

THE HERO OF GREYFRIARS I

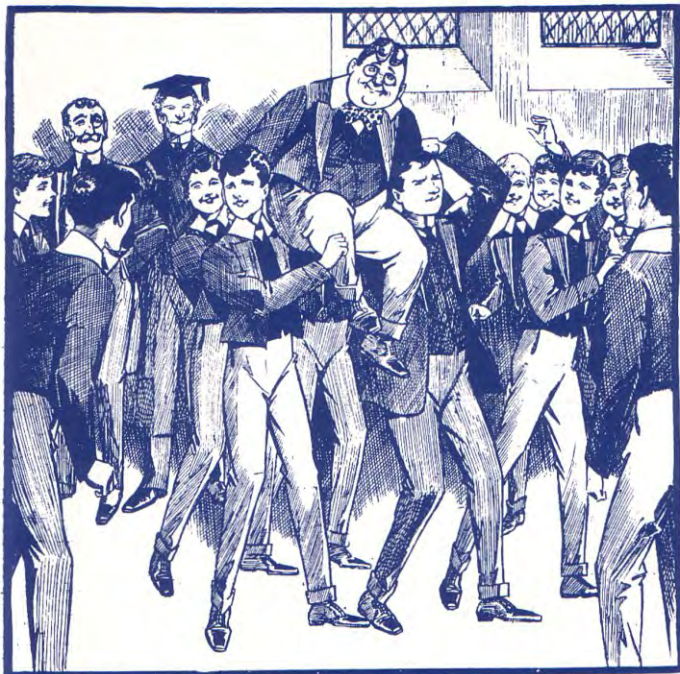
A Magnificent New Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.



The Magnet¹ Library

No. 431. Vol. 10.

MAY 13th, 1916.



A CHANGE FOR BILLY BUNTER.

(An Extraordinary Scene in the Splendid Long Complete Tale of School Life in this Issue.)



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MY READERS' PAGE

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1d., Every Monday. "THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1d., Every Wednesday. "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d., COMPLETE LIBRARY. "THE PENNY POPULAR," 1d., Every Friday. "CHUCKLES," Price 3d., Every Saturday.

The Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums, at home or abroad, and is only too willing to give his best advice to them if they are in difficulty or in trouble. . . . Whom to write to: Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

For Next Monday:

"THE BOY FROM SOUTH-AFRICA"

By Frank Richards.

There is no lack of thrills in the magnificent story of school life which Famous Franky, as he is termed by many admiring readers, has written for next Monday. The arrival at Greyfriars of an Afrikaner named Piet Delarey gives rise to considerable excitement in the ranks of the Remove; and the new boy finds himself confronted with a hard battle by reason of a stigma surrounding his father's name. Subsequently, however, a piece of very good news comes to hand concerning Delarey senior, and this, coupled with the fact that the South African boy has displayed real grit and élan, fearless courage, causes the tide to turn in favour of

"THE BOY FROM SOUTH AFRICA!"

who is unanimously voted one of the best and a jolly good fellow!

A HEADMASTER HITS HOME!

"Stories Admirable in Every Way!"

Those amiable persons who make it a practice to sneer and jeer at the morale of the Harry Wharton stories will be given food for reflection in the following letter from a gallant soldier-schoolmaster:

"Fort Nepean, Victoria,

"Australia.

"Dear Sir,—I should like to express my admiration for the stories appearing in the Companion Papers. I have read the 'Magnet' since the first issue, and the 'Gem,' too, I have taken for a long time now; and I find the papers a healthy relaxation from the reading of books of study. The stories are admirable in every way, and if your tales were always read in preference to some of the trash that is on the market there would be fewer such cads about as are a disgrace to our glorious Empire. That spirit of honour animating your heroes is what has made the public schoolboys of Britain and her Colonies to be looked upon as a gentleman everywhere.

"Until recently I was for some years headmaster in one of our State schools, so that I know something of boys. Now, as a member of our Expeditionary Force, I often read your stories, and derive much amusement and pleasure from them. In closing, may I wish you every success; and I hope the Companion Papers will continue to enjoy a wider circulation with each year of their issue.—I am, yours very sincerely,

"J. H. U.

"P.S.—I should like to know if 'Cousin Ethel's School-days' is obtainable in book form: as it would make a good addition to the school library."

I thank my schoolmaster friend most cordially for his entertaining letter, and wish him the best of success in the Service. With regard to the query contained in his postscript, 'Cousin Ethel's School-days' has not yet appeared in book form, but I hope, in the course of a few months, to be able to arrange this, especially as the story gave great delight to myriads of readers all the world over.

NOTICES.

F. G. Chamberlin, Officers' Steward III, Warrant Officers Mess, H.M.S. Revenge, c/o G.P.O., London, would be glad to correspond with a girl reader of 17 or 18, and also asks for back numbers.

G. Stone, 33, Aspland Grove, Amburst Road, Hackney, N., is willing to pay 1d. each for back numbers of the "Magnet" and "Gem" up to the end of Vol. 6.

Lestie V. Lean, 79, Lansdowne Road, Notting Hill, W., "Gem," and would be glad to hear from any reader who is willing to sell them cheaply.

T. Riley, 245, North Road, Preston, Lancs., wishes to form a "Gem" and "Magnet" League, open to readers anywhere in the United Kingdom, and would be glad to hear from anyone interested.

E. Muller, Craigvar, Pir Avenue, Sea Point, Cape Province, South Africa, asks South African readers to send him back numbers of the Companion Papers and other suitable literature for forwarding to soldiers. He offers to pay all postal expenses.

Private A. Percival, 17455, 1st Northants Regiment, No. 1 Infantry Base Depot, R.E.F., Le Havre, France, would be glad to correspond with "Magnet" readers.

J. Peele, 108, Great Western Street, Moss Side, Manchester, wishes to form a "Gem" and "Magnet" League for boys and girls in his neighbourhood, and would be glad to hear from all interested.

A. Browne, 132, Planchet Grove, East Ham, is starting an amateur magazine, and would be glad to hear from any reader having a small hand-press or a duplicating machine who would co-operate with him.

Sapper W. Chiswell, 4th Coy., R.E., Moorish Castle, Gibraltar, would be glad to have back numbers of the Companion Papers.

Pioneer B. Harbours, 129165, F Coy., 33rd Section, 2nd Battalion, Special Brigade, R.E., B.E.F., France, would be glad if any reader would send him copies of any of the Companion Papers each week.

Private W. J. Dean, 9 Platoon, C Coy., 2nd City of London Regiment (R.E.), B.E.F., France, would be glad to correspond with a girl reader about 17 or 18.

B. Brownson, J. Plants & Co., 15, Cross Street, Manchester, wants to join a "Gem" or "Magnet" League in the Cheetham district, if possible.

Private F. Fiveash, of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, begs to thank all the readers who responded so generously to his appeal for back numbers.

John F. Porter, 55, Mayall Road, Herne Hill, S.E., would like to join a "Magnet" League in or near his district.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

T. S. M.—The support I ask from such as you—who cry out "Swindle!" directly they are disappointed about getting a prize—is just what you say you mean to give to the "Herald"—now on at all!

R. C. H. M. (Graaff Reinet).—Mr. Richards has obliged at last. See particulars in Column 1 of next week's story. Every mail from South Africa brings requests for the introduction of a South African boy to Greyfriars.

"A Reader" (Sunderland).—I don't really think that most readers are in any doubt as to the meaning of cave, adam, pater, and mater. They didn't pronounce cave as "carway" when I was at school, by the way. Sounds like the sort of noise a seed-cake might make.

A. C. (Alfreton).—Certainly you can have all available numbers of the "Boys' Friend" 3d. Library on sending price. Do you want a list of the titles, or simply the number of issues still in print?

L. B. (Coventry).—Thanks for portrait, and also for your very interesting letter!

"Gumsucker."—It won't do, young man! There would be an outcry from all over the earth if we turned H. W. & Co. into serious seniors. Your other suggestion is being acted upon from time to time. Russell, Vernon-Smith, and others have been put well in the front.

Elfen (Hull).—You didn't shock me. I am not so easily shocked. I don't see why you should think yourself too old for the "Magnet" and "Gem"; we have many adult for the men who got your cigarettes, I should say.

Yours Editor

A Complete School-
Story Book, attrac-
tive to all readers.

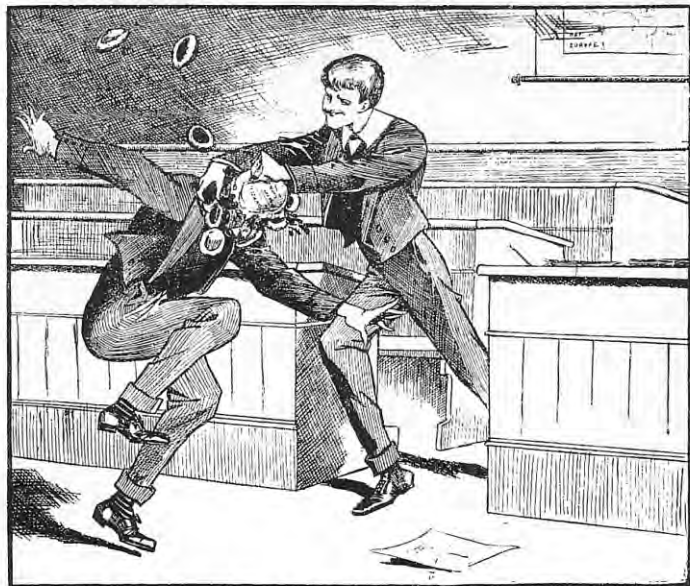


The Editor will be
obliged if you will
hand this book,
when finished with,
to a friend. . . .

THE HERO OF GREYFRIARS!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Bob Cherry grasped the bag, and squashed the tarts over the head of the Yankee Junior. "Yaroo!" gasped Fish. "Why, you mugwump—you ungrateful Jay—Groogh!—Ow! Yaboo!" (See Chapter 2.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Bob Cherry Has Bad Luck!

BOB CHERRY was in great spirits that morning. Perhaps it was the kindly influence of spring. The sun was shining down on the old Close of Greyfriars. The old trees were thick with new green. Bob Cherry would have given a term's pocket-money to be out of doors that morning instead of in the dusky old Form-room. It was always very difficult for Bob to keep still

indoors, and that fresh and sunny morning he found it more difficult than ever.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes dwelt upon him more than once. The Remorse-master had long passed the age when the influence of spring induced exuberant spirits. Solemn seriousness was what Mr. Quelch required in the Form-room, and solemnity and seriousness were foreign to Bob's nature. Quite involuntarily Bob began to whistle—actually to whistle in class while Mr. Quelch was dabbling weird figures on the black-

board! And Mr. Quelch spun round with a face that was truly terrific.

"What is that? Who is that? Cherry!"

"Ye-es, sir?" stammered Bob.

"You were whistling!"

"W-w-was I, sir?"

"You were!"

"Sus-sus-sorry, sir!"

"Take fifty lines, Cherry!"

"Ye-es, sir!"

Mr. Quelch turned to the blackboard again. Bob Cherry groaned under his breath. The fifty lines did not trouble him so much as the stern necessity for keeping quiet.

"Cherry, sit, you ass!" whispered Harry Wharton. "You'll get detained for the afternoon if you're not careful!"

Bob shuddered at the bare idea. It was a half-holiday that afternoon, and the mere thought of detention was dismaying.

But a few minutes later Bob's irrepressible spirits rose again. Billy Bunter was in the form next in front of him, and Bob could not resist the temptation to lean over and tickle the back of Bunter's fat neck with a pen-holder. Unfortunately Billy Bunter was so startled that he uttered a sudden yell.

"Yoh-hoh! Yow! What's that?"

Billy Bunter screwed round in his seat, clutching at the back of his neck. He blinked at Bob and Harry Wharton through his big glasses reproachfully.

"Oh, really, you fellows—?"

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir!" said Bunter, screwing round again to face Mr. Quelch's glinted eyes.

"What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing, sir!"

"Then why did you utter that ridiculous ejaculation, Bunter?"

"I—I—something tickled my neck, sir!" stammered Bunter. "I—I think perhaps it was a wasp, sir."

"A what?"

"A wasp—I mean, a wasp, sir! Or—or perhaps a hornet!" stammered Bunter.

"A hornet!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"I didn't really see it, sir; but very likely it was a hornet," said Bunter helplessly. "It—it was something, sir."

"Cherry, did you touch Bunter?"

Bob groaned inwardly.

"Yes, sir?"

"Why?"

"To—to—to—"

"To what?"

"To—to make him jump, sir!" said Bob desperately.

Some of the Removites giggled. Mr. Quelch gave them a freezing look, and the giggle died away. Bob sat with crimson cheeks, fervently wishing that he had resisted the impulse to make the Owl of the Remove "jump."

"Cherry, you will take a hundred lines! If there is any further disorder on your part this morning I shall detain you for the afternoon!"

"Oh, sir!" murmured Bob.

"The Form-room is no place for mischievous pranks, Cherry."

Bob had to admit that that was the case. But fifteen years and fifty naturally did not see eye to eye in such matters.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked expressively at their exuberant elum. Johnny Bull shook a warning fiat at him as soon as Mr. Quelch was looking another way. Frank Nugent gave him a warning glare. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh murmured that the carefulness should be terrific. The Famous Five of the Remove had a little excursion planned for that afternoon, and Bob was going the right way to get detained.

Bob grinned reassuringly at his chums. He was going to be very careful now—awfully careful!

And for an hour or more his carefulness was, as Hurree Singh expressed it, terrific. He was as good as gold. When the catastrophe came it was really not Bob Cherry's fault. Mr. Quelch having gone to the cupboard for a nap, Skinner of the Remove projected an ink-ball at Bob—perhaps also feeling a desire to make somebody "jump" to break the monotony.

The missile, composed of blotting-paper kneaded up with ink, caught Bob on the nose, and he gave a little gasp. Then he caught the little missile, dipped it into the inkpot on his desk, and whizzed it back at Skinner.

Skinner promptly ducked, and the ink-ball flew past his head. Past Skinner, and—horror of horrors!—straight at Mr. Quelch, who was coming towards the class.

Before that bullet found its billet Bob knew what must happen, and he sat frozen with horror.

Squish!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 451. Form-master the missile.

alighted, daubing it with ink, and sliding down Mr. Quelch's gown.

The Remove-master fairly staggered.

He put up his hand to his nose, and drew his fingers away icky, and gazed stonily at the missile lying on the floor at his feet. The Remove sat frozen. For a full minute Mr. Quelch stood staring, while the juniors waited for the thunder-bolt. Mr. Quelch found his voice at last.

"Who—who—who hurled that at me?"

Dead silence.

"This is outrageous!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "If the boy who hurled that missile does not come forward immediately I will detain the whole class this afternoon until six o'clock!"

Up jumped Bob Cherry at once.

"If you please, sir—"

"Was it you, Cherry?"

"Yes, sir; but—"

"You threw that at me, Cherry?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"What do you mean, boy? Did you or did you not?"

"Yes, sir—no, sir! I—I mean, I threw it—"

"You threw it!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You threw a missile at your Form-master in class!" breathed Mr. Quelch, apparently hardly able to credit such an awful and unheard-of happening.

"No, sir!" gasped Bob. "I—I threw it at Skinner, sir!"

"Oh, I understand! I accept your word, Cherry. If you had thrown it at me, I should have taken you to the Head for a flogging. As it is, you are detained for this afternoon, and you will remain in the Form-room till six o'clock. You will occupy the time by writing out five hundred lines of Virgil."

"I—I—"

"Silence!"

Bob Cherry's high spirits caused no more trouble in the Form-room that morning. His high spirits had vanished. During the remainder of morning lessons he sat as dismal as the most exacting Form-master could have wished.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Detained!

"FATHRAD!"

"Ass!"

Such were the sympathetic remarks of Bob Cherry's chums when the Remove came out of the Form-room.

Bob Cherry groaned dismayfully.

"Detained!" he mumbled. "Detained all the afternoon! Lucky there's no match on, at any rate! But—"

"You won't be able to come out now," said Wharton. "You're a fathead, are you? That spot to Reddyliffe is odd."

"Oh, you fellows can go all the same," said Bob. "That needn't make any difference. You'll find me dead in the Form-room when you come back! Wow!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, don't bother now, Bunter!" said Wharton crossly.

"Oh, really, Wharton! I was going to propose something to set the matter right," said Billy Bunter warmly.

"You can't get Bob out of detention, I suppose?"

"Well, not exactly," admitted Bunter. "But I'll tell you what. You're going over to Reddyliffe on your bikes, and you're going to have tea with the Reddyliffe chaps. Now Bob can't come, but they'll be expecting five visitors. My idea is that I should go instead of Bob."

"What!"

"That seems to me to settle the difficulty," said Bunter, blinking at them. "I can ride Bob's machine, and if the ride's a bit too much for me, you fellows can take it in turns to feed-wheel me along."

"My hat!"

"You can push me up the hills, too—I don't like hill-climbing. As it happens, I'm rather short of tin to-day, so I shall be really glad of that feed at Reddyliffe. Is it a go?"

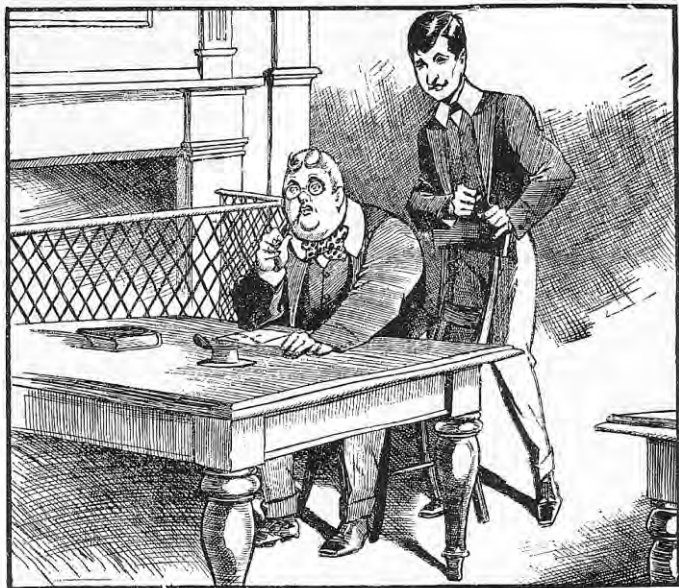
"So that settles the difficulty, does it?" asked Johnny Bull, with a glare at the complacent fat junior.

"Yes, that seems to me to settle it all right. You silly ass, wharrer you up to?" roared Bunter, as Johnny Bull caught him by the collar and tapped his head against the wall.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull did not explain what he was up to—he left Bunter to guess that, while he rubbed his head. Bunter's excellent idea of settling the difficulty did not seem to appeal to the Famous Five at all.

Bob Cherry's face was quite glum at dinner. After dinner the chums of the Remove sat at the table and talked over the



Bunter chewed the handle of his pen for a time, and Skinner regarded him curiously. "Can I help you?" he asked, very politely. (See Chapter 9.)

unfortunate Bob had to stay at home, but the other fellows could not keep him company in detention. Bob was to have the whole Form-room to himself that afternoon.

"It's rotten," growled Bob, as he watched Nugent mending a puncture—"cotton I! I've a jolly good mind to chance it and bunk!"

"Too jolly risky," said Wharton anxiously. "It might mean a flogging. Better grin and bear it. Besides, you've got lines to do."

"I've got a lot of lines in stock—I did them last half-holiday, when it was raining—two or three hundred, at least," said Bob. "I've a jolly good mind—"

"I say, Cherry—"

"Oh, buzz off, you fat boulder!"

"Mr. Quelch has sent me for you," said Bunter. "You're to go into the Form-room at once."

Bob Cherry grunted, and walked away to the School House, his hands driven deep into his pockets. Mr. Quelch met him at the door with a severe brow.

"Cherry, it is time for you to go into the Form-room."

"Yes, sir," said Bob heavily.

"During part of the afternoon I shall be absent," said Mr. Quelch. "When I go out I shall request Loder to keep an eye on the Form-room. If you should venture to break detention, Cherry, as you have done on a previous occasion, I shall report you to the Head for a flogging."

Bob Cherry went dully into the Form-room. His idea of "bunking" and chancing it was nipped in the bud.

The fire had died out, and it was dismal enough in the Form-room. Outside the sun was shining, and all was merry and bright. Bob dragged out his Virgil and a sheet of impot paper, but he could not settle down to work. He went to the window, and stood looking out into the quadrangle.

Four juniors came wheeling out their bikes, and they looked up, and waved their hands to Bob. He waved his, and watched his chums disappear through the gates. Harry Wharton & Co. were gone, and Bob was left to a dismal afternoon's grind.

He sat down desolately to work.

From the Close came merry voices. Most of the fellows were going out that afternoon. The bright weather tempted them to the seashore and the cliffs and the woods and meadows. The voices outside died away, and poor Bob felt more forlorn than ever.

There was a step in the passage, and Squiff of the Remova looked in.

"How are you getting on, Bob?"

"Rotten!"

Squiff looked sympathetic.

"Thought I'd just drop in and say a word," he remarked. "I've brought you some toffee, too. Buck up!"

The Australian junior tossed a packet of toffee across, and vanished. It would not have done to be caught there by Mr. Quelch. Bob Cherry felt a little cheered, and he began operations on the toffee. A quarter of an hour later the skinny face of Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee junior, looked in.

"Feeling pretty down?" he asked.

"Rotten!"

"I guess you'll get pretty peckish, staying hyer till six o'clock," said Fisher T. Fish. "Did you bring in any grub?"

"Never thought of it."

"How'd you like some jam-tarts?"

"First rate."

"Then I guess I'm open to trade with you," said Fisher T. Fish, producing a paper bag. "I've got some ripping tarts here at threepence each."

Bob Cherry stared at the Yankee merchant. For a moment he had an impression that Fisher T. Fish was sympathetic, and had brought him a bag of tarts by way of consolation. It dawned upon him that the astute Yankee had come to sell him twopenny tarts at threepence each. Fisher T. Fish neglected no opportunity of turning an honest penny.

"You worm!" burst out Bob.

Fisher T. Fish looked indignant.

"I guess I'm hyer to do you a good turn!" he exclaimed. "I've been to the tuckshop and paid twopenny each for these tarts, because I thought you might get peckish."

"Buzz off, you worm!"

"I guess I'll let you have them at tuppence-ha'penny," said Fish persuasively. "That ain't much for my trouble. Mind, you know what a tremendous appetite you've got; you'll be feeling like a cannibal about five o'clock. I calculate you'd better make it a trade."

Bob Cherry jumped up.

"Hyer you are!" said Fish, thinking that Bob was coming to take the tarts. "Spot cash, mind. I don't deal on tick. Why, what—Yoooonce!"

Bob Cherry grasped the bag, and squashed the tarts over the head of the Yankee junior. Fisher T. Fish yelled wildly. Then Bob swung him round, and his heavy boot was planted behind the merchant of the Remove, and Fisher T. Fish departed from the Form-room with a wild jump.

"Yaroo!" gasped Fish. "Why, you mugwump—you ungrateful jay—Crough! Or! Nah-yahoop!"

Bob Cherry, feeling somewhat cheered, returned to his lonely desk. Fisher T. Fish went down the passage with his tarts plastered on his head, and his feelings too deep for words.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Breaking Bonds!

"O H, dear! Oh, crumbs! Oh, eriky!"

Thus Robert Cherry, after another hour of detention.

From sheer boredom he had been grinding away at his lines, and a couple of hundred of them had been finished. Then he threw down the pen and groaned.

It was really too bad. He went to the window and looked out. The Close was deserted. All the fellows were out. It seemed to the unfortunate Bob that he had all Greyfriars to himself.

He would have been glad even of Fishy's company at that moment.

A step in the passage made him jump back to his desk, and his pen drove away over the paper again. But it was not Mr. Quelch—it was William George Bunter who entered.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob dimly. "Mind Quelch doesn't catch you here, Bunter."

"He's in his study," said Bunter. "I thought I'd give you a look in."

"Thanks," said Bob, rather surprised.

"The fact is, Cherry, I've been disappointed about a postal-order," said Billy Bunter confidentially. "It's owing to this conscription business, I suppose. Anyway, the postal-order hasn't arrived. As you're not going out this afternoon, you won't want that remittance you got this morning. I suppose you wouldn't mind lending me five bob till my postal-order comes?"

"Oh, get out, you fat fraud!" granted Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"What are you doing here, Bunter?" said an acid voice in the doorway.

Billy Bunter spun round in dismay. Mr. Quelch was standing behind him.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I—"

"You know very well that you are not allowed to speak to a junior under detention, Bunter."

"I—I wasn't speaking, sir—"

"I heard you, Bunter."

"I—I mean, I wasn't exactly speaking, sir," said Bunter. "I—I was only urging Cherry to—to work hard, sir, and—and please his kind teacher."

"You are prevaricating, Bunter!"

"Oh, sir! I—I couldn't, sir! I've often got into trouble for being so truthful, sir," said Bunter, his eyes almost

bulging through his glasses as the Form-master picked up a cane from his desk.

"Hold our your hand, Bunter!"

Swish!

"Yaroo!"

"Silence! If you come here again, Bunter, you shall be detained for the rest of the afternoon!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the Form-room, squeezing his fat hand under his fat arm. Mr. Quelch turned to Bob Cherry.

"Cherry, I am going out now. You will remain here till six o'clock, and you may leave when you hear the hour strike."

"Yes, sir."

"Loder will keep this Form-room under observation," added Mr. Quelch.

He walked out. Bob returned to the window, and a few minutes later saw the Remove-master crossing to the gates. Bob sat down on his desk and swung his long legs. He debated in his mind whether to "bolt." Mr. Quelch was gone, and Loder, the prefect, was careless enough in his duties. There were enough lines done to fulfil his task, added to the stock so judiciously accumulated in advance on that rainy afternoon the previous week. Bob congratulated himself on his forethought on that occasion.

The junior was still thinking out the pros and cons when Loder of the Sixth looked in.

"Hallo, you young cub!" said Loder.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, fathed!" replied Bob.

Loder scowled.

"I've got to keep an eye on you here!" he growled. "Nice for a prefect, I must say! If you get out of this Form-room I'll skin you!"

"Thanks!"

"Mind, you'll be reported for a flogging if you put one foot outside the room," said Loder threateningly.

The prefect stamped away, and Bob Cherry grinned. He could guess why Loder had come there to give him that warning—he was a little keener than the bully of the Sixth gave him credit for being. Loder had not cared to refuse Mr. Quelch's request; but he had other engagements that afternoon, and had no intention of keeping Bob Cherry under observation.

Bob stationed himself at the window again. About five minutes later he had the satisfaction of seeing Loder and Carne and Walker of the Sixth crossing towards the Cloisters. He knew their destination—the old tower, where Loder frequently had his little smoking-parties and card-parties secure from discovery. Loder was safely disposed of for the afternoon, and only his threat remained to keep Bob in the Form-room.

Bob Cherry made up his mind.

Mr. Quelch was gone, Loder was gone, and nearly everybody was out of doors. He had lines enough to show for the afternoon's work. It would be perfectly safe to clear out for an hour, and get back before six.

The oppressive Form-room was too much for him, and the wind and the sun seemed to call to him.

He tiptoed to the door and looked out. The passage was empty, the house was silent. He slipped out, and closed the Form-room door quietly.

He took his cap from the hall, and walked out into the quadrangle. With beating heart he crossed to the gates. Rake of the Remove came out of the tuckshop, and started as he saw him.

"Hallo! Ain't you detained?" he asked.

"I'm let off!" said Bob cheerily. "I've let myself off, you know."

"Fathed!" said Rake. "You'll get spotted!"

"I'm going out. Keep it dark."

"Oh, rather!"

Bob Cherry scuttled out of the gates. Goading the porter was in his lodge, and there was no one to "spot" him.

Bob breathed more freely as he found himself in the open road.

He broke into a run, and scudded away across the fields, and in a very short time he was on the towing-path, following the shining river, with half a mile between him and Greyfriars.

His face brightened up wonderfully now. He would rather have been with his chums, but at least he was free, enjoying the fresh air and sunshine.

"Hurrah!" he chirruped gleefully. "What a lark! Hurrah!"

"I say, Cherry—"

Bob Cherry gave an angry snort as Billy Bunter came through the trees beside the towing-path. The fat junior blinked at him.

"Quelch let you off?" he asked.

"No!" growled Bob. "I've bunked. Don't you?"

DELICIOUS TUCK-HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF THE "BOYS' FRIEND," 10.

Billy Bunter grinned.

"What a wonderful reveal," he said. "I really don't know what!"

"It's against all the rules, you know," said Bunter, wagging his head solemnly. "I can't approve of this disobedience. I'm shocked at you, Cherry!"

"Why, you fat toad—"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I can't help thinking that it's my duty to report you!" said Bunter firmly. "I can't help it if I've got a stronger sense of duty than most fellows. You notice that all really honourable claps are like that."

"You fat, sneaking worm!" shouted Bob.

"Still, one good turn deserves another," said Bunter thoughtfully. "If you're going to lend me that five bob—"

"Go and eat cake!"

"I mean half-a-crown," said Bunter. "Mind, I feel that it's my duty to report you, Cherry. But—"

Bob Cherry extracted a shilling from his pocket, and pitched it at Bunter.

"Now buzz off before I duck you in the river!" he said.

And Billy Bunter, with a fat grin of satisfaction, "huzzed" off. Bob Cherry continued his stroll along the river, safe—at the low price of one shilling—from Billy Bunter's troublesome sense of duty.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Marjorie!"

Bob Cherry had strolled away towards Cliff House in the hope that he might fall in with Marjorie Hazeldene. He reasoned it out that Marjorie was pretty certain to be out of doors that ripping afternoon. As he came up to the level-crossing in Pegg Lane he caught sight of a girlish figure in the distance, approaching the level-crossing from the opposite direction.

Bob's rugged face brightened up at the sight of Marjorie Hazeldene. He felt that the risks he had run that afternoon would be well repaid if he could have a pleasant "jaw" with Marjorie, and perhaps see her home to Cliff House before he made for Greyfriars and the detention-room.

The gates of the crossing were closed, and Bob looked to right and left. The train was not yet in sight, and he crossed the little stile at the side of the gates and ran across the line.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Bob ran towards Miss Hazeldene, raising his cap.

Marjorie stopped, giving him a bright smile.

"Fancy meeting you!" said Bob cheerily.

"I am going to Friardale," said Marjorie. "I have a parcel to post for Miss Primrose."

"Let me carry it," said Bob.

Marjorie handed over the parcel.

"May I come as far as the village?" asked Bob.

"Yes," said Marjorie, laughing. "To the post-office, if you like."

"I should like; but I might get spotted," said Bob lugubriously. "I'm out of bounds."

"Oh, Bob!"

"The chaps have gone over to Redclyffe," explained Bob. "I'm detained for docting Quelch on the nose with an ink-ball—quite by accident, but Quelch was waxy."

"No wonder!" said Marjorie, laughing. "But will not Mr. Quelch find out that you have left your detention?"

"Not if I show up in the Form-room again before six. He's gone out, but I think he's in Friardale. I don't want to run into him, you know."

"I suppose not. You had better not come near the village," said Marjorie anxiously. "You are very reckless, Bob."

"Well, how could a chap stick indoors on a day like this?" said Bob argumentatively. "I stand it as long as I could. It's so ripping out here, isn't it? Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter?"

Marjorie was looking towards the level-crossing.

In the distance a train was in sight, coming along at great speed. But it was not towards the train that Marjorie was looking. Her face had gone suddenly white. On the lines, between the closed gates, a child was playing—a little girl of four or five, utterly unconscious of danger. Bob felt his heart jump as he followed Marjorie's glance.

"Great Scott! The kid—she will be killed!"

He broke into a run towards the gates.

There was a scream, as a nursemaid appeared on the other side of the crossing, calling wildly to her charge:

"Cecily! Cecily! Help!"

Bob Cherry recognised the little girl on the railway line. It was the niece of Sir Hilton Pepper, a landowner in the neighbourhood of Greyfriars, with whom the Greyfriars fellows had had many rubs. The nurse, with a face like chalk, was screaming and waving her hands over the gate, the child looking at her in alarm and wonder, unconscious of the approaching peril.

the child looking at her in alarm and wonder, unconscious of the approaching peril.

Bob Cherry reached the crossing and vaulted over the gate. The shrill scream of an engine-whistle was in his very ears.

The express was rushing down upon the spot. Bob did not look at it. His eyes were fixed upon the child standing directly in the track of the rushing engine.

Marjorie stood frozen with horror as she watched him. He could never save the child in time—it would be two deaths instead of one! There was a silent prayer upon the girl's frozen lips.

Another shriek from the engine! Bob was on the line now. He stooped and caught the child in his strong arms, and tore her up and rushed on. There was no time to turn back; there seemed no time to rush on to safety before the engine was upon him.

With the child in his arms Bob Cherry leaped desperately for safety.

He cleared the line, and stumbled forward, feeling the rush of the wind of the train close behind.

But he was clear!

By a foot or less the great engine rushed past, and Bob Cherry had escaped instant and terrible death.

He fell forward on his knees, dazed, panting, almost sick, as the train rushed past.

It was gone in a few seconds.

Bob Cherry stumbled up.

His face was white now.

"My—my word!" he muttered thickly.

He ran on to the gate. But the nursemaid had sunk to the ground in a dead faint. Bob looked back; he had no idea how to deal with a fainting woman.

"Marjorie!"

The girl was already running forward. She crossed the line, clear and safe now, and joined Bob. Her eyes were full of tears.

"Bob! Oh, Bob, how splendid it was of you! I—I thought you would be killed!"

"So did I, by gum!" said Bob, with a gasp. "I think it was rather close."

"I—I did not know you were safe till the train had gone by," sobbed Marjorie. "I—I—I thought—" Her voice broke, and she sobbed.

"All serene, you know," said Bob. "I—I say, that silly idiot—I mean, that poor girl has fainted, or something. This blessed kid is going to cry!"

There was a howl from little Cecily, frightened almost out of her wits. The gates were still closed, but Bob helped Marjorie over the stile, and followed with the child. Marjorie raised the nursemaid.

"It is all right," she said. "Don't be afraid; the little one is not hurt."

"Safe as houses," said Bob cheerily. "Take her, will you? She's going to yell."

The frightened nursemaid clasped the little girl in her arms, sobbing.

"Nothing to cry about!" said Bob reassuringly. "No harm done."

"You have saved her life, sir!" sobbed the nurse.

"Yes; lucky, wasn't it?" said Bob. "Never mind, the kid's as safe as houses. Come on, Marjorie!"

Bob was anxious to get away, for good reasons. He did not want to be recognised, and it was certain the nursemaid would talk about what had happened. He hurried on down the road, leaving the nursemaid soothing the crying child. A tall figure in riding-clothes came striding along a footpath towards the spot, and Bob lowered his head for the hedge to conceal him.

"That's old Popper!" he said. "Do you mind bucking up a bit, Marjorie? It means a flogging for me, you know, if I'm caught out of bounds."

Marjorie smiled and ran, and in a few minutes they were safe from observation by Sir Hilton Pepper, though from the distance they could hear his deep voice rating the nursemaid.

"Jolly narrow escape!" said Bob, with a breath of relief. "I say, Marjorie, don't mention to a soul that you met me. If it comes out that I've been out of bounds, I shall get it right in the neck. Quelch has promised me a flogging."

"Thank Heaven you were out of bounds!" said Marjorie. "Little Cecily would have been killed if you had not been there."

"Ye-es; but I shall get a flogging, all the same, if Quelch hears of it," said Bob. "Old Popper would report me like a shot. He doesn't like us Remote chaps, you know; we've trodden on his toes a little too often. Mum's the word, you know."

"Of course, I sha'n't mention you," said Marjorie. "You

ought to go straight back to school now, or you may be found out."

"Time to come as far as the village," said Bob.

On the outskirts of Friardale the two parted, Marjorie going on to the post-office, and Bob cutting across the fields towards Greyfriars. It was fortunate for him that they had parted, for Marjorie found Mr. Quelch in the village post-office.

Bob Cherry reached Greyfriars, and hurried across the quadrangle. Most of the fellows had not come in yet, and he flattered himself that he had not been seen. He ran into the School House, and reached the Form-room. It was barely half-past five.

"All serene!" murmured Bob, as he sat down at his desk. He was writing away industriously when six o'clock struck, and Mr. Quelch looked in at the door. Bob Cherry rose to his feet meekly.

"Have you finished your lines, Cherry?"

"Ahem! Nearly, sir."

"You may go when they are finished."

"Thank you, sir."

"Bring them to me in my study, Cherry."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Quelch departed. Bob wrote a few more lines, and then gathered up the sheets, and went to his study with them. There he carefully sorted out the necessary number from his "stock," and added them to the imposition to make it complete. Thus provided with five hundred lines, he repaired to Mr. Quelch's study.

"You may lay your lines on the table, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch, relaxing a little. "I am glad you have been industrious this afternoon. I have spoken to Loder, and he assures me that he kept you under observation, and that you were working in a conscientious way. I am very pleased with this, Cherry. Had you broken detention in my absence, I should have reported you to the Head for a very severe flogging. You may go!"

And Bob Cherry went. He did not smile till he was in the passage.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Spirited Away!

BOB CHERRY waited about the gateway for his chums to come in.

He was not smiling now.

As a matter of fact, Bob, who was not very often serious, was realising the seriousness of his escapade that afternoon—rather late.

He had not thought it out very carefully before breaking detention—and certainly he had had no thought of doing harm. A run out into the fresh air, and a return before he could be spotted—that was all he had thought about. But it was borne in upon his mind now that the matter was more serious than he had deemed. He had deliberately broken detention—he had directly disobeyed the explicit order of his Form-master—and he had not even the excuse that his punishment had been unjust or excessive.

He was feeling uneasy in his mind.

Mr. Quelch had told him very plainly that, had he broken detention, he would have been reported for a flogging, and he knew that the Remove-master meant every word he said.

Loder, too, had reported that he had "kept an eye" on the detained junior. He had, of course, done nothing of the sort. He had had his own occupation that afternoon, and had quite dismissed Bob from his mind. Loder's carelessness would come to light if Bob's escapade was discovered, and the prefect would be furious—his was certain to receive a sharp reprimand from Mr. Quelch. If Bob's adventure came out, he had to expect the very severest measures from his Form-master, and from the prefect. It was not a pleasant prospect.

Too late Bob regretted that he had not endured that heavy detention to the end. Yet he could not wholly regret it, for, as it had happened by chance, his being out of gates had saved a human life. Little Cecily Popper would have been crushed to death under the express had not Bob been there. He could scarcely regret his escapade, so far as that went. Yet—His conscience was not quite easy, somehow. He ought not to have disobeyed, and he knew it. Above all, it was necessary to keep the matter a dead secret. The thought of a public flogging made him shiver—not so much the actual infliction of pain, as the disgrace and the humiliation.

He had intended to tell his chums about it when they came in; but as he waited at the gates he had time to think. He resolved to say nothing, and to let the matter rest. His circumstances had been dangerous, and it was safer for the

to know nothing about it. Making them "accessories after the fact" would do no good, and it gave them the burden of his secret to keep.

It was wiser to say nothing, and to let the whole matter drop as soon as possible, though he reflected with uneasiness that Bunter knew.

He was, in an unquiet mood as he lounged about the old gateway waiting for his chums.

There was a whir of bicycles on the road at last, and the four juniors came in sight, back from Redclyffe. They jumped off their machines at the gates.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob, not so cheerily as usual.

"Here we are again!" said Johnny Bull. "What sort of a time have you had this afternoon, kid? Pretty rotten?"

"Oh, so-so," said Bob. "Glad to see you again, anyway. Had a good ride?"

"Yes, topping!"

The juniors put up their bicycles, and went into the School House. They were feeling very cheery after their long ride, but somewhat concerned about Bob's dull afternoon under detention. But, as Frank Nugent remarked, it was all in the day's work, and might have happened to any of them. Bob did not talk about his detention. He wanted that subject to be forgotten as soon as possible. He proposed a six-handed mill in the study, and Mark Linley came in to make a sixth, and the juniors were soon merrily at work with the gloves, which kept them occupied until calling-even.

Mr. Quelch took the roll-call, and Billy Bunter failed to answer to his name. The roll-call was finished, and the school about to dismiss, when the Owl of the Remove came rolling in breathlessly. Mr. Quelch fixed his gimlet-eyes on him.

"Bunter, you are late!"

"Awfully sorry, sir," said Bunter. "It really wasn't my fault, sir. I—I had to see a lady home, sir."

"What?"

"I—I mean, sir, I—I met Miss Hazeldene, and—and I thought I ought to see her safe to Cliff House, sir, in—case of Zepellins, sir."

There was a chuckle from the fellows who heard Billy Bunter's remarkable excuse for his unpunctuality. Bunter's excuses always were remarkable. When he told a "whopper," it was always very whopping.

"Bunter! You utterly absurd boy! In what way could you protect anyone from a Zepppelin?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, half-smiling. "That is no excuse for being late."

"The fact is, sir, I—I was delayed, because the level-crossing was closed."

"That is no excuse."

"Oh, really, sir, I—I— The fact is, sir, I was nearly run over at the level-crossing, and I had to sit down and rest for some time, sir, I felt so faint."

"You should be more careful, Bunter. Take fifty lines."

"Ye-e-es, sir," said Bunter dismally.

The fat junior was looking indignant as he came out of Hall with the Remove. Hazeldene tapped him on the shoulder.

"You spoofing fat oyster!" said Hazel. "You didn't see my sister home. I met her in Friardale, and took her home myself."

"Oh, really Hazel! I meant I was going to, if—I'd met her," said Bunter. "That was what I really meant to say."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to chuckle at!" said Bunter, blinking at the juniors. "I know I've had a jolly narrow escape at the level-crossing. I didn't see the busby train; you know I'm a little short-sighted—"

"A little, you owl! Ha, ha!"

"You duffer!" said Bob Cherry. "You shouldn't cross when the gates are closed. It's not safe for a blind owl like you."

"Well, I didn't see the train, you know, and I felt quite faint," said Bunter. "It passed within a dozen yards of me."

"A dozen yards!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Well, perhaps fifteen," said Bunter. "It gave me quite a turn. I've had an awfully narrow escape—"

"Awfully narrow. At fifteen yards distance!" chuckled Squiff. "Must have given you quite a turn!"

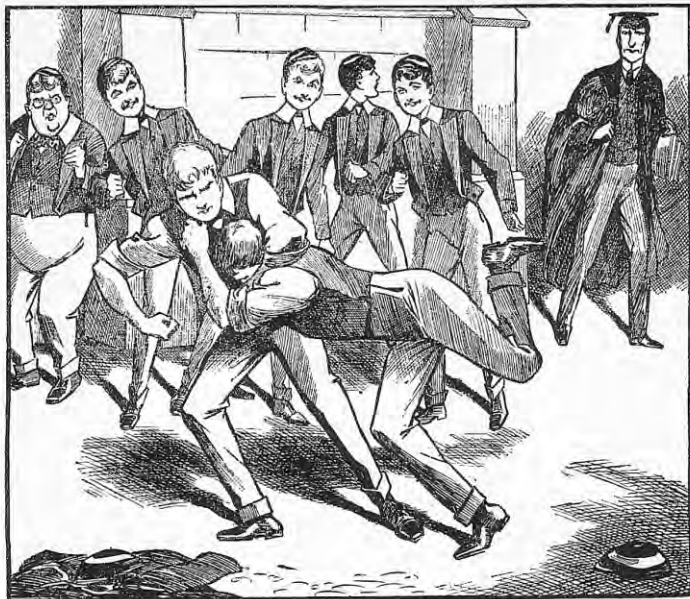
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think it's heartless to chuckle at a fellow who's been in danger of his life," said Bunter. "I say, Cherry, I feel a bit faint still—can you lend me a lob?"

"Hobs are off," said Bob Cherry.

"You might lend me a nob," said Bunter, blinking at the

ANSWERS



Bolsover major rushed at Bob Cherry, and in a moment they were fighting. But scarcely had they closed in conflict when a deep voice broke in. "Cherry! Bolsover! Separate at once! Do you hear me?" (See Chapter 11.)

Remove in a very significant way. "One good turn deserves another, you know."

Bob looked at him hard. He had purchased Bunter's silence once already that afternoon.

"I'm expecting a postal-order shortly," went on Bunter. "I'll settle up both bobs at once. I can't say fairer than that."

Bob silently placed a shilling in Bunter's fat hand.

"That's the last," he said briefly. "Oh, really, Cherry, I hope you don't suppose that I want to sponge on you!" said Bunter loftily. "If you don't want to lend me this bob—"

"Well, I don't!" "Ahem! I shall accept it as a loan, Cherry, and settle up immediately my postal-order comes," said Bunter, his fat fingers closing tightly on the coin. "I must say, you're not the kind of chap I want to remain under an obligation to longer than I can help!"

Bill Bunter rolled away with the shilling, and comforted himself with jam-tarts at the school shop. About an hour later he looked in at No. 13 Study, where Bob Cherry was at work on his prep.

"I say, Bob, old chap—"

"Get out!" growled Bob, without looking up. "Can you lend me another bob?"

Bob Cherry jumped up, and caught up the pakee from the grate. He rushed at Bunter, brandishing the pakee.

Billy Bunter uttered a howl of terror, and fled down the passage at breakneck speed.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 43L

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE BOY FROM SOUTH AFRICA!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Bob Cherry chuckled, and tossed the pakee into the grate. The Owl of the Remove did not come back for the "other bob."

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. The Unexpected Happens!

"HALLO! More trouble!" said Johnny Bull. "Old Popper, by Jove!"

"Give him a groan!"

Greyfriars had just turned out after morning lessons the next day. The Closo was crowded with fellows. A score of pairs of eyes turned upon the tall, angular, big figure of Sir Hilton Popper, baronet, as he came in sight, striding up the path from the gates.

Many of the fellows gave the baronet grim looks. They had not forgotten the time when Sir Hilton Popper, then a governor of Greyfriars, had attempted to introduce drastic reforms into the school on Prussianising lines. Nor had they forgotten his many complaints to the Head on the subject of trespassing by Greyfriars fellows on his land, especially on the island in the river. The Famous Five really considered themselves in a state of perpetual warfare with Sir Hilton Popper. "More complaints!" growled Holoover major. "Who's been on his old island this time? Give the old bounder a groan."

"Anybody got a catapult?" asked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's a catapult, Skinny," chuckled Snoop.
 "Ahem! Not for me—give it to Bolsover."

Bolsover major declined the catapult, however. Catapulting the baronet in the Close was a little too hardy, even for Bolsover major.

"Let's give him a groan," he said. "They can't get at us for that. Let's let him know what we think of him!"

"Honour the stranger that is within thy gates," said Peter Todd reprovingly. "Besides, the Head would cut up rusty. Smile at him. Show him how forgiving we are."

"But we ain't forgiving."

"Never mind that—smile!" said Peter. "Besides, smiling at him will make him wild."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd's suggestion was adopted. As the tall, thin figure came striding up to the house, the whole party of juniors near the door started smiling. They smiled broadly, as though they found something extremely amusing in Sir Hilton's red face and white moustache.

Todd's prediction was fulfilled at once. That sea of smiles had the expected effect upon Sir Hilton's temper, never very equable. He frowned angrily at the grinning juniors.

"Good-morning, sir!" said Bob Cherry, with a tremendous grin. "I hope you are well this morning, sir!"

"Hope you're enjoying this lovely weather, sir?" said Skinner.

"Nice weather, sir!" said Johnny Bull. "Makes you feel specially good-tempered, sir, this nice weather!"

"Huh!" grunted Sir Hilton Popper.

He strode on savagely, looking very much inclined to lay his stick about the grinning juniors. But, after all, a fellow was at liberty to smile if he liked, and as much as he liked. The baronet grunted, and rang a tremendous peal at the bell. Trotter showed him to the Head's study at once. The juniors were left debating the cause of the visit. They had not the slightest doubt that it was some fresh complaint, and they wondered who was the culprit.

"Which of you boudiers has been on his land?" asked Peter Todd. "Wasn't me this time—it was last term I used his notice-board on the island for a camp-fire."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You chaps were out yesterday afternoon," said Bolsover major.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"We were at Redclyffe. Not guilty this time."

"Bob Cherry—"

"Bob was detained."

"Bunter, perhaps. Bunter was late for calling-over, and told a whooper about it," said Skinner. "Was it you, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Skinner! I wasn't anywhere near the island—I was in the other direction. You know I had a narrow escape at the level-crossing in Pegg Lane—the express rushed past me within a quarter of an inch—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was fifteen yards yesterday," chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ahem! I really meant to say—"

"Perhaps it was some of the Fourth," said Harry Wharton. "Hallo, Temple! Have you been on old Popper's property?"

Cecil Reginald Temple shook his head.

"Not yet," he said. "We're going on the island for a picnic on Saturday. But we haven't been yet. He's not after us yet."

"Well, somebody's going to get it in the neck, I guess," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "He's jawing with the Head now. I calculate there's squalls ahead for some jay."

The juniors waited in some anxiety to hear what was toward. After a time Trotter came to call Mr. Quelch to the Head's study. The baronet was still there. The Removites watched their Form-master go, and exchanged glances.

"That shows it's a Remove chap, I should think," said Temple of the Fourth. "One of you fags is booked for trouble. Shouldn't be cheeky, kids, you know— Oh!"

Temple spent the next few minutes extracting his head from his hat. Three or four fets had crammed it down on him, thus ruthlessly interrupting his lofty remarks.

Mr. Quelch came out of the Head's study in a few minutes. He was seen speaking to Wingate of the Sixth, and Wingate came out into the quad. Fifty pairs of eyes at least were fixed on Wingate.

"Order for the school to assemble in Hall!" said Wingate. "Oh!"

"What's the matter, Wingate?"

"Tumble up, and I dare say you'll find out," said the Greyfriars captain.

Word was passed round, and all Greyfriars turned up in Hall. They turned up in a state of wonder and uneasiness. Sir Hilton Popper's coming was pretty certain to be in the

serious one, if it caused the Head to assemble the whole school.

The Greyfriars fellows, far from pleased at having their leisure hours broken in upon in this manner, took their places in Hall. The fellows compared notes in whispers, trying to get at the mystery of the culprit, but nobody owned up to having offended the high-mindedness of Sir Hilton. Somebody, as Wibley remarked, in Shakespearean language, had come between the wind and his nobility. But who it was was a mystery.

There was a buzz of voices in Hall when the Head entered by the upper door, accompanied by Sir Hilton Popper. The prefects called for silence, and the buzz died away.

"Now for it!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Tremble, ye guilty!"

"The tremblousness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Behold, I am knocking together kneelessly!"

"Silence!" rapped out Loder.

"I say, you fellows, the Head doesn't look waxy!" whispered Billy Bunter. "Old Popper doesn't look as savage as usual, either. Perhaps he's come to ask for a holiday for us, or something."

Some of the juniors burst into a chuckle at that suggestion. It was really very unlikely.

"Quiet, there!" said Wingate, frowning.

"Keep your wool on, cocky!" said Rake. But he did not make that remark loud enough for Wingate to hear.

There was silence in Big Hall. Sir Hilton Popper surveyed the assembled school through his glittering eyeglasses. The presence of the Head kept back the deep groan the Greyfriars fellows were inclined to bestow upon the invisible baronet. But it was remarked that Sir Hilton was not looking so grim as usual. And the Head certainly had a most benevolent expression on his kind old face. Perhaps it was not "trouble" after all. But if it was not trouble, what on earth was all the bother about, the Greyfriars fellows wondered.

Dr. Locke gave his little cough which the juniors knew so well.

"My boys, you are doubtless curious to know why the school has been assembled at this unusual hour."

"Right on the wicket, old chap!" murmured Bob Cherry—not audibly.

"Sir Hilton Popper has very kindly called upon me to acquaint me with a very brave action performed by a Greyfriars boy."

There was a general gasp. As Skinner said afterwards, you could have knocked him down with a fifteen-inch gun. That was about the last communication the school had expected the Head to make.

"Yesterday," resumed the Head, "Sir Hilton Popper's little niece strayed on the railway-line, at the level-crossing in Pegg Lane, owing to the carelessness of her nurse. She was within an ace of being crushed to death by a passing train."

Bob Cherry felt his cheeks growing red. He understood now the purpose of the baronet's call. A vision of a flogging in Hall danced before his eyes. Was it all coming out now?

"At the critical moment," went on the Head, listened to by a breathless audience now, "a lad ran on the line, caught up the little girl, and carried her to safety. The nurse, seeing him, as she believed, about to be crushed, with the child in his arms, fainted. The child, however, was saved. The brave rescuer left immediately the nurse recovered consciousness, and was gone before Sir Hilton Popper arrived on the scene a few minutes later. The nurse, however, is certain that he was a Greyfriars boy, as he was wearing a Greyfriars cap. Sir Hilton Popper desires the boy to make himself known, in order that he may thank him."

There was silence in Big Hall as the Head's voice died away. Bob Cherry closed his lips tightly. He had not the slightest intention of owning up. He had no desire whatever to "show off" in public as the heroic rescuer, and not the slightest wish to receive the thanks of Sir Hilton Popper. But he had a very strong desire to keep strictly dark the fact that he had been out of bounds the previous afternoon. A little limelight, even if he had cared for it, which he did not, would hardly have compensated for a flogging.

There was a long pause.

"It is possible," said Dr. Locke at last, "that the nursemaid was mistaken; but Sir Hilton Popper tells me that she is certain that the boy who saved Cecily Popper's life belonged to Greyfriars. If that boy is present, I trust that no sense of false modesty will keep him from coming forward. Now, let him stand out!"

Silence!

"Come, come!" said the Head, a little testily. "This will not do! What boy here was at the level-crossing in Pegg Lane yesterday afternoon?"

"Mr. had it momentary that was in the... "Dinner was in!"

Billy Bunter gave a start as he heard Bolsover's words. A sudden gleam came behind his big glasses. Bolsover pinched his arm.

"Did you see the chap there, Bunter?" he whispered.

"I was the chap!" he replied calmly.

"Wh-a-a!"

Billy Bunter stepped out of the ranks of the Remove. No reply having been made to the Head's demand, it seemed clear enough to Billy Bunter that the heroic rescuer did not belong to Greyfriars at all, and that the nursemaid was mistaken in that matter. Under the circumstances, with honour and glory going begging, so to speak, for want of a claimant, Billy Bunter did not see why he should not step into the breach. Undoubtedly he had been at the level-crossing in Pease Lane the previous afternoon—not at the time of the rescue, certainly, but he had been there! That was near enough for William George Bunter!

With a fat face as bold as brass, William George stepped forth, and there was a buzz of amazement from the whole school.

"Bunter!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Hero of Greyfriars!

"BUNTER!"

It was a buzz at first; then it grew to a shout. Fellows gazed at the fat junior blankly.

Bunter the heroic rescuer!

"Come back, you young ass!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, catching the Owl of the Remove by the shoulder anxiously.

Bunter jerked himself loose.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Come back!"

"The Head has asked me to come forward," said Bunter, with dignity. "I don't think this is a time for false modesty."

"Wh-a-a!"

Bob Cherry stood thunderstruck.

Billy Bunter advanced up the hall, between the ranked Greyfriars fellows, towards the dais where the Head stood with Sir Hilton Popper.

All eyes were fixed on the podgy junior.

Bunter expected the whole Hall to break into ringing cheers. But they didn't. They stared and blinked at Bunter.

Dr. Locke regarded him with surprise. For the moment he did not realise that the Owl of the Remove was laying claim to being the heroic rescuer.

"Bunter, what does this mean? Go back to your place," said the Head, while Mr. Quelch made angry signs to the fat junior, as if he were "shooing" away a stray dog.

Bunter came on resolutely.

"You asked me to stand out, sir," he said.

"Bunter! You—you mean to say—"

"I wasn't going to say anything about it, sir," said Bunter modestly. "I don't want to brag of a little thing like that. Some fellows would, I know. But I'm not that sort. But if Sir Hilton wishes to see me, I'm here."

"You!" almost gasped the Head. "You, Bunter! Bless my soul!"

"By gad!" said Sir Hilton Popper, tugging at his white moustache.

The baronet was amazed. That this little fat fellow in glasses had performed that heroic action was amazing. True, appearances might be against Bunter; but really, he did not strike one as an heroic rescuer.

Dr. Locke looked fixedly at Bunter.

He had supposed that some senior—perhaps Wingate or Courtney of the Sixth—had performed that brave action. It would have been a surprise to him, in any case, to find that it had been done by a junior. But Bunter—

"It was you, Bunter, who saved Sir Hilton Popper's little niece from a terrible death!"

"Well, a fellow couldn't do less, sir," said Bunter.

"Ahem! It was a very gallant action! You are quite sure, Bunter, that—that—" The Head hesitated. "Have you mentioned this to anyone previously?"

"I'm not the fellow to brag, sir. I only told Mr. Quelch that I had had a narrow escape at the level-crossing, because I was—was late back."

"Oh!"

This looked like proof, and the Head glanced at Mr. Quelch for confirmation.

The Remove master nodded.

"Bunter certainly told me that yesterday evening," he said. "I understood him to mean that he had been crossing the line, and had narrowly escaped the train owing to his short sight."

"I—I couldn't tell you all about it, sir," said Bunter. "I felt that I couldn't. It would have looked like—like trying to get off lines, sir, by bragging about what I'd done!"

"Quite so," said Mr. Quelch.

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NEXT MONDAY—**"THE BOY FROM SOUTH AFRICA!"**

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ONE
PENNY.

He glanced at the silent Removites.

"Were any of you aware of Bunter's heroic action?" he asked.

He told us about having narrowly escaped the express, sir," said Harry Wharton. "He didn't tell more than that."

Bob Cherry was grimly silent.

If he was inclined to speak up and cover the absurd Owl of the Remove with confusion, his good nature would have held him silent now, to say nothing of the flogging for disobedience that loomed ahead. He could not have found it in his heart to betray Bunter's ridiculous pretensions, much as he deserved it. Bunter would assuredly have been severely punished for his false claim, and it was no business of Bol's to betray him to punishment.

The two masters exchanged glances.

"It—it appears that it was Bunter, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "I should never have supposed Bunter capable of such an act. I am glad to see that I was mistaken in his character!"

The fact is, sir," said Bunter, "I'm a very brave chap."

"Ahem!"

"All the Bunters are as brave as lions, sir. From the time of Sir Bunter de Bunter, who came over with the Conqueror—"

"I am glad that the right person has been found," said the Head, still in a state of astonishment, but very willing to do Bunter justice now that the proofs seemed clear.

"Bunter, I congratulate you! Sir Hilton Popper, here stands the lad who rescued your niece!"

"By gad!" said the baronet.

He strode forward and held out his hand to Bunter, and gave him a grip that nearly doubled up the fat junior.

"My lad, I am proud to shake hands with you," said Sir Hilton, all his grumblings gone. "Your schoolmates should be proud of you. You have done me a service I shall never forget, and I hope you will always look upon me as a friend!"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Bunter.

He wondered wildly whether it would do to borrow a "quid" of the baronet on the spot; but he felt that it would spoil the effect. Besides, Sir Hilton Popper gave him no time.

The baronet turned to the staring crowd of boys.

"Boys of Greyfriars, you see here a lad who ran into fearful danger to save a child from death. I call for three cheers for Bunter!"

The cheers rang out readily enough. Amazement was still in every face; but all Greyfriars was ready to acknowledge pluck, perhaps all the more because it came from such an unexpected quarter.

The old Hall rang with the thunder of cheering.

Billy Bunter swelled out his chest, and swelled and swelled with pride and importance until he really seemed in danger of sharing the fate of the frog in the fable.

"Bunter a ginkly hero!" gasped Bolsover major. "Well, you never know a chap till you find him out! Shoulder high!"

"Hoora!"

The Removites rushed forward, led by Bolsover. Billy Bunter was caught up, yelling with alarm.

"I say, you fellows— Yaaaah! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo, Bunter!"

"Good old oyster!"

"Hip, hip, hooray!"

The Head looked on with a smile. He was glad to see that testimony of the way the Greyfriars fellows could appreciate courage.

As the school was dismissed, Billy Bunter was borne out shoulder-high by the enthusiastic Removites. Reassured now, the fat junior, perched on the shoulders of Bolsover major and Harry Wharton, sailed proudly above the cheering crowd, snirking and grinning.

It was the greatest day of Billy Bunter's life. He had always loved the limelight, and but little of it had fallen hitherto to his share. But he had enough and to spare now. Every dog has his day, and it was Billy Bunter's turn to strike the stars with his sublime head!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter In All His Glory!

BUNTER the hero!

There was no doubt about it!

The fat Owl of the Remove was a hero!

It was amazing, but true! Or, at least, it seemed true.

Fellows stared at Bunter, unable to make it out. The

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.



Marjorie opened the door timidly. The sight of the sweet, blushing face in the doorway surprised Mr. Quelch, and he rose to his feet at once. "Come in, Miss Hazeldene!" he said, in his courteous way. (See Chapter 14.)

Remove had given him generous recognition; but still they were surprised. Bunter the heroic rescuer! It was almost as surprising as if it had turned out to be Snoop or Fisher T. Fish.

"It beats the band!" said Harry Wharton, when the ovation to Bunter was over. "It beats everything hollow! Bunter's got a lot of good in him that we never suspected!"

"He has, and no blessed mistake!" said Nugent. "It was no joke to run in front of an express train!"

"The courage of the esteemed Bunter was terrific. But the amazefulness is also great!"

"Tain't very complimentary to Bunter to be so surprised!" grinned Johnny Bull. "But a chap can't help being surprised, all the same. What do you think, Bob?"

Bob Cherry granted.

"You haven't said a word, Bob!" exclaimed Wharton. "You might give the chap a pat on the back, anyway!"

"More likely a punch on the nose!" growled Bob.

"Oh, come," said Wharton warmly, "you must admit it was plucky! Old Poppey wouldn't be so keen about it if he didn't know it was a big thing to do!"

"Pooh! Any fellow would have done it!"

Bob Cherry's chums looked at him in surprise. It was utterly unlike Bob to belittle another fellow. His own performance he was modest enough about, but he could always be depended on to give a most generous meed of praise to anybody else who deserved it.

"I say, Bob, I don't like your talking that way," said Nugent. "Any fellow wouldn't have done it, if you come to that. It was a splendid thing!"

"Lots of fellows would have had pluck enough," said Harry. "But lots wouldn't have been quick enough, or determined enough. Lots of fellows would have hesitated a

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few seconds at least, and then it would have been too late. Bunter must have rushed right into it without stopping to think of the danger. That's what makes it so ripping!"

"Br-r-r!"

"Look here, Bob—"

"Oh, rats! Any chap would have done the same!"

"Bosh! Skinner wouldn't, or Snoop, or Fishy, Priestance," said Johnny Bull. "It's easy enough for a chap to say he'd do the right thing at the right time, but it might be different when the time came. But a chap who's really done a splendid thing deserves to be patted on the back. I'm going to treat Bunter a bit differently in the future. I know that!"

"Isn't he the same sponging, lying worm that he always was?"

"Perhaps he is; but he's jolly brave, all the same, when it comes to the test," said Johnny Bull. "And, dash it all, Bob, I don't like to hear you running him down! He's a silly ass, but he's got his good points!"

"Br-r-r!"

Bob Cherry walked away to end the discussion. His chums looked after him in surprise.

"Jolly queer that Bob should get his back up about it!" said Nugent. "I don't understand him!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, Billy!" said the Co., quite cordially, instead of "Shut up!" or "Buzz off, Bunter!" as usual.

Billy Bunter blinked at them. There was a new strain in Bunter's walk—perhaps excusable under the circumstances. Greyfriars did not turn out a first-class hero every day in the week.

"Harry, old chap!" Wharton accepted that form of address without demur. "Could you oblige me with a loan?"

The juniors could not help laughing. Billy Bunter was evidently intent upon striking the iron while it was hot, and putting his new popularity to the very best use. But Wharton nodded cheerily.

"How much, Billy?"

"Well, I'm expecting a postal-order for five bob," said Bunter cautiously. "If you'd like to cash it in advance, I'll hand you the postal-order immediately it comes."

"Billy!"

"There's been some delay in the post, owing to conscription," explained Bunter.

"Have they conscripted the Postmaster-General?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Billy," said Wharton quietly, "I'll lend you five bob, and here it is. But let me give you a tip along with it. You've done a ripping thing, and we all think better of you than we did. You've shown that you've got pluck—real pluck. Well, a chap who has pluck ought to do better than—than—well, telling whoppers! Telling whoppers is a thing only fit for punks and slackers. You ought to make an effort to live up to your name, Billy!"

"Oh, really, Wharton, I hope you don't think I'm capable of telling untruths!"

"That yarn about the postal-order, you know," said

Wharton—"drop it, Billy! You've made the fellows respect you, and you ought to keep it up."

"I really don't quite understand you, Wharton. I'm expecting that postal order by every post now. It's from a titled relation of mine."

"Billy, old chap—"

"I don't brag of my titled relation, any more than I brag of my splendid courage," said Bunter. "I'm simply mentioning the fact."

Herry Wharton gave it up.

"As for this five bob," said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity, "it will be returned to you as soon as my postal order comes. If you can't take my word, Wharton, I can only decline to discuss the matter any further."

Billy Bunter rolled away with the five shillings.

"Same old Bunter!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"The giddy leopard can't change his spots, you know. Bunter will always be a Prussian in some things."

"Some claps can't help lying," said Nugent. "Perhaps Bunter will go into politics when he grows up, and it won't be noticed there."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Anyway, he's done a jolly plucky thing," said Wharton.

And that was agreed upon.

Bunter the hero was still Bunter on the make, as usual. Some heroes hide their light under a bushel, but William George Bunter was not that kind of hero. He had no intention whatever of blushing unseen, and wasing his sweetness on the desert air. Everybody having recognized that he had performed a courageous and devoted action, Billy Bunter intended to have the full credit of courage and devotion—and he did. He was a little too obtuse to realise that a modest demeanour would have set off the heroic action to advantage, and caused it to shine. "Swank" was what he loved, when he had a chance to swank—and he had a chance now. And swank he did to an amazing extent.

While he was expending Wharton's five shillings in the school shop, Bunter entertained a crowd of fellows with a history of his great exploit. Bob Cherry looked into the tuckshop, and this is what he heard—with mingled feelings:

"Risk! Well, I never stopped to think of the risk! There was the kid in danger! There was I, a fellow as brave as a lion! I rushed forward! With one bound I cleared the gates, seized the kid in my arms and bore it to safety! The train rushed past, just grazing me!"

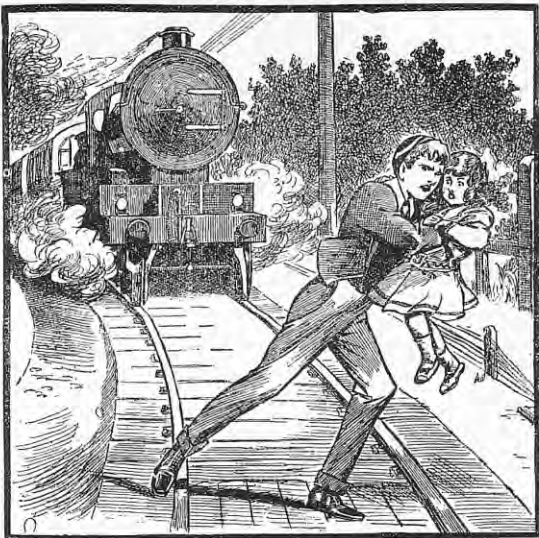
"Grazing you, by Jove!" said Squiff.

"I felt it touch me as it passed!" said Bunter firmly. "It was the narrowest squeak of my life! But, bless you, I didn't turn a hair! That's not my style! I was as cool as ice! When a chap's really brave he takes it like that!"

Bob Cherry turned away without making the purchase he had come for. He felt that he could not stand any more of Bunter the hero.

How the fellow could stand there and roll out such astounding falsehoods was an amazing mystery to Bob.

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With the child in his arms Bob Cherry leaped desperately for safety. He cleared the line, and stumbled forward, feeling the rush of the wind of the train—close, close behind! (See Chapter 4.)

As a matter of fact, Bunter was barely conscious that he was telling falsehoods, if he was conscious of it at all. He had a fervid imagination; he was convinced that, had he been there, he would have done what the unknown rescuer had done—and probably done it better—so that, in a way of speaking, he was actually an heroic rescuer who hadn't happened to have a chance of performing an heroic rescue. And the praise that was bestowed upon him had quite turned Bunter's head, and after a time he half believed that he really was the heroic rescuer.

Bunter was late for classes that afternoon, and Mr. Quelch's eye turned upon him as he came into the Form-room. But the Owl of the Remove had an excuse ready.

"You are late, Bunter—five minutes late." "I'm sorry, sir! I—I was feeling a little upset owing to—to what happened yesterday, sir," said Bunter meekly. "It—it rather upset me, sir."

"Oh! You may go to your place, Bunter."

And Bunter went to his place—without lines!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Sends in a Little Bill!

BILLY BUNTER was wearing a thoughtful expression in No. 7 Study that evening. Peter Todd and Alonzo and Tom Dutton were doing their preparation, but Bunter was not bothering about his. He had other matters to think of. Peter Todd looked at him curiously many times. Peter was puzzled. It seemed clear that Bunter had performed a brave and devoted action. Peter hated to feel doubtful on the subject; he was far from desiring

to refuse Bunter the credit due. But he couldn't understand it—he simply couldn't!

"Haden't you better get on with your prep, Tubby?" he asked at last.

"Prep?" said Bunter carelessly.

"Yes. Quelchly will talk to you in the morning, you know."

"Well, I think Quelchly might be a bit easy with me, considering," said Bunter. "A chap who has risked his life—"

"That cock won't fight for ever!" said Peter.

"Oh, really, Today! Of course, I'm not the fellow to boast—"

"It seems to me that you've done precious little else since old Popper was here," said Peter. "Quelchly won't let you off for ever on the strength of what happened yesterday. Better wire into your prep."

"I've got a letter to write," said Bunter. "I suppose you can lend me a stamp, Toddy?"

"News of the gallant deed for the old folks at home?" asked Peter, with a touch of sarcasm.

"Certainly not! I'm not a chap to blow my own trumpet. I feel that I ought to write to Sir Hilton Popper."

"Popper! What the dickens for?"

"Well, he said he was grateful," said Bunter. "He said I was to look on him as a friend. I think he ought to be allowed an opportunity of showing his gratitude. Words are cheap, you know. If a fellow as brave as a lion should rush in and rescue my niece—if I had one—I should stand him a quid at least. I really think old Popper might have thought of that."

"Perhaps he was afraid of insulting you."

"Oh, that's not! How can you insult a fellow by tipping him a quid?" said Bunter, in astonishment. "I suppose the labourer is worthy of his hire. Why, the Prime Minister himself says he's going on taking his salary—in war-time, too! What's good enough for him is good enough for me, I suppose! I'm not going to set myself up above a great man like that!"

"You're going to write a begging-letter to old Popper, you fat worm?"

"Nothing of the sort! Now I come to think of it, I damaged my clothes in rescuing old Popper's daughter—I mean his niece. Well, if he knew, he'd be glad to pay for the damage, I should think. I rescued his niece from a fearful death, didn't I? I suppose a man would stand a chap a new pair of bags for that."

"So your bags were damaged, were they?"

"The engine brushed against them as the express rushed by," said Bunter calmly.

"Let's see the marks."

"There aren't exactly any marks, but I'm convinced that the damage is serious. I'm entitled to a pound at least. Old Popper will jump at it, I should think. He said distinctly he was grateful. Well, when a chap's grateful he shells out, doesn't he? That's my idea of gratitude."

"It would be," said Peter.

"I don't want any of your rotten remarks, Peter Todd, because you're jealous of a chap who's distinguished himself," said Bunter loftily. "The question is, will you lend me a stamp or won't you?"

"Not for a begging-letter!" said Peter, very decidedly. "Bunter, you've done a decent thing. Don't spoil it by being a cad."

"That's enough!" said Bunter loftily. "I've got friends outside this study, Peter Todd! I'm thinking of changing back into No. 1, as a matter of fact! You fellows don't seem to understand the credit I've brought on this study! A fellow who's as brave as a lion, and has proved it, is entitled to be treated with respect!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the study, and Peter shrugged his shoulders and went on with his prep. Bunter went down to the Common-room to write his letter. He took pen and paper and reflected. He was a little perplexed how to begin.

"I say, hallo!" he said at last, as Bob came in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, you giddy hero!"

"How do you address a baronet?" asked Bunter. "Do you begin, 'Dear Baronet'?"

"Ha, ha, ha! You ought to know—a fellow with such a crowd of titled relations."

"Ahem! My—my relations are—are lords," stammered Bunter. "They don't happen to—to be baronets, as it happens."

"I suppose you address them as 'Dear Lord,' when you write to them?" asked Bob. "Or do you say 'Good Lord'?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You have to begin 'Dear Bart,'" said Skinner, with owl-like seriousness. "Bart is short for Baronet, you know."

"Dear Bart" is the thing."

"Sure of that, Skinner?"

"Absolutely!"

Bob Cherry walked away grinning, and Bunter started his letter.

"Dear Bart—"

Then he chewed the handle of his pen for a time. Skinner regarded him curiously.

"Can I help you?" he asked very politely.

"Well, I'm rather doubtful exactly how to put it," said Bunter. "I shouldn't like old Popper to misunderstand. But I'm entitled to be paid for the—the clothes that I spoiled in rescuing his niece, isn't it?"

"Oh, crikes!"

"My trousers, for instance," said Bunter—"nearly ruined, you know. The engine scraped against them in passing."

"Great Scott!"

"Then my jacket—seriously damaged."

Skinner chuckled.

"I should put it in the form of a bill," he said. "Old Popper is a business man, and he'd like it better that way. You put 'Statement' at the head of the letter—"

"Do I?" said Bunter dubiously.

"Yes; and if he doesn't shell out, you send him another letter marked 'Account rendered,'" said Skinner.

"I—I suppose it's better to be businesslike."

"Ever so much better."

Old Popper will appreciate it—he's a business man. He likes to have everything in regular order. Let me help you with the bill. Begin with 'To one of my trousers, damaged by collision with a locomotive—'

How much?"

"Well, they cost two guineas," said Bunter.

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"Liar!" murmured Skinner.
 "Th? What did you say, Skinner?"
 "I said 'Exactly!' Put that down. Now about the jacket. I suppose that was soiled by contact with the tender?"
 "Very well." To one Eton jacket, seriously soiled by contact with the tender—"How much?"
 "Guinea and a half."
 "Oh! Put that down! Anything else?"
 "Well, my waistcoat—"
 "What happened to your waistcoat?"
 "Lemme see! I—I fell on it—got it muddy, you know."
 "Good! Put that down."
 "One guinea," said Bunter.
 "Right! Didn't you damage your cap, too?" asked Skinner gravely. "Didn't it knock against the engine?"
 "Now I come to think of it, it did."
 "Shove it down, then! What about your boots? When the engine passed over your feet it must have damaged your boots."

"But—but old Popper wouldn't believe that, would he?"
 "Why shouldn't he?" said Skinner, without moving a muscle. Skinner could look as solemn as a judge when he was in his most humorous mood. But there was a limit even to Bunter's obtuseness.

"I damaged them on the railway-line," he said. "That sounds better. I—I mean, that's what happened."
 "Yes, better stick to the exact facts," agreed Skinner. "What about your necktie? I suppose that's worth pounds and pounds, and you must have damaged it."
 "Say a guinea," said Bunter.

"I shouldn't under-estimate it. Old Popper's rolling in money. And you ought to strike the iron while it's hot. Gratitude wears off in time, you know."

"Well, I might say thirty bob. I—I caught the necktie on the engine."

"Of course you did! Now add it all up," said Skinner. "I can picture old Popper's delight when he gets that bill. He will be as pleased as anything to testify his gratitude."

"Well, he ought to be, Skinner! It isn't every chap who would rush dauntlessly into fearful danger to rescue a kid, is it? A chap who's as brave as a lion ought to have some recognition."

"Exactly! Tot it up."
 Billy Bunter "totted" up the account. It was really an interesting document when he had finished. It ran:

"STATEMENT."

To one pair of trousers, damaged by collision with an engine	£2 2 0
To one Eton jacket, seriously soiled by contact with tender	1 10 0
To one Waist, damaged with mud	1 10 0
To one School Cap, damaged by knocking against the engine	5 0
To one pair of Boots, damaged on the railway-line	1 10 0
To one Necktie, seriously damaged	1 10 0
Total	£7 18 0

Billy Bunter surveyed that statement of account with a considerable amount of pride. It represented a good deal more than the value of the clothes alleged to be damaged. But it was cheap for the heroic rescue of a niece, Bunter felt that. Heroism at seven pounds eighteen shillings could not be considered expensive.

"Now write a short letter with it," said Skinner. "You'll get the money to-morrow like a shot—I don't think!" he added, under his breath.

With the kind Skinner's assistance, Bunter dictated the following letter:

"Dear Bart—I beg to enclose my account for damages sustained in rescuing Miss Cecily Popper from a dreadful death on the railway. Trusting you will find the account correct, I remain,
 "Yours faithfully,
 "W. G. BUNTER."

"Now about addressing the envelope," said Bunter. "Do you put 'Bart' on the envelope, Skinner?"

"Certainly!"

The envelope was duly addressed:

"Bart. Sir H. Popper,
 Popper Court, Kent."

"Now lend me a stamp, Skinner, old chap, will you?"
 At this point Skinner appeared afflicted with sudden doubts, and he walked away without replying.

Bunter grunted, and stuck one of his own stamps on the envelope, and rolled out to post it in the school letter-box. When he came in he found Skinner surrounded by a crowd of fellows in the Common-room, shrieking with laughter.

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

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry Takes a Hand!

BILLY BUNTER went to bed that night in a very contented mood. It was really impossible that the baronet, after publicly testifying his gratitude as he had done, could fail to "square" for the damages sustained in the heroic rescue. Bunter looked confidently forward to receiving the handsome sum of seven pounds eighteen shillings on the morrow. It was a pleasant prospect to the impetuous junior. By this time Bunter was almost convinced that he had indeed rescued Miss Popper, and it did not even occur to his obtuse mind that there was anything dishonest in that letter to the baronet.

He rose like a lark in the morning, with seven pounds eighteen shillings running in his mind.

Skinner had spread the story in the Remove, and most of the fellows had heard of Bunter's little bill. Some of them were disgusted, and some of them laughed, but all agreed that it was just like Bunter. Harry Wharton had made one attempt to induce the fat junior to live up to his newly-acquired reputation, but he had not repeated the attempt. It was only too clear that there was "nothing doing."

Bob Cherry did not hear of that famous letter till after breakfast, when he heard some of the fellows cackling over it. A terrific expression came over Bob's face when he heard. He rushed away at once in search of Bunter, and found the Owl of the Remove strutting under the elms in the quad, his fat thumbs poked into the armpits of his waistcoat, and a smugly contented expression on his face. Bunter was counting his quids in advance—counting his chickens, in fact, a long time before they were hatched.

He gave a yell as Bob Cherry grabbed him by the shoulder and spun him round.

"Varcooh! Bolstode, you beast—"

"It's me, you fat, swindling beast!" growled Bob furiously.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"I've heard about your letter to old Popper, you fat thief!" howled Bob, shaking him. "How dare you write to him for money!"

"Varcooh! Leggo! Help! I say, Bolsover, help! Make him leggo!"

"What's the row?" asked Bolsover, coming up.

Billy Bunter squirmed out of Bob's angry grasp, and dodged behind the bulky form of Bolsover major.

"The fat ratter!" panted Bob. "I hear that he's been writing to Sir Hilton Popper for money."

"Ha, ha! Why shouldn't he? It's just like him!"

"Oh, really, Bolsover! I suppose I'm entitled to be paid for my clothes, when I spoiled them rescuing old Popper's niece from a fearful death."

"You lying worm!" shouted Bob. "You did nothing of the sort!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"It's a lie from beginning to end!"

"I decline to discuss the matter with you, Cherry, if you rest dumb on my word," said Bunter, from behind Bolsover.

"I can understand that you're jealous of a chap who's as brave as a lion. But really—"

"You—you lying Prussian!"

"How the dickens do you know he's lying, if he is?" demanded Bolsover major. "You weren't on the spot; you were detained all Wednesday afternoon."

"It's jealousy!" said Bunter. "Sheer jealousy! I call it rather disgusting. It's rotten that a chap can't distinguish himself by splendid courage without having all this. I must go."

"I'm surprised at you, Cherry!"

"You fat worm!" roared Bob, making a rush.

Billy Bunter fled.

Fear lent him wings, as the novelists say, and he vanished into the School House before Bob Cherry could get near him. He took refuge in the Form-room, where all the Remove soon gathered for morning lessons. During lessons Bob glared at the Owl of the Remove from time to time with Hunnish looks.

When the Lower Fourth came out, Bob cornered the Owl in the passage. Billy Bunter blinked at him with deep indignation.

"I'm not going to touch you," said Bob, controlling his temper. "You're not fit to touch, for that matter. You've written to Sir Hilton Popper for money?"

"I've sent in a bill for losses sustained in rescuing his niece," said Bunter, with dignity. "I suppose it isn't your business?"

"If you had rescued his niece you would be a rotten cad to ask him for money," said Bob. "But you didn't, and I know you didn't!"

"You jolly well don't know anything of the kind!"

"I do know it!" said Bob. "I know you're trying to swindle old Popper, and I know you're not going to!"

"I'm going to be paid for the damages—"

"There weren't any damages."

"I suppose I ought to know best about that. You weren't there at the time, and you don't know what happened."

"I was there at the time, and I do know what happened!" said Bob between his teeth.

Bunter started.

"You were detained on Wednesday—"

"It happened after I had broken bounds."

"You—you saw it?" gasped Bunter.

"Yes, I saw it!" said Bob grimly. "And I saw that you weren't there, Bunter!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"If you were there at all, you came along later," said Bob. "You know as well as I do that you never even heard about the kid being saved till Sir Hilton Popper came over here yesterday."

"Oh, really!" said Bunter feebly.

"You can strut about like a miniature Kaiser as much as you like," said Bob scornfully. "I sha'n't say anything about that. But when it comes to swindling a man out of money, it's time to stop. Understand? You're not going to take a single penny from Sir Hilton Popper! If you did, you would be a thief, and I should be your accomplice, as I know the facts."

An obstinate look came over Bunter's fat face. The mere thought of losing the expected remittance from Sir Hilton Popper made him almost wriggle with rage. He certainly did not intend to give it up unresistingly.

"Look here, suppose we say halves?" he said.

"What!"

"Halves," said Bunter. "That's fair!"

"Do you want me to smash you?" gasped Bob Cherry. "Do you take me for a rotten swindler like yourself? If Popper sends you any money, you're going to send it straight back to him!"

"I—I can't! What would he think?"

"He might think that you're a bit more decent than you've made him believe by your letter. Tell him anything you like—I don't care! But you're not going to pocket a shilling from him!"

"Under the circumstances, Bob Cherry, I decline to be dictated to by you!" said Bunter loftily. "I shall do as I please."

"And this," said Bob. "If you keep a single shilling, I shall go straight to Quelch, and tell him that you've been lying, and swindled old Popper on the strength of your lie!"

Bunter grinned.

"You can't!" he cried.

"Why can't I, fathead?"

"Because you'd have to own up that you were out of bounds at the time, and that means a flogging," said Bunter coolly.

Bob Cherry set his lips. That very obvious consideration had escaped him for the moment. But it did not change his purpose.

"I shall chance that," he said quietly.

"It won't be a chance—it will be a dead cert!" said Bunter. "Quelch will be as mad as a horet if he knows you went out on Wednesday. If you sneak about me, I'll sneak about you, I promise you that!"

"Flogging or no flogging, I go straight to Quelch if you don't send Sir Hilton Popper his money back," said Bob, with a deep breath. "I'd rather take a flogging than be a party to a swindle. Mind, I mean that, every word. And I'm going to keep an eye on the post, and if you get a letter from Sir Hilton Popper, you'll open it in my presence."

"I won't!"

"Or else I'll take you by the neck and march you in to Quelch!" said Bob.

Bob Cherry turned his back and walked away. He joined his chums in the quad with a heightened colour. His mind was fully made up. The flogging he had successfully dodged so far was coming after all—that was pretty certain now! Bunter was not likely to keep silence, disappointed of his expected plunder. But there was only one course for Bob to take, and he meant to take it.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Riches Take Unto Themselves Wings!

THERE were two fellows in the Remove who kept a keen eye open for the postman that day. Billy Bunter nourished a hope of getting his letter from Bob Cherry. Bob Cherry was determined that when the letter came he would be on the scene, and would take THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 451.

care that the Owl of the Remove did not make off with it. So when Mr. Boggs the postman came along after lessons, there were two juniors who bore down on him in the quadrangle.

"Letter for me, Boggs?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"Yes, Master Bunter."

Old Boggs good-naturedly tumbled in his bag for the letter. Billy Bunter blinked round at Bob Cherry with a ferocious expression.

"What do you want here, Bob Cherry, you rotter?"

"I'm after that letter, if it's from Sir Hilton Popper," said Bob coolly.

"I—I say, Cherry, Wharton's calling you!"

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Now I come to think of it, Cherry, Mr. Quelch told me he wanted to speak to you in his study."

"Go on!"

"Here you are, Master Bunter!"

Mr. Boggs handed out the letter—a thick, square letter, addressed in a stiff hand, and sealed with a seal that bore the Popper crest. Bunter blinked at the crest, and knew that it was the answer from the baronet. His fat fingers closed tightly on the letter. It was not registered, but it was a very fat letter, and evidently contained more than a sheet of notepaper.

Mr. Boggs stumped on to the house. Skinner and Bolsover major and several other fellows bore down on Bunter, eager to see the letter. Skinner had not supposed for a moment that Bunter's little bill would extract cash from the baronet. His aid to Bunter had been dictated wholly by a sense of humour. But it looked now as if the little bill had "materialised."

"Let's see the guilty goid, Bunter," grinned Skinner.

"Blessed if it doesn't look as if the old boy has shelled out!"

"Yes, let's see it!" said Bob Cherry grimly.

"I—I say, you fellows, this is mine, ain't it?" said Bunter.

"That rotter Cherry wants to take it away from me. I'm going to stand you claps a feed out of it, too!"

"What rot!" said Bolsover major. "Cherry can't take your money, I suppose? It was rotten mean to ask old Popper for it, but it's yours if he's sent it!"

"Let's see it!" repeated Bob.

"I'm going to show it to my friends, Bob Cherry, not to you!" said Bunter.

"You'll show it to me!" said Bob Cherry.

"You let Bunter alone, Cherry!" exclaimed Bolsover major, in his most bullying tones. "It's nothing to do with you!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Bob irritably.

"What's the row?" asked Harry Wharton, who had joined the growing crowd of fellows round Bunter. "Bob, old chap, what are you chipping in for?"

"To stop a swindle," said Bob. "Let the fat beast show what's in the letter. If it isn't money, I'm not interfering with him."

"You're not interfering anyway, you rotter!" howled Bunter. "Bolsover will stop you—won't you, Bolsover?"

"Nobody will be allowed to take that cash from you, Bunter," said Bolsover, in his most dictatorial way. "Cherry can't mean that; but if he does, he won't be allowed to."

"If you chip in, Bolsover—" began Bob hotly.

"I'll chip in fast enough if you take Bunter's money from him!"

"Hold on, Bob!" said Harry, laying his hand on Bob's arm. "You can't take it from Bunter. Have you gone dotty?"

"You don't understand!" growled Bob, realising that he was putting himself into a very peculiar position, and his colour deepening under the curious glances that were turned upon him. "You don't know how it is. Bunter is trying to swindle old Popper, that's what it is. That letter is from Popper, and Bunter's got to show me whether there's money in it. If there is, it's got to be sent back!"

"Let's see it!"

"But I don't see whether there's any tin!" broke in Skinner.

"Open the blessed letter, Bunter. Well look after you."

Billy Bunter opened the envelope. Eight currency notes for one pound each were inside. There was no letter.

"No letter," said Skinner.

"But there's the money," said Bunter. "That's what Sir Hilton Popper owes me. It's rather queer that old Popper hasn't written, isn't it?"

"Not much!" grinned Rake. "Can't you see, you fat duffer? You've disgusted the old boy so much he wouldn't write. He's sent you the money, like throwing a bone to a dog."

"Oh, really, Rake! I suppose I'm entitled to be paid for the damages sustained in rescuing his niece at the risk of

my life?" said Bunter warmly. "I can't see why old Popper should be disgusted."

"You wouldn't!" agreed Rake.

"Anyway, there's the tin," said Skinner. "Seven—eight—
—By Jove, you owe Popper two bob change, Bunter!"
"I'm going to have a snack," said Bunter with dignity. "First of all I'm going to have a snack. I invite my friends to come to the tuckshop with me. You needn't come, Bob Cherry!"

"Stop!" said Bob.

"Gerrot of the way! Make him gerrot of the way, Bolsover!"

"Look here, Cherry! What the thunder do you mean?" demanded Bolsover. "That's Bunter's money."

"Let him alone!" exclaimed Skinner.
"Bob, old chap, what are you driving at?" exclaimed Wharton, utterly amazed.

"I'm driving at this," said Bob Cherry steadily. "Bunter has swindled old Popper, and I should be a party to it if I held my tongue. Bunter's got that money out of Popper on the pretence that he rescued his niece from the train."

"Well, he did," said Wharton.

"He didn't!" said Bob.

"I say, you fellows, you all know I did!" yelled Bunter. "You all know how I rushed to the rescue, as brave as a lion—"

"Oh, shut up, you spoofing rotter!" said Bob. "You were nowhere near the place when it happened."

There was a buzz of amazement among the juniors. Harry Wharton stared blankly at his chum.

"Bob, how can you know? You were detained all that afternoon."

"He doesn't know anything about it," said Bolsover major. "He's gassing!"

"I was detained," said Bob. "But I cleared out all the same. I was out of doors on Wednesday afternoon for a couple of hours."

"And never mentioned it before?" sneered Bolsover.

"Bob! You didn't tell me—"

"I didn't want anybody to get into trouble about it," said Bob. "Quickly promised me a flogging if I cleared off from detention, and I promised to keep it dark—and I didn't mention it to you fellows because it was safer for you not to know—you'd have been supposed to have had a hand in it if it had come out. I suppose it will come out now, and I shall get the flogging. That can't be helped. But as I know Bunter was lying about rescuing Popper's niece, I can't let him take Popper's money for it without being a party to a dirty swindle."

"Oh, my hat!" said Nugent.

"But how do you know anything about it, even if you were out of bounds?" exclaimed Ogilvy. "I suppose you weren't near the level-crossing at the time?"

"I was!" said Bob.

"You saw what happened?" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"Yes."

"And never mentioned it before?" said Skinner sceptically.

"I couldn't mention it without giving away that I was out of bounds, and getting it in the neck," said Bob.

"Well, that's so," said Bolsover. "So it wasn't Bunter?"

"No, it wasn't!"

"I say, you fellows, that's a whooper!" howled Bunter. "It was me, you know. I rushed to the rescue like a—lion. Cherry's telling whooppers—keep off, you beast! He wasn't out of bounds at all!"

"I met Bunter on the towing-path some time before I got to the level-crossing," said Bob. "He saw me out of bounds, and I lent him a bob to keep him from sneaking about me."

"Well, that sounds like Bunter," said Vernon-Smith, with a grin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tain't true!" howled Bunter. "I didn't meet anybody on the towing-path. In fact, I wasn't on the towing-path at all. Cherry wasn't out of bounds!"

"I suppose you fellows can take my word," said Bob, his cheeks deep red now. "I've told you why I haven't mentioned it before. Rake knows I was out of bounds that afternoon—he saw me going out."

"That's so," said Dick Rake at once. "I met Cherry in the quad as he was scuttling off, and advised him to chuck it. He went out."

"That settles it," said Bolsover. "Cherry was out of bounds right enough—and it will be jolly warm for him if it gets to Quelsy. But it isn't proved that he was on the scene when the rescue took place."

"Isn't my word good enough?" demanded Bob hotly.

"Isn't mine?" shouted Bunter.

"I don't see why your word should be taken against Bunter's," said Skinner.

"Why, you cheeky rotter—"

"Peace, my children!" said Peter Todd. "We can settle."

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NEXT
MONDAY—**"THE BOY FROM SOUTH AFRICA!"**

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that easily enough. Bob says he was on the spot and saw the rescue—"

"I say, Teddy, he wasn't—"

"Shut up, Bunter! If Bob saw the rescue, he knows who it was clipped in and got the kid out of danger. Tell us that, Bobby, and that settles it. We can ask the chap himself when we know him."

"Well, that would settle it," said Bolsover. "If Cherry can do that, I agree that Bunter has been lying—as usual."

"Who was it, Bob?" asked Harry.

Bob Cherry did not reply.

"Give us his name," said Skinner maliciously. "Was it a Greyfriars chap? The nursemaid said it was."

"Yes," said Bob.

"And you know him, of course?"

"Ye-es!"

"Well, give us his name!"

No reply.

"Bob," urged Wharton, "nobody doubts your word, but there's no reason why you shouldn't give us the chap's name. If you can't do that, you'll really make us think you've been dreaming."

"Speak upfully, my esteemed Bob!" urged Harroo Singh persuasively.

Bob's face was crimson. He could have spoken up easily enough, and given his own name. But he could not do it. His whole nature shrank from the thought of claiming distinction by announcing his own gallant act to a curious crowd; and he knew, too, that many might not believe him—that it would be looked upon, by some at least, as an attempt to purloin Bunter's laurels. It was his word against Bunter's. But he had no proof. He could have called upon Marjorie Hazeldene as a witness, it was true. But the bare idea of calling on Marjorie to testify to his gallant conduct made him flush. He had not the slightest intention of doing that. He had no wish to claim the credit for what he had done—he hoped fervently that the whole matter should die a natural death. To appear childishly eager after limelight, like Bunter, was utterly repugnant to him.

But it was natural that his silence and his crimson face should be misunderstood. The juniors were exchanging mocking glances already.

Even Wharton, whose faith in his chum was founded on a rock, did not understand, and did not know what to think. Why did not Bob speak, if he knew what he said he knew?

"Speak up, Bob!" said Squiff. "Why don't you speak? Who was it that clipped in and saved the kid? If he's hiding his light under a bushel, there's no reason why it shouldn't come out."

"I'm not going to give the name," said Bob at last. "But I've told you the exact facts. I was at hand, and saw that it wasn't Bunter, and I can't stand by and see Bunter get money from old Popper by a rotten lie!"

Bolsover major burst into a derisive laugh.

"And we've got to take your bare word, when you could give us proof, and don't choose to give it!" he exclaimed. "That's not quite good enough, Bob Cherry!"

"Of course, he's telling whooppers!" said Bunter. "He's been down on me ever since I rescued Cecily Popper from a fearful death. Everybody's noticed it."

"Natural enough, if you didn't do it after all!" snapped Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Well, if his lordship won't give us any proof, I stand by Bunter," said Bolsover major. "I suppose we're not babies, to take Cherry's statements on trust without his condescending to explain?"

"I've told you the facts," said Bob.

"Oh, bother your facts! They don't agree with Bunter's facts. I believe Bunter."

"Same here," said Skinner. "Come along, Bunter. We'll help you change your blarney."

"You won't," said Bob grudgingly. "That money's going to be returned to old Popper, every cent of it."

"Get aside, and let Bunter pass!" said Bolsover threateningly.

"Go and eat cake!"

"I'll jolly soon shift you if you don't!"

"Come on, then!" said Bob.

Bolsover major was as good as his word. He rushed at Bob at once, and in a moment they were fighting. But scarcely had they elosed in conflict when a deep voice broke in.

"Cherry! Bolsover! Separate at once! Do you hear me?"

Mr. Quelch had arrived on the scene.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry Faces the Music!

BOB CHERRY and Bolsover major separated at once. They stood back, their hands still clenched, and their faces flushed, under the severe eyes of the Remove-master. Billy Bunter was already scuttling away, heading for the tuckshop. But Harry Wharton caught him by the collar and jerked him back. Bunter wriggled in vain in the grasp of the Remove captain.

"What does this mean?" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "How dare you fight in the Close almost under my very windows?" Silence.

"Wharton, what are you holding Bunter for?"

Wharton coloured.

"Make him leggo, sir!" howled Bunter. "They're bullying me, sir! They're jealous because I rescued the kid the other day, sir. Bob Cherry's been down on me ever since."

"Release Bunter at once, Wharton!"

The captain of the Remove obeyed.

"It's got to come out now," said Bob. "You've landed yourself in this, Bunter. You can keep the money."

"Money!" said Mr. Quelch. "What money? Is this a dispute about money?"

"It's my money, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Bob Cherry wants to take my money away, and Bolsover won't let him, sir."

"What?"

"It's a lie!" growled Bob.

"It's the truth!" said Bolsover major.

"Silence! Wharton, as head boy of the Remove, you may explain to me. This matter must be inquired into. What is this dispute about?"

"Bunter has received some money from Sir Hilton Popper, sir," said Wharton. "He says it was sent him for—for—"

"Well, for what? You may answer me, Bunter."

"It's a present from Sir Hilton Popper, sir, for rescuing his niece," said Bunter. "My—my clothes were damaged by the railway-train, and—Sir Hilton Popper's sent me some tin to pay for them."

"Indeed! Did you ask him to do so, Bunter?"

"Well, sir, I thought I—I was entitled— You see, sir, I risked my life, but I didn't mind that, but the damage to my clothes—"

"How much has he sent you, Bunter?"

"Eight pounds, sir."

"What! You have represented to Sir Hilton Popper that your clothes sustained damage to the amount of eight pounds?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Well, sir, you know, prices are going up, owing to conscription," said Bunter feebly. "I—I thought I—I ought to be on the safe side, sir. Skinner thought it was all right—didn't you, Skinner? Skinner helped me to make out the bill, sir."

"I am afraid, Bunter, that you have acted unscrupulously, and imposed upon Sir Hilton Popper," said the Remove-master sternly. "It was extremely indelicate to ask for compensation at all in such a case. But to ask for a larger sum than was really involved is seriously near to actual dishonesty. Is it for that reason that you have interfered with Bunter, Cherry?"

"I didn't think about that, sir," said Bob. "Bunter's not entitled to the money at all, and I was going to make him send it all back. It must be sent back."

"Bunter's conduct was indelicate, Cherry, but I fail to see that it is your business to force him to return the money. He has a right, if he so desires, to be paid for the damage he actually sustained."

Bob Cherry opened his lips and closed them again. He had a natural disinclination to show up the foolish fat junior as a liar and a braggart to his Form-master. But Bolsover major chipped in at once. Bolsover was heartily in support of Bunter, partly out of opposition to Bob Cherry, partly because he firmly believed in Bunter's claim.

"Cherry says that Bunter didn't do the rescue thing, sir," he said. "He wants to make out that Bunter wasn't there at all."

"Well, that's the truth," said Bob. "I didn't want to bring it all out, Bunter, but I warned you what to expect. You could have gone on bragging as long as you liked, if you hadn't taken to swindling, too."

"Oh, really, you know—"

"This alters the case very seriously," said Mr. Quelch, his jaw becoming very square. "Cherry, you state that Bunter has made a false claim, and that he did not perform that gallant action at all?"

"I—I—I—"

"Speak out!" roared Bolsover. "You said it fast enough to us!"

"Silence, Bolsover!" Cherry. I warn you that you had better speak candidly."

"Very well, sir," said Bob. "Bunter wasn't telling the truth. He didn't save old Popper—I mean Sir Hilton Popper's niece. He wasn't anywhere near the place."

"You are personally aware of that, Cherry?"

"Yes, sir."

"You mean that you were a witness to the occurrence yourself? Otherwise, you could know nothing whatever about it."

"Yes, sir."

"And now," said Mr. Quelch, in a dangerous tone, "how could you be a witness to the occurrence, Cherry, when you were detained in the Form-room all that afternoon? Take care of what you say!"

"I cleared out, sir," said Bob.

"You did what?"

"I—I mean I broke detention, sir."

"Indeed! I found you in the Form-room when I returned."

"I got back half an hour before you came in, sir."

"Indeed!" Mr. Quelch's lips closed very hard. "After I had warned you, Cherry, that you would be flogged if you disobeyed me, you broke detention?"

"Yes, sir," said Bob desperately.

"Very good. You will therefore receive the flogging," said Mr. Quelch. "I shall see that flagrant disobedience and disrespect are not encouraged in my Form."

"I—I didn't mean it as disrespect, sir," said poor Bob.

"Only—only I couldn't stand it, sir."

"You must learn to stand, as you call it, just punishment," said Mr. Quelch. "You will be reported to the Head for a severe flogging. Cherry, having, on your own confession, broken bounds against my strict orders."

Bob drew a deep breath.

"Very well, sir."

"And now as to this matter?" said Mr. Quelch. "You declare positively that you saw the occurrence at the level-crossing, and that the person who rescued the child was not Bunter?"

"I do, sir."

"What have you to say to that, Bunter?"

"That's true, sir. I rushed to the rescue like a lion," said Bunter indignantly. "I—I risked my life, sir. I'm still suffering from—fron shock to the system. I think it's rather mean of Cherry to run me down in this way. I'm accustomed to jealousy, but—"

"You state that you were the person who rescued Cecily Popper, Bunter?"

"Absolutely, sir! I rushed to the rescue—"

"It's not true, sir," said Bob. "I wouldn't have given him away, but I couldn't see him taking Sir Hilton Popper's money for it without chipping in. I wanted him to send it back quietly. He can't help being a silly fool, and it's not my business to speak about him. He forced me to bring all this out by sticking to old Popper's money. But that's enough for me."

"It is not enough for me, Cherry. Unless you give the name of the person who rescued Miss Popper, and investigation shows that your statement is correct, I shall be compelled to believe that you have brought a false accusation against Bunter."

Bob's eyes glistened.

"I've nothing more to say, sir."

"Very well! In the circumstances, Bunter's claim must be considered to be unassailed."

There was a murmur of approval. Even Bob's own chorus did not know what to think of his inexplicable silence, and the rest of the fellows were heartily against him.

"And—and this money's mine, sir!" said Bunter, brightening up.

"Not at all, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch unexpectedly. "You have lost a large sum of money—your clothes. I shall investigate that damage very strictly. You will be allowed to retain precisely the amount due to you for such damage, and the remainder will be returned to Sir

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Miss Popper, with an explanation from myself. Meanwhile, we will keep the money to me, and it will remain in my charge until your claims are settled."

Bunter's jaw dropped.

"Oh—oh, really, sir?" he murmured.

"Give me that money at once, Bunter! I am convinced that you are not entitled to more than a small proportion of it. With a face that was the picture of woe Bunter handed over the eight currency notes to the Form-master. Mr. Quelch placed them carefully in his pocket-book.

"Now disperse, all of you!" he said. "Cherry, I shall report your conduct in breaking bounds to the Head. You will be flogged before the whole school to-morrow morning after prayers."

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Marjorie Chips In!

THERE were glum faces in No. 1 Study.

Marjorie & Co. of Cliff House were coming over to tea; and on such occasions, as a rule, in No. 1 Study all was merry and bright.

But the horizon was overcast now.

Bob Cherry was to be flogged before all Greyfriars in the morning. Bob made no complaint; he took it quietly enough. But it cast a natural gloom over his spirits—which was shared by his chums. It was not only the pain of the affliction—though that was serious enough—that worried Bob. It was the humiliation of such a punishment. But he had risked it, knowing what he was asking; and he could not say that the punishment was unjust. He had been detained on good grounds; he had broken detention in defiance of his Form-master's warning, and he could not expect to escape when the truth came out. True, he had acted thoughtlessly, without intending any harm; but reflection had shown him that it was a serious matter. He did not blame Mr. Quelch. He only felt that it was "hard cheese," and that he had to grin and bear it.

With unusual gloom in their looks the Famous Five set about making their preparations for the distinguished visitors. Marjorie and Clara and Phyllis were coming to tea, and it was agreed that they were not to be allowed to see that anything was wrong.

Billy Hunter did not mean to miss that feed if he could help it. He stationed himself at the gates to wait for the visitors, sagely opining that if he went in with Marjorie & Co. the Famous Five would not be able to kick him out. He had tried that "trick" before with success.

There was a whirr of bicycles on the road, and the three schoolgirls jumped off their machines at the gate. Bunter rolled forward, raising his cap gallantly.

"Lemme take your machine, Marjorie. Oh, do! How do you do, Phyllis? Jolly glad to see you, Miss Clara! Wharton asked me to wait for you here."

"Bow-wow!" said Miss Clara.

"Ahem! I say, Phyllis—"

"I shall wheel my bike over you, if you keep in the way," said Miss Howell unceremoniously.

"Ahem! I say, Marjorie, let me take your bike, you know."

Kind-hearted Marjorie allowed the fat junior to take her machine and wheel it in. The three bikes were left at the porter's lodge, and the visitors crossed the quadrangle, Bunter toddling beside Marjorie with his most agreeable grin.

"I'm coming to tea," he said agreeably. "I had several other invitations—Lord Maulverer especially was very pressing—but I felt I couldn't refuse to come, as Wharton begged me. I'm going to try to cheer up poor old Bob, you know."

"What's the matter with Bob?" asked Phyllis.

"Poor head, he's booked for a flogging!" said Bunter. "It really serves him right, considering. Still, I'm sorry for him," added Bunter magnanimously.

Marjorie stopped, remembering what Bob had told her on Wednesday afternoon.

"Has it been found out about Bob breaking bounds on Wednesday?" she asked, with a quick breath.

"Yes, that's it," said Bunter. "So he told you he broke bounds, did he? He jawed a good deal too much about it, the ass, and so Quelch got to know! He's going to have a high old time in the morning. He, he, he! All the school in Hall, you know, and everybody looking on, and old Gosling hoisting him, and whack, whack, whack! you know. He, he, he!"

"Why, you're glad!" exclaimed Phyllis, with breathless indignation.

"Well, he's an interfering beast!" said Bunter. "He's practically robbed me of eight pounds—he and old Quelch together. He—"

"Is Bob going to be flogged for breaking bounds on Wednesday?" asked Marjorie.

"Yes, that's it."

"Has he told Mr. Quelch—"

Marjorie paused. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 451.

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"Well, it came out, and he had to tell him," said Bunter, not understanding Marjorie's unspoken thought. "Quelch was waxy, you can bet! Cherry's booked, and it really serves him right, you know, because—"

"Is Mr. Quelch at home?" asked Marjorie.

"You'll hear his giddy typewriter clicking when you go in," grinned Bunter. "He's in his study. Come on; I think tea's ready."

Marjorie paused in the passage. Her brows were knitted, and her thoughts were working quickly. It was clear to her that Mr. Quelch knew nothing of the gallant action Bob had performed on Wednesday afternoon, to which she had been a witness. Bob had not told him. Of Bunter's claim to that distinction, of course, Marjorie knew nothing. She was thinking it out. Bob's action was no excuse, of course, for his having broken bounds—yet if he had not broken bounds little Cecily would have been crushed to death on the railway-line! Surely that amounted to extenuating circumstances, at least! Marjorie could easily understand Bob's reluctance to blowing his own trumpet by proclaiming what he had done. Probably it had never even crossed his simple mind to make capital of his performance for the purpose of eluding punishment. But what he could not do for himself a friend could do for him, perhaps.

Marjorie paused, her heart beating, the colour deepening in her cheeks. She shrank from facing the stern-faced Form-master in his study, yet if she could help poor old Bob—

"Come on!" urged Bunter.

"You go," said Marjorie to her friends. "I—I am going to speak to Mr. Quelch."

"To Mr. Quelch?" repeated Phyllis.

"Yes. Don't wait."

And without any further explanation Marjorie ran down the passage—taking her courage in both hands, as it were—and tapped at the door of the Remove-master's study.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Loses His Glory!

"COME in!" The click of the typewriter ceased in Mr. Quelch's study.

Marjorie opened the door timidly.

The sight of the sweet, blushing face in the doorway surprised Mr. Quelch. He rose to his feet at once.

"Come in, Miss Hazeldene," he said, in his courteous way.

The girl entered the study. Her colour came and went as she faced the severe-featured old gentleman.

Mr. Quelch smiled reassuringly.

"You wish to speak to me?" he asked.

"Yes, if—if you please," stammered Marjorie.

"Please sit down. Now, go on," said Mr. Quelch. "Don't be afraid, my child. Tell me what it is."

His kind manner somewhat reassured the girl.

"I—I—it is about Bob, sir—I mean, Bob Cherry," said Marjorie. "I—I thought you wouldn't mind if—I told you—"

"Cherry? You are alluding to Cherry's punishment to-morrow?"

"Yes, sir."

"Surely, Miss Hazeldene, Cherry has not asked you—"

"He doesn't know I have come!" exclaimed Marjorie breathlessly. "He doesn't even know I'm at Greyfriars yet. I have just heard from Bunter that Bob is going to be flogged to-morrow, sir, for breaking bounds on Wednesday."

"A well-deserved punishment," said Mr. Quelch dully. "I cannot suppose for one moment, Miss Hazeldene, that you are here to intercede for him."

Marjorie crimsoned.

"No, no, no! You must not think me so interfering and impudent!" she exclaimed. "I should not think of such a thing. But—but I think I ought to tell you what happened on Wednesday afternoon. I know Bob did wrong in disobeying your order, sir, and Bob knows it, too, I think; but—but if he hadn't, that poor little girl would have been killed."

"I don't understand. What little girl are you alluding to?"

"Little Cecily, sir—Sir Hilton's Popper's niece."

Mr. Quelch looked astounded.

"Miss Hazeldene! What had Cherry to do with that?"

"He risked his life, sir, to save her from the train!" said Marjorie simply. "He was almost killed. It was a miracle that he was not killed! I know it was wrong of him to be out of bounds, but if he had not been there—the girl shuddered—" if he had not been there, sir, Cecily would have been crushed to death! There was no one else to save her."

"Has Cherry made a claim to be the person who rescued that child, Miss Hazeldene?" said the Remove-master sternly.

"Made a claim?" repeated Marjorie. "Oh, no! Bob wouldn't speak about it. He would think it mean to speak about anything he had done like that."

"Then why do you suppose it was Cherry who performed that very gallant action?"

"I saw him, sir."

"You—you saw him?" exclaimed the Remove-master, stupefied.

"I was there, sir."

"You were there? You saw him rescue the child?"

"Certainly. I had met me in the lane, and we stopped to speak, and then I saw Cecily on the line, and the train coming. I pointed it out to Bob, and he ran on the line at once. And then—the train passed, and I thought he was under it. Marjorie's voice quivered. "It was not till the train passed that I saw he was safe on the other side. He might have been killed. It was terrible, sir!"

"You actually saw this occurrence, Miss Hazeldene, with your own eyes?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you aware that Bunter of the Remove has claimed to be the person who performed that action?"

Marjorie almost jumped.

"Bunter! But it was Bob Cherry, sir. Bunter was not there! The nursemaid would recognise Bob again if she saw him—I am sure of that."

"I shall not need her evidence, Miss Hazeldene; your assurance is enough for me. This has surprised me very much. I—I think I understand now what has puzzled me considerably."

"I thought that if you knew, sir, you would not blame Bob much," said Marjorie timidly. "He did wrong, but he was so brave; and if he had not been there, the little girl would have been killed."

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"I shall certainly take that into consideration, Miss Hazeldene. Courage should never go unrecognised. I cannot be sorry that Cherry disobeyed me, as his disobedience had, by chance, such happy results. It does not alter the fact that he did wrong, but a gallant action may be taken as compensating for even a serious fault. Where is Cherry now?"

"I—I think in the study, sir. I am going there to tea."

"I will accompany you there," said Mr. Quelch, rising.

"You—you don't blame me for speaking to you, sir?" faltered Marjorie.

"Not at all, my dear child. I am very glad you have spoken."

Marjorie's face was very bright as she walked by the side of the big, grave Form-master. Voices were heard in No. 1 Study, in the Remove passage, as they approached.

"Buck up with that jam, Franky! If you're going to make the tea, Phyllis, don't let Bob hand you the kettle—you'll get the hot water over you!"

"Look here, you silly ass—"

"Don't jaw, old chap! Marjorie will be here in a minute. Bhoove one of your feet out of the study, and make room for the visitors!"

Mr. Quelch smiled, and tapped at the half-open door.

"Come in, Marjorie! Oh, Mr. Quelch!"

The juniors stood to attention at once. Marjorie glided into the room, and Mr. Quelch stood in the doorway. His visit was a great surprise to the chums of the Remove.

"Will you—will you come to tea, sir?" stammered Harry Wharton.

"The arduous are goodful, honoured sahib, and the jamfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh.

"Thank you, I have not come to tea," said Mr. Quelch.

"I have just received a very surprising piece of information from Miss Hazeldene. Cherry, it appears that it was you who saved the life of Sir Hilton Popper's niece at the level crossing!"

"Bob!" gasped Wharton.

"Oh, really?" murmured Billy Bunter, making a frantic attempt to squeeze himself out of sight behind Nugent. As he was twice as wide as Nugent, the attempt was not very successful.

Bob Cherry turned crimson.

The eyes of all his chums were fixed on him. His rugged features assumed the hue of a well-boiled beetroot, and he gave Marjorie a reproachful look.

"Bob," said Marjorie breathlessly, "I—I felt I ought to tell Mr. Quelch about it, because—because I knew from Billy that—"

Miss Hazeldene very rightly informed me," said Mr. Quelch. "Cherry, I congratulate you upon the courage you showed, and upon the modesty with which you refrained from speaking of your conduct!"

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"It—it wasn't that, sir," stammered Bob. "I—I didn't want it to come out that I was out of bounds that afternoon—"

"But since it came out that you were out of bounds, Cherry, you have still maintained the same silence."

"Well, sir, I—I couldn't—I—"

"I understand. You feared that it would be supposed that you were boasting, and perhaps that I should think you were making capital out of the matter to escape punishment," said Mr. Quelch. "I should not have thought so, however. I think I know you too well, my boy. Now that I know the facts, I shall pardon you for your escapade on Wednesday. Mind, I have not altered my opinion of your action; you did very wrong. But your act of great courage atones for your fault, and nothing more will be said about the matter."

"Oh, sir!"

"As for you, Bunter"—Mr. Quelch's voice rumbled like thunder, as he fixed his eyes upon the wretched Owl of the Remove—"I hardly know what to say to you. You have laid claim to the action of another—"

"I—I didn't know it was Cherry, sir," stammered Billy Bunter. "The best never said a word! I—I really thought it was me, sir—"

"What!"

"I—I mean, I didn't exactly think so, sir—I meaner say, I should have done it if I had been there, sir, being as brave as a lion," said Bunter. "And—And Sir Hilton Popper wanted to thank somebody, sir, and—and I didn't like to see him disappointed—a gentleman I respect very much, sir. So—so I thought it would be only the right thing to—to come forward, sir—"

"You untruthful and ridiculous boy!" said Mr. Quelch. "I hardly know how to deal with you. The money you have obtained from Sir Hilton Popper will be returned to him at once, with a letter from me acquainting him with the real facts of the matter. If you were not so obtuse, Bunter, I would have you flogged for this deception—"

"Yes, sir, I—I'm awfully obtuse," moaned Bunter. "Everybody says so, sir. Under the—circumstances, sir, I—I'm willing to let the whole matter drop."

"You may be willing, Bunter. But the matter will not drop until you have been caned very severely."

"Oh, dear! C-couldn't you let me off with a warning, sir?"

"Follow me to my study at once!" rapped out Mr. Quelch. Billy Bunter, with a deep groan, followed the Form-master.

"Well, my hat!" said Johnny Bull. "So it was you, Bob? You're the guilty hero!"

"Oh, rats!" said Bob. "Thank you for speaking up for me, Marjorie. It was ripping of you!"

"Topping!" said Wharton. "And you're the hero, Bob—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"You performed the gallant action," grinned Nugent. "You covered yourself with glory and limelight—"

"Dry up, you ass!"

"Rushed to the rescue as brave as a lion," chuckled Nugent, "and—"

Bob Cherry picked up the teapot.

"The next silly idiot gets the tea!" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chums of the Remove chuckled and dropped the subject of the heroic rescue. Tea in No. 1 Study was a very cheerful meal, after all. Floggings were off—and the Co. were very pleased, and proud of their chum. The merry party was interrupted a quarter of an hour later by a lugubrious fat youth who limped into the study wringing his hands.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!" moaned Bunter. "I'm nearly slaughtered! Yow-wow-wow! I say, you fellows, I'm suffering fearfully! Yow-wow-wow!"

"Serve you jolly well right, you spoofing humbug!" said Wharton. "Get out!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, Bob, old man, you might ask a chap to tea, after he's been nearly flogged by old Quelch," said Bunter pathetically. "My eight pounds gone, too—yow-wow! That was all your fault, Bob; but I'm prepared to overlook it, and treat you as a friend—yow-wow!"

Bob Cherry burst into a laugh.

"Sit down and shut up!" he said.

Bunter sat down with alacrity, and he was even willing to shut up, as his jaws had a more important occupation than talking just then. And now that the clouds had rolled by, it proved to be the merriest party that had ever gathered within the historic walls of No. 1 Study.

THE END.

(Do not miss "THE BOY FROM SOUTH AFRICA!" next Monday's Grand Story of the Chums of Grayfriars, by FRANK RICHARDS.)

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T. C. BRIDGES.**The First Instalments Told How**

DICK DAUNT and DUDLEY DREW, two chums, discover a letter in a bottle which they have extracted from the body of a shark.

They are informed by its contents that a certain MATTHEW SNELL is marooned on an unnamed island in the Keys, and he offers a substantial reward to any persons effecting his rescue.

On going to the island, however, they are unable to find Mr. Snell.

EZRA CRAY, a moonshiner, and his scoundrelly colleagues then visit the island, and, finding that it contains gold, attempt to kill the two chums.

Dick and Dudley eventually find Matthew Snell hiding in a small cave, and with his help they plan to blow up a dam near Cray's camp.

Having put in a dynamite charge, Snell proceeds to light the fuses.

(Now read on.)

The Explosion—and What Followed.

As soon as the fuses were lit the three hurried hastily away through the trees, keeping fairly close to the edge of the brook which, in itself, was running higher than usual, owing to the recent heavy rains. It was a grey morning. Although the sun was above the horizon, it was not visible. A queer, yellowish haze covered the sky. The air was unnaturally close, and it was already so hot that big drops of perspiration rolled down their faces as they tramped through the wet undergrowth.

Outwardly, the three were calm enough, but Dick's heart was beating much more rapidly than usual. He fully realised how much hung upon the success or failure of the plan for ridding the island of Cray's pestilent horde. If they succeeded, not only was the gold theirs, but also—and what was for the present even more important—the store of provisions and the schooner. Without the provisions they could not stay and work the gold. Without the schooner the gold was useless, for they were marooned, and could not get back to the mainland.

The undergrowth was thick, and as they neared the camp they were forced to go more and more quietly. They were still a quarter of a mile away when Dudley suddenly held up his hand, then dropped silently into cover. The other two followed his example. Dick crawled close.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Someone moving on ahead there. Ah, I see him! It's Degan!"

Degan it was. He had a double-barrel in his hands, and was prowling across a bit of open ground.

"He's after pigeons," muttered Dick. "They come down to the creek about this time. I saw some the other morning."

"Dern the luck!" said old Snell softly but emphatically. "We ain't got a deal o' time to waste. I wish as he'd hurry up."

But the sallow Degan stopped and seemed to be peering up into the sky.

"How'd it be to stalk him and bod him over the head?" suggested Dudley eagerly.

"Too risky," said Dick, with decision.

For at least five minutes they were forced to crouch and wait for the wretched Degan. Every moment made them more uneasy. At last, however, he shifted and walked straight down the edge of the creek towards the camp.

The three jumped up hurriedly and followed. Suddenly from the distance came a low, booming sound, which shook the air like distant thunder.

"That's done it!" grunted Snell. "Boys, she's bust, and we've got to move mighty quick!"

Quick they were, but not so quick as the flood. In a moment or two they could hear it coming with a deep-toned roar, which grew louder every instant.

"Run!" cried Snell. "Run! Keep a bit back from the water. They ain't agoing to notice us so long as we're behind 'em."

Run they did, but they were still nearly two hundred yards from the cabin when the great flood wave came thundering by. It carried with it logs, branches, all sorts of rubbish, and the roar it made was deafening.

"They've a-heard it!" exclaimed Snell, as the three emerged from the thicket of the scrub on to the edge of the open ground, fifty or sixty yards from the cabin.

He was right. Four men were in the act of rushing out of the cabin. In the distance could be seen the negro slaves, scuttling away out of the gravel flat as fast as their ironed legs would carry them.

"Make for the cabin, boys! That's what we want!" ordered Snell.

His keen old face gleamed with the light of battle, his pale-blue eyes shone.

"Don't you shoot yet. Time enough when I gives the word."

There was no need for the last order. As a matter of fact, neither Dudley nor Dick could have brought themselves to blaze away at men who were at the moment standing in the opposite direction.

At this moment the flood wave leaped the broken dam just burst out of the narrow channel above on to the open expanse of gravel where the gold digging had been going on. It turned over with a fierce hissing, and in the twinkling

(Continued on page 14 of cover)



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THE GOLDEN KEY.

(Continued from page 20.)

of an eye was seething across the level in a great sheet of white water. The sound it made as it caught the loose gravel and sent hundreds of tons of it piling together, was indescribable.

Under cover of the hiss and rattle Snell and the two boys bolted for the cabin. They came to it from the back, and had almost reached it when Degan; who, it seemed, must have paused among the trees to watch the flood come by, suddenly appeared in sight, running at right angles to their course.

He saw them, and they him, at the self-same moment. He gave a yell, and, flinging up his gun, fired both barrels at them. But in his haste the shots flew high. Before he could reload, Snell had pulled up short and taken quick aim. A spit of flame leaped from the muzzle of his rifle, and Degan crumpled up like a wet rag and collapsed.

Without a word Snell rushed on, and reached the cabin. All three rushed into there.

The place was empty.
"The hogs!" muttered Snell, glancing round at the dirt and confusion of the place, the dirty dishes, soiled blankets; and the swarms of flies.

"Get to the windows, boys," he continued sharply. "Pile them mattresses for shelter. I'll take the door. And shoot straight. We've got to get 'em all afore they reaches us!"

Dick and Dudley obeyed at once. Looking out, they could see Cray, Bendall, Weekes, and the big negro, Rufe Finn. These four were all down by the edge of the flooded gravel. They were talking and gestulating furiously, but what they said could not be heard. The noise of the flood was still too great.

Dick wondered why they remained there, why they had not returned to the attack. Then it occurred to him that they had actually failed, in the roar of the wave, to hear the first three shots; nor had they yet missed Degan.

They were very excited about something, but whether it was the flight of the negroes or the breaking of the dam Dick could not, of course, tell.

The water began to drop quickly. The wave was already past, and on its way down to the sea. The gravel began to appear again.

Then all four suddenly turned to the left, and began to hurry up-stream. It was clear that they meant to cross, if possible, and try to collect their negroes.

Suddenly Cray, who was leading, pulled up short. He had almost fallen over Degan's dead body.

If the whole situation had not been so desperately serious, Dick could almost have laughed at the expression of horror and dismay on Cray's face.

He bent down and examined the man. The other three crowded round. Naturally, if did not need much examination to see the cause of death. Snell had shot very straight, and his bullet had gone clean through Degan's throat, breaking his neck; and killing him instantly.

Dick saw Cray point to the bullet-hole, watched him pick up Degan's gun, and eject the two empty cartridges. The whole four men were evidently desperately excited and anxious.

Then Cray stood up and looked all round. His eyes fell on the cabin. He saw that the door was closed, and noticed the mattresses piled in the lower parts of the windows. He pointed excitedly, and gave his men some orders.

At once they made for the trees.

"Shoot, boys!" cried old Snell. "Shoot afore they gets to the trees! Sharp, now, or they'll get around us!"

As he spoke he began to fire rapidly.

At his second shot that great, cruel brute, Rufe Finn, reeled and toppled over. Cray and the other two dropped flat, and began firing back. Bullets rattled on the cabin. One came through the upper part of the window, just over Dick's head, and thudded into the opposite wall. He and Dudley both set to work, and the firing became hot and heavy. For some minutes no one was hit on either side. Then suddenly Dick, leaning out a little too far, felt a sharp blow on his left forearm.

The shock sent him reeling, but he was himself again in a moment. He realised that it was nothing but a flesh-wound, and, hastily knotting a handkerchief round the arm to stop the bleeding, got back to his feet.

As he did so he saw Cray, Bendall, and Weekes suddenly spring to their feet, and bolt for all they were worth for the trees. He fired again, and Snell and Dudley also let loose.

"That's a bull!" shouted Dudley, as Bendall went sprawling.

But the other two reached the trees in safety, and disappeared.

"Keep your eyes peeled, boys," said Snell warningly. "I

guess they'll try and sneak around and get us from the other side!"

"We're three to two, anyway, now," replied Dudley. "I guess we're all right."

"A fight's never finished till it's won," retorted Snell. "You mind that, Mr. Drew!"

Then he noticed Dick's arm.

"Say, are you hit?" he asked anxiously.

"Nothing but a scratch," declared Dick.

"Come right here and let me see," said Snell.

It was curious how the fight had changed the old man. He had lost all his nervousness, and his slow speech had given way to a crisp, sharp way of talking. He appeared ten years younger.

He had a look at the arm, allowed that it was nothing serious, and made a thoroughly good job of binding it up.

"Now," he said, "you two boys might as well set to work and fix the place up a bit. One's enough to do the watching for the present. And see how much grub they've left here."

Dick and Dudley obeyed at once, and the first thing they did was to open the cupboards and hunt for food.

To their surprise they found very little. There were three tins of meat, a small piece of bacon, about a pound of coffee, a little sugar and salt, and not much else, except a good-sized bag of meal.

The Dummy.

"Where have they got to? It's my notion they've cleared out altogether!"

Dudley spoke quite sharply. More than half an hour had elapsed since Cray and Weekes had vanished together into the trees, and since then nothing had been heard or seen of them.

"Let's go out and have a look," he continued. "I'm sick of hanging about here among all these flies and dirt!"

Old Snell shook his head.

"I guess not," he said. "I wouldn't do it, Mr. Drew. They'll sure have the first of us that goes outside!"

"What do you say, Dick?" demanded Dudley. "Do you reckon Ezra Cray has got the patience to lay for us all this time?"

"I'm hanged if I know!" replied Dick. "It seems funny that they should stick out there so long. Still, I'm willing to be guided by Mr. Snell!"

But Dudley was not satisfied.

"Let's make a test, anyhow—try the old dodge of sticking a hat on the window on the end of a stick!"

"Try that if you're a mind to," said Snell indulgently. "But I guess Cray'll wait to shoot till he's mighty sure of getting one of us!"

"Tell you what," put in Dick. "I've got a better dodge than that. Why not make a dummy, and push it out of the door? The light's none too good, with all these clouds over the sky. It ought to draw their fire, if anything will!"

Dudley jumped at the idea. He found an old suit of overalls in a corner, and began stuffing them with some of the Spanish moss used for bedding by the late occupants of the place.

Dick helped, and inside five minutes they had rigged up a very fair representation of a human figure. With a hat on its head, and well pulled down over what would have been its eyes, it might have deceived anyone at a hundred yards distance.

They tied it on the end of a pole, then Snell pushed the door open very quietly, and Dick and Dudley between them poked the dummy slowly out.

Nothing happened. The stillness remained unbroken by any sound except the ripple of the brook, from which the flood had long since run down.

"I told you so," said Dudley. "I told you so, didn't I? They've gone!"

At this instant old Snell gave a sharp cry of warning, and raised his rifle to his shoulder.

Before he could pull the trigger came a frightened yell.

"Don't go! shoot, boss! Don't go! shoot!"

And a dusky, ragged figure sprang up out of the grass from the very point at which Snell was aiming.

"Why, it's Dan—Dan Grayson!" exclaimed Dick. "He's all right, Mr. Snell! He's the nigger who helped us escape the other night from the stockade!"

"All right!" he shouted to the negro. "Come along, Dan, we shan't hurt you!"

Dan came forward. He was in absolute rags, and miserably thin. A wretched-looking object altogether. He limped as he walked, and they saw that he still was wearing leg-irons. Yet, for all that, he was looking almost cheerful as he came up.

(Another fine long instalment of this grand new serial next Monday. Order your copy early to avoid disappointment.)