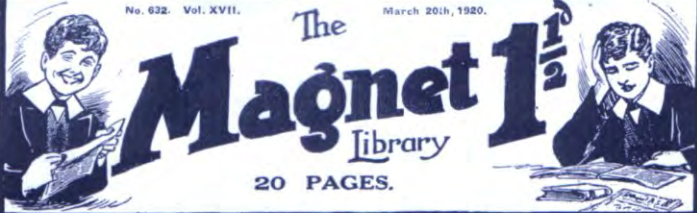


THE PAPER THAT IS READ ALL OVER THE WORLD!

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GAGGED AND BOUND IN THE OUTLAWS' CAVE!

(A Thrilling Scene in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)



For Next Monday :

"BOB CHERRY'S SECRET,"

By Frank Richards,

is the title of next Monday's grand long story of Greyfriars, and to regular readers that title in itself will arouse immediate interest, for Bob Cherry is the cheeriest member of the Famous Five of the Remove, and has never before been known to have a secret from his chums.

If you order your copy of next week's MAGNET at once, you will be sure of finding out all about

"BOB CHERRY'S SECRET,"

and how the bright and popular junior narrowly escaped expulsion from Greyfriars.

AN INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE.

Mr. J. Arthur Phillips, of 10, West Terrace, Boldon Colliery Co., Durham, writes to say that, as president of the British and International Correspondence League, he is out to promote the bonds of union between all Companion Paper readers. Membership is open to all readers of the Companion Papers, and Mr. Phillips hopes those desirous to join will write to him, when he will furnish all particulars. A stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed.

GOING TO SEA.

George Duddin writes to me asking about the Merchant Service. I can only recommend him to study John Margerson's book "The Sea Service" issued at 1s. 3d. by Messrs. Holders & Son, 10, Warwick Square, London, E.C. He will have to apply for a job as in any other business. I could not reply personally to my correspondent as his address was not legible.

LUCK, GOOD AND BAD.

Sometimes it is permissible to wonder why bad luck comes. You ask yourself why. There does not always seem to be a reason for the down-and-out touch which enters many a brave life. Probably there is a reason—more likely several, some passive, some active. The fellow who has never come into contact with bad luck is apt to be a prig, to err from over-confidence. Adversity brings strange bed-fellows, as the saying goes.

But it brings a lot more besides. It makes a chap take stock. It causes him to rally his forces and start a fresh campaign. Being on your beam-ends is not all bad. The best comes out when the best fellows are concerned. Have you noticed what a lot more the man knows, how infinitely more sympathetic he is, and, therefore, more use to the world, when he has passed through the grey days? He has learned to think. The

always successful individual loses knowledge of much that is priceless in life.

Still, you do wonder now and then. I know I do. Some bright young fellow—I have letters from such—is laid by through a sad mischance. He cannot join in active life any more. But who shall estimate the high service such fellows render to others in the way of noble example, in all that business of holding aloft the standard of patience under blighting trouble? I have several chums to whom such big success has come. They were keen on sport, on all outdoor things; and then the blow fell. But their lives are full of life service.

It is pleasant to think of them, encouraging and inspiring, and—well, one just likes to think about them, and is glad to get a letter now and again full of buoyancy and hope. For there is one thing about life which is always good. There is hope always; and we can be grateful for that.

THE MIXTURE AS BEFORE.

That is just it—the mix-up which is valuable. All prosperity tucks out an article which is far from perfect, except in picked instances, and they have seen to it themselves that wealth easily come by did not spoil their lives. We need the ups and downs, or we should never develop along the right lines. You know it is so.

I had a note the other day from a fellow who was trying to become a famous writer for the films. He sent me his efforts, and they showed promise; but just as Roundie found he could not run up Rome in a day so does the would-be celebrity find the business of achieving fame difficult—not a bit as in some yarns, where, at the end of the third chapter, say, the money is made. But there must be something in bad luck that is good. Quarrel with the theory if you like. No charge.

It is as puzzling as most things. Many things do not seem to be right somehow. Perhaps there are all the same, but somehow you get the idea there is a kink. Look at the old music merchant who was up against it.

"The way was long, the wind was cold, The minstrel was young and old."

No comfortable motor-car coming purring along behind the minstrel to give him a lift was notice. And yet the weather-beaten pilgrim of harmony might have drifted into being a poor sort of musician if he had taken that route in a spanking high-power. Rolls Royce, with his harp squatting on the front seat. You never know, you know. Ask Bunter!

THE OLD STORIES.

A valued correspondent tells me that many of his copies of the Companion Papers have been destroyed or gone

astray, "a great many during my four years' absence at the Kaiser's war. And this lament of mine brings me to my point. Would it not be possible to republish the old stories? There must be tens of thousands of your present readers who have never read either "Gem" or MAGNET from 1 to 300. A charge of 4d., or even 6d., for a weekly re-issue would, I am convinced, be cheerfully paid."

I am indebted to my supporter for his hint.

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS.

Miss Peggie Durban writes from Hong Kong that during the war she had much difficulty in getting the "Greyfriars Herald." The Chinaman at the shop said, "No sorry," just like Wai Lung, but that Chinaman knows now, I am sure.

Miss Peggie would prefer Doris Lessington to be more of a tomboy, and she wants to see more Editorial portraits, but I am afraid this cannot be managed.

Thanks to F. A. Yeomans for his cheery note about his holidays on a farm near Groedooms, South Africa, where he rides and swims.

From St. Cecilia's School of Music at Darlington comes a wonderful letter, but here comes the rub. "You have done my mother a personal injury. Since the arrival of your letter she has had to buy me two new hats, owing to the extraordinary increase in the size of my head!"

"Personal Recollections" were much appreciated in Darlington. I am much obliged for what this correspondent says. By the way, she fancies she is not clever, even brilliant; but a glance through her note, with its shrewd and kindly observation and comments, would show anybody her mistake.

WHAT IS A WELKIN?

A welkin is supposed to be the vault of heaven. It is what some events came to me. An anonymous chum asks the question. His letter is dry enough, in all seriousness, and with plenty of sense. I fancy he knew all the time.

Also, what is a beer-garden? This term can be traced back to the German "Biergarten," where in the old days there were plenty of disputes, or you can try and link it up with Bruin—just as you choose—but, as a rule, a beer has not got a garden!

Your Editor



Mauleverer's Mission!

A Magnificent, Long,
Complete Story of
Harry Wharton & Co.
at Greyfriars School.

BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Highway Robbery!

"STOP!" Lord Herbert Mauleverer stopped.

The schoolboy earl had been walking through the fields on his way back to Greyfriars, lost in thought. Mauly had been wondering if he would ever become a real sportsman, like Harry Wharton, instead of the lazy slacker he knew himself to be. The splendid game Harry Wharton's team had just put up against Trumpser's Courtfield School eleven had made Mauly feel rather small.

"Stop!" Mauly had to stop, whether he liked it or not. His road was barred by half a dozen figures wearing hideous masks over their faces. Each of these awful-looking persons carried a revolver, and every revolver was pointing straight at Mauly.

"Stop!" The summons rang out for the third time, in spite of the fact that the schoolboy earl was standing perfectly still. Mauleverer rubbed his eyes and then pinched himself.

"Gad!" he murmured, "Am I asleep?"

"Hand over your money an' jewels!" said a sharp voice.

Mauleverer burst into a sudden laugh. "Ha, ha, ha! Oh dear! Begad!"

Mauly apparently could not help seeing the funny side of the affair. He had never dreamt that a thing like this could happen in real life in the twentieth century.

Highway robbery with violence! It must be a jape.

"Gad, you chaps, this joke's gone far enough!" he drawled. "Let a fellow pass. It's gettin' near call-over time now!"

"This is no joke!" said a stern voice. "Hand over your purse, your watch and chain, and the tie-pin that glimmers in your throat!"

"In my tie, you mean?" chuckled Mauleverer, who seemed determined not to take the affair seriously. "I say, chappies, are those air-guns or water-pistols?"

Without deigning to reply, the masked robbers made a united rush on the schoolboy earl. Mauleverer was bowled over, and as he lay on the ground he realised for the first time that his assailants were in earnest.

"Rescue, Greyfriars!" he shouted. "Rescue!"

The next moment a hand was clapped over his mouth, and Mauly saw the robbers taking his money and his tie-pin and his watch and chain. Mauly did not care much about the loss of his valuables. He was wealthy enough to replace them pretty easily. But he certainly did object to being robbed in this fashion. Highway robbery with violence was not at all to the schoolboy earl's taste.

Mauly was helpless. Robbers were sitting on his arms and legs, and a hand was held over his mouth.

So the schoolboy earl did the only thing he could, he bit!

"Wow!"

The fellow who had placed his hand over Mauly's mouth hastily withdrew it.

"Rescue, Greyfriars—rescue!" shouted Mauleverer once again.

"Coming!" yelled eleven voices in unison, as Harry Wharton's team appeared on the scene. "Coming!"

But it was too late. Mauly's assailants had already disappeared, carrying his valuables with them.

"Oh dear!" gasped Mauly, as he rose from the ground, looking very dirty and dishevelled, and not at all his 'fatty self."

"Why didn't you chaps come before?"

"What was it?" asked Wharton anxiously. "A Courtfield rag?"

It was not unusual for lads from the Courtfield County Council School to play practical jokes on Greyfriars fellows. The Greyfriars fellows took such japes in good part, and returned the compliment when the opportunity occurred.

"Not much of a rag!" said Mauleverer indignantly. "More like common theft, begad!"

And he described briefly what had happened.

"Phew!" gasped Harry Wharton. "It must be the Deadshot Gang!"

"The whatter?" asked Mauleverer. "What the dickens are you talking about, Wharton?"

"Never heard of the Deadshot Gang, Mauly?" asked Bob Cherry. "Then you're more asleep than I gave you credit for!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They're a set of young rascals who've been terrorising the neighbourhood," explained Wharton. "Only last week they broke into old Lazarus' place, half-killed the chap, and took all the money and jewels they could lay their hands on."

"And a few days ago," added Nugent, "they brought old Tozer, the policeman, to the very brink of the River Sark, and dipped him in the water."

"Well, that's not so bad," commented Johnny Bull. "provided they didn't let the old jossie drown."

"Old Tozer can't swim a stroke," said Peter Todd.

"They did drop him into the water, as a matter of fact," said Nugent; "only Trumpser happened to be passing just after they had cleared off, and fished him out."

"Good old Trumpser!" echoed a dozen voices.

The Greyfriars juniors had grieved THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 932.

admiration for the captain of the Courtfield County Council School eleven.

"I say, you fellows—"
Billy Bunter, the fat Owl of the Remove, had arrived on the scene.

"I say, you fellows—"
"Buzz off, Billy!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton, I was just going to suggest—"

"That we should lend you a fiver?" added Nugent.

"Because you're expecting a postal-order," interposed Cherry.

"Or a remittance from a titled relation?" put in Linley.

"The Lord Bunter De Pigsty!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Or the Earl of Swiney?" added Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really you fellows, as a matter of fact, I am expecting a remittance from the Marchioness of Bunthorpe, my maiden aunt—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I admire your imagination, Billy," grinned Mauleverer. "The Marchioness of Bunthorpe, begad! What a ripping name!"

Bunter hastily changed the subject. He did not know enough about the aristocracy to start a discussion with the schoolboy earl.

"But that's not what I wanted to talk about," he said. "You fellows were just saying that it was ripping of Trumper to save old Toser—"

"Well, wasn't it, duffer?" snapped Wharton. "I can imagine your doing such a thing, I don't think!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors at the idea of Bunter's saving anybody's life.

"You can laugh, you chaps! But if Trumper hadn't fished the chap out he'd have been hanged!"

"How do you make that out, Billy?" asked Bob Cherry impatiently.

"Because he shoved him in!" said Billy Bunter.

"He what?" gasped the Greyfriars team.

"Has it never struck you fellows," asked Bunter, with a very knowing air, "that Trumper is the leader of the Deadshot Gang?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a unanimous shout of laughter. The idea of Trumper, that fine, stalwart fellow, being the leader of a set of ragamuffins was really too funny for words.

"Rescue, Courtfield—rescue!"

The shout rang through the air in Trumper's manly tones.

"I told you chaps so," said Billy Bunter. "The fellow is pretending now that he's being attacked. It's all a blind!"

But Bunter was wasting his wisdom on the desert air. The Greyfriars fellows were all running in the direction whence the shout had come.

"Rescue, Courtfield—rescue!"

Trumper was struggling against terrific odds. No less than a dozen masked figures were attacking him simultaneously.

"Coming, Trumper!" yelled Wharton cheerfully, as he arrived on the scene with his supporters.

At the sight of Wharton & Co. Trumper's assailants attempted to escape. The majority of them ran off, and disappeared from sight as if the earth had swallowed them. But Trumper was keeping two hefty fellows fast by their coat-collars as Wharton & Co. drew near.

"Hold them!" yelled Wharton.

But the two masked figures struggled desperately, and next moment they had twisted themselves away from Trumper.

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and had also disappeared. But one of them had left his coat in Trumper's hands, having simply twisted himself out of it to escape.

"After them!" yelled Wharton.

The Greyfriars juniors attempted to pursue the brigands, but these were nowhere to be seen.

"That's what always happens!" said Bob Cherry, stopping on the outskirts of the wood. "These chaps have some secret hiding-place round about here, I should say!"

"Gone!" asked Trumper, as he came up, with the brigand's coat still in his hand. "I thought so!"

"Let's have a look at the coat," suggested Wharton. "It may give us some clue."

"Right-ho!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's all this?"

In one of the pockets of the coat in question were the valuables which had just been stolen from Mauleverer.

"Gad!" gasped the schoolboy earl. "My money an' ornaments! What luck!"

"Serve you right if you'd lost them!" said Bob Cherry severely. "You're no business to be wearing these things at all! Why don't you wear ordinary togs and a plain ticker, like any common mortal?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"D'you know," said Mauleverer thoughtfully, "there's something in what you say, Cherry, old man! I've just been thinking—"

"Oh, help!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Mauly's thinking!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you chaps!" said Harry Wharton. "It's just struck me that this coat must belong to the leader of the gang, whoever he is. He's the fellow most likely to bag the loot."

"There's a lot in that," said Trumper thoughtfully.

"It certainly seems likely," said Mark Linley.

"The likelihood is terrific!" added Hunree Singh, the Indian junior.

"Look here," said Trumper thoughtfully. "If you'll let me have that coat I'll make some inquiries in Courtfield, and may come across a clue to the owner. I am brought into contact with the village chaps more often than you fellows."

"Right-ho!" said Wharton, handing over the coat to the leader of the Courtfield School juniors. "See what you can discover, and let us know."

"That I will!" said Trumper heartily. "I must be going now, chaps. My road branches off here."

"Bye-bye, Trumper!"

"Bye-bye, chappies!"

And the Courtfield School leader disappeared from view, leaving the Greyfriars fellows discussing the strange happenings of the afternoon.

"Well, Billy," said Bob Cherry jocularly, "do you still believe that Trumper is the leader of the Deadshot Gang?"

"Of course I do, Cherry," said Billy Bunter. "It's all as plain as a pike-staff!"

The juniors stared at Bunter in amazement. That the Owl should believe that Trumper was the leader of the very gang of brigands from which they had just rescued him seemed extraordinary.

"How do you make that out, Billy?" asked Harry Wharton curiously. Of course, Wharton attached no importance whatever to Bunter's ideas, but they were usually funny if they were nothing else.

"Look here, you fellows," said Bunter importantly. "Trumper got you to rescue him from the gang as a blind!"

"Gad!" gasped Mauleverer. "Oh, gad!"

"Go on, Billy!" said Bob Cherry, encouragingly.

"Well," continued Bunter, "if he'd really been up against those chaps, why did he let two of them escape when he had hold of them?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't cackle, Nugent!" said Bunter irritably. "It upsets my train of thought."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And then, look at the way he ran off with the coat! He was afraid you chaps might get a clue from it," continued Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh dear!"

"Begad!"

Bunter the detective was really too rich!

"That'll do, Billy," grinned Wharton, as they reached Greyfriars. "Give your brain a rest, old fellow!"

"It's all very well for you to laugh, Wharton," snapped the fat junior, "but I mean to lay my hands on the leader of that gang one of these days!"

"Take care he doesn't lay his hands on you!" chuckled Peter Todd wamingly.

But to this wholesome piece of advice Billy Bunter disdained to reply.

Bunter's was not the only forehead corrugated with unwonted thought that night. Mauleverer was thinking very hard, and a queer idea was taking shape in his mind—an idea that would bear abundant fruit within a very short period.

Harry Wharton & Co. were destined to have some lively times within the next few days.

And in these exciting events Billy Bunter and Lord Mauleverer were to play leading roles.

"Gad, you chaps!" said Lord Mauleverer, in the dormitory that night. "I wonder if—"

But there were no chaps awake to hear Lord Mauleverer. They were all fast asleep.

And Mauly decided to reserve his brilliant idea for the following day.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter the Detective!

"TRUMPER! I say, Trumper!"

Billy Bunter had been waiting for Trumper outside the gate of the Courtfield School, and when Trumper issued forth, Bunter at once went up to him.

"Trumper! I say, Trumper!"

"Well," snapped the Courtfield leader, who had as little time for Billy Bunter as any of his own Form-fellows.

"Oh, really, Trumper, you needn't be so stand-offish! Look here, old chap, I—"

"I've got no postal-orders for you, if that's what you're after, Bunter!" said the Courtfield leader sharply, as he turned on his heels and walked away.

Billy Bunter followed Trumper as fast as his fat little legs would carry him.

"Really, Trumper," he panted, "you might wait for a fellow!"

Trumper stood still, and waited for the Owl of the Remove to come up.

"Well," he repeated.

"Look here, Trumper, I know your great and awful secret, you know," began Billy, in an impressive tone of voice.

Trumper stared.

"Oh, you needn't pretend to be surprised!" said Bunter fatuously. "I know all about you and the Deadshot Gang, you know."



Bunter stopped under the ledge of the window and tried to hear what was going on in the cottage. "It's not as if I was spying!" said Bunter to himself. "I'm doing regular detective work!" (See Chapter 2.)

"I'm blessed if I know what you're talking about, Bunter!" said Trumper impatiently. "And I don't think you know yourself!"

"Don't try that game on with me!" said Bunter knowingly. "It won't work!"

Trumper turned once more on his heels, and was about to walk away, when Billy caught hold of him by a waistcoat-button.

"Now, don't try to get out of it, Trumper," he said. "You are the captain of the Deadshot Gang!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Trumper could do nothing but burst into a loud laugh at this ridiculous accusation.

"Now, look here, Trumper," went on Billy, "I've always liked you, old chap—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I'm willing to keep your secret for you, if you're going to be a real pal—"

"And provide you with plenty of free scoff!" grinned Trumper. "Oh, Billy, you'll be the death of me! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What is the joke, Trumper?" asked Solly Lazarus, as he arrived on the scene with several other Courtfield School fellows.

"That's no affair of yours, Lazarus!" said Bunter haughtily. "It's a secret between my friend Trumper and me!"

"You'll kill yourself when I tell you!" gasped Trumper. "This fat specimen of humanity accuses me of being the leader of the Deadshot Gang!"

"What!" roared the others. "Ha, ha, ha!"

And the laugh echoed and re-echoed along the Courtfield Road.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter blinked indignantly at the laughing juniors.

"That's all very well, you fellows," he said, "but you can't laugh your guilt away like this! I see now that you are all in it!"

"Bump him!" gasped Grabame.

"Bump the fat rotter!"

And the Courtfield School juniors packed up Bunter and heaved him heavily to the ground.

Bump!

"Ow!"

Bump!

"Wow!"

Bump!

"Yarrah!"

"That's enough, chaps!" said Trumper.

"The fat toad's not responsible for his actions!"

Bunter gathered himself up from the ground, filled with dust and indignation.

"I'll make you rotters sorry for this!"

he muttered. "This comes of trying to do a friendly action to proper cads!"

"He's not bad enough yet!" yelled Wicks. "Go for him!"

"Right-ho!" said Grabame and Lazarus and Dicky Browne, all together.

And the juniors were about to rush at Bunter yet again when Trumper lifted a prohibitive hand.

"Enough's as good as a feast!" he said. "You can't knock any sense or decency into that sort of bouncer!"

Bunter, who had just been about to run away, turned round at that.

"Yah!" he booted. "I'll show you up! You just wait! Yah!"

Without troubling themselves further about the fat junior, Trumper and his chums made for home. Some of them lived in Pegg, some in Friardale, some in Courtfield.

As stealthily as he could Billy Bunter followed the Courtfield leader. Billy Bunter was usually very clumsy on his feet, but he could walk fairly softly and quickly when he chose, and he did so now.

When Trumper reached his father's little cottage in Pegg, Billy was already tired out. Bunter looked at the cottage disdainfully. The Owl of the Remove was a snob of snobs!

"Nice sort of place!" muttered

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Bunter. "Just the sort of den for a robber-chief to live in!"

And the Owl seated himself on a rock overlooking the sea and waited for Trumper to reappear.

He had not long to wait. Within a very short time Trumper came out of the cottage again, carrying a rather bulky package in his hand.

Fortunately for Bunter, he did not look round. He walked straight towards Frisardale, the little village on the outskirts of which Greyfriars lay.

"Wonder what he's got in that parcel!" murmured Bunter to himself, as he followed after Trumper. "I bet it's some sort of tools belonging to the Deadshot Gang. The masks or the revolvers, or something like that!"

Bunter was not as far wrong as may be imagined. Trumper was carrying the coat which the highwayman had left in his hands the day before. The Court-field leader wanted to make sure of the ownership of the coat. It would provide a very useful clue in his search for the leader of the Deadshot Gang.

"The best thing to do, I suppose," he muttered to himself, "is to ask the tailors in town if they made it. Of course, it may be a hand-me-down coat, but it doesn't look like one!"

Trumper went to three tailors in succession, but they knew nothing whatever about the coat. Bunter followed him from shop to shop wonderingly. Even the Owl found it difficult to believe that there were any hidden motives behind these visits.

"I dare say he's thinking of raiding them!" murmured Bunter to himself. And he's exploring the lay of the land."

At last Trumper stopped before a small, but by no means impoverished-looking cottage, in a side street.

"I'll just see how old Porter is now!" he said to himself. "It's ages since the old fellow's been bed-ridden, and he'll be glad of a visit. I suppose Jimmy will be grateful when he comes home from London and learns that somebody's been to have a look at his old father."

Jimmy Porter was one of Trumper's closest chums and the best goalkeeper of the Courtfield junior eleven. A couple of weeks ago he had obtained permission to pay a visit to some relatives in London, and, as far as Trumper knew, he was still in the metropolis.

"He's gone in to talk to some of his gang!" murmured Bunter. "I'll—

How shall I arrange to hear what he says?"

Fortunately for Bunter's purpose, there was a large window looking out into the street. Bunter concealed himself under the ledge of the window, and tried to hear what was going on inside the cottage.

"It's not as if I were spying!" said Bunter to himself. "I'm doing regular detective work!"

The Owl of the Remove never admitted his bad motives even to himself. He found it easier to persuade himself that he was a fine, virtuous, ill-treated character than to convince anyone else.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Porter!" said Trumper cheerfully. "How are you to-day?"

The old man groaned dismally. "Wusser an' wusser!" he said. "My pain's that bad—"

Trumper looked sympathetic. The old man was certainly not looking too well.

"Oh, well," said Trumper cheerfully, "we'll soon put that right, I hope! The doctor is looking after you, isn't he?"

"Yus; but he ain't much good! What I wants is my boy—my Jimmy! He's the only one as can look arter me!"

"Yus, of course!" said Trumper. "He'll soon be back now, I suppose!"

"I hopes so," said the old man. "What you got in that parcel, me boy?"

Trumper reddened. "Nothing nice for you to eat, I'm afraid, Mr. Porter," he said. "I didn't know I should drop in at all till I happened to be passing."

"Yus; but what you got?" asked the old man pettishly.

"Oh, just a coat I happened to pick up," said Trumper, undoing the package. "I'm trying to find out who it belongs to."

Mr. Porter stared at the coat as though he had seen a ghost.

"Where d'you get that coat?" he asked anxiously. "It's my Jimmy's coat!"

"Nonsense, Mr. Porter!" laughed Trumper. "It can't be!" And he passed the coat over to the old man for further inspection.

"I told you so!" said the old man, pointing to the buttons. "It's the new coat my Jimmy had afore he went to London. I remember saying the buttons was loose when the coat come from the

tailor, so Jimmy sewed them stronger again with this purple thread 'cause there wasn't no other in the house."

Trumper turned pale and a shiver passed through him.

Billy Bunter, outside the window, chuckled. The Owl was certainly not hearing what he had expected to hear, but what he did hear was interesting enough.

"Where did you get my Jimmy's coat?" persisted Mr. Porter.

"I—I— it must have been left in the station waiting-room," said Trumper, bringing out the lie with difficulty. "They sent it to the school to find out whose it was."

"Tek, tek!" said the old man, clicking his tongue. "Very careless of Jimmy! I'll give him a talking to when he comes back!"

"C—certainly!" gasped Trumper. "G—good afternoon, Mr. Porter! I must be going now."

"Goo'-afternoon!" wheezed the invalid.

"Send the girl in when you go out!" Trumper departed with his head in a whirl. What did it all mean? Was it really Jimmy Porter's coat? And, if so, was Jimmy the leader, or at least a member, of the Deadshot Gang?

Trumper dared not speculate further. He feared he would lose his presence of mind.

Back to Peggy he wended his way, a furrow on his brow.

With an ill-natured chuckle, Billy Bunter made his way back to Greyfriars.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Mauly's Great Idea!

"W HARTON, old bean—" The schoolboy ear intercepted the Famous Five on the way to the playing-fields.

They were in football garb, whilst Mauly was clad in Etons and a topser, his boots shining like a brightly-polished mirror, and his aristocratic countenance wearing its usual expression of boredom.

"Wharton, old bean—" "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry.

"Coming along to footer, Mauly?"

"Gad, no! Too much beastly fog! I've been thinkin'—"

"Still thinking?" gasped Bob Cherry. "Is it never going to stop now that you've started?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, what have you been thinking about, Mauly?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I've been thinkin' of what happened yesterday, an' I've been tryin' to discover why there should be such an epidemic of crime—"

"Good word, 'epidemic'!" murmured Johnny Bull. "How d'you spell it, Mauly?"

"I don't spell it, my dear Bull. I just think it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why there should be such an epidemic of crime," repeated Mauleverer placidly. "I've been wonderin'—"

"And we'll be wandering, old chap," interposed Wharton, "off to the playing-fields. We can't stop here all day thinking of conundrums."

But Frank Nipper, the most thoughtful member of the Famous Five, took Mauleverer more seriously than Wharton seemed to do.

"It's not a joking matter, Harry!" he said. "Things are getting jolly uncomfortable in the neighbourhood with all the pranks and raids and robberies carried out by the Deadshot Gang."

"Yess, dear boys," said Mauly. "I've been tryin' to discover why there should

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Suddenly Trumper became aware of a startling fact. Another form was lying close to his! It was that of Lord Herbert Mauleverer, of the Greyfriars Remove! (See Chapter 5.)

"Oh, the reason seems plain enough to me!" growled Bob Cherry. "The very name Deadshot Gang tells you what the young ragamuffins have been stuffing themselves up with—dirty, bloodthirsty rubbish that's put silly and dangerous notions into their heads!"

Bob Cherry was by no means a brainy fellow, but he seemed to be striking the right chord.

"That's so," said Wharton. "They've been reading all the terrible, horrible, fearful literature—"

"Phew!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Steady on, old man! Surely it isn't as bad as all that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't rot, Bob! You know what I mean! I don't say that you don't find good stuff even in blood-and-thunder yarns at times—"

"I rather like a good, gripping, murder or detective tale," confessed Johnny Bull. "Quite so!" assented Harry Wharton. "So do we all! But we don't stuff ourselves up with deadshot and pirate rot till we feel inclined to become deadshots and pirates ourselves. Well, as far as I can make out, that's what's happened in the village and at Courtfield."

"Exactly!" assented Frank Nugent. "And another thing that's probably had a bad effect on those ragamuffins is the sort of trash they've put on the screen at

the new cinema-house. The other cinemas used to give 'em fairly decent stuff, but this new place seems to make a speciality of fishing up everything that's putrid and exhibiting it."

"The putridity," assented Hurree Singh, "is awful and terrific!"

"Yaaa!" interjected Mealy. "That's why the new place has been put out of bounds for us by the Head, I presume. Awfully rotten sort of show, I should imagine, from what I hear."

"Bunter liked it," grinned Bob Cherry. "What other proof do we need that it's a place that caters for the rag-tag and riffraff?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"One thing seems certain to me," remarked Harry Wharton. "And that is that there aren't any of our fellows connected with the gang—"

"I should hope not!" said Bob Cherry. "Not even Skinner or Bolsover would be such an idiot—"

"What's that about me?" snarled the unpleasant voice of Percy Bolsover, the bully of the Remove.

Bob Cherry turned quickly.

"Sorry I offended you, Boloy!" he chuckled. "I was just saying that you had too much sense to belong to the Deadshot Gang; but, of course, I may have been mistaken."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

The expression on Bolsover's face was funny in its fury.

"Don't take any notice of the rotters, Boloy!" said Skinner, the cad of the Remove. "It's quite plain that it's these own pals, Trumper & Co., who're at the bottom of the whole trouble."

"I should jolly well think so!" growled Bolsover. "Those Courtfield School paupers—"

"You'd better be careful what you say, Bolsover!" interrupted Harry Wharton quietly. "Trumper is my friend, and I'm not having an accusation of this sort brought against him without proofs!"

"Hear, hear!" chorused a dozen voices. "The hear, hearfulness is terrific!" chimed in Hurree Singh.

"What more proof do you want than that the gang is made up of all the loafers and ragamuffins of the district?" sneered Skinner. "If that description doesn't suit your pals Trumper & Co. down to the ground—"

Before he could say another word Skinner was seized by half a dozen pairs of hands and sent flying down the Close.

"Do you want some of the same medicine, Bolsover?" asked Bob Cherry invitingly.

"Look here, Bob Cherry!" snarled the bully of the Remove. "I've got just as

much right as you to speak my mind, and—

Before he could say another word the bully of the Remove was seized by a dozen pairs of hands. The bully, who was no coward, struggled furiously, but in vain. He could do nothing against such heavy odds, and next moment he was sent flying down the Close, just as Skinner had been.

"Good riddance to bad rubbish!" said Bob Cherry.

"Yas, dear boy!" drawled Mauleverer. "I've—"

"Don't tell us that you've been thinking again, Mauly!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You'll never get over it!"

"Don't rot, old bean! I've been wonderin' if there's no way of stoppin' the ravages of the Deadshot Gang."

"The peelers are the proper people to do that!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I've not over much confidence in our friend P.-c. Tozer," said Mauly.

"No! Nor have any of us!" assented Harry Wharton. "After the way he let the rascals duck him last week we can see he's hopeless."

"Oh, absolutely!" agreed Mauleverer. "I've been thinkin' of takin' up the case myself—"

"Thinking of turning policeman!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Oh, Mauly!"

"Well, hardly, dear boy. The idea's struck me that prevention is better than cure, you know—"

"Well?"

"Don't fluster me, Cherry. It seems to me that what's really at the bottom of the whole business is the fact that there are a crowd of young ragamuffins knockin' around who don't go to school, have no regular work, an' no respectable homes. It's no wonder that some of 'em take to this sort of thing!"

"Quite!" agreed Wharton. "You've hit the nail on the head, Mauly!"

"Who said the age of miracles had passed?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Mauly's had an absolute brain-wave!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I know the sort of fellows you mean," said Johnny Bull. "You mean chaps like that hefty lout Bilsen, who used to carry our bags from the station, but who's got too lazy to do even that now!"

"Precisely!" said Mauleverer. "Now, why shouldn't we take a hand at remedy this state of affairs—"

"Give all the loafers in the district a hiding!" asked Bob Cherry. "We'd have our work cut out, but I shouldn't mind taking a hand."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You haven't got me quite, Cherry, old bean! I mean, why shouldn't we do some sort of mission work amongst 'em?"

"What?"

It was a unanimous exclamation of surprise from all the juniors.

"Oh, you're potty, Mauly!" said Johnny Bull.

"Absolutely daft!" agreed Ogilvy, the Scottish junior.

"Of all the tommy-rot—" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"The tommy-rotfulness is terrific!" added Hurree Singh.

But Wharton and Nugent and Linley and Pety Todd and several others, were not looking quite so contemptuous.

"What do you say, Penfold?" asked Wharton, turning to the son of the Friar-dale cobbler. "You know all about these fellows!"

"I should just think he does!" chuckled Stott, the sneak of the Remove.

"He, he, he!"

But Stott suddenly stopped laughing as many furious glances were turned on

him. Penfold might be of poor and humble origin, but he was a splendid fellow, and liked by all the decent Greyfriars men.

"I think that Mauly's idea is a ripping one!" said Penfold quietly. "A lot of the loafers and ragamuffins of the district could be turned into decent and respectable fellows if a little attention were paid to them."

"That's so!" said Vernon-Smith, once known as the Bouncer. "If those chaps only had some decent and rational amusements they wouldn't go in for imitation highway robbery and other tommy-rot!"

"Hear, hear!" chimed in Monty Newland.

It was Nugent, however, who originated the really brilliant scheme which was to bear such splendid fruit.

NO. 57.—NAPOLEON DUPONT.



Another comparatively recent arrival from France. Had some stormy times at first, but has now settled down quite well. Shares study No. 10 with "Bolswaire," as he calls the burly Removeite. Occasionally prepares some remarkable French dishes, about which the Remove juniors make the most complimentary remarks. Quite a decent fellow on the whole.

"In my opinion," said Nugent, "the best thing we can do is to start a kind of social club, supply them with outfits and games of all sorts, and coach them ourselves when we've got any spare time."

"Gad, that's the very thing!" said Mauleverer.

"Ripping!" agreed Wharton.

"Absolutely topping!" chimed in Bob Cherry.

It was Vernon-Smith who threw a dash of cold water on their enthusiasm.

"I'm all the way with you, as far as the theory of the scheme goes," he said.

"But I think you'd better not forget that it'll be a jolly expensive affair."

"That was just like the Bouncer. He always thought of the financial side of things."

The juniors looked rather disconcerted. This certainly seemed to make matters difficult.

"Oh, well," said Harry Wharton, "never say die! We'll manage somehow!"

"Oh, rather!" chorused a score of voices.

And Bob Cherry, lifting up an imaginary cup to his lips, roared in a loud voice:

"Good luck to Mauly's Mission!"

And the shout was taken up by several dozen voices as the Removeites made their way to the playing-fields to start their long-delayed game.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mauly is Missing!

"INLEY!"

"Adum!"

"Mauleverer!"

No reply.

The Head was calling the roll to see whether all Greyfriars scholars had returned before closing-time. But the schoolboy earl seemed to be absent.

"Mauleverer!"

Still no reply.

"He's not here, sir!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. Bob saw nothing strange in Mauly's absence. Fellows often came in after closing-time, getting delayed for some reason or other, and this was specially likely to happen to a languid, easy-going fellow like Mauleverer.

But the other juniors looked grave. In view of the activities of the absurd but formidable Deadshot Gang, Mauly's absence might mean that he had again fallen into the hands of the robbers.

"Thank you, Cherry!" said Dr. Locke.

"As you say, he is not here. I should like you to discover the cause of his delay when he arrives, Mr. Quelch!"

"Certainly, sir!" replied the master of the Remove.

And his lips pursed in a way that boded very ill for the absent junior unless he had some very good excuse indeed.

Mauly received no extra consideration at Greyfriars on account of his title. He was treated exactly like any other Removeite.

The Head continued the call, and there were, apparently, no more absentees.

"I don't like Mauly's absence," said Harry Wharton. "If the gang have got hold of him they'll give him a rough time!"

"What's the use of worrying?" asked Bob Cherry. "He'll very likely come in soon."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, Owl! Where've you been all the afternoon? We've missed the sight of your lovely features."

"Don't rot, Bob Cherry! I've got some most important information!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've never known a time when you're not bustling with news!" grinned Bob.

"Is it news Billy is always bustling with?" asked Johnny Bull. "I thought it was grub!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, Cherry—"

"I'm not Cherry, Owl! I'm Wharton!"

"I mean Wharton, of course! I knew you all the time. Wharton! Look here, Wharton, I've been doing some most important detective work all the afternoon—"

"Detective work!" yelled the juniors.

"Oh, help!"

"You needn't laugh, Cherry. I have made a most important discovery about the Deadshot Gang—"

"And you want us to stand you a feed for your information, Billy, you swindler!" said Nugent. "Nothing doing!"

"The nothingfulness is terrific!"

agreed Hurree Singh.

And the Famous Five departed to their study. They had had too much experience of Bunter's fairy-tales to believe that he really had anything of consequence to tell them. Billy Bunter was like the humorous shepherd-boy in the old legend who cried "Wolf!" once too often.

Bunter wandered along the Remove passage till he came to Study No. 11. Skinner was entertaining several of the worst ends and bouncers in the Remove.

Billy Bunter calmly seated himself. In the presence of Skinner & Co., at any rate, he felt that he could make a business-like proposal.

"See here, you chaps!" he said. "What are you willing to pay for first-hand information about the leader of the Deadshot Gang?"

"Good!" gasped Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "How are we to know that you are giving us the straight goods, you fat cat?"

"You'll see!" said Bunter. "If you chaps make it ten quid, I'm willing to take five in advance, and the other five when the truth of my story is proved."

"Ten what!" yelled Bolsover. "Ten quid? If your information is worth tenpence I'll be surprised!"

"Oh, really, Bolsover, if you don't want to know who the leader of the Deadshot Gang is—"

"I'll make it a quid, to be paid when the truth is out!" snapped Bolsover. "Take it or leave it!"

Bunter reflected. A sovereign was not to be despised. On the other hand, his information was certainly worth more than that.

So Bunter did a very business-like thing. He decided to tell part of the truth.

"All right, Bolsover!" he said. "You chaps are witnesses!"

"We are!" grinned Skinner.

"We is!" chuckled Stott.

"And what's more, Bunter," added Bolsover, "if we find that you've been telling lies you'll get the hiding of your life!"

"Really, Bolsover, I hope I'm incapable of telling an untruth!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Skinner and Stott.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bolsover.

The idea that Billy Bunter was incapable of telling an untruth was really too funny.

"Very well, you fellows—"

"Hold on, Billy!" gasped Skinner.

"Out with the deadly secret!"

"I guess you've got—"

"Speak up, Bunter!" said Bolsover sharply.

"All right, Bolsover! The leader of the Deadshot Gang is a fellow from the Courtfield School!"

And with this startling announcement, Bunter took his departure.

"Here, Bunter!" yelled Bolsover. "That's not enough! We want names and proofs!"

But Bunter was sure that he had imparted a sovereign's worth of information, and refused to say any more. In fact, he disappeared from view round the corner of the Remove passage, and Bolsover & Co. called after him in vain.

Maully was still absent when the Remove assembled in the dormitory that night.

"I don't like it at all," said Harry Wharton. "I'm pretty sure now that Maully has fallen into the hands of the Deadshot Gang!"

"If to confirm his words, Mr. Quelch entered the dormitory at that moment, looking very disturbed.

"Wharton," he said gravely, "the Head has decided to organise a search-party to look for Mauleverer. Wingate

is organising the prefects and seniors of the Sixth and Fifth Forms, and Mr. Prout, Mr. Lascelles, and the rest of the staff are joining in the search. As captain of this Form, I rely on you to keep order during our absence!"

"But mayn't we join in the search, sir?" pleaded Wharton.

"Dr. Locke thinks otherwise, my boy!"

"But, sir—"

Mr. Quelch wasted no time in replying. He left the dormitory.

"Look here, Harry!" said Bob Cherry. "We can't allow this! If Maully is lost it's our duty to find him!"

"Oh, rather!" chorused a crowd of voices.

"I agree with you chaps!" said Wharton quietly. "As soon as the masters and seniors have gone, we'll slip out and join in the search."

No. 58.—RICHARD HILLARY.



Not quite so prominent a character in the Remove as some, having only fairly recently made his appearance at Greyfriars. "A Case of Conscience" was the title of the story in which he was announced. Quite a good fellow, and clever with his fists, though not quite Bolsover's superior in this direction. (Study No. 5.)

"Hear, hear!"

The applause was almost, but not quite, unanimous.

"It's all rot!" growled Skinner. "It's much too cold to go fooling about in the dark!"

"I guess so!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I'm not having any!"

"No fellow who funks it need come!" snapped Wharton. "If chaps like Skinner and Fishy and Bolsover—"

"Who says I funk it?" roared the bully of the Remove. "I'm coming, Wharton, whether you like it or not!"

"Oh, all right!" said Wharton pacifically. "The more the merrier!"

And within a short time about thirty figures might have been seen issuing from the Remove dormitory with Wharton at their head.

"Silly asses!" snorted Bunter, who remained comfortably in bed. "Why can't they stay quietly at home!"

But even Skinner & Co. did not applaud that sentiment. Though they were not taking part in the expedition, they almost wished they were.

"If only it weren't so cold!" muttered Skinner.

Then he turned over on his side and went to sleep.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Trumper!

"RESCUE, Courtfield! Rescue!" Trumper's voice rang out in the stillness of the night. But there were no juniors this time to rush to his assistance as there had been on the previous afternoon.

"Rescue, Courtfield! Rescue, Greyfriars!"

Trumper's shouts rang out bravely; but they were suddenly cut off. A gag was thrust into his mouth by one of the masked forms surrounding him.

"Stow it, Trumper!" growled a voice in the darkness. "We don't want none of your babble!"

The voice was certainly not that of the fellow who had addressed Mauleverer on the previous afternoon. That voice had been an educated one. This one was that of a rough and uncultured rascal.

Trumper stared at his captors, and then began to struggle. But he could do nothing! They were too many for him.

Ropes were bound round his arms and legs, and a bandage was placed over his eyes. Then he was carried, he knew not where, for a short distance. At last he was placed upon the ground, and his bandage was removed. But his gag and his bonds remained untouched.

Trumper found himself in a small, stony cave, dimly lit by a smoky lantern. On all sides were figures wearing hideous masks. Trumper wondered whether Jimmy Porter was amongst them, and, if so, which he was.

Suddenly Trumper became aware of a startling fact. Another form was lying close to his! It was that of Lord Herbert Mauleverer, of the Greyfriars Remove!

Trumper winked at Mauleverer, and Maully winked back. There was an enormous difference in social standing, in disposition, in upbringing, in every way, between the son of the Pegg fisherman and the son of the noble earl, but they were both equally stout-hearted and brave.

"What have you brought this fellow here for, captain?" asked the rascal. "He is no use whatever for purposes of ransom! His father is as poor as yours or mine."

Trumper started. The voice was certainly disguised, but Trumper detected a familiar note in it. It could belong to no one but Jimmy Porter.

"I don't want no back answers!" growled the captain, in a voice that Trumper felt sure he had also heard before. "If his father doesn't ransom him, the Head of the school'll have to. Anyway, here he stays till we get what we want for him!"

"Sides," added another voice, "once he's out of the school, o' raps we'll get some of his old chums to join us! We can't do nothing with 'em now."

"That's so!" remarked Porter's voice. "Apart from me, you haven't been very successful with the school chaps, captain."

The captain snorted.

"Lot of stuck-up prigs!" he growled. And he gave the prostrate form of Trumper a kick with his boot.

Porter clenched his fists, but said nothing.

"See here!" said the captain. "It's about time we little chaps was safe back in bed, or the folks'll think we're connected with the horrid, awful Deadshot Gang!" And he chuckled loudly.

"Right-ho, captain!" said Porter. "I'll keep sentry over these fellows!"

"An' if you let them escape," growled the captain, "just you look out!"

"All right, captain!" he said. "These bounders will be quite safe with me!"

Without uttering another word, the captain turned on his heels and departed, followed by the rest of his men.

Porter stared after them for fully five minutes. Then, when he was quite sure they were gone, he burst into a hysterical laugh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mauleverer raised his head and looked at the masked fellow in surprise. What could that strange laugh mean?

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Picking up a sharp knife that was lying on the stone floor, Porter approached the schoolboy earl. In spite of his natural valour, Mauleverer shuddered violently. The only conclusion he could come to was that the fellow intended taking his life.

"Look here, chaps!" said Porter. "When I remove your gags don't make a sound. Voices carry very far down here; and the Deadshot Gang may not be out of earshot yet!"

Mauleverer and Trumper both looked at Porter in surprise and relief. This was a most unexpected development of their dangerous situation.

Trumper's heart beat fast. Was it possible that his suspicions were unfounded, and that Porter had been playing some deep and dangerous game?

Porter removed Mauly's gag and his bonds. Whilst Mauly was rubbing himself to restore the circulation of his blood, Porter did the same for Trumper.

"Porter, old chap—" whispered Trumper.

"This time it was Porter's turn to be surprised. He did not expect Trumper to know him in his disguise.

"Shush!" he replied. "That's the best way out!"

And he pointed to an opening in the wall in the direction opposite to that which the gang had taken.

Mauly and Trumper followed him without a word. But as they emerged into the open a great surprise awaited them.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Wharton to the Rescue!

"**Q**UIETLY, you chaps!"

Thus Wharton admonished his followers as they climbed over the school wall.

"It seems to me," he went on, when they were all over, "that what we've got to find is the robbers' lair! Once that's found—"

"The rest is as easy as cracking nuts," said Vernon-Smith sarcastically. "But how are we going to find it?"

"Look for it, of course!" said the straightforward Bull. "That ought to be pretty plain."

"The plainfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Singh.

"Quite so, Inky!" said Nugent. "But it looks to me as if the searchfulness will also be terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, we've got one clue, at any rate!" said Wharton. "We know that their den has an entrance somewhere near the edge of the wood."

"That's so!" assented Vernon-Smith.

"Though there are probably lots of other entrances as well!"

"Well, then," said Wharton, "my idea is that we should split up into several search-parties of, say, half a dozen each, and look for the den in different directions."

"Good!" agreed Peter Todd. "That's the ticket!"

But Vernon-Smith looked doubtful.

"That means," he said, "that when we come across a couple of dozen or so of the gang all together, the half-dozen of us will be overpowered!"

The juniors were silent. There was certainly that very important point to be taken into consideration.

"On the other hand," said Nugent, "if we all search in a heap, we'll have such a stretch of space to cover that we'll never find the den at all!"

"Well, then," said Wharton, "we'll have to keep pretty close together, and arrange a signal to call the other parties to our assistance if anything turns up!"

"Good idea!" said Bob Cherry. "The scout-ry is the very thing!"

And so it was arranged.

"Who're going to be party-leaders?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Me, of course," said Bolsover, "for one."

"And me!"

"And me!"

"And me!"

Practically every junior present raised that claim.

"You leave that to me!" said Wharton sharply. "I'll pick out the party-leaders for myself, thanks!"

Bolsover began growling, but finding that he was in a minority of one, he quietened down.

"Well, then," said Wharton, "I choose—"

The juniors waited anxiously. Each of them was eager for that honour.

"I choose Vernon-Smith, Peter Todd, Bulstrode, Dick Rake, Squiff, and myself!"

Exclamations of disappointment arose amongst those who had not been chosen.

"Look here, Wharton—"

"I say, old chap—"

Even Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull were amongst the protestants, but Wharton's next words satisfied them.

"In my own section," continued Wharton, "I'll take Cherry, Nugent, Bull, and Inky."

"Good!" muttered Bob. The Famous Five were to be together.

"The other leaders can choose their own men."

"Right-ho!" said Bulstrode.

Bulstrode chose Bolsover, Hazeldene, Trevor, and Treluce.

Dick Rake chose Wibley, Desmond, Morgan, and Newland.

Squiff chose Tom Brown, Delarey, Pold, and Linley.

Vernon-Smith chose Ogilvy, Russell, Redwing, Kirpy, and Dupont.

Peter Todd chose Dutton, Almonzo Todd, Vivian, Hilary, and Smith minor.

"Now we're all sorted out," said Wharton. "March!"

And the various sections marched off in different directions.

Meanwhile, Trumper, Mauleverer, and Porter were just emerging from the cave.

"This way lies safety!" chuckled Porter, still wearing his mask. "Why! What—"

The three juniors, on emerging, had fallen straight into the arms of the Deadshot Gang!

They were completely surrounded by masked faces on all sides.

"You traitor, Porter!" commenced the captain of the gang. "I thought I

couldn't trust you! Why, what's become of the chap?"

Porter, taking advantage of the fact that he was still wearing his mask, had quietly worked his way through the gang, and was nowhere to be seen.

In reality, he was taking advantage of the darkness to escape.

He pulled his mask off, and then gazed around. He was in the wood.

The wood at that time of night was generally very quiet, but now it seemed to be humming with noise.

Approaching Porter were about twenty big fellows, amongst whom Porter recognised Wingate, Gwynne, Mr. Lascelles, and Mr. Quelch.

It was the party of masters and prefects sent out to rescue Mauleverer.

"Here's one of the Deadshot Gang!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "He has the audacity to carry his mask in his hand."

And, indeed, Porter was approaching the company very calmly.

"Good-evening, sir!" he said, raising his cap respectfully to the Head.

Dr. Locke looked astounded.

"How—how—how dare you address me, boy! You—"

Wingate was looking at Porter very closely.

"This is James Porter, of Courtfield School!" he said. "Not at all the sort of fellow one would expect to be mixed up in a business of this sort!"

"But the evidences are plain!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Do you deny that you belong to the ridiculous gang of rascals who have been infesting the neighbourhood, boy?"

"Not at all, sir!" said Porter coolly. "I am quite able to explain that when the proper time comes. In the meantime, I offer to lead you to the headquarters of the gang, where you will find Mauleverer as captive!"

"Don't accept!" said Mr. Prout quickly. "The young rascal is trying to tempt us into a trap!"

"That is my opinion, too!" said Mr. Quelch.

The Head looked doubtful.

"What do you think, Lascelles?" he asked.

"It seems quite likely that this boy is trying to lead us into a trap," replied the staid young mathematician, "but I think we are in sufficient numbers to risk such a strategy."

"Hear, hear, sir!" echoed the prefects. Only Loder looked sour. Danger had no appeal for Loder.

"I think we will risk the danger," said the Head.

And he followed Porter with the whole of his party.

Porter led the way straight back to the cave. He calculated that by this time Mauleverer and Trumper would have been taken back into the cave and tied up again, and the gang would perhaps have departed.

He laughed to himself at the idea of the surprise which he was about to spring.

At the entrance to the cave he paused.

"This is the way in, sir," he said.

"Will you go first?"

As the Head looked rather doubtful, Mr. Lascelles volunteered.

"I will enter first, if you do not mind, sir," he said.

And he stepped down the stone steps leading into the cave.

He found himself in pitch darkness, and before he had time to utter a word he was seized by a dozen pairs of hands, a gag was placed in his mouth, ropes were thrust upon him, and he was made helpless.

All this was done in perfect silence, and when Wingate followed he had no idea of what had taken place.



"My only aunt!" ejaculated Nugent. "Look at this!" It was a mask which Porter had worn, and which he had dropped at the entrance to the cave. The Famous Five were indeed on the trail! (See Chapter 7.)

"Is it all right, sir?" shouted Wingate from the entrance.

"A' right!" replied the captain of the gang, in a muffled voice.

Wingate and the rest of the party were all treated in the same way as Mr. Lascelles. Fortunately for the gang, the entrance to the cave was so constructed that only one person could enter at a time, and there was a bend in the passage before the actual cave was reached.

The masters and prefects of Greyfriars lay trussed up in a heap on the stone floor of the cave!

Unintentionally, Porter really had led them into a trap, as Mr. Prout had feared he would.

Porter had also come into the cave, and had been trussed up in the darkness with the rest.

The captain of the gang lit the grimy lantern, and the gang looked at their hapless victims and laughed.

"What a catch!" chuckled the captain. "What a haul!"

"Better not let 'em hear your voice, captain," whispered another. "They might recognise it later on."

The captain nodded. But he could not refrain from bestowing a hearty kick at the prostrate body of Porter.

"We'll serve you out for this, my lad!" he snarled.

Porter shivered at the captain's tone.

And Mauleverer and Trumper looked at him sympathetically. They knew he had done his best.

What was to happen now?

Were they all at the mercy of these idiotic, uneducated young rascals, rendered half-insane by sanguinary films and stories?

Or would rescue arrive from somewhere?

Perhaps they would all have felt a little more at ease if they had known of Harry Wharton's unauthorised expedition.

But, even so, it was very doubtful if Wharton & Co. would meet with any success.

The way to the den was not easy to find. And if they did find it they might meet with the same reception as the others had met.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Harry Wharton's Success!

"SEEMS to me this haul is quite big enough for one night!" chuckled the captain of the Deadshot Gang.

Porter groaned inwardly. Things had not at all worked out as he had intended.

"We're not goin' to leave this blooming traitor 'ere!" commented the captain, kicking the hapless Porter afresh.

"We'll take him wi' us, an' leave him in the other place, where the money an' things is kept!"

Porter shuddered. He wondered what fate was in store for him when he was taken to the other den where the robbers kept the valuables which they had stolen.

Trumper looked at his chum pityingly as he was picked up and carried off. However Porter had come to be connected with the gang, it looked as if he was going to pay the penalty of his rashness.

The prisoners were left by themselves in the dark. Numerous as they were, they were perfectly helpless.

In the meantime, the various sections of Wharton's party were blundering about in the dark.

Each section carried a lantern, but the light these lanterns gave was none too good.

"Stop!"

Bulstrode's little party suddenly found themselves surrounded. About two dozen of the masked robbers were around them, having chanced upon them on the way to the other den.

Bulstrode and the fellows who were with him, though by no means the pick of Wharton's party, were no cowards. They would even have attempted a four to one tussle against the brigands. But

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they could do nothing against levelled revolvers.

"I suppose we've got to give in!" muttered Hazeldene, with dry lips.

"I'm not—!" began Bolsover, and then started back as he found himself looking into the barrel of a revolver. "My hat!"

"It's no use," said Bulstrode, shrugging his shoulders. "It goes against the grain. I know, but there's nothing else for it."

"The 'em up!" said Bilson sharply. "We're in luck to-night, and no mistake!"

"Coo-ee!"

Bolsover major had suddenly reminded himself of the arrangement that a signal was to be given to call the other sections to the rescue.

The next moment the whole party was gagged. Trevor, Trulace, and Hazeldene were shivering violently, but Bulstrode and Bolsover were made of sterner stuff. However, they all had to submit equally. Together with Porter, they were carried along to the other cave.

Here they were deposited, absolutely helpless in their bonds. Then the robbers threw off their masks, and made their way quietly to their own homes, leaving no trace of their identity behind.

Meanwhile, two other sections of Wharton's party had met in the search for the lair of the Deadshot Gang, and a few moments later they were joined by Squiff's party.

"Coo-ee!"

"It's the signal!" cried Squiff. "Altogether—forward!"

And accompanied by Rake, Todd, and the rest, Squiff rushed quickly towards the spot from which the cry had come.

But there was nothing to be seen. Bolsover had sent the signal too late, and the Deadshot Gang had already carried off their prey.

In another part of the wood the Famous Five were examining the ground carefully for clues.

"It's like hunting for a needle in a haystack," said Johnny Bull gloomily.

"Worse!" growled Harry Wharton. "It's like hunting for a particular wisp of hay in a haystack!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Bob Cherry. "Cheer up, chappies!"

Bob Cherry was always the last to lose his good-humour.

Nugent suddenly pounced upon something lying on the ground.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated. "Look at this!"

It was a mask.

To be precise, it was the mask which Porter had worn, and which he had dropped at the entrance to the cave. The Famous Five were indeed on the trail.

"A mask!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"A mask belonging to the Deadshot Gang!" corrected Nugent. "There can be no doubt of that."

"I told you so," said Bob Cherry. "Luck always turns when you're least expecting it!"

But Johnny Bull was not to be comforted so easily.

"What's the good of this thing?" he said contemptuously. "Some fellow might have dropped it miles away from the den."

"That's true," said Nugent quietly. "But why look at the dark side of things? I'm inclined to believe that the entrance to the cave is somewhere near here."

"The best thing to do," said Wharton, "is to follow these footprints here. They seem to have been freshly made, and they all seem to lead in the same direction."

"That's right," said Bob Cherry. "Lead on, O Chief!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was not an easy trail to follow, on account of footprints which led in other directions; but eventually it brought the Famous Five to the very entrance of the cave.

"What's this?" asked Harry Wharton, rather disappointedly. "There doesn't seem to be anything here but a blank rock!"

Nugent pointed to a hole in the rock-wall.

"Let's see where this leads to," he said.

"Right-ho!" said Bob Cherry. "Lead on, O Chief!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was not an easy trail to follow, on account of footprints which led in other directions; but eventually it brought the Famous Five to the very entrance of the cave.

"What's this?" asked Harry Wharton, rather disappointedly. "There doesn't seem to be anything here but a blank rock!"

Nugent pointed to a hole in the rock-wall.

"Let's see where this leads to," he said.

Wharton crept in and went along the zigzag passage that led into the den itself. His chums followed him, one after the other. It was impossible for more than one to go along that passage at a time.

But when Bob Cherry held up the lantern the juniors saw something which repaid them for all their trouble.

It was an astounding sight!

Lying all over the floor of the cave were the Greyfriars party. Not only was Manleverer there, but all the masters and seniors of the school lay there as well, bound and gagged! Amongst so many Greyfriars fellows Trumper was hardly noticeable as an exception.

"By Jingo!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Is it real?"

"Kick me, Harry!" pleaded Bob Cherry faintly. "I'm getting nightmares!"

At that very moment footsteps were heard in the direction opposite to that from which the Famous Five had come.

"The Gang!" gasped Nugent.

And the Famous Five set their teeth.

But it was not the Gang! It was Vernon-Smith, who appeared at the other entrance to the cave, followed by Ogilvy, Russell, Kippe, Dupont, and Redwing.

"Smithy!" gasped Wharton. "How the dickens did you get here?"

Vernon-Smith blinked round the room dazedly.

And his followers were too astounded to speak.

"There's no time for explanations now," said Johnny Bull. "The first thing to be done is to untie all these chaps!"

And Bull was evidently right. He might not be brainy, but he had plenty of common-sense.

Wharton began with the venerable Head of Greyfriars.

"Wharton!" gasped Dr. Locke. "I can never be so grateful enough!"

"Sorry, sir," interrupted the captain of the Removites, "but there's lots of work to be done!"

And he continued with his rescue work, assisted by his chums.

The Famous Five had come to the rescue at the right time.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Trumper's Trick!

MASTERS, seniors, and juniors returned to Greyfriars when the remaining Removites had been discovered and gathered together, with the exception of Bulstrode & Co. What could have become of Bulstrode's little party was indeed a mystery, and excited ceaseless discussion, but as no clue as to the whereabouts of the five Removites could be discovered, the search was abandoned for the time being.

Trumper took counsel early next morning with his closest friends of the Courtfield County Council School—Wicks and

Solly Lazarus, Grahame, and Barney O'Neil.

"Sure," said O'Neil, "and I am sorry I wasn't out with you last night, at all, at all, Trumper, darling!"

"That's it, tho!" assented Solly Lazarus. "I should have liked to tackle the boulderth who thole my father's jewellery that he kept in his thafe!"

And Solly looked quite unusually vicious.

Trumper shook his shoulders.

"It wasn't all jam being out last night, I assure you!" he said. "There were times when I felt the cold shivers creeping all down my spine, especially when I was lying in that filthy den!"

"I should jolly well think so!" agreed Grahame. "What I can't make out is why Porter is so closely connected with this affair!"

"Porter is O.K.!" said Trumper, in a firm voice. "Once we've discovered him, we'll know all about his motives!"

"Yeth! But how are we to discover him?" asked Solly the prudent.

That was indeed a poser.

"All I know is that we'd better do it jolly quick!" said Trumper. "That rat of a robber captain is not responsible for his actions, and you never know what poor old Jimmy may have to go through!"

"Faith, and I'm sorry for old Jimmy entirely!" remarked Barney O'Neil, rather unnecessarily. They were, of course, all extremely sorry for Porter, and racking their brains how to come to his rescue.

"Didn't you say that you were pretty sure the captain's voice sounded like that cad Bilson's?" asked Wicks.

"I certainly thought so last night," replied Trumper. "But, of course, I may have been mistaken!"

"In that case," said the acute Solly, "we had better get on the track of this fellow Bilson, and find out what he doeth with himself all the time!"

"Spleddid idea, Solly!" said Trumper enthusiastically. "Let's start the trail straight away!"

"But what about school?" asked Wicks doubtfully.

"Haven't you heard?" interjected Trumper. "All the schools in the neighbourhood are closed for the day to give the fellows a chance of organising search-parties in the woods and around the caves!"

"Glorious!" exclaimed Grahame. "Then we'll commence our search at once!"

"Rather!" chorused Solly Lazarus and Barney O'Neil, Wicks and Trumper, all together.

And the five Courtfield School juniors immediately set out for Bilson's cottage.

Bilson's father was a longshoreman by calling, but never did any real work if he could help it, and Bilson took very much after his father.

Neither Bilson nor his father was at home when Trumper & Co. arrived. In fact, the doors and windows were all firmly shut. But, nothing daunted, Trumper & Co. lifted the latch of one of the windows with the blade of a pocket-knife, and entered.

"Jove!" gasped Grahame. "What a dirty place!"

And so it was. The dust lay thick upon floors and ceilings, walls and furniture.

"Life here must be round and see if we can find any clues!" suggested Trumper.

At first the most diligent search seemed fruitless; but just as the Courtfield School juniors were about to give up the search, Trumper's eyes fell on a pair of seamen's boots under the bed.

There was nothing extraordinary about these boots, but something made the

Courtfield leader takes them out from under the bed and examines them more closely.

"My only aunt!" he yelled. "Look at this!"

The boots were stuffed with the cloth masks worn by the Deadshot Gang!

"Well, it's all clear now!" said Grahame. "With these proofs we can go to the police and have Bilson arrested!"

"Yes!" said Trumper contemptuously. "And let the rest of the Gang escape!"

"What are we to do, then?" asked Solly.

"Don't you see?" said Trumper, in excitement. "With these masks in our possession—"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Grahame. "What a lark! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Solly Lazarus and Barney O'Neil.

But Wicks was rather denser than the others, and looked puzzled.

"I'm blowed if I savvy—" he began.

Instead of replying, Trumper took one of the masks and put it on! The effect was startling. The Courtfield School leader looked an exact double of the robber captain!

"Oh, I see!" said Wicks. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Wicks had grasped the idea at last. The Courtfield School juniors were to enter the woods disguised as members of the Deadshot Gang and mix with the robbers if they came across them.

It was a dangerous scheme, but the juniors were plucky and full of grit.

And they immediately set out to put the scheme into execution.

Strange to say, the very same idea had entered into the head of a Greyfriars junior, and that no less a person than Billy Bunter!

Of course, Bunter's motives were quite different. Confused ideas of capturing the robber captain were mixed up with plans of extorting money from him by blackmail and enjoying numerous feeds on the proceeds!

To carry out this scheme, Bunter got hold of the mask which Porter had lost at the entrance to the robbers' lair, and which the Famous Five had brought with them on their return to Greyfriars.

Bunter proceeded to the wood, and put on the mask. Needless to say, there was no value in the fat junior's heart. It was merely a case of fools stepping in where angels fear to tread.

He had only proceeded a short way when he heard voices in front of him. They were the voices of the Famous Five, who were also on the trail.

"One thing seems pretty evident from what we heard last night," Wharton was saying. "The robbers' other den must be somewhere between their first den and the village."

"How do you make that out, Harry?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I'm blowed if I can see it!" chimed in Bob Cherry.

"But it's quite clear!" said Nugent excitedly. "The robbers were going to deposit Porter in the other den on their way back home!"

"That's so," said Wharton. "I—"

A dozen masked figures had suddenly appeared before him, with revolvers in their hands. They seemed to have sprung out of the very ground!

It seemed incredible. True, they were in a densely-covered and isolated part of the wood. But it was broad daylight!

Yet there it was.

There was no help for it. It was the turn of the Famous Five to surrender to the formidable gang.

"Tie 'em up!" growled the captain.

"Gag 'em an' bring 'em along!"

"You're making things worse for your-

selves with every fresh outrage you commit," thought Wharton to himself. But he had no chance of saying anything aloud, for a filthy gag was thrust into his mouth, and he was bound hand and foot, blindfolded, and carried into the robbers' other den. So it also fared with the rest of the Famous Five.

Down on to the stony floor of the cave were the Famous Five plumped, and the look in the eyes of Bulstrode & Co. grew still more desperate as they saw Harry Wharton and his chums brought in. The fellows on whom they had set their hopes of rescue were prisoners like themselves.

Billy Bunter had watched the whole scene from behind a tree. Bunter was an expert at watching and eavesdropping, and these qualities were very useful now, as it happened.

"Oh dear!" he gasped. "How lucky I'm wearing my mask! Even if I come across the robbers now they won't know who I am!"

At that very moment five figures wearing the masks of the Deadshot Gang approached him.

Bunter's first instinct was to run away. But he reflected that if he stood still the gang would take him for one of themselves, and so, trembling inwardly, he remained motionless.

"Hallo, Billy!" said a genial voice.

"What are you doing in that get-up?"

"Oh, really, you fellows, who told you I'm Billy Bunter? I'm not him, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, dear, Billy," gasped Trumper, "you can never disguise yourself! It's your beautiful figure that gives you away!"

Bunter changed his tactics at that.

"Look here, old fellow," he said, "let's be pals! If you let me into the gang—"

"Oh, hold me up!" gasped Trumper.

"Bunter wants me to let him into the gang!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the rest.

"Sure, Bunter, darling," said Barney O'Neil, "we're not the robbers at all, at all, entirely!"

"You needn't tell me that!" snapped Billy. "Didn't I see you holding up Wharton & Co. just now, and taking them into the den?"

"What?" gasped Trumper, becoming serious suddenly. "Have the Famous Five been captured by the gang?"

"Of course they have!" said Bunter.

"You captured them yourselves!"

Trumper saw it was time to disillusion the fat junior. He hastily explained the situation.

"Now lead us to the den, Bunter!" he said sharply.

"Oh, really, Trumper—"

For a second Bunter hesitated. Here was a chance of getting his own back on the Famous Five for the way they had refused to give him a leading place in the Remove footer and cricket clubs, and for the many japes they had played on him.

But it was only for a second. Bunter was not really bad all through. There was more of the fool than of the cad in him. He remembered occasions on which Harry Wharton had come to his aid in times of trouble. And he also reflected that Wharton & Co. would probably stand him some glorious feeds in return for the service he was about to render them.

Moreover, there was Marjorie Hazeldene to be considered. Billy Bunter might be a selfish, thoughtless beast, but he had a soft spot for Marjorie. She would be very grateful to him for being the means of rescuing her brother, and might even invite him to the next dance at Cliff House.

And, what was most important of all, there seemed to be no danger attached to the scheme.

"All right, Trumper!" he said, strutting haughtily towards the den. "Just you follow me with your men!"

And Trumper & Co., still wearing their masks, meekly obeyed.

But they had only proceeded a few steps, when Trumper suddenly called a halt.

"Look here, chaps," he said, "what's the use of our going to the robbers' cave?"

"To set Porter and Wharton and Bulstrode and Hazel and those other fellows free, of course, as!" said Grahame testily.

"Afraid of being recognised, Trumper?" asked Wicks.

"No! It's not that. With the exception of Bunter, here, I think we're fairly well disguised. But I think it's about time we captured the whole rotten Deadshot Gang!"

"Yeth! But how can we?" asked Solly Lazarus.

It was then that Trumper outlined an astounding scheme.

"There are several search-parties in the wood—" he began.

"Sure, an' we know that," said Barney O'Neil impatiently. "There are the Greyfriars spalpeens, and the Courtfield School galoots, and the Highcliffe broths, and the—"

He stopped for want of breath.

Yes, and the village fellows have also organised search-parties," put in Grahame, "with Sande, the grocer's boy, and Norton, the tailor's apprentice, at their head. And I shouldn't be surprised if there are others as well."

"Very well, then," said Trumper. "My idea is that we should split up our forces. You four chaps go in search of the four expeditions, and bring them along to the den, whilst Billy, here, and I go on to the cave!"

"Really, Trumper—"

"Getting the funks, Billy?"

"N-no! It's all right!" stammered Bunter.

Trumper looked at the fat junior with pity. Bunter was for once trying to do the right thing, but it was pitiable to see how difficult he found it to fight down his cowardice.

But what are you going to do in the cave?" asked Solly. Even the cute Jewish junior found it difficult to fathom Trumper's latest plan.

"Pretend to be the captain, and take command of the gang!" said Trumper. "Then you chaps bring along the four expeditionary parties, surround the den, and I'll lead the gang straight into your hands!"

"Jingo!" gasped Grahame. And the other juniors could hardly even say that. Trumper's scheme took their breath away.

"There's only one possible drawback," said Wicks at last. "Suppose the captain is in the cave!"

"We've got to risk something," said Trumper. "Nothing venture, nothing win!"

And Trumper's four chums took their departure, after Billy Bunter had pointed out the way to the cave.

Trumper and Bunter went forward towards the robbers' den.

Would they meet with success?

Or would they be recognised and made prisoners like the rest?

There was every possibility of the latter alternative happening, but the leader of Courtfield School never faltered. It was a case of neck or nothing.

And Bunter accompanied him

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tremblingly. The fat junior was quaking like a jelly, but he bit his lower lip till it nearly bled. Bunter had decided to see this adventure through.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Trumper's Winning Trump!

FORTUNATELY for Trumper, there was but one fellow present in the den when he entered, if we except the prisoners, bound and gagged, who were lying all over the floor. But that one fellow was Bilson.

There could be no mistake about it. His build gave him away directly.

"An' who are you?" he managed to ask, in his raucous voice. "I don't remember seeing—"

Before he could say another word Trumper had hurled himself at the robber captain. Bilson was so surprised that he forgot to do the thing which he ought to have done immediately—he forgot to give the rallying call of the gang!

The delay was fatal. Billy Bunter, rendered wise by desperation, did the natural thing. He clumsily opened a knife and began cutting the prisoners' bonds.

Bilson struggled valiantly with his adversary. Whatever else he might be, he was no coward. But in another moment Porter, Bulstrode & Co., and the Famous Five had brought him down between them.

Then, indeed, Bilson did give the rallying call! But it was too late. He was gagged and bound, and thrust into a corner with his head turned to the wall.

"Who—who are you?" gasped Harry Wharton, turning to the disguised Trumper.

Trumper revealed himself, and briefly outlined his plan. Bilson, in the corner, tangled with anger as he listened to Trumper's crafty scheme, but he could do nothing. He was as helpless as his victims had hitherto been.

"Quick, chaps!" said Trumper. "Slip into your bonds again, and put your gags on! When the gang arrive they must suspect nothing!"

No sooner said than done. And not a second too early, either! Next moment the gang arrived in a crowd, blocking up the den with their numbers.

"What's the trouble, captain?" asked a rough voice.

Trumper felt highly delighted. The gang evidently took him for their leader.

"I'm expectin' some rich old cove to pass through the wood this afternoon," he growled. "I want you men to be ready!"

"Ay, ay, captain!" said the brigands. "Where there's loot there's us!"

The fellows had evidently had a thorough training in the little ways of Murderous Mike and Cruel Kit. As Wharton lay listening, it crossed his mind that it was a thousand pities that Bilson and the rest had not been taught to use their natural bravery and cuteness to better purpose.

Each man brandied his revolver lovingly.

Trumper started. In arranging his scheme he had forgotten to take account of the revolvers. As long as they were armed with these weapons the brigands could keep off almost any number of foes.

"Put down your revolvers!" he snapped. "Drop them on the ground at once!"

The gang were well disciplined by Bilson, but there was a limit to their obedience.

"Ere, captain—"

"I say, captain—"

"Nah, then, captain—"

"What's the game, guv'nor?"

Trumper's heart quaked. In the embarrassment of the moment he did not know what reason to give.

A thousand pretences crossed his mind, but they were all absurd. And, meanwhile, the gang seemed to be getting suspicious and impatient.

It was then that Billy Bunter made use of his most valuable accomplishment—his ventriloquism.

"Mateys, the captain has allus been a good leader, and I trust him, for one! If he says drop revolvers he's got some good reason for it! I'm willin' to drop mine!"

The words seemed to come from a big, burly ruffian in the very centre of the crowd; but they were really spoken by Billy Bunter.

The utterance had a magical effect. Without another word, every brigand present dropped his revolver.

"Now, then!" said Trumper sharply. "Quick march!"

The opening to this den, unlike the other, was not through a narrow passage, but directly into the wood. The Dead-shot Gang marched out boldly, with the fellow whom they took for their captain leading the way.

What was their surprise to find a formidable array before them. In front of them were Greysfriars seniors and juniors, led by Wingate and Blundell, Hobson and Temple, Mr. Prout and Mr. Lascelles. To the right stretched a long line of village fellows and fishermen, amongst whom Sands and Norton were conspicuous. On the left were massed practically the whole of the scholars from Highcliffe and the Courtfield School, amongst whom Trumper's chums, Grahame and the rest and Courtenay & Co. seemed to occupy leading positions.

Resistance was useless. A few of the brigands attempted to retire into the den, but they found that their late prisoners had possessed themselves of the revolvers which they had dropped, and they were forced to surrender.

It was a complete rout. Through Trumper's trick the whole of the Dead-shot Gang had been captured.

When the police, with P.-C. Tozer as guide, appeared on the scene, they discovered that there was nothing left for them to do except to lead the prisoners away, which they promptly did.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Mauleverer's Mission.

BUNTER!

Billy Bunter stopped with a fatuous smile on his fat face. It was no ordinary thing for Marjorie Hazeldene to call on him to stop and talk to her. Usually she avoided the Owl of the Remove as much as possible. But now, reflected Billy, things were of course, different.

"Hallo, Marjorie, old girl!" he said airily.

Marjorie Hazeldene shuddered involuntarily. She was trying hard to get over her dislike of Billy Bunter.

"Bunter," she said, "I have come to thank you for what you did yesterday. I understand that you had something to do with the rescue of my brother and his friends."

Any decent fellow would have replied

that he had only done his duty, and passed on to another topic; but that was not at all the sort of thing Billy Bunter was likely to do when he had a chance of blowing his own trumpet.

"Something to do with the rescue!" he said indignantly. "Oh, really, Marjorie! If it had not been for me and Hazel, the others would still be prisoners in the robbers' cave, or perhaps rotting in their graves. The fellow who told you what happened is a mean, jealous beast!"

"Bob Cherry told me!" replied Marjorie quickly.

"I thought so!" sniffed Bunter. "I suppose he ran me down because he thought I'd cut him out with you, now that—"

"Billy," interrupted Marjorie earnestly, "you've done a good action for once. Don't spoil it by talking like a mean, selfish chump."

Bunter stared at her.

"Oh, really, Marjorie!" he said. "If that's what you call being grateful—"

"Oh, come on, Marjorie!" interrupted Clara Trevlyn, who was with her friend. "He's not worth talking to!"

"Look here, Clara," said Bunter, "you're only jealous because you think I'm paying too much attention to Marjorie—"

Without another word the girls left Bunter, and passed on towards the Rag, where a monster meeting was being held.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Here are the Cliff House delegates!"

"Really the delegates from the juniors, Bob!" smiled Marjorie. "I think the senior delegates must be in the Rag already!"

"Oh, rather!" said Harry Wharton, coming up. "I've never seen such a meeting! The whole of Greysfriars is in the Rag, and half of Courtfield School, as well as delegates from Highcliffe and Cliff House, and Pegg and Friarale and Courtfield!"

"And the Head's in the chair!" added Bob. "Poor Mauly!"

"Why poor Mauly?" asked Clara.

"Oh, Clara," said Marjorie, "fancy having to address such an audience!"

"What about it?" asked Clara. "I'd do it for two pins!"

Bob Cherry, the inveterate humorist, extracted two pins from the lapels of his coat and handed them to Clara.

"Here are your two pins, Clara!" he said.

"Don't talk rot, Bob!" said Harry Wharton sharply. "Clara can't!"

"Oh, can't!" said that roving lady, bristling. "I'll show you I jolly well can!"

"You're not going on the platform, Clara!" exclaimed Marjorie in alarm.

"You wait and see!" was Clara Trevlyn's cryptic reply.

The Rag was a scene of bustle and excitement. In the main body of the hall were rows upon rows of benches, filled with eager and grinning faces. Here the Caterpillar from Highcliffe was talking with his chum Courtenay. There sat Trumper & Co. in a compact little group—Dick Trumper and Solly Lazarus, Dicky Browne and Grahame, Wicks and Barney O'Neil: and with them, looking rather self-conscious because so many eyes were turned on him, Jimmy Porter.

Over yonder, on the front bench, sat prefects and seniors from all the schools—Wingate and Gwynne and Blundell and others from Greysfriars; Northcote from Highcliffe; Stella Stone and Isabel Drake from Cliff House.

Two benches immediately behind the front bench were reserved for the village folk, and a very motley assembly

throughed these two benches. Sir Hilton Popper looked rather uncomfortable next to old farmer Giles, whilst Mr. Lazarus staved every now and again sideways at his neighbour, P.-C. Tozer. Here Bol-saver major was trying to keep a comfortable seat against the onslaughts of Hobson and Temple, and there Nugent minor, with a crowd of fags, tried to wedge in between the older fellows. In short, it was a record gathering.

The Head, as chairman, opened the proceedings. He gave a short account of the adventures with the Dead-end Gang, praised the heroism of those who had helped in the capture of the gang, and then called on Lord Herbert Maul-verer to address the audience.

Mauly cut a handsome figure as he rose on the platform. His natty attire looked natter than ever. Nor did he seem the least bit nervous.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" he said. "I have great pleasure indeed in addressing you here this afternoon. You know what I and many others suffered at the hands of that fellow Bilson and his confederates—"

"Good word—confederates!" murmured Johnny Bull. "What's it mean, Harry?"

"Chums, duffer!"

"Look here, Harry, if you say that Bilson's gang are our chums—"

"Shush, idiot, the Head is looking at you!"

"But my experiences," went on Mauly, "only make me more determined than ever that we must get at the root of the evil—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bilson has been sent to a reformatory, and his gang have been punished in various ways," continued the school-boy earl.

"Hip, hip, hooray!"

"But the root of the evil still remains. We must teach the loafers and vagabonds of the district to lead a new life—"

"Hear, hear!"

"And the only way of doing this is by giving them decent occupations and decent amusements," continued Mauly.

"That's the ticket!"

"Various friends have already promised assistance," said Maulverer. "Sir Hilton Popper has promised to see to the employment scheme—"

"Good old Popper!"

"And Mr. Lazarus has instructed the cinema-proprietor, who rents the hall from him, that unless the standard of his pictures is improved, Mr. LAZARUS will hand over the hall to a man who runs a cinema-palace on proper lines!"

"Quite right!"

"Clap your dad on the back for us, Solly!"

"Now we come to my scheme," said Maulverer impressively. "I think we ought to start a social club for the

benefit of the district, and I'm willing to contribute a monthly sum towards the upkeep of the club!"

"Good old Mauly!"

"The only thing left to do is to ask for assistance and contributions."

So saying, Maulverer stepped off the platform amidst loud cheers.

"Is there anyone else who would like to speak?" asked the Head.

Clara stepped coolly on to the platform.

"I have only just one word to say," she began. "We girls are not going to be left out of this. We'll start a girl's branch of the club!"

And with these few words she stepped off the platform again.

"Clara's kept her promise," grinned Bob Cherry.

The meeting dispersed soon after, but not before many promises of support and assistance had been given. Mauly's Mission seemed likely to prove a stupendous success.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, Billy!"

Bunter hesitated.

"Look here, Wharton," he said. "I wonder why Marjorie is cross with me! She ought to be jolly grateful to me after the way I saved Hazel!"

"Alone he did it!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Marjorie Hazeldene was at hand to speak for herself.

And she decided to speak plainly, for Bunter's good.

"I am not cross with you, Bunter," she said. "I am quite willing to tolerate you, as long as you behave yourself and don't act like a mean cad—"

"Really, Marjorie—"

"And if you choose to apologise for the way you talked to me this afternoon, I shall ask Harry to invite you to the study feed."

"Certainly, Marjorie, I apologise!" said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Bob Cherry. "Trust Bunter not to miss a feed!"

But to do Bunter justice, he really did feel that he wanted to make friends with Marjorie Hazeldene, and it hurt him to think that she disliked him.

But Bunter soon forgot to worry about Marjorie Hazeldene as he enjoyed the many good things spread on the festive board—a spread which Trumper & Co. of Courtfield School, and Lord Herbert Maulverer, as well as the two girls, had been invited to share with the Famous Five.

And when Marjorie and Clara rose to go, Billy Bunter was too full to get up to say good-bye.

THE END.

(Another grand, long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled "Bob Cherry's Secret!" Order your copy EARLY.)

READERS' NOTICES.

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Master D. J. Lacey, 254, Barking Road, East Ham, E. 6, has a good printing set to sell for 2s.

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TIGER TIM'S WEEKLY



THE WRITING ON THE WALL.

The famous King Belshazzar was much dismayed to see the mysterious writing upon the wall of his palace. Without reducing your friends to a similar state of terror, a very easy experiment can be performed productive of the same effect, and if it does not exactly make their knees strike together, it will astonish them very much.

The appliances are such as can be found in any home, and the writing can be produced in the following way:

At one end of a dark room erect a screen that shall conceal you and your apparatus effectually from the spectators. Upon a table behind this screen, place a large mirror, such as can be found upon any dressing-table. Put a lighted candle in front of this glass, placing the latter at such an angle that a large patch of light is thrown upon the wall before you, as in Fig. 1.

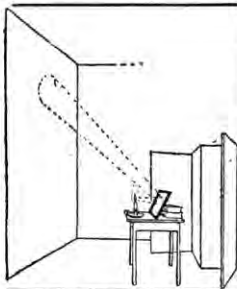


Fig. 1.—Showing relative positions of candle and mirror, so that patch of light is thrown on the wall.

The screen must, of course, hide all this from the company, who will see nothing but the light on the wall.

To write your message is now a very simple matter. Dip a coarse brush into some lamp-black water-colour, and, writing backwards, inscribe what you wish upon the face of the mirror. The message will then appear legibly upon the wall, seemingly written by a mysterious hand.

By dipping the brush into clean water and washing out what you have written upon the glass, the message on the wall will disappear as inexplicably as it appeared in the first place.

A peculiar optical illusion is accomplished as follows: The merry-thought of a fowl or duck should be thoroughly cleaned, and a thread passed several times around the prongs of the fork, as shown

INTERESTING EXPERIMENTS.

AMUSING TRICKS WITH SIMPLE APPARATUS.

in Fig. 2. Having secured the thread tightly, pass a strong wooden match between the strands, twisting it several times, until the prongs of the bone have been drawn closer together. (Fig. 3.)

Now, pulling out the match sufficiently to allow of one end catching against the fork, hold the bone firmly. Releasing



Fig. 2.—Thread passed round prongs of the bone.

the match, it immediately describes a circle, striking against the under part of the fork; but so rapidly has it completed this revolution that the eye has been quite unable to follow it. This causes an illusion that induces all who witness the experiment, to imagine that the match passes through the fork of the bone at A.

But if the eye was too slow in the last experiment, it is so officious in what is next to be described, that it sees something which really does not take place.

Draw a lion and a cage, as in Fig. 4. If you place a visiting-card upon the line A B, and put your face so near that the

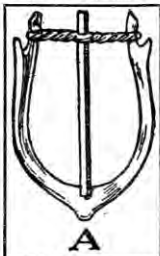


Fig. 3.—Match through twisted thread.

right eye looks upon the lion, whilst the left can see only the cage, you will observe the lion walking into his cage as naturally as if he were at the Zoo!



A LIGHT EXPERIMENT.

Why do we wear white clothes in extreme heat, and dark clothes in the winter? To this question everyone will answer that white clothes absorb less heat than black, and that we therefore feel the rays of the sun less.

How is it, then, that Polar bears and other Arctic creatures exposed to such extreme cold are clothed in white?

The fact is, that not only does white absorb less heat, but it serves to retain heat, and a white coat preserves the natural warmth in the animal's body. This is exemplified by the following experiment, for which only a tumbler is required:

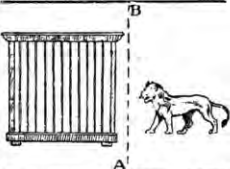


Fig. 4.—The lion and his cage.

Choose a glass with the lower part faced, as in Fig. 5. Colour these faces black and white alternately, a little indian ink serving for the former, and some crushed chalk and water for the latter.

With a very small knob of wax fasten a pin to each face, as shown in the figure. Having done this, place a lighted candle within the glass.

The heat, striking the interior equally, is modified by the colours painted on the outside to such an extent, that, after some little while, the wax supporting the pins of the black faces is melted, whilst the pins on the white parts remain unaffected. This shows very clearly that

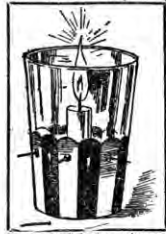


Fig. 5.—A "light" experiment.

the white prevents the escape of internal heat, as surely as it prevents the penetration of external warmth.

(More experiments next week.)

The Secret of the Silent City



Our Grand New Adventure Serial.

By DAGNEY HAYWARD.

The Man of Mystery!

WITHOUT exchanging another word the man threw open the door, and with an imperious gesture waved away the grim spearmen who guarded the boys.

Then, before anyone could utter a word, he slipped into the hut, and rapped out sharply:

"Follow me in silence—your lives depend upon it!"

It was a very mystified procession which filed across the moonlit grass into the very shadow of the great idol. Once there, however, the man of mystery threw off his imposing attitude.

"We are safe here," he said. "None of those niggers dare touch us now. I suppose you will be wondering who I am? Well, I am not going to waste any time on a lengthy story. I will just tell you the bare facts about myself.

"In the first place, my name is Robert Harland—Dr. Harland, to be precise. Three years ago I set out to study the social habits of the South American races. We were a party of four, with about twenty coolie carriers. We came upon this ugly old idol one early morning. The natives made a rush at us and captured our whole party, except myself, who managed to dodge them and hide in a clump of trees. There I found some of our baggage, amongst other things a big bale of dyes and paints.

"Some good genius inspired me to dub myself in the extraordinary colours you see now. Thus rigged out, I returned to the spot where I had last seen our party. I will not tell you what I saw—the horror of it all haunts my sleep even now. Suffice it to say that not one of them was left alive.

"My good luck followed me. These niggers took me for a god, or, at least, a magic man sent down to reward them for their faithfulness to the idol. I immediately assumed an air of authority, but rarely spoke a word, for fear of betraying myself. For three years I have hardly spoken to a living creature, though I know something of the natives' language.

"This afternoon I saw you three boys, and I knew you would be killed unless I protected you. It shows you how powerful I am that I was able to save your lives."

"We are indeed happy in meeting you, Dr. Harland," said Mr. Sherwell. "But

how are we going to get clear of these murderous natives?"

"In the first place, you must get a message back to your followers telling them not to look for you."

"That's rather difficult," said Mr. Sherwell, scratching his head. "Unless one of us can return, I don't see how it is to be done."

"Simply enough," broke in Dick. "If you write a note and tie it to Boris' collar he will carry it back."

"The very thing!" said the producer. "We shall have to send it to Tubby Bouncer. He is the only white man left in the camp."

"He's got more fat than brains," muttered Tom. "He's a poor sort of thing to trust to."

Mr. Sherwell tore a leaf out of his notebook, and scribbled a short note:

"Stay where you are, and do not attempt to find us. You will be skinned alive if you do. We are all safe."

"SHERWELL."

"That'll fix him!" he said, with a grim smile.

The note was tied to Boris' collar, and, with a final word of instruction, the

READ THIS FIRST.

Mr. Sherwell, producer of the Southern Film Company, accompanied by his staff, set out in search of the Silent City, which is situated in the wilds of South America.

The staff includes Tom Rackett, the operator; Tubby Bouncer, a comedian; Dick Grainger, Mike Rafferty, and Larry, three boy chums; two servants, Tung Wu, a Chinaman, and Quambo, a nigger; also three animals, Angwath, an elephant, Wanga, a chimpanzee, and Boris, a bearhound.

Mr. Sherwell's chart is incomplete, and he has only a vague idea as to the position of the Silent City.

Tom Rackett obtains many wonderful and interesting films en route. Later it is discovered through Wanga, the chimpanzee, that a rival film company is making for the Silent City.

One night Dick, Mike, and Larry take a stroll into the undergrowth to investigate, and are captured by natives. Mr. Sherwell and Tom Rackett proceed in search of the missing boys, and meet a mysteriously-dressed stranger, wearing a hideous mask, who leads them to the hut in which the boys are imprisoned.

(Now read on.)

splendid dog dashed off into the darkness. When it came to a mission of this kind no truster messenger than Boris could be found.

As they heard afterwards, he rushed into the tent where Tubby Bouncer was having a nap, and awakened him with a peremptory nip in the leg.

"Yarroo!" yelled Tubby, thus rudely awakened from a dream of glorious roast duck. "Yarroo! Let go, you Chink!" He thought it was Tung Wu playing a joke upon him.

But Boris soon recalled him to fact. He thrust his old nose into the fat man's face, rubbed his neck against Tubby's hand, and thus made him feel the note attached to his collar.

By the light of a match Tubby read it, and groaned in horror.

"Skinned alive!" he gasped. "I guess we will stay here and not move an inch! Skinned alive, by Jove!"

As soon as Boris had gone off on his errand, Dr. Harland issued his orders.

"All of you lie on the ground," he said. "Don't struggle, whatever happens. Trust me. My safety as well as your own depends on it."

With some misgivings the party of five did as they were bid and stretched themselves on the ground.

Harland stepped out of the shade, and gave a curious whistle, which was answered from the woods. The next moment a party of natives, armed with spears, hastened towards them.

Harland raised his hand. In a trice they seized the recumbent figures, carried them high on their shoulders, and started off to the river-bank. After some fifty yards they suddenly stopped, and unceremoniously dropped their living burdens to the ground.

In after days Mr. Sherwell often wondered how he had trusted Harland with their lives in this fashion. But what else could he have done?

With a final wave of his hand the doctor dismissed the warriors, and turned to his captives.

"We are all free now," he said. "Do you know your way back to your camp?"

"Yes," said Mr. Sherwell. "I can soon find it! Thank goodness I have got the boys safe again! Dr. Harland, we should have been dead men if it had not been for you. I thank you with all my heart!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 632

An Anxious Time!

"YOU will, of course, remain with us as long as you like," said Mr. Sherwell as they walked along. "We shall be very pleased indeed if you will join us at a meal which I know will be excellently cooked by Tung Wu, my faithful Chinese servant, who refuses to part from me and the boys."

It was a curious sight to see Dr. Harland walking along in his hideous native dress and mask; but he told Mr. Sherwell that he would keep it on as a matter of precaution.

"I may as well tell you," explained Mr. Sherwell, just as they approached the camp, "that I am heading a great filming expedition. We are out to capture the finest and most exciting films that can be procured."

Everyone had been busy since Mr. Sherwell's absence, and things looked very snug and comfortable.

As the new arrival saw Augustus piling up some of the heavy baggage in stacks, caught a glimpse of Wonga busily engaged in laying places at the table prepared for a meal, glanced round and saw Tung Wu busy at a little field cooking-range, and noticed the scene of activity, he gave vent to an exclamation of happy surprise.

"You've got some family!" he said, with a laugh, waving his hand towards Augustus and Wonga, and the company of men who were working far into the night.

"Augustus, the elephant, and Wonga, the chimpanzee, are most valuable members of our cinema company," explained Mr. Sherwell. "They have been highly trained for cinema work, and anything they don't know is not worth teaching them."

At that moment Wonga looked round, and, giving a strange cry, came shuffling straight towards Dr. Harland. For a moment the ape seemed utterly incapable of comprehending what strange animal Dr. Harland represented.

He advanced somewhat close, and then drew away with a grimace that set everyone laughing.

"I'll take off this beastly mask," said Dr. Harland, removing it as he spoke. Directly he had done so, Wonga came forward, uttered a few cries of pleasure, and held out his hand for Dr. Harland to shake. Amidst peals of laughter, the doctor thus introduced himself to Wonga.

When the doctor's mask was off it revealed a well-shaped and refined head; but the face was rendered hideous by slashes of paint daubed in various colours on his head and cheeks.

"You see," he began, "I maintain my position as a witch-doctor, and have to point in this ghastly manner so as to keep up the traditions of the natives."

At that moment Tubby Bounce came up to Mr. Sherwell. But when he saw that crudely painted face he ran vent to a yell of terror, and started to run away. But Larry was after him like a shot, and persuaded him to come back.

Tubby was introduced to the stranger, and found that he was not as bad as he was painted. With tears in his eyes, he told Dr. Harland that he had the misfortune to be the comic "stunt" of the show, and that if it was funny to be nearly eaten alive by crocodiles he would like to know what real humour was.

Presently Tung Wu came over to announce that the meal was ready, and

presently all were sitting round a good-sized folding-table, and exchanging yarns and experiences.

In the midst of the general talk and merriment over pipes, cigarettes, and coffee, Quambo appeared, and, without permission, went straight over to Mr. Sherwell, and whispered something into his ear.

A look of startled incredulity flashed across the leader's face.

"I'm afraid I have some rather serious news for you!" cried Mr. Sherwell, springing up. "Quambo tells me that Tung Wu has fallen foul of one of the natives, and that the whole camp is encircled by what looks like a very hostile crowd."

"What's the trouble?" asked Dr. Harland.

"Well, Quambo here says that evidently the natives mistrust us, and have

Oh, why did I come on this fool's expedition! I know I shall live to die—"

"Be quiet, you ass!" whispered Dick. "I don't like the look of things!" broke in Dr. Harland. "Here, where's my mask? I shall go out and have a confab with the head man of the village, and see what's doing. If I can avert disaster you may depend upon my doing so."

He donned his mask, and by way of precaution took a loaded six-chamber revolver with him. Soon he disappeared into the gloom, walking rapidly towards the native village.

Meanwhile, Mr. Sherwell, Tom Rackett, the boys, and Tubby Bounce looked to their arms, and posted themselves at various places round the camp, determining that they would sell their lives dearly if it came to fighting.

The dismal chant, rising and falling in



Wonga came forward, uttered a few cries of pleasure, and held out his hand for Dr. Harland to shake. Amidst peals of laughter, the doctor thus introduced himself to Wonga.

put a strong guard all round us—literally hemmed us in! It appears that Tung Wu, resenting the attitude of one of the natives who was watching him, lost his temper and knocked him down senseless. Tung Wu only just escaped a bad mauling by Quambo's interference, for he picked up the Chinaman under his arm to get him out of harm's way, and a perfect sheaf of spears came hurtling towards him. Hark! What's that?" broke off Mr. Sherwell, holding his hand up for silence.

As all listened intently, there came towards them a low murmuring, which grew into a loud wail, then died down again to a kind of buzzing. This loud and soft noise rose and fell with horrible monotony.

"I know what it means!" groaned Tubby, looking as if he were about to have an apoplectic fit. "It's the signal for them to come and eat and roast us! These copper-coloured fellows always do that when there's a prospect of a feed!

horrible monotony, continued without ceasing.

For safety, Mr. Sherwell had posted the boys in a snug position behind Augustus, who, if the necessity arose, could hoist the boys on his back and charge at the natives, should any have the temerity to attack in the elephant's vicinity.

Boris accompanied Mr. Sherwell and Tom Rackett. From where the boys crouched they could hear the faithful dog's occasional growl. Wonga nestled close up to Dick. He was armed with a heavy club, which, in the ape's dexterous hands, could do savage slaughter.

Hours seemed to pass in terrible suspense. But presently the dismal chanting ceased, and a few minutes later Mr. Sherwell, in company with Rackett and Dr. Harland, came to tell the boys that danger for the time being was over.

"This position is this," began Dr. Harland, when the boys, Rackett, Tubby, and Mr. Sherwell were in the tent,

"The head man of the village mistrusts you all, and thinks you have come to make war upon him, so he sent a guard to encircle the camp. He has heard of Tung Wu's unfortunate action, which has roused the anger of the whole tribe, and they are out for revenge. I told this chief that your party consisted of most wonderful magicians who could kill men with animals with smoke and fire, with out spears or bows and arrows. Further than this, I said that if any harm happened to any of you you could wipe out the whole tribe. As a trump card, I declared that you could make men and women come to life again after they were dead!"

"Good gracious, man!" cried Mr. Sherwell. "What on earth made you say that?"

"Why," returned Dr. Harland quietly, "our good friend Rackett here has only got to throw one of his living pictures on the screen, take a film of one or some of the natives to-morrow morning, before one of them dies, and show them moving on the screen afterwards."

"By George!" cried Mr. Sherwell in admiration. "You are the greatest bluffer who ever lived!"

"Splendid!" grinned Dick.

"Spitting!" echoed Larry.

"Sure and bedad!" yelled Mike. "If I'm not dead by to-morrow night I'll see the dead alive!"

"Shake hands!" said Rackett, holding out his hand. "It's the greatest stunt ever thought of!"

"You'll not have to film for your life, my friend!" returned Dr. Harland, taking the proffered hand.

"The chief says that if your party fail to do this, Mr. Sherwell," he went on, "the whole lot of us die!"

"We shall not fail," said Rackett, with grim determination.

Then the whole party, assured that every hostile native had returned to the village, settled down for the night.

Filming for Life and Freedom.

BEFORE dawn Rackett, the boys, and Tung Wu were getting things ready for the film. At sunrise they cautiously approached the village, and, hiding behind a large rock covered with tropical creeper, through which they made a large hole, so as to give them free scope for the camera lens, Rackett took a short reel of natives as they passed to and fro at work.

Click, click, click! went the camera, as Rackett took the film that was to gain them life and freedom.

The boys, Wonga, and Tung Wu, fully armed, crouched behind the rock. All knew that discovery meant instant death.

Suddenly Wonga gave Dick the slip as a huge native passed very close to the opening. He had seen the mischief.

To the amazement of the out from Rackett, the rumpancee ran up to the behind the rock and went up to the native, who, startled by his sudden appearance, made as if to beat him off.

With a cry of savage fury Wonga, with his club in both hands, sprang at the man, and dashed his club with all his force on the man's head. The native fell like a log.

"By gum," whispered Rackett, excitedly, his camera still clicking, "what a film! Wonga's killed him!"

There was a big stir among the other natives when the man fell, and a number ran up to see what had happened.

Wonga, at their approach, made a hasty retreat.

The natives looked at their fallen comrade. He was quite dead. The few copper-coloured men who gathered round

seemed frightened and ill at ease. They were evidently superstitious about the dead, and did not touch the man, but let him lie there. Then some of them set up a wailing which brought others on the scene.

As the boys crouched in their hiding-place, peering through the hole among the brambles, whilst the undaunted Rackett still turned the handle of his camera, they soon realised that one or two natives who had seen the incident were describing in pantomime to the others how the man had met his death.

"We'd better try and get out of this," whispered Rackett presently. "I've got a wonderful film, boys; and we'll have the dead man on the screen to-night and

startle some of those savage beasts out of their lives! Dick, keep an eye on Wonga, and don't let him escape again!"

"Good old Wonga!" whispered Dick. "He's done the very thing that was wanted—haven't you, old man?"

"Crumbs!" muttered Larry. "Wonga knows how to use that club of his to some purpose! He saved our lives!"

Rackett stopped filming and took a long look through the cranny in the rock.

"They've apparently all gone off to tell the rest of their friends," remarked Rackett. "The land seems to be pretty clear now, so we'd better try and make for the camp."

Cautiously the boys emerged from their hiding-place, and signalled to Quambo and Tung Wu, who were concealed a little distance off.

By dint of much caution and hard work the cinema party at length had everything ready to carry back to the camp. They were met by Mr. Sherwell and Dr. Harland.

"Well, boys," said their leader, "had any adventures?"

"Wonga has, with a vengeance!" answered

swered Dick. And then the boys told Mr. Sherwell and Dr. Harland what had happened.

"It couldn't have happened better!" declared their leader, when he had heard of the native's death. "He would certainly have given us away, and we should have been in their hands."

"Now, Rackett," he said, "all you've got to do is to develop and prepare your film, fix up some sort of a screen, and we'll have the worst cinema show that could be imagined! How shall we get our audience together, Harland?" asked Mr. Sherwell, turning to the doctor.

"I will arrange all that," was the reply. "I shall visit the head man of the village, and invite him and any other guests he likes to bring to the wonderful magic of the Whites. I guess we shall startle him and all the rest of 'em!"

"My eye!" grinned Larry. "I wouldn't miss that show for anything!"

The whole of that day Rackett was busy with his film, preparing the one taken in the morning, and getting others ready for the camera which had been filmed on previous occasions.

Under Rackett's instructions Tung Wu, Tubby Bouncer, and the boys were busy erecting a large white sheet, stretched between two trees in a very dark spot in the forest which surrounded them.

Rackett's idea was to have the natives sitting in the deepest gloom, and then suddenly to illuminate the screen with brilliant white light from his apparatus.

Which, the untiring operator declared, would give them a startler to begin with.

Rackett had a special film-drying process of his own invention, so that he had no fear of his reel taken that morning not being ready. But there was a great deal to do, and it took them all their time to have things prepared by night-time.

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