want me to play for the Form you've got to play the whole of the Top Study."

"Rate!"

"You might do worse; your team are getting it in the nick now—"

"Oh, the Shell couldn't beat us in a month of Sundays," said Wharton confidently. "But I didn't come here to talk cricket. I want you, Todd."

"Thanks! Anything to oblige a kid," said Peter. "Have some ginger-beer while you tell me your little troubles? Has Loder the prefect given the warpath again, and do you want No. 7 Study to give him the kybosh?"

"No, no," said Harry, laughing.

"Is a Coker of the Fifth? I'll handle Coker of the Fifth in two shakes, if he gets his back up," said Peter.

"It isn't a Form row. It's a private matter, and I want your advice. Come along with me, and I'll explain."

"All serene."

Peter Todd slipped down from the high stool, and followed the captain of the Remove from the tuckshop. Wharton led him quickly towards the School House, explaining as he went the peculiar trouble of Dick Penfold. Peter Todd's face grew very serious as he listened.

"You see, as your pater's a lawyer, we thought you might know the law on the subject," said Harry, in conclusion. "I know these agent chaps drive too hard in dealing with poor people who don't know the law, and there might be some point where Snooks could be no-balled, you know, if we knew how."

"It's worth thinking of," said Peter. "I'll think— Oh, my hat!"

He was staring away towards the cricket-field. Frank Nugent's wicket had just gone down, and Nugent was carrying out his bat with a look of dismay.

"That's the second wicket down for nil," said Peter.

Wharton's face clouded.

"Come on," he said. "We may get this affair settled in time for me to bat for the Remove. It would be rotten to let the team be beaten by the Shell!"

Wharton paused in the doorway of the School House to take another glance at the cricket-ground. There was another shout from the fellows standing round the ropes. Johnny Bull had gone on in Nugent's place, and Benson had bowled; and Hobson had caught the ball hot from the bat. It was another wicket down for the Remove. Pen's trouble had certainly come at a very unfortunate time for the Remove. Never had the team wanted their captain as they were likely to want him now. But Wharton had resolved to do what he could for Pen, and he put other thoughts out of his mind and led Peter Todd to the scholarship junior's study.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Maulverer's Uncle.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry, rather lugubriously.

Bob had been watching the cricket from the study window. Pen, sitting at the table, deep in mopey thoughts, had seen nothing.

"How's Todd," said Wharton. "Now, then, Pen, here's the giddy lawyer. I've told him how the matter stands."

Pen smiled faintly as he looked at Todd.

"You afraid you won't be of much use, Todd," he said. "But if you could tell me anything that would help me I'd be very grateful."

"If there's anything to be done you can rely on your Uncle Todd," said Todd cheerfully. "Now, the state of the case—"

Todd leaned his chin on his hand, and assumed an expression of owl-like gravity and wisdom, as he had seen his father the solicitor do when giving sage advice.

There was a tap at the door, and Lord Maulverer looked in.

"May I come in, my dear fellows?"

"Come in, Maulverer," said Penfold. "Todd's going to give me legal advice."

"Begad!"

Lord Maulverer came in, and seated his elegant person upon a corner of the table. He tapped a glossy boot with a handsome cane, of which the knob had cost more than the whole sum for which Mr. Penfold was indebted to the hired Mr. Snooks. Such are the peculiar inequalities of life.

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"Go ahead, my dear chap," said Lord Maulverer. "I'm interested in law. I thought once of studying for the Bar, you know, but I thought it would be too much like work. Pile in."

"The state of the case is that Mr. Penfold owes rent, and Mr. Snooks is empowered to distrain for it," said Peter Todd. "No good trying to pick holes in that. Snooks is a legal beast himself, and won't have done anything out of order. He is entitled to put a man in possession unless the money is paid, and then to sell up the place. That's it!"

"That's it," said Pen, wincing.

"He's got to be stopped," said Peter Todd. "No good appealing to him. I've talked to Snooks, and a harder-hearted blighter never blighted. He simply enjoys selling people up, and they say in the village that when he has happy dreams it's always about bailiffs and brokers and things, and imprisonment for debt. But there is a power behind the throne in this case. Snooks isn't the landlord."

"No; he's the agent," said Pen.

"With full powers, of course?"

"Oh, yes."

Todd tapped his nose wisely.

"Then the question arises, my dear sir, whether it's possible to get past Snooks and to reach the landlord," he said. "The landlord mayn't be a bad chap—couldn't be quite so bad as Snooks, anyway. Does he live about here?"

Pen shook his head.

"Where is he to be found?" asked Todd.

"He lives abroad."

"Oh, my hat!" said Todd, rather taken aback, and forgetting his legal aspect for a moment. "That's rotten! Ahem! I mean, it's very unfortunate. Far away!"

"On the Riviera," said Pen. "He's got a villa at Cap Martin, somewhere near Monte Carlo, I think."

"Begad!" said Lord Maulverer. "That's where we had our holiday, Wharton. You remember coming with me to visit my uncle at Cap Martin and Monte Carlo?"

"I'm not likely to forget it, Mauly," said Harry, with a smile.

"Pray excuse my interruption, my dear fellow," said Lord Maulverer. "Pile in! I'm awfully keen about legal matters."

"The Riviera!" said Todd. "That's a jolly long way; and it would cost a good bit to endle there. But you've got friends who'd stand the cable, and who would dot you in the eye if you raised any objections."

"Yas, begad!" said Lord Maulverer.

Pen laughed.

"I'm afraid my father's landlord wouldn't take any notice of a cable from a non-paying tenant," he said. "He leaves matters here entirely in Mr. Snooks' hands. He never comes near Friarland at all."

"You never know," said Todd. "He may be a tender-hearted old johnnie, or he may just have won on red at Monte Carlo, you know, and be specially flush with money and the milk of human kindness. Do you know his exact address?"

"No. I could find it, but—"

"Who is he?"

"A very rich baronet."

"Name?" said Peter Todd, in a businesslike manner.

"Sir Reginald Brooke. But—"

Pen did not finish.

"There was a sudden exclamation from Wharton and Bob Cherry together. As for Lord Maulverer, he dropped his gold-headed cane with a crash to the floor, and slid off the table, and stood regarding Pen open-eyed.

"Begad!" gasped his lordship.

Pen looked at him in astonishment.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Do you know the name, Mauly?"

"Know it?" shrieked Lord Maulverer.

"Know it?" shouted Wharton and Bob Cherry.

Pen looked amazed. So did Peter Todd. The latter did not look pleased, either. The sudden excitement of the three juniors was interrupting the legal gravity of the case.

"Gentlemen—" began Peter Todd.

"Sir Reginald Brooke!" gasped Wharton.

"Old Reggie!" said Lord Maulverer, suddenly breaking into a waltz-dance. "Uncle Reggie! My only pyjama hat!"

"What?" said Pen.

"Know him?" roared Lord Maulverer, slapping Pen on the shoulder. "Know him! Do I know my own angel! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

Pen jumped.

"Your uncle, Mauly!" he gasped.

"Yass, my uncle—one of my uncles," shouted Lord Mauleverer. "I've got two, and they're both my guardians. And Uncle Reggie is the pick of the bunch—the best old sort that ever—ever—ever sorted!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was Uncle Reggie I stayed with, when these chaps came on a holiday with me to Monte Carlo," pursued Lord Mauleverer. "He's got a villa at Cap Martin, and a villain in Friarale looking after his property, begad! That's a pun, by Jove!"

"Your uncle!" said Pen dazedly.

"Yass, you bet! The old boy's got a lot of landed property in this county, but I didn't happen to know about this in Friarale," said Lord Mauleverer. "So he's your landlord—your giddy landlord! There can't be two Sir Reginald Brookes with villas at Cap Martin!"

"Hurrah!"

Pen's face brightened up.

"Oh, Mauly! But—but he'd think it an awful cheek to ask him—"

"He wouldn't think anything a cheek that I asked him," said Lord Mauleverer confidently. "I'm the giddy apple of his eye! I'm the head of the family, you see, and he's a nice, dutiful, obedient uncle, as all uncles ought to be! The old boy would come home in an aeroplane if I wanted him. Blessed if I know what he sees in me; but he's very fond of me, you see."

"No wonder!" said Pen.

"Thanky kindly!" grinned his lordship. "This is where I come by being such a nice chap! Uncle Reggie would do anything I asked him—and I know what I'm going to ask him. I'm going to ask him to make things easy for your pater, and to get his lawyer to look into the way Snooks is managing his estate. My hat! Isn't this ripping?"

"Gorgeous!" said Peter Todd. "This is what comes of asking me for legal advice. Always rely on the Top Study. My advice is, that Lord Mauleverer communicates with his uncle at once, to give Mr. Snooks the kybosh!"

"Yes, begad!"

Pen's face fell.

"But—but you can't do it in the time," he said. "You couldn't get a reply from Monte Carlo to-day, even if your uncle's at home, and wires back at once. And Snooks is putting the bailiffs in at five o'clock this afternoon!"

"Oh!" said all the juniors together.

There was a pause.

"It will be all right," said Lord Mauleverer at last. "I'll go down and see Snooks, and when I've told him that Sir Reginald Brooke is my uncle, and that I'm telegraphing him about it, Snooks will hold his hand. I'll order him to, begad!"

"He's a hard man!"

"He won't cut up rough with his employer's favourite nephew. If he does, I'll get old Reggie to boot him, begad! I'm off!"

And Lord Mauleverer rushed out of the study.

"It's all right now, Pen," said Bob Cherry, clapping Penfold on the shoulder. "Manly will work it with Snooks. Now you can come down to the cricket with a clear conscience. We want you—the Shell are knocking the side all to pieces!"

Pen rose to his feet.

"I must go to my father as soon as Mauly gets back," he said. "But if you want me to play, I'll be glad! This has put new life into me."

"Bravo!" said Peter Todd. "My fee for legal advice is five guineas, but under the peculiar circumstances of the case I make no charge."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Wharton and Bob Cherry linked arms with Penfold, and marched him down to the cricket-ground. They arrived in the nick of time. For six Remove wickets were down, and the score was only at 24 runs. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and Rake were at the wickets. And as Harry Wharton and his two companions came up, Rake was out, clean bowled by the terrible Benson.

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "I hope you've come to play! The Shell are making ducks and drakes of us, and there's no second innings for us to pull up in."

"Here you are!" said Wharton. "Seven down for twenty-four—that's bad!"

"The Shell have been training!" growled Johnny Bull. "They're putting all their beef into this match, to take us a peg. Looks as if they're going to do it, too."

"Game isn't lost till it's won," said Bob Cherry. "We're ready."

"Men in, Bob!" said Wharton.

"Right ho!"

"Look here!" shouted Bolsover major. "I'm next man in."

Wharton shook his head.

"Only if we couldn't come," he said. "You understood that well enough, Bol-sover. And with the innings in this state, we can't afford to risk anything."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 277.

A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Games of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

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

"Not going to play me?" yelled Bolsover angrily. "Can't be done—unless you get Hobson to agree to let us play twelve!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" growled Bolsover major. "Leave Penfold out. He's wanted at home, anyway! I've just heard from Bunter that his people are getting the bailiffs in—"

Wharton out in sharply:

"Never mind what you've heard from Bunter. You ought to know better than to listen to Bunter's tattler. Blow Bunter!"

"I'm pretty sure it's true," said Bolsover, "and I think—"

"Oh, rats!"

There was a yell from the crowd:

"Well bowled, Benny!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with dismay in his dusky face, was coming away from the wickets. Benson, of the Shell, who was turning out to be unexpectedly hot stuff in the bowling line, had taken his leg stump out of the ground.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Nugent. "Eight down for twenty-four! It's all over bar shouting, and the Shell-fish will do all the shouting."

"Man in!" said Wharton. "Wire in and do your best, Pen!"

"Right-ho!" said Pen.

And he took his place at the wicket, in the place of the dusky nabob. Two minutes later there was a roar.

"Caught! Oh, well caught, sir!"

Bob Cherry stared at Stuart, of the Shell, who grinned and held up the ball. Bob grinned and came out. He gave Wharton a glum look.

"They're in frightfully top form, Harry!" he said. "That was as neat a catch as ever I saw in my natural! You're last man in, old kid, and—"

"And you won't stop in long!" sneered Vernon Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"That remains to be seen!" said Wharton quietly, as he buttoned his glove.

And he went out to the wickets to join Dick Penfold, to make a last struggle against the forces of the victorious Shell.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not Out!

HOBSON, of the Shell, was grinning with glee.

On a previous occasion the Remove had beaten the Shell, and they had talked a good deal about it, as was natural—and the Shell had writhed. The Shell were almost a senior form, as Hobson proudly declared, and as good as the Fifth any day in the week. To be beaten by a junior form eleven was too humiliating; and Hobson had made the Shell team slog away at practice till they were quite at the top of their form.

At the top of their form, they were naturally a stronger team than the Lower Fourth. And they had been showing their "class" now with a vengeance. They had expected to beat the Remove. But they had not expected so sweeping a victory as this. Nine wickets down for 24 runs—it was enough to make the Shell fellows grin.

And they grinned!

Their grins were exasperating enough to the Remove. But the Removes had to bear it, even if they did not follow the Shell example and grin.

It was with great relief that the Remove fellows saw Harry Wharton go to the wicket. They remembered how he had pulled the game out of the fire on the occasion of the great match at St. Jim's. They hoped to see his performance of a similar feat on the present occasion.

But on this occasion it seemed too much to hope for. The Remove had a terrible leeway to make up; and, if the Shell batting was anything like their bowling, they would knock up a good score when their turn came. And as it was a single-innings match, there was no chance of making up lost ground in a second innings.

"Go on and get that kid Penfold out, Benny," said Hobson, with a chuckle. "And then we can get on to bat—and we'll make the first five. What?"

"What ho!" grinned Benson.

And Benson loomed on to bowl against Penfold.

Pen was one of the youngest members of the Remove, and he did not look very dangerous. Wharton, as all knew, was a hard nut to crack. But the Shell fellows had no doubt at all that Dick Penfold would speedily fall to Benson's bowling. Then the Shell fellows would come in to bat, and Hobson privately intended to knock up enough runs of his own bat to beat the miserable Remove score.

It was a gorgeous prospect for the Shell—such a crushing defeat would, they hoped, put the Remove in their proper places for good and all.

"IN DIREST PERIL!"

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But it did not work out exactly like that.

Dick Penfold seemed to have become a new fellow since that sudden and joyous discovery in his study. He was bright, keen, alert, and decidedly "all there."

Benson sent down a regular twister, which he had been practising for a long time for the especial benefit of the Remove batsmen. As Hobson saw it, he gurgled joyfully. "Now watch!"

There was something to watch, certainly, but it was not what Hobson, of the Shell, anticipated.

Dick Penfold was quite equal to that ball. There was a click as the bat met it, and the leather went soaring on its journey—far out of the reach of the fieldsmen.

And the batsmen were running.

Hobson and Stuart were running, too, for the ball—running their hardest. But before Hobson recovered it, the batsmen had crossed and re-crossed four times, at express speed. And the ball came in yards too late! And the Remove roared.

"Well hit—oh, well hit!"

"Well run! Bravo!"

"Bravo!" roared Boleover major, forgetting for the moment that he had wanted Pen's place. "Well hit, young Penfold!"

"Hurrah!"

Bob Cherry rubbed his hands.

"Looking up now—what!" he exclaimed.

"The look-upfulness is terrific, my worthy chum," murmured Huxley James Ram Singh.

Benson looked quite grim as he prepared to bowl again. He wasn't expecting his bowling to be knocked about like that. He put all he knew into the next. Unfortunately for the Shell, Pen put all he knew into the batting—and what he knew was more than Benson knew.

Away went the ball, and the batsmen ran, and ran, and ran again. Three runs had been scored when the ball came in.

And now Harry Wharton was standing up to the bowling. Benson expected hard work there—and he got it!

Wharton drove the leather all over the field.

The runs ended with sixteen runs added to the Remove score, and the Removes were joyful looks now.

The shells were correspondingly serious.

The innings was not to tail off helplessly as they had anticipated. Instead of ending, their struggle was only just beginning. Last man was in, and it was the last throw of the die, so to speak, for the Remove. But the last men in seemed likely to stay in.

"Get that beggar Pen out, for goodness' sake, Benny," growled Hobson, as the field crowded over.

Benson grunted.

"Not so jolly easy," he said. "You have a try."

Hobson had a try. But he fared no better than Benson—in fact, worse. The two batsmen in turn knocked up three and two of his bowling, hardly ever missing a run, even if it were only stalling a single.

Bob Cherry clapped his hands till they were sore.

"Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!" he roared.

"My hat! I never saw young Penfold in such form before!" said Frank Nugent. "Blessed if isn't hitting ont like a giddy Jessop! And he's well set now."

"The selfishness of the esteemed Pen is terrific!"

"They won't get him out in a hurry," grinned Tom Brown. "My hat! Look at the score! Sixty already! And they're going strong!"

"We shall have to declare, if they keep on much longer," chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Indeed, it seemed quite possible that the Remove would have to declare, unless the innings was to last all the afternoon, for the Shell bowling was quite unable to touch the wickets. Benson, who was really a keen and able bowler, did his best, but his best was not good enough. The runs were piling up, and there was a joyous yell from the Remove when the score topped the hundred.

"Hundred for nine!" grinned Bob Cherry. "That looks better than it did, my infants."

"What do!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There goes a catch—Wharton, too, by gun!"

It was true. The little Stuart was seen to leap up at the ball hit from Wharton's bat, and his fingers closed upon it. Caught!

"How's that?" gasped the Shell, greatly relieved.

"Out!"

The innings was over—all down for a hundred. And Pen—Pen was not out! There was a rush of the Removes to surround him, and clap him on the back, and punch him in the ribs, as he came off, amid a storm of cheers. Wharton the Gem LIBRARY.—No. 277.

and Pen had saved the game for the Remove, and Pen was not out!

"Bravo, Penfold!"

"Hurrah, hurrah!"

"What did I tell you?" roared Bob Cherry. "Didn't I tell you they'd pull the game out of the fire, and run it up over the hundred, eh?"

"No, you didn't!" grinned Tom Brown.

"Well, I should have if I'd thought of it, anyway! Hurrah, hurrah!"

And Bob Cherry gave Pen a mighty swipe on the shoulder.

Pen grinned. His face was very bright and happy.

"I'm jolly glad!" he said.

"What ho! Hurrah!"

And Pen walked off the field, surrounded by enthusiastic admirers. It was a happy moment for Pen! But the bright smile died off his face as he glanced up at the old clock tower of Greyfriars, above the elms.

Four o'clock! And at five—Lord Maulverer had not returned yet! And Pen, with a throb of anxiety in his heart, escaped from his friends, and hurried down to the school gates to look for Maulverer.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

No Luck!

THE pitch was being rolled for the Shell innings. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry walked down to the school gates with Pen. It was time that the schoolboy earl returned to report how he had prospered with Mr. Snooks.

"Snooks seems to be keeping him a jolly long time," Pen remarked uneasily. He looked down the long, white road, but there was no sign of Lord Maulverer.

"Might have been out," Bob Cherry suggested. "Then Mandy would have to wait for him."

"Yes, it's possible."

Pen's anxiety was increasing.

The discovery that Sir Reginald Brooke, the landlord for whom Mr. Snooks acted, was no other than Lord Maulverer's Uncle Reggie had brought great relief to his mind. If Lord Maulverer was given time to appeal to his uncle, there was no doubt at all that Mr. Snooks' possession of the house would be promptly stopped, that there was no time—unless Mr. Snooks listened to Lord Maulverer's persuading tongue, and agreed to hold his hand until Sir Reginald was appeased to. What if he refused? Mr. Snooks was a hard man, and sure of his employer's confidence—he had served the baronet for many years, and Sir Reginald was not aware of his real nature by any means. Mr. Snooks might decline to listen to a schoolboy—might not even believe that Maulverer had any influence over his uncle at all. In that case—

Was the new and sudden hope to fail him, after all? Pen's heart was like lead as the big hand crawled round the dial in the clock-tower. Wharton cast an uneasy glance towards the cricket-field. Hobson & Co. were preparing for their innings, and the cricketers would be wanted very shortly. As the Remove were fielding now, they could not spare a man. After the unexpected "clash" the Shell had shown, it would not do for the Remove to field two or three men short.

But it was pretty clear that until Pen's doubts were settled he would be of no use in the game. And neither Wharton nor Bob Cherry felt inclined to desert him in his anxiety. It was a Form match, and the juniors took Form matches very much to heart; but it was Pen's home that hung in the balance now. Why did not Lord Maulverer return?

"I say, you fellows—"

There was an unpleasant grin on Bunter's face as he rolled up, and blinked at the anxiously waiting juniors. Bunter had not failed to gather news in Fricdale.

"Cut off!" said Bob Cherry curtly.

"I say, you fellows, I've got some news for Penfold—I heard in the village—"

"Never mind what you heard in the village. Pen don't want your news. Buzz off!"

"I think I ought to tell him," grinned Bunter. "There's a regular crowd gathering round his father's shop. Young Hogg, the chemist's kid, told me. His father is the bailiff. You know. Mr. Snooks has ordered old Hogg to put a man in—"

"Shut up!" roared Bob Cherry.

"He's going in at five o'clock," said Billy Bunter. "It's a quarter past four now. If I were Pen I'd get home. The man will want looking after, you know. Young Hogg told



Mr. Ratcliff rushed into the quadrangle, and a yell of laughter from the juniors greeted the extraordinary sight. "Help! Help!" roared the frightened Housemaster, as the monkey fastened a grip of iron on his victim's scanty locks. (For this exciting incident see the splendid, long, complete story entitled "THE STRIKE AT ST. JIM'S," by Martin Clifford, in our grand companion paper "THE GEM" LIBRARY. Out on Wednesday. Order Early.)

me that the man has to be fed and looked after regularly—and old Penfold—"

"Biff!"

Billy Bunter sat down in the gateway with a sudden shock that knocked all the breath out of his fat body. His spectacles slid down his fat little nose, and he blinked over them and gasped like a landed fish.

"Ow, ow! Boast! I—I—I'll tell Peter Todd!"

"Good!" said Bob Cherry. "Tell him that I kicked you as well!"

"Ow, ow! Yow!"

"And that I boxed your ears!"

"Yarrah!"

"And pulled your over and booted you—"

"Yah! Oh! Yuh!"

Bunter scrambled up and fled, with Bob Cherry's heavy boot helping him off. Bob returned to the gateway breath-

ing hard. Billy Bunter tore away under the impression that Bob was still after him, and did not stop till a strong hand gripped his collar, and swung him round, and halted him.

"Whether bound?" asked Peter Todd cheerfully.

"Ow! That beast Cherry—I want you to lick him, Todd," gasped Bunter. "He's after me—"

"You're dreaming," said Peter Todd. "He's not in sight!"

"Oh! Well, he was after me! Look here; you know the rule in Study No. 7. Teddy—nobody is to say any of us, you know. I want you to lick Bob Cherry."

"What did you do?" asked Peter.

"Nothing at all—I was only speaking about Penfold's letter having the brokers in, and—"

"Then you got what you deserved," said Peter Todd, cheerfully, and if you open that wide mouth of yours any more I'll give you some more—see?"

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

"IN DIREST PERIL!"

"Look here, Todd," roared Bunter, "I—"
 "There's another rule in Study No. 7," said Peter. "We've made it a rule that you are not going to be a rotten cad, Bunter—we're going to cure you. I'm going to cure you if I wear out my boots in doing it. Here's for a start!"
 "Ow—ow—yoh!"

And Billy Bunter fled, with Peter Todd's boot behind him this time. Having "drilled" Billy Bunter for some distance, Peter Todd smiled sweetly, and strolled down to the gates. He found the three juniors still waiting there anxiously, and Frank Nugent had just joined them.

"The Shell are ready to bat?" Frank was saying. "I suppose you fellows are coming back."

"Pen can't come," said Wharton uneasily, "and we—"

"We want our best bowlers," said Nugent. "The Shell are in great form. You're not going to let them lick us, Harry?"

Pen glanced round from the road.
 "You fellows go back," he said. "Hobson will let you play one substitute, and you can leave me out!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Maulvever!"

Lord Maulvever had appeared in sight at last, striding quickly towards the school, at a pace very much in contrast with his usual leisurely movements.

"Cut back and ask Hobson to wait five minutes, Franky," said Wharton.

Nugent nodded. He had some idea of what was "on"; but he was not a fellow to ask questions.

"Right-ho!" he said, and he hurried back to the cricket-ground.

Lord Maulvever came up to the gates, somewhat out of breath, after his unaccustomed exertions. The expression on his face told that he had not been successful.

"What's the news?" asked Harry.

"Out with it!" said Peter briskly.

"I'm awfully sorry—" began Lord Maulvever.

Pen caught his breath.

"Snooks won't hear you?" he asked.

"I'm sorry—no."

"You explained it all to him?" asked Peter Todd.

"Yes, begad! I found the end in the office—and he was very unkind, begad, you know; but he climbed down a bit when I told him that I was Sir Reginald's nephew—and became very civil. But when I explained what I wanted, he was hard as iron again. Said he couldn't allow even his regard for Sir Reginald's relations to interfere with the course of his duty to Sir Reginald, begad!"

"The rotter!"

"I jolied it on, you know—explained that Sir Reginald was my guardian, and I was his favourite nephew—that he'd do anything I asked him—and that I was going to ask him to stop this bizney. Snooks only grinned like a hyena. He said he really didn't think that Sir Reginald would allow a school-boy to interfere between him and his trusted agent—awful cheek, you know. He advised me not to cable Sir Reginald, as my uncle would only smile and think me a young donkey. Yass, begad—he said my uncle would think me a young donkey!" said Lord Maulvever indignantly.

"And he won't chuck it?" asked Bob Cherry.

"No. He said it was his duty. Duty, begad! Then I said some things to him—called him names, you know—told him he was a dashed old rascal, you know; but even that didn't have any effect on him, somehow. I told him he was a rotten outsider, and that seemed to get his back up, and he called his office-boy to show me out! So I biffed the kid on the nose and came out!" concluded Lord Maulvever.

The juniors were silent with dismay.

The intervention of Lord Maulvever, from which they had hoped so much, had ended in failure—in fact, worse than failure—for Mr. Snooks was likely to be exasperated by the terms Lord Maulvever had applied to him, and to be harder than anything in consequence. And the "biffing" of the office-boy was not likely to placate him, either. Lord Maulvever had certainly not improved matters.

"I—I was afraid it would be something like this," groaned Pen. "I'm afraid Mr. Snooks is right about your uncle, Maulvever—Sir Reginald isn't likely to interfere with his agent to please you, you know—a schoolboy! He'll fancy that you don't know anything about the matter, and that you've been influenced because you're a good-natured chap—"

"You don't know my Uncle Reggie!" said Lord Maulvever. "I've spoken to him about you, too, Pen. I told him you were my best chum, and I found out afterwards that

he'd written to the Head, asking what sort of chap you were—and the Head answered that you were top-hole—not exactly those words, you know, but something to that effect. A soon as Uncle Reggie gets my cable, he'll wire to Snooks to chuck it—I know that!"

Pen glanced at the clock in the tower.

"No time!" he said.

"That's the rotten part of the bizney," said Lord Maulvever. "By to-morrow, Snooks will have got it in the neck from Uncle Reggie; but now—"

Pen was very white. Lord Maulvever turned desperately to Peter Todd.

"Look here, Toddy, you're a blessed lawyer—can't you think of something. Chaps in difficulties always take legal advice. Trust out some legal advice, can't you?"

"I'm going to think it out," said Peter Todd. "Look here—we've time yet. You chaps can go to the cricket, and leave me to think it out. I've got an idea in my brain already, but it wants thinking out."

"Some way of holding off Snooks till to-morrow?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes. But I've got to make sure—we mustn't break the law, you know. I've got some legal books in my study that my father sent me—you know I'm going to study the law. You chaps leave it to me!"

"You—you think you can—" stammered Pen.

"Yes."

"Begad! Jolly ripping thing to have a tangle lawyer about the school," said Lord Maulvever. "It will be all right. Pen, till Peter's thought it out!"

Pen nodded without speaking, and the juniors returned to the cricket ground.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Hat Trick!

HOBSON & CO. were showing signs of impatience. They were ready to bat, and the Removs were keeping them waiting.

"Oh, here you are!" growled Hobson, as Harry Wharton and his companions arrived. "Look here, we can't wait for all night, you know!"

"Ready now!" said Harry.

"Time you were!" grunted Benson.

Harry Wharton led his merry men out to field.

Hobson and Hoskins of the Shell opened the inning. Harry Wharton gave the ball to Dick Penfold.

"Do your level best, Pen," he said. "If Todd thinks of a wheeze, we've got to leave the cricket—and we don't want to leave the Shell wickets up. The fellows would have a right to grumble if we left the match and left them to be belted. If we can settle four or five wickets in good time, we can leave them to finish the Shell."

Pen nodded.

"I understand!" he said.

Dick Penfold was a good bat, but it was in bowling that he was best. He was, indeed, after Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Indian, the best bowler in the Removs eleven.

Wharton watched him anxiously as he went on to bowl. If his trouble put him off his form, the bowling would have to be left to Hurree Singh and Tom Brown—but if Pen was at his best, the wickets would go down fast enough, and the fellows would have no right to complain at his leaving them a man short before the end of the match. If, on the other hand, the Shell batsmen made a firm stand, there would be loud growling from the Removs eleven—naturally enough—if Pen deserted them before the finish. A fellow's private affairs could not be allowed to interfere with a Form match. Pen understood it, and he made a great effort to drive his worries from his mind, and to put all he knew into the bowling.

His first ball went to Hoskins. Hoskins of the Shell was a great amateur musician; but in cricket he did not shine. The Removs easily expected that Hoskins's "sticks" would go down to Pen's first ball.

But they didn't! Hoskins met the ball with a swipe that sent it away almost to the boundary, and the batsmen had run three by the time the ball came in to the wicket-keeper. Wharton's face lengthened.

"Poor old Pen!" he murmured to Bob Cherry. "I suppose he can't help it—I won't put him on to bowl after this over."

"Better not!" agreed Bob.

Pen did not hear them, but he understood their expressions.

The lad pulled himself together.

He was bowling now to Hobson, the best bat in the Shell, and about ten times as able as Hoskins to deal with bowling. If Hoskins had knocked the ball away for 3, the natural

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assumption was that Hobson would finish the over with a series of boundaries. But again there was a surprise.

Pen had himself in hand now. His chums were doing their best to help him in his trouble, and he would not fail them!

And the second ball of the over was very different from the first. It came down like a streak of greased lightning, as Hobson expressed it afterwards. Hobson was there to play a cricket-ball, not a lightning-flash. His bat swept the empty air, and the ball curled in and whipped the middle stump out of the ground, and there was a roar.

"Oh, well bowled!"

"How's that?"

There was not much doubt as to "how" was "that." It was out. Hobson glared at his wretched wicket, and glared at Pen, and went his way.

Wharton's face lighted up.

"Bravo, Pen!" he shouted.

Stuart of the Shell came on in Hobson's place. Hobson had given him a hint about that lightning-flash—which was, perhaps, the reason why Stuart was not on the look-out for a slow ball with a twist on it he had never experienced before. Whatever the reason, there was no doubt as to the result—the off-stump reclined at an angle of forty-five, and the balls were on the ground.

Then the Removites roared.

"Bravo, Pen! Hooray! Give us three, old man! Make it the hat-trick!"

Pen's eyes gleamed.

For the moment his troubles were banished; the dangers that threatened his home, his father's troubled face, vanished from his thoughts. He was a bowler now, and bowling for his side—bowling to win!

And when the next man came in, Pen sent down a ball that would have beaten many a county batsman, and that gave Benson of the Shell no chance whatever.

Crash!

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Benson.

And the Remove yelled:

"How's that?"

"Out!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Benson again; and he went decorously back to the pavilion.

"Hurray! Hurray! The hat-trick! Hurray!"

"Good old Pen!"

"Bravo, my dear fellow! Bravo, begad!"

Pen had performed the "hat-trick," and three of the best Shell batsmen were out. It was an inauspicious start for the Shell innings, and the Shell fellows were looking decidedly blue.

The rest of the over was uneventful—not varied by a run. Pen did not take any more wickets, but the Shell did not take any runs.

Wharton clapped Pen on the shoulder jocosely as the field crossed over.

"Good for you, kid," he said—"good for you! Now, Inky, you can go on and do another hat-trick."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh grinned as he took the ball.

"I will do my honourable and esteemed best," he remarked. "But I do not think I shall be able to equal the form of our ludicrous clown."

And Inky went on to bowl.

Inky did not equal Pen's form; that was to be expected. Hat-tricks are not as common as blackberries. But he took a wicket for the over, without giving the Shell a chance to run, and the Remove cheered him. Hobson & Co. were four down for 5 now, and as they had to get over a hundred runs to beat the Remove, the juniors were feeling decidedly confident and elated.

Hobson growled as he sent the next man in.

"For goodness' sake, stand up to them, Murphy!" he said. "We shall be all down for sixteen at this rate."

"Sure, I'll do my best!" said Murphy of the Shell.

And Murphy did his best, manfully, and he piled up twelve runs for the Shell before Pen whipped out his middle stump with the last ball of the over.

Five down for 15.

Peter Todd came down from the School House, and he heard the yelling of the Removites as he arrived on the cricket ground.

"How's it going?" asked Peter.

"How!" said Bolsover major. "It's going strong! The Shell are getting socks—regular clocked socks! Penfold's done the hat-trick!"

"Good egg!"

"Rats," said Vernon-Smith. "Other fellows could have done that—if they'd been put in the team instead of that cobbler!"

Bolsover major snorted.

"Well, I couldn't have done it," he said, "and you jolly well couldn't, Smitty! What's the good of grousing when we're beating the Shell? Give 'em a cheer, and shut up!"

The Brouder did not give the cheer, but he shut up. It was not of much use for Pen's enemies to say anything against him just then. He had saved the Remove innings as a batsman, and he was wrecking the Shell innings as a bowler.

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ONE
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bowler, after matters had looked very black for the side. And just then there was not a more popular fellow in the Lower Fourth than Dick Penfold, the scholarship boy and cobbler's son.

Peter Todd glanced up at the clock-tower. It was turned half-past four. Time was getting very close now.

But to interrupt the match! Todd caught Wharton's eye, and made a sign to him. Just then a wicket went down. Six down for 19. It was the last ball of an over, and as the field crossed, Wharton came to the ropes to speak to Todd.

"I've got it!" said Peter.

"Got the wheeze?"

"Yes."

"And it will work?"

"Yes, if you fellows are game."

"We're game enough," said Wharton. "Don't the match—"

"It means that we've got to get to Penfold's house before Mr. Snooks's man gets there," said Peter Todd.

"Phew!"

"We can do it easily enough on the bikes. But there's no time to lose," said Peter. "If you like, Pen can come with me, and you fellows can stay here to finish the match. We could handle it all right, I dare say, though some more with us would be better."

"We'll come," said Harry. "The Shell are six down for nineteen. They can't possibly pull up. They'd have to get eighty-two with four wickets to beat us. And they can't do it. We'll come. The Remove can beat three men short."

The new batsman was coming out to the wicket. But instead of sending on a bowler, Harry Wharton called the field together.

"I've got to get out, you fellows," he said. "But you can lick the Shell three men short, after the start Pen has made. Bob Cherry and Pen are wanted, too."

"What on earth—" began Tom Brown.

"It's jolly important, or we wouldn't think of going," said Harry. "But you can beat the Shell now. Pen's half-beaten them already."

The New Zealand junior nodded.

"Yes, we can finish them," he agreed.

"We'll pile in and settle them," said Mark Linley. "I suppose it wouldn't be quite the thing to ask Hobson to let us play substitutes at this time of day?"

Wharton shook his head.

"He wouldn't agree if we did. Play your hardest, you chaps. If the Remove should get loked through our gang, we shall be scalped by the fellows."

"Ha, ha! You would!"

"We'll win!" said Tom Brown.

And Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry and Penfold left the cricket field. There was a buzz of amazement in the crowd as three of the field walked off before the new over. But the astounded spectators received no explanation. The game was on, three fieldsmen short.

Wharton and his companions walked quickly away to the bicycle shed, answering no inquiries, and the crowd remained to watch the diminished team play the Shell. Hobson & Co. were as surprised as anybody, and their hopes revived. They had given up hope, but with only eight players against them they felt they had a new chance. And the crowd watched with intent interest as the match went on. And, with the best Remove bowler gone, and two points unguarded in the field, certainly the Shell batting showed great signs of "bucking up."

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Legal Advice!

BOB CHERRY was pumping up his tyres. Wharton took his bicycle from the stand. Pen had no bicycle, but he was to ride behind one of the other juniors.

Peter Todd had said that it would be necessary to get to Mr. Penfold's house before five, as that was the hour when the "man" was to be put in possession. That decisive step was to be prevented, and time gained for the appeal to Sir Reginald Brooke. But the plan of Peter Todd, whatever it was, was not yet known to the juniors. But the confidence in his manner inspired them with confidence in their turn.

"What's the wheeze, Toddy?" asked Bob, as he drove at the pump. "Tell us what we've got to do."

"Yans, begad!" said Lord Maudeverer. "Trot out the legal advice, my dear fellow."

"Maudeverer's got to cable to his uncle," said Peter Todd. "Never mind the expense. You can put in a thousand words if you like. I think it's twopenny a word to Montague and Cap Martin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"IN DIREST PERIL!"

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"Bogad, that's all right!"

"I—I say, I—I can't have you spending a lot of money on my account, Maundy," faltered Pen.

"Rats!" said his lordship cheerfully. "I suppose a chap can wire to his uncle if he likes. I'll ask the old boy how he is, and whether he's won anything on red at Monte, bogad!"

"At twopence a word?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Yas. Why not? When a chap's got an affectionate uncle, it's worth twopence a word to ask him how he's getting on. And I'll just mention Pen, you see."

"But, really, Maundy—"

"You shut up, Pen, or I shall dot you on the nose!" said Lord Mauldewer. "It's all right about the cable. I'll make it a yard long, if necessary, and Uncle Ruggie shall know the whole bizeny from alpha to omega. But how are you going to keep Snooks and Hogg from putting the man in? That's what beats me."

"That's where we're going to beat Snooks," said Peter Todd, with a chuckle. "It's only a question of gaining time, as Lord Mauldewer can depend on his uncle—"

"Yas, that's a cert."

"I had the idea in my mind, and I've looked it out in the giddy legal books to make sure," Peter Todd explained. "I've got it down fine. When a chap owes his rent, landlord or landlord's agent can get an order to distrain, and they put a man in possession. But you're not bound to let the man in."

"What!"

"You can shut up all the doors and windows if you like, and keep him out," Peter Todd explained. "If there's a hole left open big enough for him to crawl in, he can crawl in, according to law, and you musn't touch him. That would be assault and battery. But if there isn't a hole left open, he can't come in—he can't force an entrance without a special order of the Court, or he would be housebreaking, according to law—I mean, not according to law."

"My hat!"

"Bailiff's order from the Court to force an entrance takes a long time," said Peter Todd. "much longer time than Snooks will have to get it in. All Mr. Penfold has got to do is to fasten up his doors and hold the fort."

"Oh!" said Pen.

"And he will have a giddy garrison to help him," chuckled Peter Todd. "Of course, the bailiff's men lots of times break the law themselves—they smash a lock or a

window, and pretend they found it broken, you know. Poor people can't go to law with them afterwards, and they have it all their own way. Poor people often don't even know enough law to know that they're entitled to keep the rorters out at all. Bailiff comes swanking along, and they let him in—and they have to pay costs and things then, after the man's once in. That's the little game, you know, to pick up the expenses, and screw a poor beast's last shilling out of the savings bank. A good many houses then are sold up now, wouldn't he sold up at all if people knew they could keep the man out, and gain time to raise the money."

"I didn't know it was so," said Pen.

"And I'll let your pater didn't," said Peter Todd, with a grin. "That's the advantage of having legal advice, you see."

"Yas, bogad!"

"Of course, if Mr. Penfold were alone there, the bailiffs would trick him somehow—they'd bust in a skylight or something, and make out it was left unfastened. But there's going to be some Greyfriars chaps on the spot—"

"Hurrah!"

"But we shall have to get back to-night," said Bob Cherry.

Peter nodded calmly.

"I haven't told you all yet," he replied. "Bailiffs can't enter between sunset and sunrise. Night attacks are barred."

"Is that the law?" asked Pen.

"That's the law," said Peter.

"The law is a jolly good thing, after all, when you know it," said Harry Wharton. "It isn't all rot, when you come to think of it."

"There's a jolly good deal in the law," said Peter Todd. "My pater makes a good living out of it, for one thing. If it wasn't for the law, he would have to work."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you're quite sure about all this, Peter?" asked Pen.

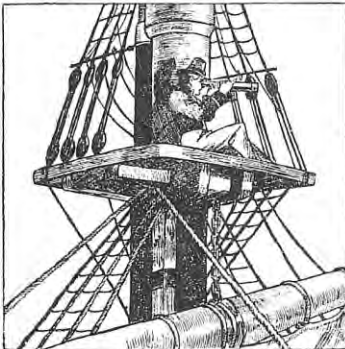
"Safe as houses!"

"Because—because my father wouldn't break the law, you know. He would have a horror of anything like—well, like a raze, you know."

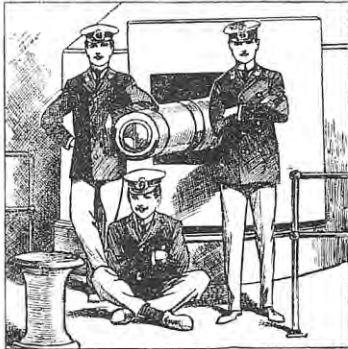
"This isn't a raze," said Peter. "This is good, solid law! We're going to stand up for law and order and the British Constitution. If your pater is timid about it, Pen, we've

CONTRASTS.—No. 11.

The Midshipman of 100 years ago had, as a rule, a very rough time at sea. Poorly fed and kept under the strictest discipline, he was liable to be "mastheaded" for the most trivial offence, and many weary hours of lonely vigil aloft in the rigging fell to his lot.

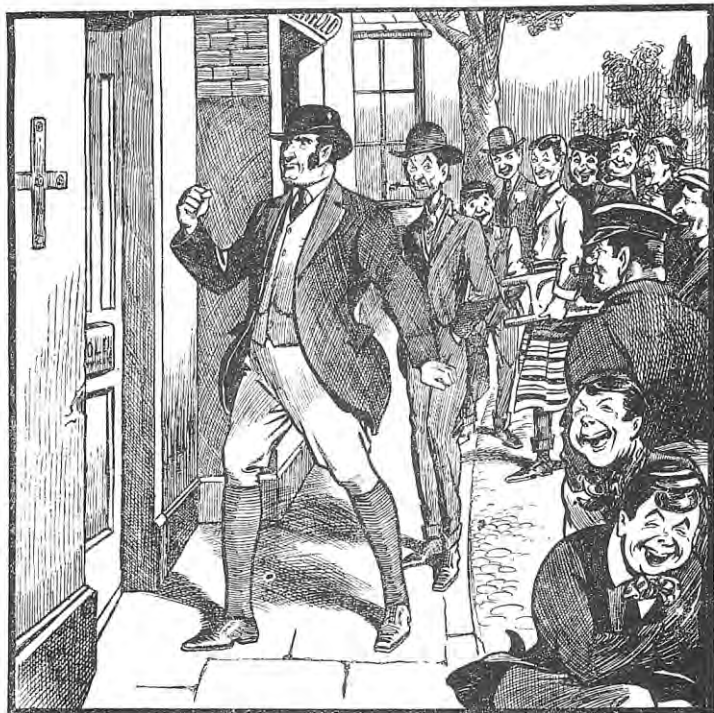


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The bailiff glared at Mr. Penfold through the glass. Then he raised his voice, and his bull-tones came loudly through the door. "Open this door at once!" "Go and eat coke!" called out Peter Todd from within. "Wha—a—at!" "Coke!" came Peter's voice again. (See Chapter II.)

got to buck him up. You see, costs and expenses run up after the man's in, and that makes a bigger bill to pay at the finish—to say nothing of having to feed the broker's man—and I've heard that they have good appetites. What I hope is, that Snooks and Hogg and Co. will go a bit too far, thinking that your father doesn't know the law, and can't do anything. Then they'll put their foot in it, and catch something."

"Hurrah!"
"Let's get off," exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Time's getting close. If we're not there before the bailiff's man arrives, it won't work."

"Ready?" said Bob Cherry, jamming his pump into the clip in the machine. "You're going to stand on my foot now, Pen, and hold my shoulders."

"Right ho!"
The juniors ran their bicycles down to the gates. Peter Todd tapped Lord Mauleverer on the shoulder.

"Get down to the post-office and send that wire," he said; "the sooner the quicker, you know."

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"Yess; I'm going down with you, and I'll stop at the post-office, and join you afterwards."

"Good bye!"

And the juniors mounted their machines, Pen standing behind Bob Cherry, and they dashed down the lane at a great speed.

It did not take them many minutes to scorch into Friar-chale.

Lord Mauleverer stopped at the post-office, and the other fellows rode on down the quaint old High Street.

Mr. Penfold's shop was in the High Street. A dozen or more village urchins were gathered on the pavement outside. In a little place like Friar-chale all news was known at once to the whole village, and Mr. Penfold's difficulties were common property. Quite a crowd was gathering to see Mr. Hogg, the bailiff, put a man in possession. Mr. Penfold was so much an old gentleman that he was not likely to throw the man out, but the crowd were not without hopes that there would be a row. As a matter of fact, their hopes in that regard were to be gratified.

"There was a howl from some of the mechanics as Pen was seen."

"Here comes young Penfold!"

"Hallo, young Penfold, your father's going to have the brokers in."

"Clear off, you young ruffians!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Run the bikes into the shop, you chaps. We're in time."

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER. No Admittance!

MR. PENFOLD was seated in his shop at work. The shop was a little dusky place, with a strong smell of leather about it—good leather, however, and not the mysterious material that was used in the manufacture of footwear at the brand-new establishment over in Courtfield.

Two uneven steps descended from the street into the shop. Mr. Penfold was at work upon a boot, his face sad and troubled as he worked.

But he dropped the boot, and looked up in great surprise at the sight of four juniors and three bicycles swarming into the little shop.

"Dick?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, dad."

Mr. Penfold rose awkwardly.

"I'm sorry, young gentlemen," he said, "but—"

"They know all about it, dad," said Pen quickly.

"They've come to help us. It's all right, dad; it's going to be all right."

John Penfold smiled sadly.

"I'm afraid it won't be all right, Dick. It's five minutes to five now, and at five o'clock Mr. Hogg will be here with his man."

Dick Penfold explained hurriedly.

"Dad, you know my chum, Lord Mauleverer—you know what a good sort he is? Well, Sir Reginald Brooke, who owns this property, is his uncle."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Penfold, in surprise. "But—"

"Mauleverer has sent him a wire—"

"Dick—"

"And he will wire back as soon as he gets it, telling Snooks to let you alone," Pen explained.

"Dick—"

"And until the reply wire comes, Hogg and Co. are to be kept out," Pen explained. "We've come to help you, dad."

"Kept out?" repeated John Penfold dazedly.

"Yes, dad."

Pen was frowning up the shop door as he spoke. He shot the bolt, and put the chain on the door, and turned to his father again with flushed face.

"You'll let us keep them out, dad? It's only a question of barring the cads out till tomorrow, when Lord Mauleverer's uncle will wire instructions to Snooks."

"But will he, Dick?"

"Yes, yes! Mauleverer says so, honour-bright. And these chaps know Sir Reginald; tell my father about him, you fellows."

"He's a jolly good old boy," said Harry Wharton. "We had a holiday with him, and he's one of the kindest men breathing, and he'd do anything for Mauleverer. There isn't the slightest doubt that, when he gets Mauleverer's wire, he'll order Snooks at once to leave you alone."

"Not the slightest doubt," said Bob Cherry.

Mr. Penfold gasped. His mind was slow, and could not grasp the situation at once.

"But we can't keep the man out, Dick," he said. "It would be akin the law!"

"No, no, it wouldn't!"

"We've had legal advice about that, Mr. Penfold," said Harry Wharton.

"Master Wharton! Legal advice?"

"Yes, sir. Todd here, his father's a solicitor, and he knows the law from beginning to end, and he says—"

"Yes, rather," said Peter Todd; "you have a legal right to keep them out, Mr. Penfold, and they can't force their way in. You could call the police if they did."

"Dear me—"

"All you've got to do is to bar doors and windows, and keep 'em out," said Peter Todd. "Sir Reginald will squash Snooks by to-morrow, and then you will be all right."

"Oh, young gentlemen," said John Penfold, and there was a break in his voice, "if this is right—"

"It's right enough, dad, right as rain! I knew there'd be a way!" Pen exclaimed joyously. "It will be a regular climb-down for Snooks."

"I've paid my rent regular for twenty year and more."

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said John Penfold. "I know Sir Reginald himself wouldn't be hard on me, if he knewed. But he doesn't know how Snooks deals with his tenants, and he trusts the man."

"He won't trust him after this, and it will be a leg-up for all the other tenants if Snooks gets the boot, dad!"

"And— You young gentlemen think I may keep them out—"

"We know you can, sir, and we're here to help you!"

"I'm sure you're very kind!" said the poor old gentleman. "I don't think I could ever have stood the disgrace of having the brokers in my house, after I've paid my way fair and honest all my life. Things grow hard for an old man, when trade isn't what it used to be. Nor that I don't want to meet my just debts. But I can pay if the man will give me time to do it, but he won't. He's said that he wants to clear out all the tenants along here, Dick, and have these old places pulled down, and a new row of shops put up. It will mean a lot of money for his master, but Friardale won't be what it used to be when he's done it. All the country-side is being spoiled with their new-fangled notions. I know Sir Reginald would stop him if he understood; but he doesn't. But if we can keep them out, Dick—"

"We can, dad! And you'll let us?"

"Yes, yes! if you're sure it's the law—"

"Quite sure, sir," said Peter Todd—"not the slightest doubt about it!"

"Then I— Ah, here comes Mr. Hogg!"

There was a buzz in the crowd outside. A fat, pompous-looking man in gaiters came striding up to the shop door, with a little thin man behind him. The fat man was Mr. Hogg, the bailiff, and the little starved-looking man behind him was evidently the poor wretch who was to be put "in possession."

Mr. Penfold trembled a little. The consciousness of being poor and unable to pay his way was what sapped the courage of the old gentleman.

"You're quite sure, young gentlemen?" he repeated.

"Quite sure, sir."

"If it's the law, I'm going to stand up for my rights," said John Penfold. "Don't open the door when he knocks!"

"No fear!"

Mr. Hogg halted before the shop door, seemingly surprised to find it closed. He tapped on the glass that formed the upper part of the door. Then he turned the handle, and, as the door did not open, he tapped again with great impatience.

"Are you there, Mr. Penfold?" he called out.

"I'm here, Mr. Hogg!"

"Let me in, then, can't you?"

"No, sir," said Mr. Penfold; "I can't!"

The bailiff's fat, red face grew redder. He glared at Mr. Penfold through the glass. Then he raised his voice, and his bull-tones came loudly through the door:

"Open this door at once!"

"Go and eat coke!" called out Peter Todd.

"Wha-a-at!"

"Coke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Hogg rapped on the glass with his knuckles, so hard that there was danger of the pane being broken. Peter Todd tapped in his turn.

"Let me warn you, Mr. Hogg!" he said. "If you break this glass, we shall send for the police, and charge you with house-breaking!"

"Pile in, Toddy!" murmured the juniors.

Mr. Hogg stared speechlessly at Todd. He could hardly believe his ears. Mr. Hogg had been accustomed to carrying all before him in the performance of his extremely unpleasant duties. To be shut out of a house, and "checked" by a cool youth inside, was something quite new in his experience.

"Wha-a-at!" he stammered again. "What!"

"Go and look after the other doors, Pen!" murmured Todd. "He will try to keep us talking here while the man slips round to the back, if he can!"

"Right-ho!" said Pen.

And he hurried out of the back of the shop.

"Open this door!" roared Mr. Hogg. "I've come to put a man in possession! Open this door immediately, in the name of the law!"

Peter Todd chuckled.

"We're keeping it shut in the name of the law, cocky!" he replied. "If you don't know the law on the subject, you can go and ask Snooks; or I'll give you my father's address, if you're prepared to plank down six-and-eightpence!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll suffer for it if you don't open this door at once!" roared Mr. Hogg.

"You take care!" said Peter Todd. "We've got witnesses here, Mr. Hogg, to the fact that you are using threatening language!"

"Wha-at!"

"Threatening language is barred by law. Mr. Hogg. You are liable to a fine, or imprisonment not exceeding three months, if you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't interrupt me, you fellows, when I'm explaining the law to Mr. Hogg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bailiff rapped furiously on the glass again. The crowd outside had heard all that was said, and they were grinning at Mr. Hogg. Mr. Hogg was a well-known person in Friarale, and he was not popular, especially with the poorer section of the population. It was a great joy to the onlookers to see Mr. Hogg baffled and defied.

"Will you open the door?"

"No!"

"You young scoundrel—"

"That is a libellous expression, Mr. Hogg! My respect for the law prevents me from calling you by the names I consider appropriate!" said Peter Todd severely. "Otherwise, I should call you a rascal!"

"What!"

"And a bully—"

"What!"

"And a beast! But I know the law, and so I can only call you a cad, a rotter, and an outsider! I can also tell you to go and eat coke, as it rests with you whether you do so or not. Go and eat coke!"

"What-a-rot!"

Mr. Hogg seemed on the verge of an explosion, or a fit of apoplexy. His starved-looking man had disappeared, and was evidently gone scouting for an entrance at the back. But Pen had taken care of that. Doors and windows on the ground floor were fastened securely, and Pen was attending to the upper windows now. There were not many; the house was not a large one.

Mr. Hogg was at a loss.

Although he was accustomed to overbearing poor people, he knew very well that he dared not force an entrance into the house.

With an effort he controlled his rage, and tapped more gently upon the glass.

"Mr. Penfold, I wish to speak to you; not to this impudent boy!"

"I won't speak to anybody who calls this young gentleman by such a name as that!" said Mr. Penfold stolidly.

"I—I withdraw the expression!" said Mr. Hogg, grinding his teeth. "Mr. Penfold, I call upon you to admit the man I have brought with me! You know the law. I am here to place Snider in possession. You must let him in!"

"That ain't the law, Mr. Hogg!" said John Penfold.

"I wouldn't let him in if I don't choose. This young gentleman says so!"

"I tell you you must let him in!"

"And I tell you I won't!"

"You will get notice to quit over this, Mr. Penfold!"

"I'll risk that, Mr. Hogg. Sir Reginald won't let them turn me out after twenty years, when he knows about it—and he'll know soon."

"Will you open the door?"

"No; I won't!"

"Hear, hear!" murmured the juniors.

And Mr. Hogg retired, baffled. His man Snider had come round again from the back of the house, apparently having

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failed to find any entrance. The two stood conversing in low tones in the street, surrounded by a curious crowd, and the door remained shut. The man in possession was not in possession yet.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER. Holding the Fort.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were gleeful.

The myrmidons of Mr. Snooks had been baffled so far, and the Greyfriars juniors were victorious.

So long as the daylight lasted the house was in danger from the attacks of Mr. Hogg and his man Snider, but after sunset they would not dare to enter. It would be safe to open the door then, and the juniors could return to Greyfriars. They would get lines for being late for call-over, but that was a light matter.

Wharton was thinking more about the Shell watch than the lines in prospect. He hoped that Nugent and the rest were beating the Shell.

Mr. Penfold sat down to his bench again, and resumed work upon the boat. He appeared to be in almost a dazed state; excitement of any sort was a new thing in his quiet village life. But the juniors were very much upon the quiver. They had come there to hold the fort, as Bob Cherry expressed it, and they were prepared to hold it against all comers.

"We haven't beaten the Hogg yet," Peter Todd remarked. "This is only the first round. I shouldn't wonder if he fetches Snooks."

"Good! We'll give Snooks our opinion of him!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Got all the windows fastened, Pen?"

"Every one—upstairs and down!" said Pen.

"Good egg! One of us had better keep watch from the back windows, or they will play some trick on us."

"I'll do that," said Pen.

"And we'll watch the enemy from here," said Harry Wharton.

"Hallo! Snider is out of sight again—and there goes Hogg! They're sneaking off!"

"Sneaking round to the back again, more likely!" said Todd.

Leaving Mr. Penfold in the shop, the juniors went through the little back-passage into the kitchen.

Outside the kitchen window was the little trim garden, and beyond that the meadows stretching away towards the river. The afternoon sun glimmered down upon the garden, and the adjoining gardens, separated by low palings.

In the garden behind the house the juniors sighted Mr. Hogg and Snider. They had come in by the back gate, and were scanning the back of the house.

"Lie low," said Peter Todd. "Let's see what they're going to do."

And the juniors watched through the curtain, invisible themselves to the men in the back-garden.

Mr. Hogg cautiously tried the kitchen door, and muttered

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something between his teeth when he found that the door was fast.

Then his shadow fell across the kitchen window. He felt the sash with his hands, and found it firm. The catch was fastened. He pressed his face close to the glass to see whether there was anyone in the kitchen. The juniors, curious to observe what he would do, flattened themselves against the wall, out of the range of his sight.

"Ain't nobody there, sir?" they heard Snider mutter.
"I'll have the window open in a jiffy," said Mr. Hogg.
"Mind, Snider, you found it unfastened."
"I knows, sir."

Mr. Hogg opened a large pocket-knife, and inserted the blade between the sashes of the window. It was easy enough to push back the catch from the outside by means of the knife. Then the window could be raised—and an open window, of course, was a legal mode of entrance. Mr. Hogg was sailing very near to the wind; but he was prepared for any amount of hard swearing that might be necessary afterwards.

The blade of the knife came through the crack between the sashes, and Mr. Hogg pressed the catch cautiously back.

"Time for us to chip in," murmured Harry Wharton.
"He's breaking the law."

"Yes, rather."
Wharton made a sudden spring to the window. He caught the lower sash in his hands, and jammed it hard against the other, so that the blade of Mr. Hogg's knife was jammed between the two so tightly that the bailiff could not withdraw it.

Mr. Hogg started, and glared at him through the glass.
"You young 'ounds!" he muttered.
"You old rascal!" retorted Wharton.
"Lemme get this knife out!"
"No fear. That knife's going to stay there," said Mr. Hogg, as evidence that you've been breaking the law," said Wharton.

Mr. Hogg turned purple.
He wrenched at the knife, and Wharton jammed the sashes harder together, the other juniors lending their aid. The knife was gripped so tightly between the sashes that the bailiff could not possibly withdraw it. There was a sudden snap as he wrenched savagely at the knife. The blade had broken off short in his efforts.

Mr. Hogg uttered an oath, and receded a pace. The broken blade of the knife remained jammed between the sashes of the window, incontrovertible evidence of the burglarious attempt.

"That's bad, sir," murmured Mr. Snider.
Mr. Hogg turned on him furiously. He could not get at the juniors, but he could get at the unfortunate Mr. Snider, who was quite at his mercy, being in his employment. He called Mr. Snider all the names he could think of, and they were not at all complimentary. He rated him, up hill and down dale, the unlucky Snider not saying a word in reply, which would have been as much as his wretched job was worth. The juniors listened to him in utter disgust.

"What an awful rotter!" said Bob Cherry. "It isn't that poor beast's fault!"

Mr. Hogg, having exhausted his breath, if not his temper, turned to the window again. He made an effort to drag out the fragment of the knife-blade, but it was in vain. The sash was too tight, and he could not get a grip on the piece of the blade that protruded. The bailiff shook his big and heavy fist at the grinning juniors inside.

He would gladly have smashed the glass, but that was further than he dared to go.

"Try again, old son," said Peter Tuld. "We're going to keep this broken blade here as evidence against you."

"You young 'ounds!"
"Go and eat cake!"
"Buz off!"
"Go home!"
"Rats!"

Mr. Hogg stamped away. Mr. Snider followed him humbly and timidly. They halted in the garden, and talked again, out of hearing of the juniors in the kitchen. But Harry Wharton & Co. could guess the gist of Mr. Hogg's instructions to his subordinate.

"You've got to get in, Snider," said Mr. Hogg. "Course, I never expected nothing of this sort. You'll ave to get in somehow. Don't you break the law. But you've got to get in."

"I'll do my best, sir," whined Snider.
"Mr. Snider's angry about it," went on Mr. Hogg. "A young swell from the school yonder has been threatening him, threatening to write to Sir Roderick. It's made Mr. Snooks very ratty, and I can tell you he means to drive it as 'ard as he can with Penfold, to show that he ain't to be interfered with."

"THE MAGNET LIBRARY," No. 371.
"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

"Quite right, too," said the wretched Snider. "I don't wonder."

"That ain't your business," said the amiable Mr. Hogg. "Shut your head, Snider, and listen to me!"

"Sottingly, sir."
"You've got to get in, or you won't 'ave any more jobs from me, that's all."

"I'll get in, sir."
"Mind you do. I shall 'ave a jawing from Snooks now."

And Mr. Hogg departed, fuming. The wretched broker's man came back to the kitchen window and looked in. Then he made a round of the other windows, trying them all. But he did not try to force the sashes. Then he climbed on the roof of the kitchen, which was an outbuilding, with lended roof, and a bedroom window looking over it—the window of Dick Penfold's old bed-room. Mr. Snider carefully tried that window, but it was fastened securely. He pressed his face to the glass, looking in, and caught the eye of a watchful junior on him, and abandoned the idea of forcing the sash with a knife. Greatly discouraged, Mr. Snider descended into the garden again, and came round to the front of the house. There he stood, somewhat like Patience on a monument, watching the house, and the juniors watched him through the glass in the shop door. The man in possession was in possession of nothing but the pavement, so far, and the crowd of urchins there were chipping him unmercifully.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Worm Turns!

LORD MAULEVERER jumped off his bicycle outside the little shop, and came up to the door. Mr. Snider's face brightened up. If the junior was going in, he could go in at the same time, and force could not legally be used to keep him out. It is an old saying that an Englishman's house is his castle; but the castle is by no means an impregnable one. Lord Mauleverer tapped on the glass of the door.

"Let me in, you chaps!" he called out.
Mr. Snider drew closer, breathing hard.
But Harry Wharton shook his head.

"Sorry, Mauly! I can't open the door, or that sneak will jump in. He's the man in possession—that worm behind you."

"Begad!"
Lord Mauleverer turned round and looked at Snider. Mr. Snider looked at him fiercely in return. He was afraid of Mr. Hogg—with reason, for his work depended on Mr. Hogg, and there was a Mrs. Snider, and several little Sniders, who depended on this wretched man for their breadwinner. But Snider was not afraid of Lord Mauleverer.

"I'm going in 'ere, young shaver," he said.
"Begad! Don't you call me young shaver, my man," said Lord Mauleverer. "Do you want me to wipe up the road with you, begad?"

The athletic schoolboy—for Lord Mauleverer was athletic enough, in spite of his slim elegance—looked as if he could do it, and would do it, and Mr. Snider climbed down at once.

"Beggin' your pardon, sir," he said. "It's my duty to go in 'ere. I'm the man in possession, sir."

Lord Mauleverer chuckled.
"You're not in possession yet, my boy," he said. "and I fancy you won't be. Begad!"

"It means the sack for me if I ain't," said Mr. Snider gloomily. "You just ask them young gentles to open the door!"

"No fear."
"They oughter let me in," said Mr. Snider almost tears fully. "I'm a poor man, and I can't afford to lose my job. And Mr. Hogg is that ratty!"

"Poor beast!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I shouldn't want a job like this, if I were you. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, begad!"

"A man must live, sir," said Mr. Snider, hoping that by moving the schoolboy's feelings he would gain his end. "I'm a poor man, and I must live."

"Begad, I don't see the necessity for that, myself," said Lord Mauleverer, looking him over with a disparaging eye. "that's simply a prejudice on your part, my dear fellow. I really can't see that you are either use or ornament."

Mr. Snider gave a sickly grin. Lord Mauleverer tapped on the window again.

"All serene, you fellows," he called out. "Hold the fort, and keep the giddy colours flying, begad! I come to tell you that I've sent the wine to Cap Martin, and my uncle will get it soon, and there'll be an answer to-morrow, my infants. Pen, old man, buck up!"

Pen grinned through the window.

"It's all right, Mauly!"

"I'll be getting back to the school, then," said Lord Maul-evever. "Keep the flag flying! No surrender!"

"Rather not!"

Lord Maul-evever turned away. Mr. Snider looked dread-fully disappointed. The kind-hearted lad glanced at him, and tapped him on the shoulder.

"So you're going to get sacked if you don't get in?" he said.

"Yes, sir!" groaned Mr. Snider.

"But it won't be your fault if they keep you out," said Lord Maul-evever kindly.

"No good tiffin' Mr. 'Ogg that," replied Snider despondently.

"How much do you get for this job?"

"I get a 'arf-crown, and my food."

"Oh, my hat! Hogg doesn't ruin himself by paying high wages, I can see. I shouldn't think you'd mind losing a job like that."

"It ain't only this one—there's others to follow, you see," said Mr. Snider miserably.

"How much do you make in a year out of this rotten business?" asked Lord Maul-evever, taking out his pocket-book.

Mr. Snider eyed the pocket-book curiously.

"Well, I gits jobs twice a week werry often," he said. "Sometimes 'ere, sometimes in Pegg, or over in Courtfield, sir."

"Five bob a week, for breaking up happy homes," said Lord Maul-evever. "It isn't good enough, my man. Look here, do you know what that is?"

Mr. Snider gasped as Lord Maul-evever whistled a bank-note, out of a wad of others, in his pocket-book.

"Yes, sir—that's a five," he said.

"Take it!"

"Wia-a-at!"

"Take it; it's yours, and give up this filthy job," said the schoolboy earl. "Put that five in your pocket, and don't be a broker's man again for six months. Look out for some honest work, see?"

Mr. Snider's fingers trembled as they closed on the five-pound-note.

"Oh, my heve!" was all he said.

"Mind what I've told you," said Lord Maul-evever severely. "Look out for another job, and if Hogg sacks you, dot him in the eye."

And Lord Maul-evever remounted his bicycle, and rode away towards Greyfriars. Mr. Snider gazed at the crisp, crumpled five-pound-note in his dirty fingers, as if he could not tear his eyes upon it sufficiently.

"Oh, my heve!" he murmured.

And he walked over to the Red Cow to change the bank-note.

The juniors had watched this little scene, grinning, from the shop window.

"I fancy Snider will be pretty busy now, shifting ale," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

About half an hour later, Mr. Hogg came back. Mr. Snooks, the agent, was with him, and Mr. Snooks's hard-featured face was pink with anger. Mr. Snooks came up to the shop door, and tapped upon it authoritatively with his knuckles.

"Open this dory instantly!" he said.

"Good-afternoon!" called back Bob Cherry.

"Open this door!"

"Nice afternoon, ain't it?"

"Will you open this door?"

"But it won't be no use if it turns to ruin."

"What! What! Will you do as I tell you?"

"Still, it will be good for the crops."

Mr. Snooks breathed hard through his nose. He rapped fiercely on the glass, and called out to Mr. Penfold. John Penfold rose from his bench.

"I demand admittance, Penfold," said the agent severely.

John Penfold shook his head slowly.

"You can't demand admittance according to law," he replied. "I ain't letting you in."

"Law! What do you know about the law?" roared the agent.

"I don't know much," said Mr. Penfold. "But these young gentlemen tell me you can't come in according to law, if I keep you out!"

The agent grunted his teeth.

"If you do not admit me at once, Mr. Penfold, you will be served with notice to quit, and turned out of the house!" he shouted.

"Very well, Mr. Snooks!"

"You refuse to let me in?"

"Yes!"

Mr. Snooks turned away, crimson with fury. He had had no doubt that his authority as Sir Reginald Brooke's agent would be amply sufficient to make Mr. Penfold admit him. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 277.

A Grand, Long, Complete School Treat of the Customs of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

He had pooh-poohed Mr. Hogg's doubts upon the subject, but he had succeeded no better than the bailiff had done.

"It ain't any good, sir," muttered Mr. Hogg. "But Snider will manage it somehow. He knows it will be the sack for him if he doesn't."

"Where is Snider?"

"I suppose he's round at the back."

"Fetch him."

Mr. Hogg obediently went to look for Snider, but he came back without him. Mr. Snider was not to be found.

"Well, where is the man?" demanded the agent.

"He seems to be gone," said Mr. Hogg. "Blessed if I can understand it. I gave him distinct orders."

"Pah!"

"Snider's in the Red Cow," one of the grinning urchins volunteered information.

"What! What?" exclaimed the agent, turning angrily upon the bailiff. "Is this how your man performs his duty?"

Mr. Hogg looked quite blank.

"He's a thirsty soul," he said; "but he wouldn't dare— But I'll soon see, sir. If he's in the Red Cow, it's the sack for him, and well he knows it."

And Mr. Hogg strode across the street, and pushed the swing doors of the Red Cow, and disappeared. To his rage and amazement, he found Mr. Snider was there. Snider was deep in his seventh mug of ale, and the ale of the Red Cow was strong. The skinny and starved-looking broker's man was flushed enough now, and inclined to be pugnacious. And with the remains of a five-pound-note in his pocket, he was not afraid of Mr. Hogg. He had more now in his pockets than Mr. Hogg was likely to pay him in six months. Mr. Hogg, unaware of the change in his man's circumstances, laid a heavy hand on his shoulder, and swung him round from the bar.

"You drunken 'ound!" roared Mr. Hogg. "Do dare you neglect your duties, to come swilling here in this pub, hey? It's the sack, my boy. Do you 'ear? The 'oly sack!"

Mr. Snider blinked at him with dirty eyes.

"And off!" he said.

"What?"

"And off, Mr. 'Ogg!" said Snider independently. "You ain't no right to hantifere with a free Englishman in his pub, I says."

"'Ear, 'ear!" murmured three or four loafers to whom Mr. Snider, in his new wealthiness, had been standing brave.

Mr. Hogg was so surprised by this new attitude of his slave and fool, that he could only stare at Snider. He did not know anything about the five, and he wondered whether the man was drunk, or mad.

"I left you on a job—!" began the bailiff.

"Go and do your own dirty work," said Snider, amid a murmur of applause from his friends. "I ain't doing it any more! I ain't going to be put in possession of an honest man's 'copy 'ome. I ain't taking the bread from the mouths of the widowed and fatherless—I ain't, so I tells yer! Do yer own dirty work, Mr. 'Ogg, and much good may it do yer!"

"Snooks like a man, 'Energy," said one of Mr. Snider's friends, and all the others murmured an admiring assent.

"You—you—you—" gasped Mr. Hogg. "Why, I'll—"

"You get houl!" said Mr. Snider.

"What?"

"Heads!" said Mr. Snider, raising a watering but dramatic finger to point to the door. "You get houl of the company of gentlemen till you learn 'ow to behave."

Mr. Hogg could stand no more. He hunched himself at Snider in a ferocious manner, and smote him. Mr. Snider staggered and reeled against the bar; but the ale had imparted much courage to his feeble soul. He caught up the foaming mug, and hurled the contents into the fat, red face of the bailiff.

"Bravo, 'Energy!" came the chorus.

Winded by the ale, Mr. Hogg staggered back, and 'Energy Snider, pursuing his advantage, rushed at him and punched him as he reeled against the sliding doors. The doors slid back under the fat man's weight, and he rolled through, and the doors closed again. Mr. Snider turned back to the bar, flushed with ale and victory.

"Bravo, 'Energy!"

"I'll show 'im," said Mr. Snider, "that I ain't any man's 'dawl. And it's my treat, gentlemen."

And the gentlemen did full justice to Mr. Snider's treat. Mr. Hogg, mopping his face with a red handkerchief, re-crossed the street, and rejoined the glowering and impatient agent.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER. A Narrow Escape!

MR. SNOOKS was in a state of suppressed fury. The grins and remarks of the urelms gathered before the Penfold shop exasperated him, and he felt that his dignity was suffering. And Mr. Snooks had a very great deal of dignity. As the trusted agent of Sir Reginald Beooke, he was in a position of great power in Friarale and the district; and the happiness of many a home depended upon the nod of Mr. Snooks. The greatest of writers has told us that:

"Man, vain man,
Dressed in a little brief authority
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep."

Mr. Snooks, during his master's residence abroad, was dressed in a little brief authority; and he was naturally proceeding to make the angels weep. He had a little mean soul, and a very hard heart, and he exacted more outward respect than his master would have done. He was the most cordially hated man in the county; but Mr. Snooks did not mind that—he was feared more than he was hated, and both fear and hatred were a tribute to his great power and consequence. To be opposed, defied, and made an exhibition of by one of his tenants, was exasperating—almost unthinkable. The remembrance of Lord Maulverer had only irritated Mr. Snooks's arrogant pride. He meant to show that he could do as he liked on the estate he governed with a rod of iron. And now a mere shoemaker, a man whose fate he held in the hollow of his hand, so to speak, had set himself up against him, and the great Snooks was being galled in the streets of Friarale.

Something had to be done, if the whole solar system was not to fall to utter ruin on the spot.

Mr. Snooks glared at Mr. Hogg. Mr. Hogg was almost as dependent on Mr. Snooks as Mr. Snider had been on Mr. Hogg. Therefore upon his devoted head the yoke of the agent's wrath was poured out.

"The man's in the pub getting drunk," said Mr. Hogg.

"He's asnaured me, too. He's been gettin' money from somewhere. But I can get another man, sir."

"Is this how you manage your business, Mr. Hogg? I can see that I shall have to look elsewhere for assistance in dealing with unsatisfactory tenants. You are wasting my time, sir! Wasting my time—my time!" said Mr. Snooks.

"I'm very sorry," said Mr. Hogg. "But I'll take the matter in 'and myself till I get a new man on the job, sir!"

"You had better," said Mr. Snooks; "and I think you had better contrive to get into possession of this house, Mr. Hogg. I rely on you. Unless you do so, I certainly shall not depend upon you again. I will not be defied by a tenant. Good heavens! The place is coming to something indeed when I am defied—openly defied!" gasped Mr. Snooks, as if it were too dreadful to believe, even with the evidence of his senses that it was the case.

Mr. Hogg would gladly have understudied Mr. Snider in his new act of the turning of the worm. But he did not dare to quarrel with the agent, so he replied with becomng humility:

"You depend on me, sir; I'll manage 'em!"

Mr. Snooks waved a fat forefinger augurially.

"See that you do, Mr. Hogg," he said—"see that you do!"

And Mr. Snooks marched away as majestically as he could, followed by a yell of derision from the urelms. He had brought the whole force of his dignity to bear upon Mr. Penfold, and he had failed, and he was looking ridiculous, and he knew it. The more he had assumed upon his authority, the more absurd he looked when he was defied, and he realised it. He fumed with rage as he walked away. He would have no mercy upon the Penfolds now. They should be sold up and turned out of house and home. He would crush them, as an example to the village. Hanging state of the law he could not have them hanged. But at all events he could crush them, and turn them out, and break up their home, and that would be some consolation.

Mr. Hogg remained in a worried state of mind. He impressed one of his enlokers into his service, and despatched him to find another "man" to be put in possession. That



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was easy enough. But how to get into the place. That was not so easy. John Penfold had had no idea of resisting until the Greyfriars juniors came to the rescue. But his slow, steady mind was fully made up now. He intended to avail himself of the protection the law afforded him. And it was not very clear what Mr. Hogg was to do. He could only resort to the trickery usual to his tribe in such cases, with a very doubtful hope of success.

Having thought it out, Mr. Hogg retired from view. Round the nearest corner he waited for the arrival of the new man, and when the man came he gave him instructions, and the substitute for Snider expressed his opinion that it would "work."

Meanwhile, the juniors were keeping watch and ward in the cobbler's shop.

Dick Penfold had raided the pantry and prepared tea, and although the meal was frugal, the juniors enjoyed it immensely.

They had the consciousness of victory—a victory in the cause of justice—to cheer them up. They were lacking up law and order, as Peter Todd remarked, and, in fact, standing up for the British Constitution. And the expression upon Mr. Snooks's fat face as he marched away had been most enjoyable.

The juniors were at tea in the little parlour, and John Penfold was working at his bench, when there came a sharp rap at the shop door. John Penfold rose. A man was looking in through the glass.

"Is Mr. Penfold there?" he asked.

"I'm here," said John Penfold.

"You're wanted."

"What's wanted?" asked Mr. Penfold, through the door, without touching the bolts.

"Your wife's met with an accident; they've taken her to the Cottage Hospital, and sent me to tell you," said the man quickly, through the keyhole.

John Penfold's face changed. He turned horribly pale, and pressed his hand to his heart for a moment.

"My wife! The Cottage Hospital?" he stammered. "Oh, my poor Mary!"

He fumbled with the chain on the door. The man outside watched him eagerly through the glass.

The rattling of the chain brought the juniors with a run into the shop. Mr. Penfold had the bolts drawn already, and he was just removing the chain. The handle of the door was turned by the man outside, and the door came open. Bob Cherry made one spring to it, and jammed his foot against it.

"You are opening the door, Mr. Penfold," he exclaimed, in amusement.

"Father!" said Pen.

"Open the door, my lady," said John Penfold brokenly. "I've got to go—your poor mother, Dick—she's had an accident—they've taken her to the Cottage Hospital—"

Pen turned white.

"Oh, father!"

The man outside was pressing on the door, and he had inserted his foot. The door could not be quite closed now.

The fat figure of Mr. Hogg loomed into sight behind him. Harry Wharton jammed his foot against the door beside Bob's heavy boot.

"Hold on a minute!" he said hurriedly. The expression on the man's face outside, and the sight of Mr. Hogg made Wharton very suspicious.

"Yes, hold on," said Peter Todd. "Don't you be in a hurry to open the door—"

"You, don't understand!" gasped John Penfold. "My wife—"

"I think it's a trick, sir."

"What?"

"What's that fellow so keen to get in for, if he's only a messenger?" said Harry.

The man outside heard the words, and he exerted all his force to shove the door wider open. Mr. Hogg came up to the door and shoved as well. The four Greyfriars juniors jammed their feet against it; they understood well enough, and Pen, too, realised that it was a trick—a cruel and cowardly trick—to get into the house.

"It's a dodge!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Shove here, Mr. Penfold!"

John Penfold pressed his hand to his brow.

"But—but it's an accident—"

"It isn't an accident; it's a lie of that scoundrel!" said Harry Wharton. "They don't know anything about Mrs. Penfold. It's a trick to get the door open!"

"But—but—"

"Why is the man trying to get in, then?"

John Penfold looked at them.

If this man had simply come to fetch him to the Cottage Hospital to see his wife there, he would not, of course, be endeavouring to force his way into the shop. And Mr. Hogg would not be helping him.

John Penfold's face became hard and stern.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY, No. 277.

A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

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ONE
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"You villain," he said—"you villain! So you were tricking me!"

The broker's man did not reply. He had his foot and part of his leg in the doorway, and he was shoving on the door with all his strength. Mr. Hogg's heavy weight was backing him up, and the juniors had all they could do to keep the door shut. They exerted all their strength to keep it shut, but the pressure from without was terrible.

"Help us, dad!" said Pen. "The lying rascal was taking you in! Mother's away, and wouldn't return suddenly without letting us know. It's a rotten trick, dad!"

"Yes, I know that now," said Mr. Penfold heavily. "I shouldn't have thought any man would be villain enough to play such a trick."

The old gentleman seemed dazed; it was not easy for him to recover from the terrible shock the false news had given him. He was useless in that emergency; Harry Wharton & Co. had to depend upon themselves.

They jammed themselves valiantly at the door, but Mr. Hogg and his new man were shoving with all their strength. The door yielded another inch, and Mr. Hogg's fat face was triumphant.

"Call somebody to help, sir!" gasped the broker's man, red with his exertions. "You'll get a man from the Red Cow for a bob, sir—"

Mr. Hogg shouted across the street to a lounge outside the Red Cow.

Wharton gritted his teeth.

With a third man outside shoving, the door would give way, and the brokers would be in. They would have held the fort for nothing. But the Greyfriars juniors were not to be so easily defeated. Wharton's brain worked quickly in that emergency. The foot in the doorway had to be removed before the third man came to aid. There was one way—and Wharton adopted it without hesitation as soon as he thought of it. Even that slight cessation of resistance caused the door to give another inch, and half the leg of the broker's man was inside now.

Then Wharton drove a pin into the rascal's calf with all his force.

"There was a yell of agony from the bailiff's man, and the leg was jerked out of the opening in a flash.

"Crash!"

The door shut again in a twinkling.

"The bolts—quick!" gasped Wharton.

The bolt had fastened, and Wharton held the handle fast, in spite of Mr. Hogg's furious efforts to turn it from outside, till Bob Cherry and Peter Todd had shot the bolts.

Click, click!

The bolts went home, and the door was secure again. And the juniors reeled back, gasping with their exertions—while Mr. Hogg, in a state bordering on frenzy, shook his fist at them from outside.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER. The Last Trick!

"D ONE 'em!" gasped Bob Cherry, "Done the ends!" "Hurrah for us!"

"But it was a jolly narrow shave," said Pen.

It had certainly been a very narrow escape. Mr. Hogg had been within a fraction of an inch of success. But a miss was as good as a mile, as Bob Cherry joyously remarked, and the bailiff was still outside.

Mr. Hogg was simply stamping with wrath. His man was clashing his damaged leg and groaning. Wharton had not had time to stand on ceremony, and the pin had gone rather deep. But no one felt sorry for the rascal who had played so cruel a trick. Pen, as he looked at his father's white face, would gladly have gone out and added to the man's punishment.

"It's all right, dad," he said softly. "Don't worry!"

John Penfold nodded.

"I know, Dick! But it ain't easy to get over the shock."

Pen stayed with his father as the juniors went back to finish their tea.

Outside Mr. Hogg was fuming. It was growing towards sunset now, and after sunset he was powerless till the following morning. If he did not gain admission very soon, he would have to give it up for that day. Mr. Hogg and his man retired to the corner to consult. Pen came back into the little parlour to his chums.

"You fellows will have to get back to Greyfriars at dark," he said. "I want you to take a note to the Head, asking his permission for me to stay here, with my father. I'm afraid they would get round the deal, somehow, and, besides, I don't want to leave him alone."

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"That's all right," said Wharton. "The Head will be satisfied if he has a note from your father, asking for you to stay out."

"You chaps will be late for call-over," said Pen, with a worried look.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"We've been late for call-over before, for less serious reasons," he remarked.

"What about to-morrow?" said Peter Todd. "You can get permission to stay away a day, as you are with your father; but I'm afraid the Head wouldn't let us out—"

"It's all right—I shall be able to hold the fort," said Pen. "They won't get in while I'm here. And Sir Reginald's answer will come to-morrow—early, most likely."

"Good old Mauly!" said Bob. "He was the right man in the right place this time."

"I shan't forget what he has done for me," said Pen, with a shake in his voice.

Outside, the shadows of night were falling.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "There they come again."

Tap!

The juniors hurried into the shop at the sound of the tap on the glass. Outside, in the growing dusk, they made out the figure of the telegraph-boy from the post office. He had one of the familiar buff-coloured envelopes in his hand.

"A telegram!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Another trick, perhaps," said Peter Todd.

"But this kid from the post-office—he wouldn't help them."

"They could send a telegram, if they liked, though," said Harry Wharton, "the boy would have to bring it—and they're round the corner waiting for a chance to jump on us as soon as the door's opened."

"Yes, rather!"

The telegraph-boy tapped again. He held up the telegram. Round the corner of the doorway a shadow was visible—a portly shadow. Mr. Hogg was there, waiting for his chance; and his man was not far away.

"Put it through the letter-box!" yelled out Pen.

The boy grinned.

"Why can't you open the door?" he demanded.

"I don't want to. Put it through the letter-box."

Then Mr. Hogg loomed into sight.

"Don't you do anything of the sort, my lad," he said.

"If they want the telegram, let them open the door. Telegrams can't be put into letter-boxes, you know that, and you'll get into trouble."

"Mind your own business, Hogg," said Pen angrily.

"It's a far-crown for you if you make them open the door, young man," said Mr. Hogg, sinking his voice.

The telegraph-boy smiled.

"I don't want your far-crown," he said. "I know what you're after, but I ain't going to help you. No fear!"

"I'll make it five bob."

"You can go and fry your face," said the telegraph-boy politely. "Don't try to bribe me."

"Push it under the door," said Pen; "then I can take it."

"I can do that," said the telegraph-boy.

Pen took the telegram, and handed it to his father, to whom it was addressed. The boy from the post office walked away whistling, and Mr. Hogg snorted with fury. Another trick had failed! Mr. Penfold opened the telegram—it contained a few meaningless words, and was not signed. It was evidently a "spoof" telegram, despatched from Courtfield by one of Mr. Hogg's myrmidons, as a trick to get the door opened.

"Another trick trumped!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I wonder what the next will be," said Pen.

"Nothing more to-night, I fancy," said Bob Cherry.

In the thickening dusk, Mr. Hogg and his man could be seen departing. Time was up; with the fall of night, the strong arm of the law interposed, and the badiff was powerless.

"But look out for tricks in the morning," said Peter Todd.

"Look out specially for a registered letter—you'd have to sign for that, you know, and the door would have to be opened. If a registered letter comes, don't take it in. Even if it's genuine, it won't hurt it to wait a bit."

Pen nodded. "I'll be jolly careful!" he said.

"Any more legal advice, Teddy?" asked Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"I think that's about all," said Peter, laughing. "I wish we could stay here with you, Pen, old man. But we've got to get back."

"I shall be all right," said Pen. "Don't forget the note for the Head. And thank you fellows for all you've done for me."

"Oh, rats to that!" said Bob Cherry.

"I thank you, too, young gentlemen," said Penfold. "And bless your kind hearts."

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The juniors shook hands with Mr. Penfold, and Wharton put in his pocket the note for the Head. Then the door was opened, and the bicycles were wheeled out. There was no danger now. If the badiffs had entered at that time of the evening, the law would have upheld a forcible ejection of them—and the juniors would have been only too glad of a chance to lay their hands legally upon Mr. Hogg. But Mr. Hogg was not risking it. He had gone for the night, and the siege would not begin again till dawn. And after bidding Pen "buck up," the juniors mounted their bicycles, and rode away to Greyfriars—sure of a "row" for missing call-over, but in great spirits all the same.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Head is Not Angry.

THE school gates were closed and locked when the three juniors arrived there. Gosling, the porter, came growing out of his lodge as the juniors rang him up. He blinked at them through the bars of the gate.

"Oh, you've come back!" he grunted.

"Yes, Gossey. We couldn't stay away from you for long," said Bob Cherry. "That's what comes of your being such a fascinating chap, Gossey."

Gosling grunted again.

"Wot I says is this 'ere—" he began.

"Wot I says," said Bob Cherry, "is this 'ere—hopen the gate!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gosling unlocked the gate, and the juniors wheeled their bicycles in.

"You're to report yourselves to the 'Ead," growled Gosling, "and wot I says is this 'ere—"

But the juniors did not want to listen to what Gosling had to say. They wheeled their bicycles to the shed and put them up, and then hurried round to the School House. They were more anxious to know the result of the Form match, than about what the Head would say. Half the Remove were waiting for them to come in.

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Yes, here we are," said Harry Wharton. "How did it go?"

Nugent chuckled.

"Ripping! The Shell hadn't a look-in after the start you and Pen gave us."

"The look-in-fulness was not terrific," remarked Hurren James Ram Singh, "and the lickfulness of the esteemed Shell was great."

"You've licked them?" said Wharton, in great relief.

"What ho!"

"They were all down for sixty," said Johnny Bull. "They'd have been out for thirty if you fellows had stayed. But they never had a chance after Pen had done the bit trick. Where is Pen?"

"Staying at home—we've got a note from his pater to the Head."

"But what's it all about?" asked Bull-stroke. "Where have you fellows been, and what have you been up to?"

"We've been home with Pen, and we've been up to snuff," Bob Cherry explained.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Shell were licked by forty-one runs, then," said Wharton. "That's jolly good. I'm glad it ended so well."

"The esteemed Holson did not look glad. His frownfulness was—"

"Terrific!" grinned Bob Cherry. "I'm jolly glad they got it in the neck. We should never have heard the end of it if they'd beaten the Remove—especially from the Remove."

"You oughtn't to have deserted the match in the middle," said Vernon-Smith. "I don't call it playing the game."

"What on earth do you know about playing the game, Smithy?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in surprise. "You talk about things you understand, my son!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors walked away to the Head's study, leaving the Bounder scowling, and the other fellows laughing.

"Come in!" said Dr. Locke, as Harry Wharton tapped at the door.

The Head looked severely at the juniors.

"You have just come in?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Penfold is not with you?"

"Here's a note from his father, sir."

Dr. Locke took the note from John Penfold and read it, and laid it upon his desk.

"This is a full excuse for Penfold," he said. "Mr. Penfold says that he is in trouble, and wishes his son to stay with him over to-morrow. That is quite right. But what excuse have you to offer for your conduct?"

"Please, sir, we're sorry we've missed call-over," said

Peter Todd, with a meekness and mildness that were worthy of his Cousin Alonzo.

"That is not all," said the Head. "You will take fifty lines each for missing call-over and straying out after locking-up. But I have received a visit from a Mr. Snooks—an agent for a landlord in this district—"

"Oh!" said the three juniors together.

"He has complained of your conduct. He states that you have interfered to prevent his bailiffs discharging their duty, and have insulted him."

"I can't trust, sir," said Wharton quietly.

"Snooks is an awful cad," said Bob Cherry.

The Head's brow was very stern.

"Have you interfered with his men in the discharge of their duty?" he rapped out.

"No, sir. We've interfered to prevent them from breaking the law, and acting like rotten beasts, sir!" said Wharton.

"Hear, hear!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Indeed! That alters the case, if it is correct," said Dr. Locke, his brow relaxing a little. "But I must be acquainted with all the circumstances of the matter. I am afraid your knowledge of the law is not extensive."

"We had legal advice, sir."

The Head raised his eyebrows.

"Really, Wharton, if you are jesting—"

"Not at all, sir. Todd's pater—I mean, his father—is a solicitor, and Todd knows all about the law. And he looked it up in a law book. Didn't you, Todd?"

"Yes, sir," said Peter Todd. "Fuzz's Edition of Buzz's 'Law of Landlord and Tenant,' with notes by Wuzz, sir."

"Dear me!" said the Head. "I was quite unaware that there was a legal light in the Lower Fourth Form at this school. And may I ask what you have done?"

The juniors explained.

Dr. Locke listened with great astonishment, and gradually his face relaxed into a smile.

"I hope you don't blame us, sir," concluded Wharton.

"It's our duty to stand up for law and order, isn't it, sir?"

"Ahem! Yes. But—"

"That's what we've been doing, sir. We were very careful to keep within the law; otherwise, we should have bumped old Snooks—"

"What?"

"I—I mean Mr. Snooks, sir. But Todd said that bumping was not according to law, and we didn't touch the cad, sir."

"We haven't laid a finger on him, sir," said Bob Cherry. "We haven't laid a finger on anybody or interfered with anybody. Everything has been quite legal, sir."

"Well, well," said the Head. "It was—well, it was meritorious of you to stand by a chum in a time of distress, certainly, and I am very sorry for Penfold. He is one of the most hard-working and dutiful junior boys in the school, and it is very sad that this should have happened to him. I had received quite a different account from Mr. Snooks; but I may tell you that Mr. Snooks did not make a favourable impression upon me, and I am more disposed to rely upon your account."

"Thank you, sir."

"I will not say that I—ahem!—approve of your taking matters into your hands like this, but—but, upon the whole, I shall excuse you. By the way, you need not do those lines for missing call-over. You may go, my boys."

"Thank you very much, sir!"

And the juniors went.

As they closed the study door they heard Dr. Locke laughing. It was evident that the good old doctor was not angry with them.

"The Head's a jolly brick!" said Bob Cherry. "And I believe he's jolly pleased that we gave Snooks the kybosh. Snooks must have got on his nerves when he came here. The Head would see right through the rotter at once. Let's go and see Mauly, and see if he's got any news."

They found Lord Mauleverer stretched upon the sofa in his study. He nodded to them as they came in.

"Excuse my rising, my dear fellows," he said. "I'm tired. I'm not going to do any preparation this evening."

"What's made you tired?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Well, I—I've been down to Etridale twice today, you know, and—and I watched the cricket match."

"Poor chap—you must be exhausted!" said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "What you want is bucking up."

And Bob Cherry thumped up the sofa and rolled his lordship over on the carpet. The schoolboy earl rose with a sigh.

"You are a rough beast, Bob. How is old Pen getting on?"

"First rate! We've defeated the enemy, confounded their politics, and frustrated their knavish tricks," said Bob Cherry. "Any news from monkey?"

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"Not yet. I shall have a wire from him in the morning—so will Pen, and so will Snooks. I explained the whole matter in my telegram, from beginning to end."

"At repudence a word?" grinned Peter Todd.

"Yaas."

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the
Chums at Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

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ONE
PENNY.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

All Serene!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were down before rising-bell the next morning.

They were anxious for the telegram from Lord Mauleverer's uncle.

They relied fully upon Mauleverer's assurance that his Uncle Reggie would "play the game"; and their experience of the kind old gentleman during their holiday with him made them the more confident.

All the same, they were anxious until the telegram should arrive. There is many a slip 'twixt cup and lip, and they were anxious to have all doubts settled. But the telegram had not arrived at breakfast-time, and all kinds of doubts beset their minds. Sir Reginald might have been away—something might have happened. And if the telegram did not come—

But it did come!

Just before morning lessons the telegraph-boy was seen entering the gates, and the chums of the Remove bore down upon him eagerly.

"Telegram for Mauleverer?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Yes, sir."

"Oh, good!"

The telegram was handed to Lord Mauleverer.

"It's all right, my dear fellows!" said the schoolboy earl.

"I told you it would be all right, bogad!"

"Open the telegram, you ass!"

"Yaas, all serene!"

"Well, open it!" roared the juniors.

Lord Mauleverer opened it. The telegram inside was a long one, and Lord Mauleverer grinned as he read it. He handed it to the other fellows to read, and they read with eagerness:

"Wire received. Extravagant young rascal. Rely upon me. Have wired Mr. Penfold will protect him. Also wired Snooks to stop all proceedings instantly. Also wired London lawyer make searching inquiry into treatment of tenants by Snooks. Tell your young friend I am very sorry this has happened.—Your affectionate
UNCLE REGGIE."

"All right—what?" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Reggie!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Peter Todd. "If you ever want to swap, Mauleverer, I've got two uncles and an aunt you can have for your Uncle Reggie!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was great news for the juniors. They had succeeded, and it was a crushing defeat for the detested Mr. Snooks. As Bob Cherry expressed it, the Snooks-bird would have come down off his perch. As the juniors were going to the Form-room, with happy faces, Dick Penfold joined them. Pen was looking very happy, too. He simply hugged Lord Mauleverer in his joy.

"It's all right," he said. "Oh, Mauly, old man, you're a good chap! You're a glibby angel, and you're uncle is a brick!"

"Yaas, bogad!" agreed Lord Mauleverer. "But don't disarrange my tie, dear boy."

"My father had a telegram this morning," said Pen. "It was from Sir Reginald himself—a long telegram. Sir Reginald says he's sorry he's been troubled—that the dad's been troubled, I mean—and that he's ordered Snooks to stop proceedings. Isn't it ripping? Snooks came this morning to tell my father he'd had a wire from his master, and he was looking awfully blue. He actually apologised to my father. Shows that he's in an awfully blue funk, doesn't it? I felt almost sorry for the beast! It's all right—you should see how cheerful my dad looks! And we owe it all to you, Mauly!"

"Yaas. Amazin' what you can do with a telegram, isn't it?" said Lord Mauleverer. "The chap who invented the telegraph was a genius!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors went in cheerfully to morning lessons.

When they came out of the Form-room, after third lessons, Lord Mauleverer learned that a visitor had called to see him. Trotter brought the news.

"Bogad! Who is it?" growled Lord Mauleverer. "I was going to have a rest."

"Mr. Snooks, sir."

"Snooks!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer. "I won't see him, then! Tell him to go and eat cake, Trotter!"

"Yes, me lord!" grinned Trotter.

"Hold on! You needn't tell him that. But say I don't want to see him."

"Yes, me lord!" said Trotter.

And Trotter vanished.

(Continued on page 26.)

"IN DIREST PERIL!"

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OUR GRAND NEW SERIAL!

'Mysteria'



Ching Lung & his 'Chums
in search of
THE LOST LAND.

By **SIDNEY DREW.**

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is surrounded in his magnificent London residence by his friends: Ching-Lung, O'Rooner, Gan-Waga, the Eskimo, Prout & Co., the stalwarts of the millionaire's famous submarine, the Lord of the Deep. After a period of inaction, there is a rumour abroad that Ferrers Lord is about to start upon one of his great expeditions again. Meantime, the millionaire himself is devoting all his attention to a curiously carved narrow-necked vase, which he has picked up in an East End curio-dealer's shop. The vase proves to be hollow, and to contain some gold coins, and a small wad of parchment, which bears a strange message from the sea. This tells of a mysterious floating island, inhabited by strange monsters which, Ferrers Lord determines to go in search of. Taurian, immediately christens the phantom island "Mysteria," in advance. All hands board "The Lord of the Deep," which slips out of its secret cavern on its mysterious new quest. "I'm so pleased I could almost sing," remarks Maddock, the boatman, to Tom Prout. "If you do, I'll let you win a 'sandspike,'" retorts the steersman.

(Now go on with the story.)

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Maddock Means War—in the Bath—Man Overboard!

"I never said I'd sing. I said as I almost could," Thomas. Don't be so blessed touchy! Now, look here, Tommy! You and me has got to stick together, and so has old Irish. If we don't, silver me, life won't be worth livin'! You remember 'ow we've suffered afore from his 'ighness and that fat inn Gan-Waga. After bein' quiet so long, they'll be worse'n ever."

"By hokey, we'll watch 'em!" growled Prout.

Maddock took a thoughtful pull at a pewter mug, and nodded.

"We'd better get Joe and Barry up, and lay down a keel," he said. "It's us agen them two, and in quarter. The things as they've done to us is enough to turn stone-coal white. I mean war. I ain't goin' to stand no more."

"Den ye sittes down. Ho, ho, ho!"

A mop hoist upwards from the darkness of the steel ladder, sweeping the stool from under the boatman. The contents of the pewter mug struck the domed roof and descended on Prout in a heavy shower. Maddock alighted on a pork-pie, flattening it into a shapeless mass of crumbs and meat. He cursed murder and other things.

"Get it!" said Prout, mopping himself.

"Who was it?" moaned the boatman.

"Who was it? I've think it was the Emperor of Bhoon or Bill Bailey? Got up and go for the vancint wif a muckin' spike. It was a blubberrin, old wadnes-chickens! By hokey, he ain't been long startin'! Go and flay him!"

As Maddock rose the mass of pie suddenly detached itself from his clothes and fell to the floor. The boatman glared at the ruin with haggard eyes. Then he took off his cap and hung it up. With cautious deliberation he turned his shins sleeves back over his big, hairy arms.

"Thou—" he said, "I'll bring you back, his corpse. That was the grandest pie I ever struck tooth in, and back at a now! I'll bring back the scoundrel's fragments on a toun in-fur, or else I ain't be on of this 'ere ship!"

"And take that dirt wi' you!" growled Prout. "By hokey, I don't want that mess interin' my whel-come!"

Maddock seized the wreckage and mounded it into a ball. With thunder on his brow he clawed his way down the ladder. So well was the submarine lined and padded that

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the vibration was hardly perceptible. Her giant engines propelled by some secret motive power, worked smoothly and easily as they churned her along ten fathoms deep.

The Lord of the Deep was submerged by flooding her with sea-water. The water could be swiftly forced out, and the vessel's natural buoyancy raised her immediately to the surface.

The millionaire did nothing in the same fashion as other people. Instead of using unsightly tanks, such as the average engineer would design, the necessary amount of water to sink the vessel was poured into a splendid swimming-bath. There was no risk of an overflow. Where the Lord of the Deep rode there was no tossing, no tumbling waves. She dwelt in a region of her own—a realm of dim green and utter silence.

Maddock fancied he knew where to find Gan-Waga. The Eskimo was an amphibian. He was as much at home in the water as on land. As a rule, he slept in the swimming-bath, floating there with only his nose above water, like a colossal seal. Too much heat acted on this son of the North like some deadly drug, and he revelled in atmospheres that would freeze a European.

Maddock crawled sideways on tiptoe. The engines switched and throbbed with regular rhythm. He tried the half-curved door of the bath cautiously. He opened it and peered in. None of the electric lights had been turned on.

All the same, down in the bath a red eye of fire gleamed sanctoriously the lighted end of a cigar which the Eskimo was smoking.

"Owd I better start?" thought the boatman. "He's got the heyes of a 'awk and the slippiness of a beel."

The surface of the water was about three feet below the top of the bath. It struck Maddock that his foe was floating very close to the long, springy plank from which Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga gave their marvellous exhibitions of concert-diving. He could not see the plank, but he was pretty sure of its whereabouts. On hands and knees he crawled along.

A gentle snore floated upwards.

"He's asleep!" grinned Maddock. "I've got him now, for old seawarves!"

Maddock was more than halfway along the springboard.

He halted to reflect. He did not know what he was going to do. At a rough guess, Gan-Waga was just out of reach, and Gan played soft, sweet music with his snub-nose.

"Some one, I'll fetch Barry to 'elp me!" he said. "That's the proper 'hidea!"

Barry O'Roonoy chuckled gleefully when Maddock informed him of Gan-Waga's baseness.

"Ay coorse Oi ought to croy, when I think of the fate of that poise," he remarked. "But niver a tear will we shed when we've punched that Iskinn dead! Oi think a noice dogmatist cartridg 'all do the thrick nately, Ben. Is he asleep?"

"Snorin'," replied the bosun.

O'Roonoy made a slipknot in a piece of rope.

"Lade on, Ben-na-Chree, and we'll tuche that blubber-biter to squeal in four octaves! Lade on, Oi say!"

The cigar still gleamed, but not with its original brightness. The snores, however, were fuller and richer in tone. Each man had picked up a deck-mop on his way.

"This is the dodge, Ben," O'Roonoy whispered in the bosun's ear. "Wance Oi get the rope round the spalpen's ankles, we'll have him as safe as money in the bank! We'll haul him out by the heels, me boy! And thin, be jabbers, the band'll start to play!"

Gan, they knew, was a light sleeper. Barry went first, and Maddock crept close behind him. Lying flat on his chest on the board, Barry tried to pierce the gloom.

The cigar had gone out.

"Troth, O'd give more'n a tuppence to know which ind was which!" muttered Barry. "It wudn't do to drop this little bit of sthuring round his windpipe. Which is your fate, yez fat lumpy of sugar?"

"Gog-o-gog! Gog-r-r-r-h! Or-r-r-h! Khor-r! Gug-ng!" snored Gan-Waga.

The plank had bent considerably, but Barry could barely reach the water.

"Hitc up a bit more, Maddock, and squeeze the thing lower!"

Maddock obeyed with such alacrity that he plunged both O'Roonoy's arms elbow-deep.

"Pwhat are yez doin', yez ham-faced atrocity?" growled Barry fiercely.

"Ow do I know? What are you doin'?"

"Faalin' about for his blissed fate! Pwhat else? Troth, they're big enough to found in the dark! Ah, Oi've got 'em!"

"No, yo' nois! Me got yo'!" yelled Gan-Waga.

His hand closed upon O'Roonoy's goatee beard. He jerked the Irishman from the plank, and Barry's howl of rage and terror was lost in the splash that followed. Relieved of Barry's weight, the board sprang back. Maddock had no time to steady himself. He made a gallant effort to balance himself on nothing, and then made a sidelong dive into the dark and icy water.

The lights were suddenly switched on.

Gan-Waga was sitting on the steps, rocking and rambling with mirth. The two angry women had just gained the surface. Gan raised a peashooter, and a hard pen-sting Barry's nose in a fashion that made the tears start.

Ching-Lung, dressed in his native costume, leaned over the back of a chair.

"Don't do it, yez spalpeen!" thundered Barry. "Ow! Oi'll make yez into sandwiches and ate yez! Stoph him, your Highness! Bedad, Oi'll blunder O'ell be!"

"Den swims forward, and keeps de dusts out of yo' eyes!" tuttered Gan-Waga. "Ho, ho, ho! I tickles him, Chingy! Not haves reveals deaps in my back! Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho!"

"You'll never need a lad afo' I've finished wi' yo'!" said Maddock. "You won't want nothin' barin' a tombstone!"

Like a couple of drowned rats they scrambled out. They looked at Gan but not with eyes of love, like the "Pretty Little Pansy Faces."

"Grab him!" hissed Maddock.

Gan gave one splendid leap, his legs twined round Barry's neck, and, reeling under the shock, Barry put his feet where there was nothing except atmosphere, and went over the side of the bath with a resounding splash, taking Gan-Waga with him.

"Man overboard!" shouted Ching-Lung. "Dear, dear! What wotness! Look out, Ben! Oh, look out! You'll tread on it! Mind, for goodness' sake! You'll step on it!"

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A GRAND DETECTIVE STORY!

(See Page 28.)

"Where—what?" gasped the startled bosun, spinning round in bewilderment.

"There—in front of you! No—in front of you, silly! There!"

A mop, thrown javelin-wise from Ching's unerring hand, struck Maddock squarely between the shoulders. Again he made a glorious effort not to leave terra-firma. The floor was wet and slippery. After sitting on one leg, with his other leg pointing at the roof, and his arms spinning wildly in the air, Benjamin took his departure amid a cloud of spray.

"Rocked in the cra-aadle of the dee-deep," warbled Ching-Lung. "Good-night, children! I must blow out the candle for you."

He switched off the lights. Wild words of wrath, mingled with splashing, coughing, and spluttering, rose from the hidden water. Then came several piercing howls.

Gan-Waga was taking his revenge. In the water a hundred men could not have caught that human seal.

"Hilp! Gerroff! Don't punch me!" wailed Barry's voice. "Oi give in! Murther! Leggo me whiskers! Ow! And Oi always spoke well of yez! Oi'll never do it no more! Hilp! He's peelin' the hair off me! Ow!"

Then came Maddock's turn. He had just reached the steps, and was fancying himself secure, when a hand caught his ankle and dragged him back. For some time Ching-Lung listened to the howls, and then, his face as grave as that of a judge delivering a death-sentence, he walked aft, and entered the splendid state-room.

"You're just in time, Ching," said Rupert Thurston. "Lord is just going to reveal the secret of the narwhal's tusk, and tell us something about our phantom isle, Mysteria."

Ferrers Lord sprang to his feet. There was a sound of shouting, and then against a crash that threw him violently against the wall, and made the vessel shudder from stem to stern.

Fouled by a Trawl-Net—A Queer Way to Catch Fish—Gan-Waga's Strange Pet.

Every light in the vessel went out, but they flashed up again immediately. The monotonous buzz of the engines could no longer be heard. Tom Prout was standing in the doorway saluting, and waiting to be spoken to.

"Why have you left the wheel?" asked the millionaire sharply.

"Mr. Honour sent me, sir, beggin' your honour's pardon," answered the burly steersman.

"Are we aground?"

"By hokey, I 'opes not, sir! I felt somethin' scraape along 'er keel, sir, but I couldn't lift 'er in time. The pumps didn't seem so wock free. It's somethin' that's fouled the stern propellers, sir, if I may make so bold."

Followed by Rupert Thurston and Ching-Lung, Ferrers Lord hurried to the conning-tower. Hal Honour was drumming his knuckles against the tough glass, and smoking his pipe nonchalantly.

"Anything very serious, old man?" cried Thurston.

The man-of-deeds, not words, shook his head.

"It hasn't yanked your scrap-iron, tin-pot engines to pieces, then?" said Ching-Lung. "It hasn't dragged the mudd out of 'em? What's really wrong?"

"The lambone engine's seized."

"We shall see, your Highness," was his brief reply.

All was perfectly quiet. After the first few shouts of warning, the well-dressed men were silent. Ferrers Lord went below, and stepped upon the bridge that spanned the engine-room. Men, with electric lamps and hammers, were peeping in and out among the vast wheels and shining shafts. The metallic ting-ting of steel against steel as they tested the machinery rose like a peal of bells. The millionaire called out an order and turned away.

Aided by a couple of sailors, Ching-Lung and Hal Honour were already donning their diving suits.

"I'll bring you back a few whisks, sir," said the prince, "for I know you're fond of 'em. Where's my nightcap? Thanks awfully, Jon! Don't forget the breath-lug, sonny! I can't breathe without breath. Oh, them golden slippers!" he added, gazing at the tremendous lead-soled boots. "I wonder if Sheffield United or Sunderland would sign me as centre-forward? It strikes me I could score a few goals."

"Get into your helmet, and don't talk such a lot," said Thurston.

"If you insult me again, I'll give you a kiss with that," remarked Ching-Lung, pointing to a massive lead-weighted

hatched. "I say, are you sure my hat's on quite straight? I'm going to meet Mrs. Winkles, and all the little Winkles, and they're horribly particular."

Thurston put an end to it by hastily screwing down the bulldog nozzle of the helmet. Honour was ready and waiting. Joe, the carpenter, strapped a bag containing bullets to Ching-Lung's waist, and then both men signified that they were ready. A door in the steel wall slid aside, showing a cavity lighted by a single electric bulb. The door closed upon Honour and Ching-Lung.

Ferrers Lord had long ago dispensed with the old system of pumps and air-pipes for his divers. The engineer and Ching-Lung carried enough compressed air on their backs to last for many hours. Naturally, as the air became used up, their bodies became proportionately heavier, rendering it more difficult for them to move. But the millionaire had overcome this drawback in the simplest fashion. The divers had merely to discard a bullet every now and then from their bags to keep pace with the loss of buoyancy. That is to say, they could regulate their own weight to balance the loss of air.

His Highness pulled a lever, and water entered the hermetically-sealed chamber and rose slowly till it covered their helmets. A second door opened, and they passed out into the glassy gloom of the sea. The submarine lay on a bed of smooth, white sand. A powerful glare poured from the conning-tower, but the beams of the lamps failed to penetrate far into the lary depths. The water was not very deep, and it was discoloured after a recent storm. The faces of Proot, Thurston, and Ferrers Lord showed dimly through the glass.

Ching-Lung switched on his lamp and sent a bright ray shooting along the dark side of the vessel. Then he touched the engineer's arm. Something barred their way—a net.

The Lord of the Deep had dashed into a trawl laid by some fishing-vessel. Honour swiftly cut his way through the obstacle. Both screws were hidden by masses of torn and twisted hemp. They knelt down and set to work, to the astonishment of a shoal of whiting and a few shark-like dogfish that gathered round them, attracted by the light.

In two hours the last shred of tanned hemp had been cleared. Hal Honour examined the propeller blades minutely. He could find no flaw or sign of damage. Ching-Lung grinned as he flashed his lamp up and down. Dozens of whiting were swimming round his helmet, wondering, possibly, in their fishy minds, what their goggle-eyed visitor could be. They followed the light like moths. He went backwards into the little diving-chamber. To the amusement of the engineer, scores of the whiting flocked in after them, and one dogfish, a good five feet long, swam lazily past his light.

A touch of the lever closed the door. The water sank lower and lower. Then Joe hung open the inner door, and there were yells of laughter and applause as they saw the fish flapping and kicking round the feet of the two divers. Gan-Waga hugged Ching-Lung rapturously.

"Oh, Ching-yo, dears boy!" he shouted. "Ho, ho, hoo! Yu'most butterfly fisherman! He putted salts on their waggly tails. I kiss yo', Ching!"

Barry O'Rourke, who had changed his clothes, but not his temper, gazed darkly at the cheerful Eskimo. Gan-un-screwed the nozzle of the prince's helmet.

"Lovely tadpoles, aren't they, blubber-linter?" remarked his Highness of Kwai-hai. "I caught 'em in a mousetrap baited with tripe. Help me to take me 'at off, like a nice boy, and I'll give you a halfpenny candle on your last next birthday. Here, don't dirty my collar!"

Joe brought a couple of pails, and gathered the whiting into a net.

"What hare us going to do wi' that hente?" he asked, pointing to the dogfish. "I shouldn't like to eat that warrant."

"Troth, it's a sad smile he has on his face, the warrant thing," remarked Barry O'Rourke. "Look at the salt tears in his gentle eyes. Phwat kind of a fish do yez call it? Phwat's its name?"

"Him Reoner fisher," muttered Gan. "Jes' likes silly fishes in faces. He, ho, too! Must be Barry's butterfly brothers, Chingy, hunk!"

Barry abashed strongly to be ranked as a brother of a toothsome dogfish. Gan took the squinting creature in his arms almost lovingly.

"Me puts hairs-on-ones on him nose, Chingy," he said, and then he grows butterfly chin-whiskers. Ho, ho, hoo! Chingy, him Barry O'Rourke's. He, ho, ho, hoo! Ain't he good 'nough, hunk?"

Gan-Waga was about to depart with his new pet, when the fishman grasped his collar and dragged him back.

(Another exciting instalment next week. Order early.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 271.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

HOLDING THE FORT.

(Continued from page 23.)

"What does the beast want to see me for?" growled Lord Mauleverer. "I decline to see the animal—he was quite rude to me yesterday—and his voice gets on my nerves, too. Never could stand an unpleasant voice, begad, and Snooks' voice is decidedly unpleasant!"

And Lord Mauleverer sauntered out into the Close with the chums of the Remove. But Mr. Snooks was not to be put off.

A couple of minutes later the voice that Lord Mauleverer's sensitive nerves found so unpleasant fell upon his ears.

"Excuse me, your lordship—"

"Oh, my hat!" said Lord Mauleverer, turning round. "Is that you, Snooks?"

Mr. Snooks bowed profoundly. The fat and pompous agent was as fat as ever, but much less pompous. There was a cringing servility in his manner that made the juniors long to kick him.

The telegram from Sir Reginald Brooks had evidently brought Mr. Snooks to his senses, and he had realised that he was not, after all, a little tin god. The hand of the master had fallen upon him, and Mr. Snooks had been brought to heel with a suddenness and completeness that had taken all the nonsense out of him at once. Mr. Snooks had not supposed for a moment, as a man of business, that any sentimental considerations advanced by a mere schoolboy would have any influence upon his employer. He had found out his mistake, and he was quite prepared to lick the dust from Lord Mauleverer's boots, if such a proceeding would have afforded Lord Mauleverer any gratification.

"If your lordship will excuse me," said Snooks, "I should like to address a few words—a few humble words—to your lordship. Your lordship knows—"

"Not quite so much 'lordship,' and get on with the washing, my dear fellow!"

"Thank you, your lordship! I have received a telegram from your respected and honoured uncle, my esteemed employer, which indicates that Sir Reginald is dissatisfied with my services," said Mr. Snooks, with wriggling servility. "I have done my best to serve my honoured patron—"

"Begad, I think you've done your worst, Snooks!"

"I may have made mistakes," said Mr. Snooks submissively. "Your lordship is doubtless quite right, and I am only sorry I did not listen to your lordship's advice yesterday."

"Called a blessed office-boy to chuck me out, begad—"

"What! Begad, what are you going to discharge him for—obeying your orders? When I dotted him on the nose, too! Don't be a fool, Snooks!"

"If your lordship pleases, I will do anything to please your lordship, and I will certainly not discharge the boy, who was honoured with a touch from your lordship's hand—"

"You will be honoured with a touch in the same way, if you don't shut up!" said his lordship, in disgust.

"Alen! What I was about to ask your lordship is to forgive me, and to interfere with your lordship's honoured uncle for me—"

"Can't be done! I hope Uncle Reggie will sack you!" said Lord Mauleverer. "You're an awful rotter, Snooks; you know you are!"

And Mr. Snooks retired.

"My hat!" said Lord Mauleverer. "There's a change come over that worm since yesterday, begad! Marvellous what you can do with a telegram, ain't it? Man who invented the telegraph was a genius! Come and have some ginger-pop, you chaps, to wash the taste of that awful rotter out of our mouths!"

"Hear, hear!"

There were few happier faces in Greyfriars School than Dick Penfold that day, if any. The clouds had rolled by, and Pen's home had been saved; and Pen did not forget that it was due to his chums, who had stood by him in the hour of distress, and helped him in "Holding the Fort."

THE END.

(Next Monday's splendid, long, complete school tale dealing with the further adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars is entitled "In Direct Peril," by Frank Richards. Please order your copy of "The Magnet" Library in advance. Price one penny.)



My Readers' Page

WHOM TO WRITE TO :
EDITOR.
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY.
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FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

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

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

C. Unwin (Surrey).—Very many thanks for your letter and the story too.

A. K. (Australia). I am very glad you like the "Gem" and "Magnet," but have you seen our new companion paper—"The Penny Popular"?

Paula Gellibrand (London).—Very many thanks for your letter. I hope your rat will be all right; you can obtain a book on the rat at Gamage's.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"IN DIREST PERIL!" By Frank Richards.

Our next splendid, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. deals with a very exciting occurrence which disturbs the peaceful and quiet countryside in the neighbourhood of Greyfriars. The escape of a tiger from a travelling menagerie gives rise to great alarm, and, of course, provides scope for any number of practical jokes. When the ferocious animal really does put in an appearance, Harry Wharton & Co. are, of course, on hand, to give a splendid exhibition of steadiness and courage, when

"IN DIREST PERIL!"

COMPETITION RESULTS.

The novel "one-week" competition which was contained in No. 268 of "The Magnet" Library was productive of the most interesting results. My readers will remember that a form was printed which competitors were invited to fill up, setting forth their own ideas of how a weekly story-paper should really be conducted. This led to my receiving many thousands of suggestions, some of which were most excellent and practical ones, while others—well, were not! I have carefully looked through each one of the forms, and I must say that this proved to be, without exception, the most interesting competition I have ever judged. Ultimately, the form sent in by A. Douel, 137, All Saints' Street, Hastings, was judged to be the most helpful and practical one in its ideas and suggestions. The first prize, therefore, goes to this competitor, with my hearty congratulations. The eight half-crown prizes offered for the next best forms go to the following readers: Albert Davis, 77, Marlborough Road, Grandpont, Oxford; Percy F. Tomblin, 75, Crayford Road, Tunford Park, N.; Victor H. Lovell, 51, Evelyn Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham; J. J. Kirby, 6, Epsom Road, Little Chauce; Grimby; Walter Miller, 6, Brookfields, Broadstone, near Wimborne, Dorset; D. S. Beard, junior, 51, Priory Road, Kilburn; L. J. S. Poult, 356, Echo Dower, Ottawa South, Ontario, Canada; T. W. Dacey, 143, Percy Road, Canning Town, E.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

V. Penfold.—A book of conjuring tricks can be obtained from Gamage's, of High Holborn, London, E.C.

"A Good Old Lover of the Three."—You should write for particulars of passages to Canada to the Emigration Office, at 31, Westminster Broadway, S.W.

"A Boy Reader" (A. B. N.).—I have pleasure in supplying you with the addresses of three of the biggest cinema film-producing firms. Messrs Pathé Freres, 31-33, Charing Cross Road, London; Messrs Gaumont Freres, 5, Sherwood Street, Piccadilly, W.; The British and Colonial Kinetograph Co., 33-35, Knoll Street, Long Acre, London.

A. M.—The book entitled "Figgins's Folly," is No. 225, and "Tom Merry & Co. in Ireland," is No. 258.

M. Hamilton (Africa).—I am sorry to say that, without the reader's permission, I am not at liberty to do as you ask. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 277.

A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

"IN DIREST PERIL!"

HOW TO KEEP FIT.—No. 4. By a Sergeant-Instructor.

To Strengthen the Legs.—If you suffer from swelled veins in the legs, have a doctor's opinion before doing any of the exercises for the legs. If you are free from any tendency in this direction, you will find the exercises I give of the greatest possible benefit.

Stand with your heels close together. Place your hands upon your hips, fingers to front, and thumbs in rear. Now raise yourself on your toes, very slowly, until you feel the muscles of your calves twitching tightly. This will be when you have raised yourself on to your toes as far as you can go. Now pause a moment, then slowly lower your heels to the ground; take your breath easily, fill your lungs, and carry on the exercise.

To get the greatest benefit from this, or any other such exercise, you must fix your whole attention upon the work you are doing. In other words, be determined to get all the good you can from the exercises. Slipshod work will not do. You must be in deadly earnest to make yourself as strong as possible. Your brain can, and does, help the body.

To Strengthen the Knees and Ankle.—Stand as for the leg exercise. Hands as before—on hips. Now, keeping the body upright, allow the knees to bend backwards, as you sink down as far as possible, keeping the heels off the ground. Balance the body by using the muscles of the insteps. Rise slowly to an upright position, and repeat the exercise until you feel that you have acquired a little control over the balance of the body. Keep your head well up. Do not look at your feet, but try and fix your eyes straight ahead. This exercise has a great and beneficial effect on all the main muscles of the legs, as well as teaching you to control the spine. Take a rest after each exercise. Breathe freely during all exercises. Avoid tricky exercises. They serve no good purpose, and may result in a fracture or dislocation of a joint.

Hopping Exercise.—This is a very good exercise if done in moderation. If overdone, it will most certainly develop swelled veins in the legs. Place your hands upon your hips, as before. Throw the shoulders well back, and keep the head erect. Now, throw all the weight of the body upon the right or left leg. Extend the other leg behind, and slanting downwards. Take a hop on the toes of your other foot, and continue the exercise until you feel that a change to the other foot would be a rest. In a short time you will find that the muscles of the instep have become so very strong that you will be able to hop round the room without shaking the dust off the gas-mantle below, so very light will your weight become when under the control of properly-trained muscles.

A Special Ankle Exercise.—This exercise has the effect of erecting the instep, strengthening the ankles, and of counteracting any tendency to flat feet. Stand on one foot, and extend the other. Now work the foot up and down from the ankle. Also work the toes, as far as you can. You will soon find that you are a lighter walker, of a more graceful carriage, and, instead of riding to work, you will find a joy in the springing step which will come as a result of the above exercises.

(Another of these helpful "How to Keep Fit" articles next Monday.)

THE EDITOR.

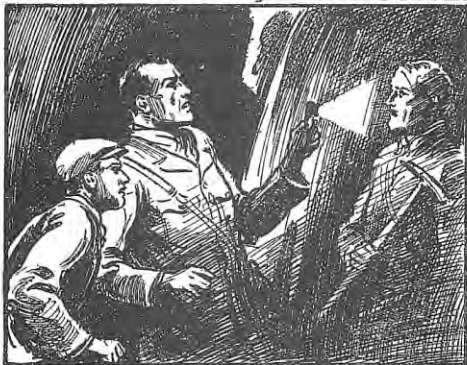
Please order your copy of "THE MAGNET" Library in advance.

A GREAT DETECTIVE STORY I AM ANXIOUS NONE OF MY READERS SHOULD MISS.—EDITOR.

THE SECRET OF THE GLACIER!

A Thrilling, Long, Complete Story, Dealing with
the Further Amazing Adventures of

SEXTON BLAKE, DETECTIVE.



This depicts one of the many thrilling incidents contained
in this amazing story of Sexton Blake, Detective.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Mason's Visit—The Tweed Coat—A Long-Delayed Letter.

"SAY, my lad, does Mr. Sexton Blake live here still?"
With his latchkey in his hand, Tinker turned to survey the questioner, and, with the swiftness born of long practice, took in every detail of his appearance at a glance—his smiling, good-natured face, his working clothes, stained with oil and putty, and the neat brown broad coat which he carried slung over one arm.

"Yes, Mr. Blake lives here still," he replied. "Do you want to see him?"

"That's what I've come for," was the answer, as the visitor knocked the ashes out of his clay pipe and thrust it into his pocket.

"Come along, then!" Tinker returned, inserting his latchkey in the lock. "I think he's in—at least, he was only a few minutes ago."

Sexton Blake was in, and as the door opened he raised his head from the microscope, under which he had been examining some tiny fragments of cloth, and looked keenly at the new arrival. The man's cheerful, indifferent expression was such a contrast to the harassed, anxious looks of most of Sexton Blake's professional visitors that it was small wonder that the detective's first words, as he rose and placed a chair for his guest, were:

"You have not come to me as a client, I think. Mr. —"

"Mason," the other replied, filling in the blank with a cheerful laugh. "Mason's my name, Mr. Blake—James Mason, foreman at Smithson's, the gasfitter, in High Street, Marylebone. No, I ain't come to consult you professionally, Mr. Blake. There ain't no mysteries that I'm concerned in, I'm glad to say!"

"Then——" the detective asked, with an inquiring lift of the eyebrows.

"Then what have I come for at all, you mean?" the gasfitter said cheerfully. "Well, the thing that's brought me along, Mr. Blake, is this coat."

And as he spoke he spread out upon the table the brown tweed coat that he had hitherto been carrying over his arm.

"That coat? And what has that coat to do with me? It isn't mine."

"P'raps not; but there's something in it that is yours—at least, I'm not rightly sure whether it's yours or the other chap's. But as it's got your name on it, and I couldn't tell without opening it who the other chap was, I thought the best thing I could do was to bring it along to you."

"Exactly," Sexton Blake replied, holding out his hand with an impassive face.

But Mr. Mason evidently preferred to tell his story in his own way, and, taking no notice of the detective's outstretched fingers, he went on:

"I'll tell you just how it happened, guv'nor. 'Bout a week ago, I noticed this here coat hanging up in a second-hand clothes dealer's, Lisson Grove way. My wardrobe was in need of a bit of mending up, and as the coat didn't look much worn, I went in and bargained for it. I agreed with the dealer for four and six. I hadn't got the money with me that evening, but I told him that I would call in the next night after work, and he put it aside for me till then."

"Next day, after we had knocked off, I called for it and took it home, and after I'd tried it on for my old woman to see, I gave it to her to put a stitch in the lining of the pocket, which had a pretty considerable tear. Well, she'd hardly put her hand in the pocket, when she pulls it out again, holding a letter which must have slipped through the tear in between the lining and the cloth."

"And that letter was addressed to me?" Sexton Blake queried.

"And that letter was addressed to you," Mason replied. "Guessed right first time, guv'nor! Here's the hole in the pocket, you see, and I put my hand in, and there's the letter. I didn't rightly know whether

it belonged to you or the fellow who wrote it; but as I didn't know who he was, and Moss at the second-hand shop had not any idea where he got the coat, I brought it along to you."

"Thank you, Mr. Mason!" the detective replied, as he took the faded envelope, assured himself with a quick glance that the handwriting was quite unknown to him, and noted the addition of the word "England" to the address. "Thank you; I am much obliged to you! You will excuse me, I am sure, if I open the letter at once?"

And, tearing open the envelope, Blake drew out a couple of sheets of paper, closely covered with a firm, bold writing. For a minute or two there was silence, while Sexton Blake scanned one closely-written page after another.

And Tinker, watching him keenly, knew by the sudden contraction of the detective's brows that his interest was keenly excited by what he read.

"Thank you!" Blake repeated, when he at last laid the letter down. "You have done me a service, Mr. Mason; and I hope you have also done a service to the writer of this long-delayed letter. I should be still more obliged if you would consent to let me have the coat as well as the letter. I'll give you a sovereign for it!"

"I only gave four-and-sixpence for it," the gasfitter objected. "Never mind. It is worth a sovereign to me. And, besides, your time in bringing it here is worth something. You will let me have it at that price? Thanks!"

The sovereign changed hands, and with a satisfied smile James Mason pocketed it and took his leave, escorted to the front door by Tinker.

No sooner had the lad closed the door on the visitor than, with a couple of bounds, he was up the stairs again.

(Continued on page 111 of cover.)

"What's up, guv'nor?" he asked breathlessly. "Another case—eh?"

"Perhaps," the detective replied, with a shrug of the shoulders, as he tossed the letter across the table to his assistant and turned to take down a stout, red-leather volume from his bookshelf.

"Why," Tinker exclaimed, as his eyes fell on the date at the head of the letter, "it was written two years ago!"

"Rather more," Blake replied. "It was never posted, and has lain in the coat for more than two years."

The letter ran as follows:

"Graftsdorf, Switzerland,
Sept. 4th, 1910.

"To Sexton Blake, Esq.

"Dear Sir,—I do not suppose that you will be much surprised to receive a letter from a total stranger, asking for your assistance; and I am asking for it because I need it badly, because I believe that if you do not give it me, I shall not have long to live.

"I had better begin by telling you who I am. My name is Anthony Ferrers, and I am the only son of Major Wilfred Ferrers, of Crossbrook, near Chagford, Devonshire. My father died two years ago, and since then I have been living under the guardianship of his cousin, Mr. John Ward. Mr. Ward has the management of the estate until I come of age—in little more than two years' time—and he arranged that Crossbrook should be left, and that I should live with himself and his son until I attain my majority. Soon after my father's death we left England, and for the greater part of the two years we have been travelling about in various parts of Europe.

"And, now that you understand how I am situated, I can explain why it is that I want your help; or, rather, I can't explain for the whole thing is a complete mystery. All I know is that I am in danger of my life, that over and over again during the last few weeks I have escaped from a sudden death only by a hair's-breadth. Who my enemy is, or what his motive can be in wishing to get rid of me, I can't guess in the very least; but I do feel certain that, if he is not discovered, he will end by succeeding in his villainous plan.

"The first attempt on my life was made a few weeks ago, when we were staying by the Lake of Como. One evening, after dark, I was strolling along the banks of the lake, when a boatman came up to me and suggested a row in his boat. I agreed, and we set out; but we had only gone a little distance when I noticed that the craft seemed leaning a lot, and spoke to the boatman about it. He only laughed, decided that it was nothing, and that as the timber swelled the inch of water would cease.

"Nothing of the kind happened, however. On the contrary, the water continued to flow in, until I got seriously uneasy, and I told the man to turn the boat's head to the shore. He did so—rather unwillingly, I thought—but we were still fully a quarter of a mile from land, and in a lonely part of the lake, when the boat began to settle down.

"Instantly my companion sprang into the water and struck out for the shore, leaving me, who am a very poor swimmer, to my fate. The craft—now sinking—I was left struggling in the water, and had it not been that I managed to get hold of an oar, I should certainly have been drowned. As it was, I floated about all night, and was picked up early next morning by some fishermen, nearly dead from cold and exhaustion. As for the boatman, he had vanished, nor were we ever able to discover who he was, or what had become of him.

"That, as I have said, was the first of the attempts upon my life; but I have had the same sort of experience over and over again. Only the other day, having missed my way on my return from a walking expedition, I inquired the path back to the hotel from a man whom I met, and who was apparently a native of the district. He directed me to strike across a snowy slope of the mountain. I did so, and was almost swept away by an avalanche.

"I did not think much of the incident at the time; but when I reached the hotel, and informed the landlord of my narrow escape, he was horrified at my rashness in venturing along the path I had taken. It was right in the track of the avalanches, he declared, and, as all the inhabitants of the valley knew, exceedingly unsafe, except at certain seasons of the year. That being the case, I have not the faintest doubt that the man who directed me misled me purposely.

"I could give you a dozen other instances of the peril in which I stand; but I dare say that I have said enough to show you that my danger is not an imaginary one. I can give you further details when I see you, which I earnestly hope will be before long. I hope I have as much pluck as most people; but I will confess to you frankly that the feeling of being compassed by an unknown and mysterious peril is beginning to tell on my nerves. It is an awful sensation to feel yourself

being dogged continually by an enemy of whose very identity you are ignorant, and whose motive for wishing to kill you you cannot even guess.

"For I must tell you that, so far as I know, I have not an enemy in the world—that is to say, I have never had a serious quarrel with anyone. Neither is there any single person in the world who would gain by my death.

"By my father's will all his property goes to charities in the event of my death before I reach the age of twenty-one—thus, you see, it is quite impossible that any relative should wish me out of the way for motives of gain. As a matter of fact, I have no near relatives. My guardian and his son are rather distant cousins; and it is to my guardian's interest to keep me alive rather than to kill me, since he receives a large allowance for managing my affairs—an allowance which would, of course, cease in the event of my death.

"I have told him that I intend writing to you, and he agrees with me that it is the wisest thing to do, since he is just as much in the dark as I am over the business. He asks me to tell you that he shall be exceedingly obliged if you can take up the case and ferret out this mystery for us. In any case, I hope you will kindly reply to this letter by return of post, as I shall be anxious to hear if you are able to assist us.

"I am writing too late for to-night's post, which leaves this remote little village early in the evening, but you will, I hope, receive this letter in not much more than forty-eight hours from now. Should you be able to start for Switzerland at once, send us a wire, and we will engage a room for you in the hotel we are staying at—the Hotel Wagner.—Faithfully yours,
"G. ANTHONY FERRERS."

"Poor chap!" said Tinker, as he read the last lines. "I wonder if it was because he was killed that night that he didn't post his letter?"

"No," Blake said quietly, as he filled his pipe; "he wasn't killed that night."

"How do you know?"

"From 'Burke's Landed Gentry,' of course." Blake smiled as he pointed to the fat red volume he had just replaced on the shelf. "George Anthony Ferrers, of Crossbrook, Chagford, Devon, was alive at the end of last year, when that volume was published, so it stands to reason that he couldn't have been killed in Switzerland two years ago."

"Then you think the whole thing is a false alarm?" Tinker asked, with a tinge of disappointment in his tones.

Blake puffed at his pipe for a few minutes before replying.

"It is quite possible that it may be a false alarm," he said at length. "This young fellow Ferrers may have suffered from morbid delusions, and the attempts upon his life may have been purely imaginary. I don't think so, however; his letter is so perfectly sane, and straightforward that it could hardly have been written by anyone suffering from mental disorder. On the whole, I think I shall try to get to the bottom of the business."

"Which means," laughed Tinker, "that you will get to the bottom of the business. What's the first step?"

"A run down to Devonshire," Blake replied. "Just get the 'Bradshaw' and look me out the best train. I'll make a call at Crossbrook to-morrow. If Anthony Ferrers is there I will see him, and have a talk with him; if he isn't, I shall doubtless be able to find out where he is, and learn something about him."

"Shall we take Pedro?" the boy asked.

"I don't think it will be necessary for either you or Pedro to accompany me this time," the detective replied. "You see, we don't really know yet whether there is any case for us to take up. I am simply going to run down to Chagford for a little preliminary investigation, and it is quite on the cards that the whole business may go no farther than that. If I want you I shall wire for you at once—you may be sure of that; but the chances are that I shall not want you, and shall just come quietly home by the next train."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Sexton Blake Visits Crossbrook—A Strange Reception—Anthony Ferrer's Agitation.

LESS than twenty-four hours after James Mason's visit Sexton Blake, seated in a dogcart drawn by a sturdy little cob, was rapidly covering the four or five miles that separated Crossbrook from the nearest railway-station. The road wound in and out among the shaggy hills of Dartmoor, and the day was drawing to a close before much more than half the distance had been covered.

The driver and owner of the cart which the detective had hired for the last stage of his journey was a native of

(Continued on the next page.)

POPLETS!

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the district, and a deft question or two from Blake soon loosened his tongue on the subject of the Ferrers family in general and young Anthony Ferrers in particular. The detective soon gathered that the latter was not popular in the neighbourhood.

"He's as different as possible from his father!" the driver declared. "Major Ferrers, he was a right good 'un, and perhaps if he'd lived a few years longer he'd have made his son a chip of the old block. Young Anthony was well enough liked till his father died, between four and five years ago; but then he went to live with his guardian, and when he came back to live at Crossbrook last summer he was that changed that the folk about here hardly knew him."

"Changed? In what way?" Blake asked quickly.

"Not so much in looks," was the reply, "though he was a sight thinner and paler than he used to be. 'Tis his ways as be so different. He always seems to avoid everyone, even the folk as he's known since he was a little lad in petticoats. I don't believe as he ever speaks to a stranger when he can help it, and he shuts himself up at Crossbrook for all the world like a hermit crab."

"Is he living alone at Crossbrook, then?"

"Oh, no; his guardian, Mr. Ward, is with him—young Ferrers doesn't come of age till next month. I expect, myself, that Ward'll stay on at Crossbrook even when the lad is of age, for Anthony seems to think a powerful lot of him, which is more than most folks do."

"Indeed! Then Mr. Ward isn't much liked here? Why?"

The driver shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, there's nothing against him that I knows of, but he's a disagreeable sort of fellow, with a domineering way with him! I will say this for him, though, that he's nain good to young Ferrers."

"He has a son of his own, I believe?" Blake asked.

The other nodded. "So I've heard; but he doesn't show up here. Folks say that he's a bad lot—that his father quarrelled with him a year or two ago, and won't have anything to do with him. I've heard that his father paid his passage out to Australia and cast him off altogether."

"Ah!" Blake said indifferently. And then, pointing across the valley above which the road was winding, he asked: "Is that Crossbrook?"

"Yes, that's Crossbrook," was the reply. "Fine old house, isn't it? If it wasn't so out of the way it would be one of the show-places of the county. We're not nearly there yet, though it's only about half a mile off as the crow flies. There's a river at the bottom of yon valley, though it's nigh too dark to see it now, and we have to go near a mile and a half further up before we come to the bridge."

"I think," Blake laughed, "that if I lived at Crossbrook, I should feel inclined to throw a bridge across the river about here and cut off three miles of the road to the station, more especially as the road is such a lonely one."

"You're right there," was the reply, "the road is lonely; and, what's more, there's a good many people in these parts as wouldn't drive you along it after dark, not for love nor money."

"What, is it haunted?" the detective inquired, in a tone of amusement.

"Ay, so they say. And 'tis just about here that the bogey walks," the driver answered, with a cheerful laugh. "Tis the ghost of some smuggler fellow as was killed in a fight with the Revenue officers when he was bringing a cargo of brandy up from the coast. They say he walks after night-fall, and there's them as'll tell you they've seen him with their own eyes; but I've passed this way dozens of times in the dark and never seen nothing, and I don't suppose I ever will. Come up, Toby; we're at the top of the hill now, you lazy beast!"

Thus admonished, the cob broke into a smart trot, and the rest of the way lying for the most part downhill, it was not long before the lights of Crossbrook loomed up through the gathering gloom, and the dogcart came to a standstill before the huge old-fashioned portico of the mansion.

A liveried footman answered the detective's knock.

"Is Mr. Ferrers at home?" Blake asked.

"Yes, sir; he is at home," the man replied, but with a shade of doubt in his tone, as if he were not at all sure that his master would be inclined to receive a visitor.

"My name is Blake," the detective said, with quiet indifference. "Will you announce me at once? I wish to see Mr. Ferrers on important business."

The decision of Blake's manner had its effect, and, after a second hesitating glance at the new arrival, the footman turned and led the way across the quaint, old-fashioned hall and along an oak-panelled passage. At the end of it he paused and, flinging open a door, announced, "Mr. Blake," and the detective found himself in a large room surrounded by bookshelves and lit only by a blazing log-fire.

The solitary occupant of the room, who had been seated in a low chair in front of the fire, rose with an expression of astonishment as his visitor entered and switched on the electric light, and Blake's eyes rested on a slight, boyish figure, and a pale, nervous face.

"How do you do, Mr. Ferrers?" the detective said composedly. "I hope you will forgive my calling so late; but the journey from London is a long one, and it was impossible for me to get here earlier."

"I am afraid," the young man stammered, "that I do not remember where we have met before. I have a shocking memory for faces!"

"Your memory is not at fault in this case," Blake replied, smiling. "You could not possibly remember my face, because it is the first time you have ever seen it."

"Indeed!" the Anthony Ferrers replied uneasily; "then may I ask—"

"What brings me here to-night? Certainly. But perhaps you will be able to guess when I tell you my name in full—Sexton Blake!"

Anthony Ferrers reeled back a pace and clutched at the mantelpiece.

"The detective—Sexton Blake, the detective?" he stammered.

Blake nodded.

"Yes; I am Sexton Blake, the detective," he answered quietly, his keen eyes watchfully observant of the agitation visible in every line of Anthony Ferrers' face.

"Sexton Blake!" the young man repeated hoarsely, and struggling in vain to hide his emotion. "What do you want with me, Mr. Sexton Blake? Don't beat about the bush, tell me quickly what has brought you here?"

"Your own letter," the detective replied. "I regret very much that it was not answered earlier; but as it only reached me twenty-four hours instead of twenty-four months ago, you will understand that I am not responsible for the delay."

"My letter? What letter? I don't understand you!" the young man stammered.

"The letter which you wrote to me rather more than two years ago, and which I conclude you forgot to post, since it was brought to me last night by a man who had discovered it in the pocket of a tweed coat that he had bought in a second-hand clothes shop."

"The letter which I wrote to you?" Ferrers repeated incredulously. "You must be mistaken! I have never written to you, Mr. Blake!"

"Curious!" the detective said drily. "This letter is signed G. Anthony Ferrers—I believe your names are George Anthony—and it is dated from the Hotel Wagner, Grand-dorf Switzerland. Have you ever stayed in Grand-dorf, Mr. Ferrers?"

If Anthony Ferrers' face had been pale before, it was paler now—pale as death. He opened his white lips as if attempting to reply to Sexton Blake's question; but no sound came from them, and Blake, believing that he was going to faint, made a step towards him with his hand outstretched.

(How Sexton Blake's suspicions of Anthony Ferrers and his guardian, John Ward, grew stronger; the strange adventure, that befel the detective in the dark as he was driving away from Crossbrook Hall; his subsequent journey to Switzerland with Tinker and Peira, and their terrible experiences and the fateful discovery they made amidst the ice and snow of the High Alps all this makes "THE SECRET OF THE GLACIER" a story of breathless adventure and peril which it would be hard indeed to match. This splendid tale is contained in No. 33 of "The Penny Poplar," a grand issue of our latest companion paper, which is now on sale everywhere.)

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