

No. 636. Vol. XVII.

The

April 17th, 1920.

Magnet

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20 PAGES.

THE CIRCUS HERO!—Grand School Tale.



RESCUED FROM THE DEN OF LIONS!

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



INTERESTING EXPERIMENTS.

AMUSING TRICKS WITH SIMPLE APPARATUS.



WATER SWINGING.

Nearly everyone has seen, at the circus or elsewhere, an acrobat executing giddy circular movements with a glass of water, and doubtless has wondered how it is that none of the liquid is spilt. This is due to the action of centrifugal force.

Having placed the glass full of water on the table, it is only a matter of



Fig. 1.—Centrifugal Force Experiment. First Position.

taking it properly with the hand, holding it at arm's length, and, with the arm thus extended, describing a complete circle, after which it may be placed upon the table without the loss of a single drop.

To ensure the success of the experiment, particular attention must be paid to the manner in which the glass is held. Instead of taking it as you would when drinking, hold it with the hand reversed, the palm being turned upwards, as shown in Fig. 1.

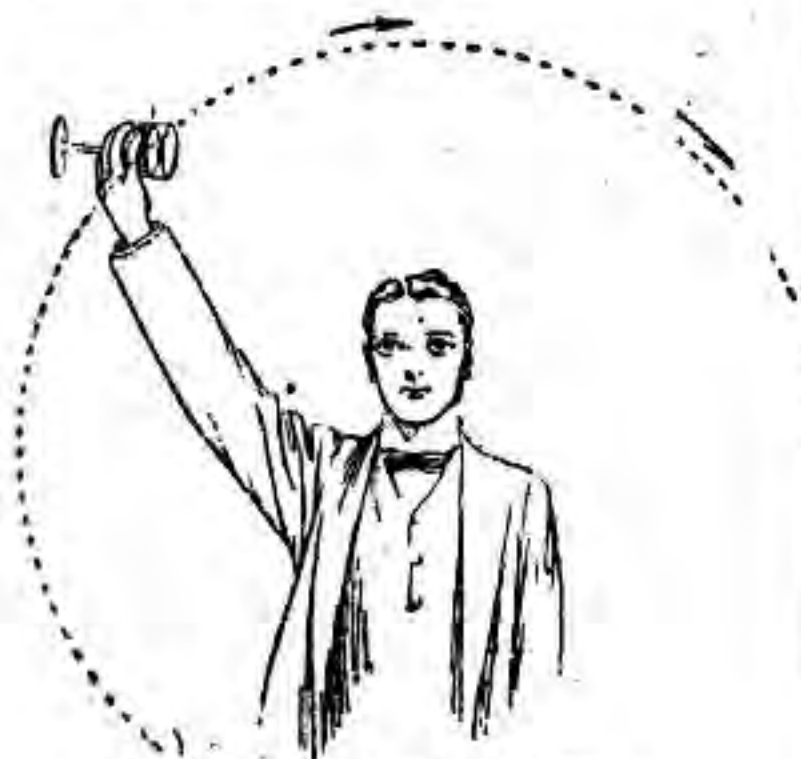


Fig. 2.—Swinging the Glass.

Without hesitation, throw the arm in the air, and swing it, not too quickly, but without shaking it, in the direction of the arrows in the diagram. (Fig. 2.)

After one complete revolution the glass should be as shown by Fig. 3. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 636.

Whilst in this position it may be placed on the table. At first it is advisable to practise this experiment with water, but, as more skill is acquired, other liquids, such as milk or wine, may be used as occasion permits.

A NOVEL MIRROR.

A simple method of illuminating the back of the mouth and throat, especially when throat trouble is suspected, may often be found extremely useful. Here is a means of supplying, at a moment's notice, an extemporised illuminant of this kind.

Take a well-cleaned spoon, and hold it against a candle-flame, when you form an excellent mirror, which will permit you to concentrate the rays of light, and produce at the back of the throat enough illumination for the making of a careful examination. (Fig. 4.)



Fig. 3.—The Action Completed.

A silver spoon, moreover, allows you to study the curious properties of curved mirrors. Holding the hollow part of the spoon before your face, notice that the head is at the bottom; turn the spoon round, and you have the bulging part a convex mirror, which will show an image very long and narrow. If you approach this face in the spoon little by little, you will see the nose attain the most amusing proportions.

THE DISAPPEARING COIN.

If you look at an object which has been placed in water, owing to the phenomenon of refraction, the article appears in a different position from that in which it really is.

It is due to this phenomenon, there-

fore, that a stick, when half-plunged into water, seems to be bent or broken.

A very interesting experiment based on this principle is the following:

Take a bowl full of water, and at the bottom place a coin. Next request one of your friends to lower his head until his eye, the edge of the bowl, and the near edge of the penny appear to be in the same line.



Fig. 4.—The Spoon Mirror.

As a matter of fact, it is not the coin itself that your friend can see, but only the image created by refraction.

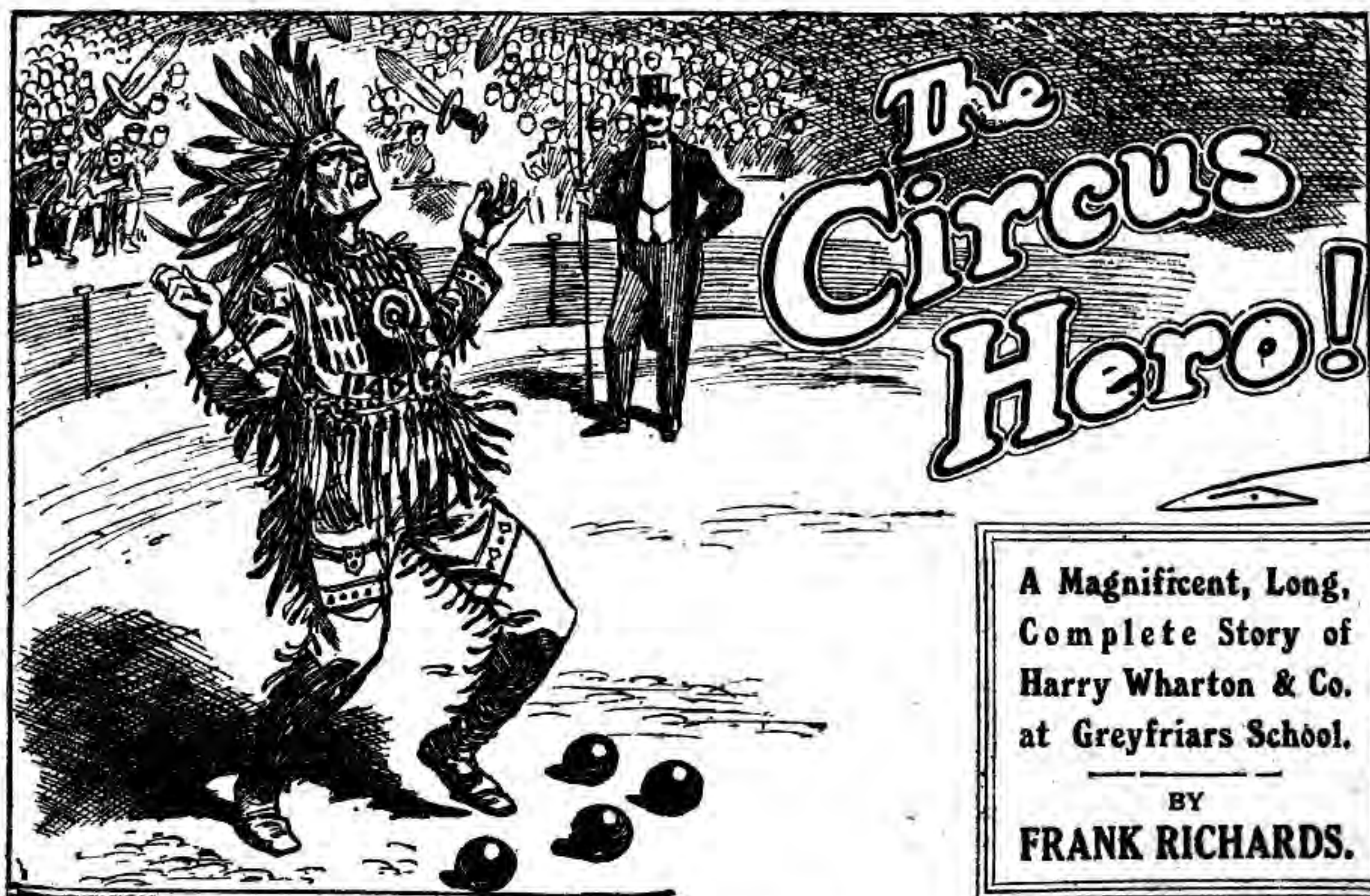
Now, keeping your friend in the same position, inform him that you intend to make the coin disappear from his view.

To do this, remove some of the water from the bowl, which may be accomplished by means of a small syringe. (Fig. 5.)



Fig. 5.—The Disappearing Coin.

Directly you lower the level of the water your friend will no longer be able to see the image of the coin, which will be hidden by the side of the bowl. If, however, the extracted water be replaced, the image of the coin immediately reappears.



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

BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Off to the Circus!

"WHAT a night!" gasped Harry Wharton.
"Oh, what a night!" agreed Frank Nugent. "What a wind!"

"Blow the wind!" growled Johnny Bull. "It's the beastly rain I object to."

"The rainfulness," agreed Hurree Singh, "is terrific!"

"Awful and terrific!" suggested Bob Cherry. "Awful and terrific!"

The wind was howling, the rain was falling in torrents, and the ground was covered with mud. As the Famous Five tramped onwards they felt far from comfortable.

Harry Wharton and his chums had been given special permits to visit the evening performance of a circus that was spending a week at Courtfield. It was, indeed, a great favour, and one that was only accorded to them because they had shown such marked progress in their studies.

But the night was so wet and dirty that they were not feeling exactly grateful now.

"Oh dear!" sighed Nugent, as a particularly nasty gust of wind lashed across his face. "Just to think that we might be comfy in our own study at Greyfriars now!"

"It's all because Bob would insist on seeing the evening performance!" said Johnny Bull grumpily. "Why couldn't we have gone to the matinee, like all the rest?"

"Well, I like that!" said Bob Cherry indignantly. "You know what matinees are! They miss out half the best stuff!"

"You silly ass!" said Johnny Bull. "I'd miss out the lot rather than be out in such a rain!"

"Well, go back, then!" said Harry Wharton impatiently. "Who's stopping you?"

"What? When we're more than half-way there? Look here, Wharton, if you think you're being funny—" said Johnny Bull huffily.

"Peace, kids!" said Nugent pacifically. "What's the good of starting a row now?"

"Look here, Nugent, if you say I'm starting a row—" bellowed Bull.

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Oh, drop it, Johnny, for goodness' sake!" he implored. "You're like a bear with a sore head!"

"Talking of bears," said Wharton quickly. "I wonder what the animals will be like at the circus?"

"Jolly good, I hear," said Nugent. "They've got some stunning lions, I understand!"

"Rather!" said Bob Cherry. "And they're giving an exhibition of the good old stunt of putting a chap's head into the lion's mouth—only at evening shows. That's why I didn't want to attend the measly matinee!"

"Oh, ripping!" said Johnny Bull.

But Wharton looked thoughtful.

"I shouldn't like to be the chap," he said frankly. "I don't see the sense of doing a silly, daredevil thing like that. You never know when the lion might bring its jaws down on your napper!"

"Oh, it's some tame old thing, I dare say!" said Johnny Bull. "All the teeth drawn, and fed on milk and hot cross buns!"

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

"They've got a jolly good conjurer, too!" said Nugent. "Simply a stunner, I understand!"

"Conjurer!" said Bob Cherry contemptuously. "I bet that he doesn't come up to our Kipps!"

"No! Hardly likely!" said Harry Wharton. "Kipps is simply tapping at juggling and conjuring, and all that sort of stuff."

"Yes. His father was the leading magician of the music-halls before he

retired, wasn't he?" said Johnny Bull. "I suppose Kipps got into the way of doing conjuring tricks when he was a nipper!"

"Might be a born gift with him," said Wharton. "Just like ventriloquism is with Bunter!"

"That's so," agreed Bob Cherry. "I never could quite make out how a born duffer like Billy Bunter came to be such a ripping ventriloquist!"

"Talking of Bunter," grinned Wharton. "he was awfully fed up that he couldn't get a permit to attend the evening show!"

"I wish he had!" growled Johnny Bull. "I should just have liked to have seen him tramping through this beastly mud! B-r-r-r!"

"Cheer up, grouser!" said Bob Cherry. "What do you chaps say to putting on a bit of a sprint?"

"Rather!" agreed Johnny Bull and Nugent.

"The ratherfulness," chimed in Hurree Singh, "is—"

"Terrific!" said Bob Cherry. "Come on!"

"Stop a minute!" said Wharton. "Running's a bit dangerous in the darkness!"

"That's so," said Nugent. "We don't want to come any croppers in the rotten mud!"

"Oh, I'm off!" said Johnny Bull, starting away at top speed.

"And I don't mind risking a bit of a spill," grinned Bob Cherry. "Here goes!"

So saying, the cheery Removite followed in Johnny Bull's track.

"If we spill fallfully," said Hurree Singh, "we cannot fall farfully, my worthy and ludicrous chums!"

"Oh, all right," said Wharton resignedly. "I'm not funkng it!"

So saying, Wharton set off after Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, followed in his turn by Frank Nugent and Hurree Singh.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 636.

For some seconds nothing could be heard but the splash of the mud as the Famous Five sprinted along through it. Then Wharton stopped as if transfixed. Through a momentary rift in the clouds a strange and pathetic sight had suddenly met his eyes.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated. "What's this?"

Approaching him were two little children, shivering with cold and soaked with rain. The elder was a girl of about eight years of age, flimsily clad in garments of the poorest description, and her unshod feet were red with frostbite. She was half-carrying, half-dragging along a child of four or five years of age that was whimpering with hunger, fear, and cold.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "The poor kids!"

The Famous Five stopped and waited for the children to come up to them. Fearfully the little girl approached, bringing the boy with her.

"Please," she stammered, "how can I get to Greyfriars School?"

"What?" yelled the Famous Five together. The last thing they had expected to hear was the name of their school uttered by a beggar-child, as the girl appeared to be.

"Greyfriars School?" repeated Wharton, in amazement. "Do you want to get to Greyfriars?"

"Yes, please! Is it very far?"

Her voice was very pathetic. Wharton looked at her curiously in the dim light of the beclouded moon.

"I'm hungry!" wailed the boy. "I'm so hungry, Gerty!"

"This is all rot, kid!" said Wharton abruptly. "Have you run away from home, or what?"

Gerty shivered.

"Don't let them take me back!" she said. "I never want to go back! Never! Never! Never!"

"Babes in the Wood!" said Frank Nugent. "But what do they want to get to Greyfriars for? Can they be related to any of the chaps?"

"Do you know somebody at Greyfriars, kid?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes. Oh, please tell me how to get to Greyfriars," said Gerty.

"I'm cold!" wailed the little one.

"I'm very cold, Gerty!"

"You've got no right to bring out a baby like that on a night like this!" said Wharton severely. "He'll freeze, or something!"

Gerty actually burst out crying.

"I couldn't stand it any more!" she wailed. "I couldn't!"

"This is no place to stand talking!" growled Johnny Bull. "The kids will catch their death of cold! Look at them! Wringing wet through! And no wonder, when you see what they're wearing!"

Gerty drew herself together, as though she were ashamed of her appearance.

"I—I'm all right!" she said awkwardly.

"I'm cold!" wailed the little one.

"I'm hungry!"

"Oh, Tiny dear!" sobbed Gerty.

"Just bear up a little longer!"

And then, overcome by exposure, she suddenly reeled and fell down in a dead faint on the ground.

"Gerty! Gerty!" cried the youngster, throwing himself on top of her. "I'm cold, Gerty!"

But Gerty could not hear.

The Famous Five bent anxiously over the girl.

"We must get her out of this beastly rain!" said Wharton. "We must bring her and the kid into shelter at once!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 636.

"The short cut to Friardale!" said Bob Cherry quickly. "We can leave them at the Penfolds!"

"That's it!" said Wharton. "Pick them up!"

"Hold on!" said Johnny Bull. "Just wrap this round the girl first!"

And he took off his overcoat.

"And wrap mine round the baby!" said Bob Cherry eagerly, taking off his mackintosh.

"No, take mine!" said Nugent.

But Nugent was too late. Wrapped in the coats of which Bull and Cherry had divested themselves, the children were conveyed to Friardale by the Famous Five.

Rap! Rap! Rap!

Wharton knocked at the door of Mr. Penfold's house. To the surprise of the Famous Five, the door was opened by Dicky Penfold, of the Greyfriars Remove!

"Hallo, Pen!" said Wharton. "Spending the night at home?"

Penfold nodded.

"Yes. What in the world are you chaps carrying?"

Wharton hastily explained the situation.

"Do you think your people will be willing to shelter the kids for the night?" he concluded.

"Of course!" said Pen. "What a question! Poor mites!"

And so Gerty and her baby brother were brought into the friendly shelter of Mr. Penfold's little cottage at Friardale.

The Famous Five stayed as long as they could, to see whether Gerty would recover consciousness. At last her eyes opened, to Wharton's great delight.

"Please, please don't let him get me!" were her first words. "I—I must get to Greyfriars to-night!"

"It's all right, kid!" said Wharton soothingly. "You are amongst friends!"

"Don't worry her with asking her questions," advised Mr. Penfold. "Just let her rest!"

"Where is Tiny? Where is my little brother? What have they done to Tiny?" asked Gerty wildly, looking round.

"He has had his supper, and now he is sleeping in a nice, warm bed, kid!" said Pen. "The little chap is happy enough now!"

"Thank you—oh, thank you so much!" said Gerty. "But you must promise not to let Jenkins the Joker get hold of him again!"

"It's all right, kid," said Wharton. "Nobody is going to get hold of him, or of you, either!"

"What's the name of your friend at Greyfriars?" asked Nugent.

"Yes. What did you want to go to Greyfriars for?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I want to find Olly. Olly is so good!" said Gerty.

"Olly! Who the dickens is Olly?" asked Wharton.

The Famous Five and Pen were extremely puzzled. They knew no one at Greyfriars by that name.

"It may be a nickname," said Bull.

"You never know!"

"Oh, well," said Wharton, "we'll probably find out to-morrow! But it's no use staying here longer now, chaps. Let's get back to Greyfriars!"

"Rather!" said Bob Cherry. "Circuses are off to-night!"

At the word circus Gerty shivered violently.

"No, no!" she said. "Don't take me back to the circus! Don't!"

"Oh!" said Wharton, enlightened.

"Is that where you've run away from, kid?"

"Well, that's not our affair!" said Johnny Bull gruffly. "Let's get home!"

"Right-ho!" said the Famous Five.

And Harry Wharton & Co. set off again for Greyfriars through the drizzling mist and rain.

"Better not say anything about the kids up at the school," said Wharton.

"You never know who's after them!"

"Very well," agreed the Famous Five.

But they kept on wondering whom the children were whom they had come across in that strange fashion. And when they fell asleep they dreamt of the Babes in the Wood, the Wicked Uncle, Cinderella, and other things of which they had not thought since their nursery days, but which were somehow suggested to them by the strange events of the night.

But the adventures connected with Gerty and her little brother had only just begun!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

What an Insult!

THE next day the Famous Five discussed the affair of the previous night in their own study.

"As far as I can make out," said Wharton, "the kids have run away from somebody at the circus called Jenkins the Joker, and wanted to reach Greyfriars because they've got a friend here called Olly."

"There's nobody here called Olly!" said Bob Cherry.

"If that's a real name," said Nugent.

"As Johnny said last night, it may be a nickname."

"Have you got a copy of the 'Courtfield Gazette' here?" asked Bob Cherry.

Wharton nodded.

"Yes, here it is. Why?"

Bob Cherry took the paper.

"Let's see the report on the circus show," he said.

"Oh, good! What a brain-wave!" said Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry glared.

"Look here, fathead, if you think I haven't got better brains than yours—" he began wrathfully.

"Peace, old dear!" said Bull. "What does the paper say?"

Bob Cherry looked it through.

"Oh, here we are!" he said. "A splendid performance! Marvellous conjuring of Jenkins the Joker!"

"Oh," said Wharton, "he's that conjuring chap they're making all the fuss about, is he?"

"The paper sings his praises no end," said Bob Cherry. "It seems he's the chap who puts his head in the lion's mouth as well!"

"Plucky fellow, then!" said Wharton.

"But what's worrying you now, Bob?"

"My hat!" said Cherry. "Just listen to this, chaps!"

"Go ahead!"

"Mr. Jenkins," read Bob, "has trained his lions so well that at his command they will be perfectly friendly, not only towards himself, but towards all whom he may introduce into their cage. At the next performance Mr. Jenkins has promised to exhibit the lions with some small children on their backs."

"What?" yelled the Famous Five together.

"So that's why the kids ran away, is it?" said Wharton. "I don't blame them!"

"This act," continued Bob, still reading from the "Courtfield Gazette," "will be an absolute novelty, and permission for the performance has been granted with great difficulty, after Mr. Jenkins has given convincing proofs of his power over the lions."

"Did you ever?" said Johnny Bull.



"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "The poor kids!" The Famous Five stopped and waited for the children to come up to them. Fearfully the little girl approached, bringing the boy with her. "P-please," she stammered, "how can I get to Greyfriars School?" (See Chapter 1.)

"It's positively wicked! The kids must have been frightened out of their lives at the bare idea of entering the lion's cage!"

"That's what the girl was in such a stew about!" said Wharton. "The youngster, of course, isn't even old enough to understand!"

Unknown to themselves, their conversation had been overheard. Billy Bunter was at his old game of listening at the keyhole.

"My word!" he murmured to himself. "Wharton & Co. are going to get into a row! Helping kids to run away! They ought to be ashamed of themselves! That chap Jenkins will be jolly glad to know what's become of the kids!"

Bunter wandered off towards the Close, with the amiable intention of setting off in search of Jenkins. Suddenly a piping little voice began yelling at him.

"Oo's too fat! Old Fatty!" yelled Tiny, as he stared at Bunter. "I don't like oo! Oo-er!"

The last shout was one of pain, as Bunter advanced indignantly on the youngster, and gave him a resounding cuff on the ear.

"I'll teach you to call me names!" growled the Falstaff of the Remove.

"Oo! Wow!" yelled the youngster.

"I see good! Oo is fat!"

-Spank, spank, spank!

Bunter had grasped the youngster, and was spanking him.

"Tiny!" called a voice, as Gerty appeared in the Close.

Spank, spank, spank!

"Wow, wow! Oo naughty fatty!" howled the youngster. "I see good!"

Spank, spank, spank!

"Just you stop that!" said Gerty indignantly, as she appeared on the scene. "What are you hitting my little brother for, you great, big coward, you?"

"Mind your own business!" said William George Bunter. "I'm teaching him not to call me names! And you'd better clear off from here, and take him with you! We don't want beggars at Greyfriars!"

Spank, spank, spank!

"Leave go!" said Gerty. "Leave go, I tell you!"

And she tugged hard at Bunter's arms. But though Bunter was no athlete at all, he was more than a match for the little girl, who was six or seven years younger than himself.

Spank, spank, spank!

"Ow! I see sore!" wailed Tiny.

Suddenly Gerty changed her tactics.

"Hit me," she said, holding out her face. "But don't hit my little brother!"

Bunter was so taken aback that he dropped Tiny. Fortunately, he dropped the child into a muddy puddle, so that Tiny, though very frightened and dirtied,

was not hurt. Tiny got up and howled at the top of his lungs.

"Stop that, you little beast!" yelled Bunter.

But Tiny only howled still more loudly.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob Cherry, as he arrived in the Close with several others. "What's all the row about?"

"Keep quiet, Tiny!" commanded Gerty.

"Oo big fatty!" said Tiny. "Oo is too fat!"

Bunter advanced once more towards Tiny, but Gerty blocked his path.

"So that's what Bunter's doing!" said Wharton. "Fighting a girl and a baby!"

"About all he's fit for!" said Bob Cherry. "What's he been doing?"

"He's been spanking Tiny!" said Gerty indignantly.

"Tiny said I'm fat!" said Bunter righteously. "I'll teach him to call me fat!"

"He doesn't seem to need teaching!" grinned Bob Cherry. "But what you need, my son, is a lesson! Come on, chaps! Bump him!"

And the Famous Five advanced simultaneously upon Bunter. Bunter eluded them clumsily.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 636.

"I—I say!" he stammered. "Ow! Wow! Yaroooh!"
 Bump!
 "And another!"
 "Ow! Wow!"
 Bump!
 "Help! Murder! Fire!"
 Bump!
 "Please don't hurt him any more!" interceded Gerty. "I—"
 Bunter looked at the girl in surprise. He had never expected her to be sorry for him.
 "Oh, all right!" grinned Wharton. "I say, chaps, there's the bell for first classes!"
 "Let's get!" said Bob Cherry.
 And the Famous Five got!
 "Oo is too fat!" repeated Tiny yet again, as Bunter was about to follow Wharton & Co.
 Bunter turned round with an absolutely ferocious look on his face.
 Gerty interceded quickly.
 "You are naughty, Tiny!" she said. "You must not call names! Beg pardon!"
 Tiny immediately looked penitent.
 "I'm not naughty!" he said.
 "Say you're sorry!" urged Gerty.
 "I'm sorry!" repeated Tiny doubtfully.
 "And you won't do it again!"
 "I won't do it 'gain!" repeated Tiny.
 "Fat lot he knows what he's saying!" grunted Bunter. "Cheeky little brat!"
 "But you had no right to spank him!" said Gerty warmly.
 "And you had no right to come here at all!" growled Bunter.
 "I—I know!" said Gerty meekly.
 "I'll soon be gone!"
 "Run away from home?" said Bunter inquisitively.
 The Owl of the Remove loved to know other people's business.
 "I—I can't tell you!" said Gerty.
 "The—the fact is—"
 "Oh, come now!" said Bunter encouragingly. "You can trust me, you know! Your secret will be quite safe with me!"
 Gerty might be young, but she was no fool.
 "I'd rather not say!" she said.
 "Oh, very well!" said Bunter huffily.
 And he walked off with his nose in the air. The Owl of the Remove was firmly convinced that he could keep a secret—a conviction held by no one else at Greyfriars!

But he turned round once again as he heard the voice of Oliver Kipps, the amateur juggler of the Remove.
 "My bat, Gerty! What are you doing here?"
 "Olly!" gasped Gerty. "Oh, Olly, I've wanted a friend! And now I've found you!"
 And the young girl burst out crying with relief.
 "Come up to my study," said Kipps hastily. "We can't talk here, if you have a secret to tell me!"
 And he glanced angrily at Bunter.
 "All right, Olly!" said Gerty meekly. "Come on, Tiny!"
 "Tiny!" said Kipps. "How the kid has grown! And so have you!"
 "Have I?" said Gerty meekly, as she followed Kipps to his study in the Remove Form. "Oh, I've got such a lot to tell you!"
 And as Kipps proceeded to make Gerty and Tiny comfortable in his study, Bunter applied his ear to the keyhole.
 Even if it meant missing first lesson, Bunter was not going to lose the chance of discovering Gerty's secret!

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Gerty's Story!

"HOW in the world did you get here, Gerty?" asked Oliver Kipps, when the girl and the child were seated in his study.
 Gerty sighed, and brushed away a stealthy tear.
 "Gerty mustn't cry!" said Tiny, nestling up to his sister.
 "No, darling!" said Gerty. "I'm not crying."
 Kipps waited patiently for Gerty to begin her tale. Bunter, at the keyhole, also waited, his little, cunning eyes gleaming with curiosity.
 "You—you remember where we met last, Olly?" asked the girl.
 Kipps nodded.
 "Of course I do! My dad was going on tour as chief conjurer to a variety theatre company, and your mater was a comedy actress in the same company."
 "I want my mammy!" interrupted Tiny suddenly.
 "Hush, dear!" said Gerty soothingly. "Poor Tiny can't see his mammy! She has gone a long, long way away!"

The tone in which she said this made Kipps look at her anxiously.
 "N-n-not dead?" he stammered.
 "Yes," said Gerty sadly. "She died some time ago!"
 Kipps took Gerty's hand silently in his own.
 "Poor kid!" he murmured. "I'm so sorry!"
 "And what a kind, gentle mother she was, too!" said Gerty. "I'll never forget her—not if I live to be a hundred!"
 Kipps wisely said nothing. Gerty gulped down her tears and proceeded.
 "And so I was left quite an orphan. No father and no mother!"
 "Your father was killed in the early days of the war, I know," Kipps said. "But who looked after you and Tiny then? Who took charge of you after your mother's death?"
 "My mother's brother. You remember him, don't you?" asked Gerty.
 Kipps thought hard for a second.
 "Oh, Jenkins the Joker, you mean? The man with the red nose, who sang silly songs, pretending to be drunk?" he said at last.
 "That's the man!" said Gerty. "But he found out that he could sing his songs better when he was really drunk than when he was simply pretending, so he took to drink something horrible!"
 "And—and he took charge of you?" said Kipps. "Did he treat you very badly?"
 Gerty bit her lip resolutely.
 "I'd rather not tell you that part of it," she said at last. "But look here!"
 So saying, Gerty exposed her right arm, on which could be distinctly seen the indelible marks of a man's cruel clutch.
 "The brute!" hissed Kipps. "The rotter!"
 "I—I bore it as long as I could," said Gerty. "I didn't mind him making me go into the lions' den every night, though I was so frightened, really! But when he began beating Tiny, then I couldn't stand it any longer, and ran away!"
 Kipps nodded.
 "Beating Tiny! I know what that would mean with a man of his sort! I suppose he nearly killed the kid?"
 "D-don't talk of it, please!" said Gerty. "I never want to think of it again!"
 "The inhuman scoundrel!" growled Kipps.
 "Well, the circus in which the man—I don't want to call him my uncle—was performing came to Courtfield last night, and—and I ran away—anywhere, so as to get away from him!" said Gerty.
 "It was a lucky thing Wharton & Co. came across you and Tiny," said Kipps, "or you might have been frozen or starved or something!"
 "Yes. It was very good of them to look after us like that. Mrs. Penfold has been very kind, too. Oh, I did enjoy my breakfast! And poor Tiny, he was nearly starving, I think!"
 "Tiny not hungry now!" interjected that young gentleman of his own accord.
 "That's all very well! But what are you going to do now?" asked Kipps.
 Gerty sat staring into vacancy.
 "I don't know!" she said at last. "If only I could get work—"
 "Work!" said Kipps. "A little kiddie like you work! Why, what could you do?"
 "Lots of things!" said Gerty. "I've learnt to do all sorts of circus tricks and—"
 "No, you can't go back to circus life," said Kipps. "You're much too young for it. And, besides, if you joined a circus, it wouldn't be long before Jenkins the Joker discovered you, and—"

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"Just you stop that!" said Gerty indignantly, as she appeared on the scene. "What are you hitting my little brother for, you great big coward, you?" "Mind your own business!" said William George Bunter. "I'm teaching him not to call me names!" (See Chapter 2.)

"No—no!" said Gerty. "He must never find me again! Never—never—never!"

"Of course not!" said Kipps soothingly. "Gerty, I—I—I'll look after you and Tiny myself!"

Kipps hardly knew what he was saying. But he was so eager to comfort his little friend that he was ready to promise anything.

Gerty smiled unbelievably.

"Oh, Olly," she said, "how can you?"

"I—I don't know yet," said Kipps.

"But this I do know—that it would make me feel miserable to think that I was well looked after here at Greyfriars whilst you and Tiny were suffering."

"Silly ass!" muttered Bunter to himself. "Fat lot he can do for them, I don't think!"

Gerty looked up gratefully. She had immense faith in Kipps. He had been a true friend to her in the old days.

"If only I could get Tiny looked after," said Gerty, "I shouldn't mind so much about myself!"

"Ow! Wow! Yaroooh!"

The yell came in unmistakable tones from the passage. Bunter was shouting with pain and indignation.

"Ow! Stop it, you beast! Wow!"

Kipps hastily flung open the door of his study, to find Bunter in the sturdy grip of Penfold of the Remove, who was pulling his ears.

"You beast, Penfold! Leggo!" yelled Bunter.

"Why, what's all this?" asked Kipps, in surprise.

"Old Quelchy sent me along to find out what had become of you and Bunter, and I discovered the fat worm spying, as usual!" said Penfold.

"Oh, really, Penfold! I was just trying up my bootlace!" said Bunter indignantly.

"You cad!" said Kipps, excited by the idea that Bunter had discovered Gerty's secret. "You fat rotter!"

"Oh, really, Kipps! You'd better alter your language!" snorted Bunter. "A word from me, and Jenkins the Joker will—"

Gerty turned quite pale.

"Oh, Bunter! Please, please don't tell him!" she pleaded.

"I hope I'm not likely to do such a thing!" said Bunter virtuously. "Only I'm warning you, Kipps, that you'd better treat me as a pal, that's all!"

"How much do you want?" asked Kipps wearily. "Will half-a-crown keep you quiet?"

"Half-a-crown!" said Bunter. "Why, tarts are so dear now that—"

"Well, five shillings, then!" said Kipps. "I can't afford more."

"Can't afford more!" snorted Bunter. "Why, you were talking about taking care of these kids just now!"

"Five shillings is all I've got! Take it or leave it!" said Kipps.

Bunter held out a fat and grubby hand.

"Shell out, you mean beast!" he said. "And don't forget I look on this as a loan!"

So saying he pocketed the two half-crowns which Kipps handed to him, and walked away towards the class-room.

"The cad!" said Kipps.

Penfold looked puzzled.

"I'm blowed if I know what you wanted to give the rotter five bob for!" he said. "And what did he mean by talking about your promising to look after these kids, anyway?"

A sudden idea struck Kipps.

"Look here, Pen, old man," he said. "Would your dad be willing to put up my little friends in his house for a short time?"

The son of the Friardle cobbler looked thoughtful.

"I think he would," he said. "But if—"

"Thanks, Pen!" said Kipps. "Tell him I'll make myself responsible for their keep—eh?"

Penfold looked undecided.

"If these kids have run away from home—" he began.

"Oh, Olly!" said Gerty. "Tell him THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 636."

everything! I'm sure he'll keep the secret!"

"I'll certainly keep any secret that you tell me!" promised Penfold.

Kipps hastily summarised Gerty's story. Penfold listened with attention and pity.

"Poor kids!" he said. "I'm sure my folks would take them in without any pay, but—"

"Yes, I know your dad's not too well off himself," said Kipps. "I'll settle for anything's that got to be paid, don't you worry!"

At that moment Mr. Quelch himself arrived on the scene.

"Ah, Kipps," he said. "I understand from Bunter that you have been looking after some children that were picked up last night, and that they are not feeling very well. Surely, that is not your province, Kipps! You should have reported the matter to me."

Kipps looked confused, but Penfold intervened.

"We've just found out whom they belong to, sir!" he said. "And if you'll let me and Kipps take them back to their home, then they shan't trouble you any more."

It was a lie, of course. But Pen thought it was his duty to tell a lie under the circumstances.

"Oh, that alters the case, of course!" said the master of the Remove. "Do you want to go back to your home now, you misguided girl?" he asked, turning to Gerty.

"I—we'll go where Olly—where Kipps takes us, please, sir!" said Gerty.

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch. "I hope, my girl, that last night's experiences will be a lesson to you not to run away from home again!"

"Yes, sir!" replied Gerty meekly.

And that's how it came about that Gerty and Tiny were brought back to Mr. Penfold's house at Friardale, and entrusted for the time being to the charge of Pen's relatives.

But Kipps was very absent-minded in class that day. He was wondering how he could keep his promise—that he would pay for the children's board out of his own pocket. For Kipps' pocket-money was a very limited quantity, and more than half of the little sum had already been spent that month.

And it was indeed an unexpected way that Kipps finally chose—a way that enabled him to keep his promise to Gerty, but which brought him into great trouble himself.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

What Kipps Did!

"**W**HAT'S that?" Harry Wharton had been suddenly awakened by a noise in the night. He listened intently, but all seemed to be quiet now in the Remove dormitory.

Tack, tack!

Somebody seemed to be moving about.

"Who's that?" rapped out Wharton again.

Some Removites had a habit of making midnight expeditions to the village, and Wharton felt that it was his duty as captain of the Remove to check anything of the sort.

"Who's that?" he rapped out for the third time, striking a match.

"What's the matter?" asked Bob Cherry sleepily. "What silly ass is making that confounded row?"

"Is—is it rising-bell yet?" yawned Nugent. "Why, it's still dark!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 636

"I thought I heard someone moving about!" snapped Wharton. "Just see if everyone's in bed, will you, chaps?"

Johnny Bull flashed his electric-lamp, which he kept at the side of his bed at night. He shed a light round the dormitory.

"Only one bed empty!" he growled. "Penfold's!"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Wharton in relief. "I know Pen had permission to spend the night at home. But I could have sworn I heard a noise!"

"Your imagination, old man!" said Bob Cherry. "If you're going to get nervy in your old age you'd better resign the captaincy, I'm thinking!"

Wharton grinned.

"It's not so bad as all that, Bob!" he said. "But I'm glad it was a false alarm."

"I'm not!" growled Bull. "I'm jolly sleepy!"

Wharton & Co. fell asleep once more, reassured that there was nothing wrong.

But it had not been a false alarm. Kipps had been out of doors, and the noise which Wharton had heard had been Kipps' return to the dormitory.

Early next morning Penfold approached Kipps in the Close.

"I want to see you, Kipps, old man!" he said.

"Yes, and I want to see you, Pen!" said Kipps. "How are the kids?"

"Oh, they're all right!" said Pen. "Topping, in fact! But look here, Kipps, what the dickens do you mean by performing conjuring-tricks at the circus? If you're caught it means the sack, you know!"

Kipps staggered back in surprise.

"How—how did you know?" he gasped.

"I saw you there myself!" replied Penfold. "I went there with my dad last night, and recognised you immediately, in spite of your queer rig-out!"

"I'll have to get a better disguise," muttered Kipps.

"But what are you doing it for?" asked Pen.

"For the kids!" replied Kipps, reddening. "Here, take this, and give it to your pater as first instalment for the kids' keep!" And he held out half-a-sovereign. "It's my last night's salary."

Pen looked at Kipps with a new admiration.

"It's—it's splendid of you, old fellow!" he said. "I wish I could refuse the money, but—"

"Yes, I know—war prices, and all that!" said Kipps hastily. "Under the cires I think it's only fair I should pay your dad in advance."

Penfold took the half-sovereign and pocketed it.

"You can be jolly well sure that my people will look after the kids as if they were their own," he said. "You should just see the new rig-out that they're getting for Gerty and the chappie! This half-quid will help to pay for it!"

Kipps smiled wryly.

"It won't go a very long way, I'm afraid," he said. "But never mind. The circus is staying a week in the neighbourhood, and at half-a-sovereign a night it ought to be a bit of a help."

"Well, but you can't keep it up!" remonstrated Penfold. "You'll be caught out!"

Kipps nodded thoughtfully.

"I was jolly near caught out last night!" he said. And he described the way in which Harry Wharton had narrowly missed catching him.

"I—I've got a suggestion!" said Penfold. "Why shouldn't you get an invite from friends in Friardale to spend a week—I mean, to sleep out for a

week? It would save you all your bother."

"Well, but would the Head grant me permission to sleep out for a week?" queried Kipps.

"I've had permission at times," said Pen. "I'll get my people to invite you to sleep at their place."

Kipps looked grateful.

"I'll never forget it, old chap!" he said.

Penfold nodded silently. He understood something of the feeling of responsibility and protection which Kipps felt to the two little orphans whom he had known in happier times.

"I'll say there are some old family friends staying in Friardale with whom I want to spend the week," said Kipps. "It will be true, in a way."

"Yes; I think the Head won't refuse," said Pen.

And he proved right. Dr. Locke consented to Kipps' sleeping at the Penfolds' for a week. He thought he could trust the boy.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

An Unpleasant Surprise!

"**O**'S very good!" whispered Tiny confidentially, as Kipps appeared at the Penfolds' cottage in Friardale. "Tiny likes 'oo!"

Kipps smiled.

"I like you, too, Tiny, my little chappie!" he said. "Hallo! Here's Gerty! Gee-whiz! What a toff you are, Gerty, old girl!"

Gerty was clad in garments which were indeed an improvement on the rags in which the Famous Five had found her. She blushed with pleasure as Kipps looked at her.

"They are very kind to me here, Olly!" she said. "And I do what I can to pay them back for it by helping in the house."

Kipps nodded.

"Quite right, Gerty!" he said. "The little I can pay them isn't nearly enough, really. But I'll try and earn more somehow!"

And he quickly described to her what he had undertaken.

"Fancy you performing at the circus I ran away from!" said Gerty. "But didn't Jenkins recognise you? He knows you!"

Kipps shook his head.

"I don't think he knew me," he said. "I was in a queer rig-out—I was disguised as a Red Indian juggler or medicine-man. And, besides, he was drunk."

Gerty nodded.

"He always is now!" she said. "But please don't let him find out where we are, Olly!"

"Of course not, you silly kiddy!" said Kipps. "He can't possibly find out. Besides, what does he want you back for? I thought he'd be glad to get rid of you!"

Gerty shook her head doubtfully, but said nothing. She had somehow a feeling that she would see Jenkins the Joker again very soon.

And she was not wrong!

Perhaps Kipps would have felt less confident if he had known that Billy Bunter of the Remove had cycled to Courtfield—on Wharton's bicycle—for the special purpose of interviewing Jenkins the Joker.

"Ello, me fat tulip!" said Jenkins, as Bunter was shown in. "What do you want?"

"Are you—are you Mr. Jenkins the J-J-J-Joker?" stuttered Bunter, as he gazed at the red-nosed gentleman.

"That's me!" said Jenkins heartily. "What can I do for you, me lad?"

For once, Jenkins was not dead drunk, but Bunter soon began to feel sorry that he had come.

He stood there trying to speak, but he did not know how to begin. His tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of his mouth.

"Well, me lad?" said Jenkins encouragingly. "What can I do for you?"

"I-I-I've come to offer you my services, Mr. J-J-Jenkins!" stammered Bunter.

Jenkins stared at the fat junior for a moment, and then burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ho, ho, ho!" he yelled. "Well, I never! Ho, ho, ho! And what do you want to appear as? The living elephant? Or the bursting beer-barrel? Ho, ho, ho!"

"Oh, really, Mr. Jenkins! You don't understand!" said Bunter. "I want to offer you my services as—as—— To find—er—er——"

Jenkins looked at Bunter quickly.

"D'you know what's come to the blessed kids?" he asked quickly.

Bunter pretended that he did not understand.

"What kids, Mr. Jenkins?" he asked innocently.

But he could not deceive Jenkins the Joker.

Jenkins grasped him fiercely by the shoulders and began shaking him.

"You know where those brats are! Don't tell no lies!" he growled.

"Leggo! I'll tell you!" roared Bunter.

Jenkins loosened his hold on Bunter, and the Owl of the Remove, thoroughly frightened, moved towards the door.

But Jenkins barred the way.

"Hang you! Now you must tell all you know!" he hissed.

"Oh, really," stuttered Bunter, "I-I-I don't think it's right of you to bully me like this! I'll tell—I'll tell you everything I know! That's what I've come for, of course!"

"All right! Go ahead, then!" said Jenkins.

Bunter still hesitated.

"B-but what about my fee?" he said.

"Fee?" repeated Jenkins, in surprise.

"Yes. I'm doing detective work for you, and I must get a fee, you know!"

Jenkins scowled. Then he drew a whip from under his blouse.

"This is what you'll get if you don't tell me!" he said fiercely.

Bunter gazed round wildly. That was not at all what he had bargained for.

He had no intention of revealing the whereabouts of Gerty and Tiny without reward in the way of a tip.

But how to escape now that he was in the lion's den, so to speak?

"Now then!" snapped Jenkins, raising the whip.

In moments of danger Bunter only had one weapon—his ventriloquism.

"Jenkins!" roared a voice from outside.

Jenkins immediately dropped the whip.

"Coming!" he shouted.

It was a voice he could not disobey. It was the voice of the master of the circus.

As he rushed out of the room Jenkins did not know that the voice had been Bunter's. But Bunter took the opportunity to escape.

When Jenkins returned, after a vain search, Bunter was gone!

"The cad!" muttered Bunter to himself. "The beastly cad! As if I'd betray the kids to an old rotter like that!"

And, comforting himself with the knowledge of his own virtue, Bunter returned to Greyfriars.

But he had given Jenkins the Joker a

clue which that personage was not slow to follow up.

Dr. Locke was surprised to receive a visit from a disreputable person with a red nose, who was announced by Trotter, the page, as Mr. Jenkins.

"My poor dear little niece and nephew!" sobbed Jenkins. "I believe you know somethin' of what's come to them, Dr. Locke?"

Dr. Locke looked surprised.

"If you are referring to the children that were at this school yesterday," he said, "then you ought to know that they have returned to their friends in Friardale," he said.

Jenkins looked astonished.

"But I was the only relative the poor little things had," he said. "They've run away from their kind old uncle, who was so fond of 'em as I can't tell you, sir!"

No. 65. JACK WINGATE.



A member of the Third, and the young brother of Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars. A wayward and rather spoiled youngster, with too big an idea of his own importance, but also with courage and spirit. Has gone wrong, and may go wrong again, but could never be a "bounder."

Dr. Locke looked startled. He rang for Trotter, the page.

"Tell Masters Penfold and Kipps I want to see them," he said.

"Yes, sir!" said Trotter, going off in a vain search for the two juniors.

"Kipps?" muttered Jenkins vaguely to himself. "It can't be the same Kipps!"

Presently Trotter returned.

"Which Mr. Quelch says, sir, that Masters Penfold and Kipps are away for the day," he announced.

"Oh!" said the Head. "I am sorry, Mr. Jenkins, but those were the two juniors who took the children back to their relatives in Friardale."

"They haven't no relatives in Friardale!" said Jenkins obstinately. "Those two boys have stole 'em away, you mark my words!"

"That's nonsense!" said Dr. Locke impatiently. "There must be some mistake. I'll question the two juniors when they return!"

"Is one of them boys a short, fat fellow with glasses?" asked Jenkins.

"Oh, no! Neither of the boys answer to that description!" said the Head. "The boy you describe is probably Bunter."

"Well, he come to see me, and wanted me to pay him for telling me where the kids were," said Jenkins.

"That is a serious accusation!" said the Head. "I shall send for Bunter!"

William George Bunter looked quite terrified as he entered the Head's study and found Jenkins the Joker there.

"P-please, sir," he stuttered before the Head could say anything. "I don't know this man at all! I've never seen him! And if he says I came to the circus to talk to him he's telling lies!"

"You ridiculous boy!" said the Head. "Try and tell the truth! What do you know about the whereabouts of this—er—gentleman's niece and nephew?"

"N-nothing, sir! How can I know whether Gerty and Tiny belong to him? I never heard Gerty telling Kipps all about him, and I don't even know that his name is Jenkins the Joker, sir!"

"Ah! Really? Well, in that case, will you please tell us, Bunter, why you offered to sell the secret of the children's whereabouts to—er—Mr. Jenkins this afternoon?"

"I—I didn't, sir! The mean beast! He used to hit the little girl with a big whip, sir! I wouldn't tell him where she was! He might kill her, sir!"

"It's a lie!" said Jenkins hoarsely.

"I was that kind to the kids——"

"Ah! So kind that they ran away!" said the Head sarcastically. "However, I must find out what connection my juniors have with this affair! Where are the children now, Bunter?"

Bunter trembled.

"I—I dunno, sir!" he stuttered.

"Look here, you fat chap——" began Jenkins.

Dr. Locke looked at the Joker calmly.

"Please leave the investigation to me, Mr.—er—Jenkins!" he said.

"See here," said Jenkins excitedly, "is them my kids or yours that's run away?"

"You have come to me about the matter, Mr. Jenkins, and if you wish me to investigate it, because some of my pupils have been assisting the fugitives, I shall do so, but kindly let me pursue the inquiry in my own way!"

Jenkins scowled.

"I ain't stopping you, am I?" he said sulkily.

Dr. Locke turned once more towards Bunter.

"Have you no idea where the children are, Bunter?" he said. "I command you to tell me anything you may know!"

"Oh, really, sir, how can I know anything? I didn't hear Kipps tell Gerty that he would look after her, did I? How could I hear it when I wasn't even listening at the door? I wouldn't do such a thing!"

"You stupid boy! You are always contradicting yourself when you attempt to depart from the truth! Am I to understand that Kipps undertook to look after the children himself?"

"Oh, no! I mean, yes, of course! But I don't know anything about it, sir!"

"In that case I shall pay Master Kipps a little surprise visit at Friardale. You will accompany me, Mr.—er—Jenkins!"

"That I will!" said Jenkins gruffly.

"You may bet your life on that!"

"As for you, Bunter, I shall attend to your punishment when I have completed my inquiries! You may go now!"

"P-p-punishment!" gasped Bunter.

"But, sir——"

"Not another word, Bunter! Go!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 655.

"Y-yes, sir!" gasped the Owl of the Remove, as he left the study.

"I shall order my chauffeur to bring out the car immediately, Mr. Jenkins!" said the Head. "I have hopes of bringing this distressing affair to a close at once!"

"If only I could find my poor, dear little kids!" said the Joker.

Dr. Locke did not trouble to reply. He rang for his chauffeur.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Wharton Takes a Hand!

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER was feeling decidedly apprehensive as he left the Head's study.

"P-punishment!" he repeated to himself. "P-punishment!"

Dense as he was, Bunter realised that the sooner Kipps was caught out and the children restored, the sooner his own punishment would come. He decided to go for advice to the junior who had stood by him before in time of trouble—to Harry Wharton.

"Come in, fathead!" said Wharton, as Bunter knocked at the door of Study No. 1.

The Famous Five were all assembled there. Frank Nugent was poaching eggs at the hearth, Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull were laying the study table, Hurree Singh was making tea; Harry Wharton himself was supervising the preparations, rather to the annoyance of his chums, who were under the impression that they did not need supervision.

"Oh, that's you, Bunter, is it?" said the captain of the Remove. "Come to cadge as usual, I suppose?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Bunter never cadges!" said Bob Cherry solemnly. "He only asks us to cash postal-orders that never come!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Or remittances from relatives that don't exist," added Nugent. "Which ducal uncle are you expecting a cheque from now, Billy?"

"Oh, really, you fellows, I haven't come to cadge! I wouldn't do such a thing!"

"Then the worthy and ludicrous Banterful chum has come to partake eatfully of the teafulness?" suggested Hurree Singh.

"In which carefulness," added Bob Cherry solemnly, "the worthy and ludicrous Banterful chum will get put out of the study footfully—I mean, bootfully!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows, I've got some most important information—"

"Been spying again?" said Wharton contemptuously. "Keep your most important information to yourself, Bunter! We can do without it quite well!"

"Quite!" repeated Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent and Hurree Singh.

"In fact," said Johnny Bull, "we would rather do without your information—and you, Bunter!"

"B-but my information is about G-Gerty, and Tiny," stuttered Bunter.

"Oh!"

It was a unanimous exclamation from the Famous Five. Since the night when they had picked up the two children on the Courtfield Road, Wharton and his chums felt themselves in a sense responsible for their safety.

"That alters the case, of course!" said Harry Wharton. "Go ahead, Bunter, but prepare yourself for a severe bumping if you're bringing us some silly fairy-tale!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 636.

"F-fairy-tale, Wharton! Oh, really! When the Head wants to p-punish me as soon as he has looked into the matter!" stammered Bunter indignantly.

"The Head?" gasped Wharton. "What the dickens has the Head got to do with Gerty and Tiny?"

"N-n-nothing, really, Wharton! I think it's like his cheek to interfere at all! He ought to have made J-Jenkins the J-Joker pay me, instead of talking about punishing me! Jenkins ought to be jolly grateful to me for giving him a clue about the kids, the beast!"

"Jenkins the Joker!" gasped the Famous Five.

"Has Jenkins interviewed the Head?" asked Wharton. "Did you bring that rotter to see the Head, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Wharton, I shouldn't dream of doing such a thing!"

"Then what are you jolly well babbling about, idiot?"

"J-Jenkins came to see the Head, and the Head has gone with him to find Kipps and the kids in Friardale!" explained Bunter.

"What!" chorused the Famous Five.

"But how did Jenkins know?" began Bob Cherry.

"Never mind that now!" interrupted Wharton. "The point is that that rotter Jenkins is about to lay his hands on the kids again! We must stop him somehow!"

"Oh, rather!" chorused the rest of the Famous Five.

"The question is, how?" said Johnny Bull.

"Yes, how?" said Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Are you still there, Billy? Clear out!"

"You ungrateful beasts—"

"One!" began Bob Cherry, raising his foot.

"Oh, really, Cherry, you rotter!"

"Two!" continued Cherry, advancing nearer to the Owl of the Remove threateningly.

"I—I say, Cherry—" said Bunter, edging towards the door.

"Th—"

Before Bob Cherry could utter the word three, Bunter hastily threw himself out of the study and fled down the passage. He had had some experiences of Bob's prowess as a dribbler!

"Good riddance to bad rubbish!" said Bob. "Now, to get on with our discussion!"

"As far as I can see," said Nugent, shrugging his shoulders, "there's no way of stopping Jenkins from getting hold of the kids again, once he knows where they are!"

"And then I pity the poor kids!" said Wharton sympathetically. "Something's got to be done!"

For some moments the Famous Five sat in silence, thinking hard. Then Wharton uttered an exclamation.

"Hurrah! I've got it!" he yelled.

"Got it?" said Bob Cherry in surprise. "Got a wheeze?"

"Let's hand over the matter to the police!" said Wharton calmly.

"The—the police!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Why, you silly ass, they'll simply restore the kids to Jenkins, and get us into a dickens of a row for interfering!"

"Fancy P.-c. Tozer as good angel!" said Bob Cherry. "It's unthinkable!"

"Oh, absolutely!" said Wharton. "I wasn't thinking of P.-c. Tozer!"

"They're all more or less alike!" said Johnny Bull. "Who the dickens were you thinking of, Wharton?"

"Us!" said Wharton calmly.

"What!"

"Us!" repeated Wharton. "You seem to forget that we're the leading lights of the Remove Amateur Theatrical and Dra-

matic Society, and that we've got a heap of policemen's helmets and things in the study here that we haven't returned to old Lazarus yet!"

"Oh!"

"But—but what—" gasped Nugent.

"Don't you see, fathead? One of us can dress up as a bobby and frighten Jenkins the Joker into letting go of the kids! I have an idea that that chap's conscience isn't too clear, and in that case the bare sight of a policeman ought to be enough to startle him!"

"My word!" said Bob Cherry. "What a wheeze!"

"What a wheeze!" echoed Nugent and Johnny Bull.

"The wheezefulness of the esteemed and ludicrous Wharton is awful and terrific!" said Hurree Singh.

Wharton smiled.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not Nice for Kipps!

OLLY!"

Kipps turned towards Gerty. The girl was sitting on a low chair near the hearth, while Tiny was reclining on the hearthrug, with his curly head resting in his sister's lap.

"Ollly!"

"Well, kid?"

"Do you think Jenkins the Joker is looking for us?"

"I don't know; perhaps he's glad to be rid of you!"

"Oh, I hope so!" said Gerty fervently. "I hope I shall never see him or those horrid lions again!"

"Then you sha'n't, if I can help it, Gerty!" said Kipps.

Penfold, who was at the centre table reading, looked up.

"That's all very well, now that you're earning ten bob a night at the circus, Kipps!" he said. "But what are you going to do when the circus leaves? You can't pay for the kids' board out of your pocket-money, old chap!"

"Oh, I'll manage somehow!" said Kipps vaguely.

Ting-a-ling-a-ling!

"Hallo! There goes the 'phone-bell!" said Penfold. "I wonder what's up!"

"Isn't your pater at home?" asked Kipps.

"No; he's out! I suppose I'd better answer it!"

So saying, Pen took up the 'phone. What was his surprise to find that it was Wharton who was ringing him up!

"Is that Mr. Penfold?" came Wharton's voice across the wires. "Oh, it's you, Pen, is it? I'm Wharton! What? A jape? No; rather not! It's something jolly serious! You can bet I shouldn't have dared to use the Head's telephone if it hadn't been."

"What is it?" asked Kipps anxiously.

"It's Wharton!" said Pen. "He seems to be excited about something or other, Kipps!"

"Is Kipps there?" came Wharton's voice again across the wires. "If he is, tell him I want to talk to him, will you?"

"It's you Wharton wants to talk to, Kipps!" said Pen, handing over the receiver.

Kipps took up the receiver anxiously. His anxiety grew still greater as he heard Wharton's next words.

"I've got some bad news to break to you, old chap!" said Wharton. "Prepare yourself for a bit of a shock!"

"Why, what's gone wrong?" gasped Kipps.

"The Head's received a visit from Jenkins the Joker!"

"What?"



"See here, you gents! Which of you is Mr. Samuel Jenkins, alias the Joker?" asked Wharton gruffly. Jenkins and the Head stared at the policeman. "That's my name, my man!" said Jenkins haughtily. "And what may you be a-wanting with me?" Wharton took out a formidable blue paper and began reading from it. (See Chapter 8.)

"Oh, all through Bunter; but never mind that now! The important thing is that Dr. Locke and Jenkins are on their way to you, in order to bag the kids!"

"Bag the kids!" gasped Kipps. "Never!"

"I'm taking a hand in the game! If you receive a visit from the majesty of the law, don't be afraid! Jenkins isn't going to have it all his own way!"

"What do you mean?" gasped Kipps.

"Sorry I haven't time to explain. I can hear Quelch's fairy tootsies approaching! Keep your pecker up, old man!"

"But—"

Kipps dropped the receiver despairingly. Wharton had apparently rung off!

"It's—it's all up!" he said, turning to Penfold. "Jenkins is coming here with the Head!"

"Jenkins!" gasped Gerty. "No, no! He mustn't get me, Olly! You won't let him get me or Tiny, will you?"

"I don't like 'im!" said Tiny, who always seemed to know what people were talking about. "He make Gerty cry!"

"Don't let him get hold of Tiny, please, Olly!" said Gerty. "I don't care so much what he does to me!"

Tiny, seeing his sister's excitement, burst out weeping.

"Oh, Tiny darling, don't cry!" said

Gerty soothingly. "Olly is going to look after us, aren't you, Olly?"

Gerty had a tremendous belief in Kipps. But Kipps had no idea what to do under the circumstances.

"Pen," he said, turning to the cobbler's son for advice, "what the dickens am I to do?"

Pen shook his head.

"I'm blowed if I know!" he said. "But—"

Before he could continue the hoot of a motor-horn was heard outside.

"There they are!" said Kipps excitedly. "It's too late to do anything now!"

Rap, rap, rap!

"Take the kids away somewhere, and I'll see to the door!" said Penfold quickly.

Kipps nodded.

"Bring Tiny along, Gerty!" he said, as he led the way out of the living-room into the kitchen.

Gerty and Tiny followed him out, Gerty trying to soothe her little brother's fears. Meanwhile, Penfold went to the front door, and admitted Dr. Locke and a red-nosed fellow whom he understood to be Jenkins the Joker.

"Ah, Penfold!" said the Head. "Is your father at home?"

"No, sir!" said Pen. "I'm here all alone, sir!"

"All alone, indeed! Are you quite sure, Penfold?"

"What do you mean, sir? But won't you come in? You and this gentleman, I suppose, have come to see my father about business, sir?"

Dr. Locke, accompanied by Jenkins, followed Penfold into the living-room.

"I have not come here to see your father at all, Penfold!" he said sharply.

"It's those kids that's run away from me we're after!" said Jenkins brusquely.

The Head turned on Jenkins witheringly.

"Please do not interfere, Mr. Jenkins," he said. "Where is Kipps, Penfold?"

"K-Kipps, sir?"

"Yes, Kipps! He has received permission to spend a week in this house, and I have reason to believe that his desire to do so is in some way connected with the absurd idea of assisting the two fugitive children."

"F-fugitive children, sir?" repeated Penfold, in a surprised voice.

"Please do not pretend ignorance, Penfold! I desire to be informed at once whether Kipps and the two children are here at present!"

Penfold glanced round the room.

"I—I can't see them, sir!" he said.

A cloud gathered on the Head's brow.

"This is rank impertinence, Penfold!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 636.

he thundered. "It will be the worse for you if you do not answer my questions properly!"

"They—they were here, sir!" said Penfold.

"Ah! So you admit that? And where are they now?"

"I don't know, sir!" answered Penfold, quite truthfully. For all he knew, Kipps and the children might be in the kitchen. On the other hand, they might have left the house through the back gate.

"Very well, then, Penfold, I shall remain here till Kipps and the little ones return!"

"An' I ain't budgin' from here, either, Mr. Doctor! I can tell you that!" put in Jenkins emphatically.

"As to that, Mr.—er—Jenkins," said the Head of Greyfriars, "you can please yourself!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Majesty of the Law!

"MY heye!" gasped Gosling, the porter, as the figure of a stalwart police-constable walked across the Close towards the gate. "Well, my heye!"

"Hallo, matey!" said the policeman. "First time you've seen a bobby?"

"Wot I wants to know," said Gosling emphatically, "is how you got in? I never seen you!"

"Go hon!" said the policeman. "I flew in, o' course!"

Gosling snorted.

"You flewed in, did you?" he said. "Well, now you're a-going to fly hout! We don't want no bobbies in this 'ere school!"

The policeman shook a warning finger at Gosling.

"I'll have ye up for contempt of the law if ye ain't very careful how ye talks to me!" he said. "I ain't used to talkin' to drunk and disorderly school porters!"

"Drunk an' disorderly!" said Gosling indignantly. "Why, look 'ere—"

Without waiting for further remarks, the police-constable—alias Harry Wharton—passed out of the school.

"By jingo, I think I did that a treat!" he chuckled to himself.

Then the frown returned to his handsome face. Wharton realised that he was doing a very dangerous thing in perpetrating such a trick as he was about to perpetrate on the reverend Head of Greyfriars!

"It can't be helped," he said to himself. "I've got to stand by Kipps and the kids!"

Wharton felt rather nervous as he walked along Friardale Road. But he attracted little attention. In the dusk of the evening, people took him for P.-c. Tozer.

As Wharton swung himself into the lane leading to the Penfolds' cottage he came full plump upon Kipps and the two children, who were just leaving it in order to avoid meeting Jenkins the Joker and the Head.

"Hallo!" said Wharton, forgetting for the moment that he was in policeman's uniform. "Fancy meeting you here!"

Kipps stared at him. The voice was the voice of Wharton, but the face was the face of Tozer!

"Who—who are you?" he gasped.

Gerty looked extremely frightened at the sight of the police-constable, and little Tiny was staring at him with open mouth.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Harry Wharton. "Don't you know me, Kipps, old man?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 636.

"Wharton!" said Kipps. "Can it be Wharton? How the dickens did you make yourself look so tall and broad?"

"Padded boots and pillows in my clothes!" grinned Wharton. "Don't you remember the policeman's uniform in the play we performed last week?"

"My hat!" said Kipps. "You do look the real thing! And now I come to think of it, you did say something about the majesty of the law over the 'phone; but I didn't know what you were gassing about. I was too busy thinking over my own little worries!"

"We—we ran away from Jenkins the Joker!" said Gerty. "He came to the house just now in a motor-car!"

"Yes! He came with the Head," said Kipps; "and we just managed to elude him! I'm blowed if I know where to take these kids now!"

"Take them straight back to the house!" said Wharton. "And if Jenkins turns nasty, and demands the custody of the children, then Police-constable Wharton will step in and just tell him that he can't have his way!"

Kipps looked at Wharton for a second without speaking. Then he shook his head.

"It won't do!" he said. "I can't allow you to take such a risk on behalf of kids whom you've never seen before this week!"

"And what about you?" asked Wharton. "Aren't you risking a good deal more, Kipps, old man?"

"Oh, that's different!" said Kipps. "I feel like a sort of elder brother to the little ones! I was great pals with their mater, you see!"

Wharton turned to Gerty and Tiny.

"I say, kids!" he said. "Do you object to making friends with me?"

Tiny answered at once.

"Tiny likes oo!" he said simply.

But Gerty hesitated.

"Oh, let me go back and give myself up to Jenkins the Joker!" she said. "Only take care of Tiny, please. Perhaps he will be satisfied, and won't worry about Tiny then!"

"That's rot!" said Kipps. "That man sha'n't get hold of you, Gerty, while I have the power to look after you!"

"Do you accept my plan, then?" asked Wharton.

Kipps nodded silently.

"Very well, then!" said Wharton cheerfully. "Back we go to beard the lion—I mean, the lion-tamer—in his den!"

The surprise of Dr. Locke and Jenkins the Joker may be imagined when Kipps returned with the children, accompanied by a police-constable.

"Ah! We have been awaiting your return, Kipps!" said the Head sarcastically. "I am glad that you have had the good sense to bring the two runaways back with you."

"My poor, little Gerty!" said Jenkins, with hypocritical affection. "What made my dear child run away from her uncle and take darling Tiny with her? But I forgive you! Come and kiss me, my dears!"

Gerty shrank back in disgust. Tiny hid behind his sister, and stared fearfully at Jenkins the Joker.

"See here, you gents! Which of you is Mr. Samuel Jenkins, alias the Joker?" asked Wharton gruffly.

Jenkins and the Head stared at the policeman.

"That's my name, my man!" said Jenkins haughtily. "And what may you be a-wanting with me?"

Wharton took out a formidable-looking blue paper, and began reading from it:

"This 'ere is a writ issued against Mr. Samuel Jenkins, alias the Joker, for neglect and cruelty towards two children in his care—one, Gertrude Fick, an orphan; and two, Constantine Fick, alias

Tiny, likewise an orphan! I must warn you, Mr. Samuel Jenkins, alias the Joker, that anything you may say will be taken in evidence against you!"

Jenkins started back in surprise and fury.

"It's a lie!" he gasped. "I was that kind to the kids—"

Kipps seized hold of Gerty's arm and exhibited the marks of cruelty that were plainly visible.

"Look here—just look here, sir!" he said to the Head.

"Atrocious!" said the Head. "You certainly deserve very severe punishment, Jenkins! I am glad that the law has stepped in, though I have felt it my duty to discountenance the actions of my own pupils in this matter!"

Jenkins, not looking in the least like a Joker now, moistened his dry lips.

"Who—who has set you on to this—this—" he began, and stopped.

"I knows nothing!" said Wharton stolidly. "I'm just the arm of the law, nothing else! You had better make yourself ready to come with me, Mr. Samuel Jenkins, alias the Joker!"

Jenkins glanced desperately round.

"Have—have you done this?" he asked, turning furiously on Kipps.

Kipps nodded calmly.

"You had better give in quietly, Mr. Jenkins!" he said.

Jenkins suddenly changed his tone of voice.

"Give me another chance, young sir!" he pleaded. "It's just the drink that made me do it! I swear I love the kids!"

"A drunken man is not fit to look after kids!" said Kipps. "It's no use! I'm not going to withdraw the charge I've lodged against you—except on one condition!"

"And what is that, young sir?" asked Jenkins eagerly.

"That you give up all rights to the custody of the children. That you promise never to trouble them again, and to restore all their belongings to them."

"Belongings!" said Jenkins wildly.

"They ain't got no belongings! All they have is just what I've given them! And I ain't a-going to give 'em up! No!" His voice was so fierce that Gerty trembled.

"In that case," said Wharton quietly, "you'd better get ready to come with me, Mr. Samuel Jenkins, alias the Joker!"

Jenkins glanced round wildly.

"I—I give in!" he said. "I'm beat! Keep the brats, an' let me go, hang you!"

"Wait a moment!" said Kipps. "We haven't finished with you yet! Have you got pen, ink, and paper, Penfold?"

Dicky Penfold, who had been a silent and puzzled witness of the scene, nodded.

"Yes—why?" he asked.

"Let's have them!" commanded Kipps.

Penfold brought out paper, pen, and ink, and placed them on the table before Kipps. Kipps sat down, and began drawing up what looked like a legal document, whilst the others watched him wonderingly and anxiously.

"What are you writing, Kipps?" asked Dr. Locke at last.

"Something for Jenkins to sign, sir—I, Samuel Jenkins, undertake hereby to relinquish all claim to my nephew and niece, Constantine and Gertrude Fick, and never to trouble them again! If I ever break this agreement, I lay myself open to a charge of cruelty and neglect to these children, to which I now plead guilty."

"If you think I'm a-going to sign that—" began Jenkins.

Kipps looked at him calmly.

"Sign it at once, Mr. Jenkins!" he said

Without another word of remonstrance Jenkins added his name to the agreement. Kipps folded up the agreement and handed it to Dr. Locke.

"Will you please take charge of this, sir?" he said.

"I certainly shall! This man's conduct, when faced with the possibility of a charge at law, shows that he has been guilty of the cruelty and neglect of which he is accused. I am very glad indeed, Kipps, that your interference prevented my assisting in the restoration of the children to their—er—relative! I shall preserve this document faithfully!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Kipps. "You may go now, Jenkins!"

"Yes, clear out, pretty sharp!" said Police-constable Wharton. "Or we may change our minds about lettin' you go! Slick's the word!"

"Hang you!" yelled Jenkins, as he dashed out of the house, banging the door behind him. "Hang you, I say!"

"Oh, Olly!" gasped Gerty. "Then I shall never, never, never have to go back to him! Thank you so much!"

"Kipps," said the Head of Greyfriars, "I can never thank you sufficiently for preventing me from becoming that man's dupe! Your action has been splendid, my boy!"

Kipps reddened.

"I felt I had to do it, sir!" he said. "But the idea was really W—"

Before he could conclude the name, Wharton stumbled against him, as if by accident.

"Sorry, sir!" he said. "Slips will happen!"

Kipps understood that Wharton wished the secret of his disguise to be maintained in front of the Head.

"I mean, the idea was really a natural one!" he concluded.

Dr. Locke rose.

"I have to return to Greyfriars now!" he said. "Would you care to accompany me in the car, Kipps?"

"No, thank you, sir! I am sleeping here to-night."

"Please yourself, my boy. Your conduct has shown me that you are to be trusted. By the way, I shall, of course, endeavour to find ways and means of providing for the future of the children."

Kipps' eyes gleamed with pleasure.

"Oh, thank you so much, sir!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Gerty. "Say thank you, Tiny!"

"Tank 'oo!" lisped Tiny, without knowing why.

Dr. Locke walked towards the door.

"Good-night, my dear children!" he said. "Kipps, you have taught me a lesson! Good-night!"

Then he went off to find a spare suit of clothes.

"What's the next move, Kipps, old man?" asked Wharton. "Why wouldn't you go back in the Head's motor?"

"I've still got to perform in the circus to-night," said Kipps. "The show moves off to-morrow, but I'm not going to bunk the last performance if I can help it! I need every penny I'm able to earn!"

"But the Head promised that he would interest himself in the kids—"

"It's a long way from promise to action, Harry! Meanwhile, I've undertaken to do everything I can for the kids myself, and I'm not going to miss the only chance I can see at present of saving up some money for the purpose."

"But if Jenkins recognises you, he might make trouble for you!"

"No fear of his doing that! My dis-

thoughtfully, "I do remember hearing his name mentioned."

"He's a regular rotter!" said Wharton. "I never expected to find him bossing a circus."

"He doesn't exactly boss it," said Kipps. "He's really the business man of the show."

"I see! Well, he and Jenkins make a fine pair, and no mistake! I wonder what underhand little games they're up to nowadays?"

"I like Captain Punter," said Gerty; "he's stopped Jenkins from hiding me lots of times!"

"Quite likely!" said Wharton. "He was always a pleasant chap on the surface! My hat! I pity you, though, if you fall foul of him, Kipps!"

"Well, it's the last night," said Kipps. "Hallo, here's Pen with the suit!"

"Thanks, Pen!" said Wharton, as he took the Etons and retired to the bedroom to dress himself. "I'll soon look a little more respectable now!"

"What a libel on the police force!" grinned Penfold, as Wharton departed. "But fancy it's being Wharton all the time! I can hardly believe it yet!"

Meanwhile, at Greyfriars, Wharton's chums were eagerly awaiting his return.

"I hope he hasn't been bowled out!" said Nugent anxiously. "It was rather a daring jape on the Head!"

"Jape!" growled Johnny Bull. "It wasn't a blessed jape! It was something much more serious than that. I shouldn't be surprised if it means the sack, if Harry is discovered."

"Well, cheer up, chaps, anyhow!" said Bob Cherry. "The Head's returning now; I can hear his car!"

Wharton's chums ran down to the gates in time to see Dr. Locke step out of the motor.

"He's by himself," said Nugent. "If he had seen through Harry's disguise he would have brought him back with him."

"That's so!" said Johnny Bull in great relief. "But Harry will get in for a dickens of a row when he does return. He's not supposed to be out of gates without a pass at this time of the evening!"

"Harry knew that, idiot, when he first thought of the scheme!" said Bob Cherry. "He has grit enough to take his gruel without binching when the times comes!"

"It seems to me," said Johnny Bull obstinately, "that it's up to us to stand by him!"

"I've got it!" said Nugent. "Let's ask Quelchy for a pass for the circus for the five of us! Quelchy needn't be told that Harry is already out of gates, and we can all come in again together."

"But we had a pass only the other night!" remonstrated Johnny Bull. "We can't expect Quelchy to give us a circus pass every night of the week!"

"Let's ask the Head!" suggested Bob Cherry. "The old jesser is looking quite benevolent!"

To the delight of the four Removites, Dr. Locke granted them the pass out of gates, making it out for the Famous Five. Armed with this defence against questions, Wharton's chums advanced towards the village.

"We'll go to Friardale first, of course, and pick up Harry," said Bob Cherry. "I'm jolly anxious to know what happened to the kids and Kipps!"

"Hallo, talk of angels!" ejaculated Nugent. "Here's Harry himself, dressed and in his right mind!"

It was a bright night, unlike the last night on which the Famous Five had set out for the circus, and the sky was

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 636.

No. 66.—TOM O'ROURKE.



A member of the noble army of fags at Greyfriars, and a shining light of the Third Form. Irish, of course, and full of Irish fun. Has never figured prominently in any of the stories, but plays his part cheerfully and manfully in the affairs of his Form.

guise wasn't very good on the first night. In fact, Pen recognised me and spoke to me about it. But I've perfected it now, and I don't think anyone could see through it. I look a regular Red Indian witch-doctor, and only the master of the circus himself has seen me in my own natural state, of all the people connected with the circus."

"The master of the circus? Who is he?" asked Wharton indifferently.

Kipps' answer electrified him.

"He's an American Johnny called Captain Punter."

"What?" yelled Wharton. "Did you say Captain Punter?"

"Yes; why, what's wrong? Do you know the chap?"

"I should jolly well think I do!" said Wharton excitedly. "He's one of the cutest old swindlers you ever met! I've been up against him several times—but that was before you came to Greyfriars."

"Come to think of it," said Kipps

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Off to the Circus Again!

"PEN," began Wharton, "would you do me the favour—"

Dicky Penfold stared at the police-constable.

"How the dickens do you know my name?" he asked. "I've never seen you before in my life!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Kipps. "He doesn't know you, Wharton, old man!"

"Wharton!" exclaimed Pen in amazement. "You—you can't be Wharton?"

Harry Wharton removed his false whiskers, grinning.

"Glad my disguise was so good, Pen!" he said. "Would you do me the favour of lending me a suit of Etons? I can't return to Greyfriars in this rig-out!"

"C-e-certainly!" stuttered Penfold, hardly able to believe his senses. "My hat! I should never have recognised you, I give you my word!"

cloudless. In the moonlight the chums of the Remove were delighted to see Harry Wharton advancing towards them.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Hail, Harry!"

"Oh, is that you, Bob?" said Wharton, coming up. "What the dickens are you chaps doing out of gates?"

"Looking for you!" grinned Bob. "How did things go off about Kipps and the kids?"

Wharton explained quickly what had happened.

"And now that boulder Jenkins has resigned all claim to the kids for evermore!" he concluded.

"Hurrah!" yelled Bob Cherry, giving his leader a hearty slap on the shoulder.

"Oh, you idiot!" yelled Wharton. "I'm not made of wood!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Never mind, Harry! You're a wonder!" said Nugent.

And he, in his turn, explained how they had obtained permission for themselves and Wharton to attend the circus.

"Jolly good!" said Wharton. "One of you had a brain-wave!"

And the Famous Five set out for the Courtfield circus in the highest spirits.

"Fancy that chap Bunter running the circus!" said Nugent. "Are you quite sure it's the same chap, Harry?"

"Bound to be, from the way Kipps and Gerty describe him!" said Wharton. "Anyway, we shall soon see for ourselves!"

"Oh, rather!" said Bob Cherry. "I'm jolly well looking forward to seeing Kipps the Conjuror at work!"

"Copper, the Red Indian!" grinned Wharton. "You chaps will never know him in his rig-out!"

"Good old Kipps!" said Nugent. "He's taking some sleep risks for the sake of the kids."

"If you ask me," said Wharton quietly, "I should say that Kipps would willingly make the greatest sacrifice for the sake of the children—particularly the girl!"

"She's only a kid!" said Johnny Bull. Wharton smiled.

"And Kipps feels like a father to her," he said. "He's a youngster himself, of course, but there it is!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's Discovery!

"PLEASE, sir——"

"Well, Bunter?" asked Mr. Quelch sharply.

Like everyone else at Greyfriars, the master of the Remove had little time for William George Bunter.

"This is the last night that the circus is staying at Courtfield, sir——"

"Indeed, Bunter! I quite fail to see how that fact concerns me."

"Could you give me a pass to attend this evening's performance, sir?"

"Certainly not, you stupid boy! You will be much more profitably occupied with your preparation for to-morrow's class-work. I have found you getting more and more ignorant every day!"

"No, sir. Not every day, sir. I have really learnt quite a lot lately, sir!"

"Please allow me to judge of that, Bunter! You are the densest ignoramus in the whole class. I believe that your minor in the Second Form knows more than you do!"

"No, sir; he doesn't. He asked me to do a sum for him the other day, and I did it!"

"Indeed! And was it correctly done?"

"Of course it was, sir! Mr. Twigg

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 636.

said it was wrong, but that's because he doesn't know much about arithmetic, sir!"

"Your impertinence is as great as your stupidity, Bunter, which is saying a great deal. I should never dream of giving you a pass!"

"But, sir——"

"That will do, Bunter. Kindly go!"

"Beast!" muttered Bunter to himself as he left Mr. Quelch's study. "I'm going to the circus, all the same!"

With this determination in his mind, Billy Bunter made his way to the gates of the old school. But here a fresh obstacle, in the form of Gosling, the porter, barred his path.

"Which you are not leaving this 'ere school, Master Bunter!" said Gosling determinedly. "Which I refuses to let you go hout!"

"Oh, really, Gossy! Mr. Quelch has just given me permission to go to the circus," said Bunter persuasively.

"Show me this 'ere permission in black and white, an' I believes you," said Gosling. "What I says is that you're a-telling fibs!"

William George Bunter drew himself up haughtily.

"Let me pass, Gosling, my man, or I shall report you!" he said haughtily.

"My heye!" said Gosling. "What cheek! What blooming cheek! Oh, my heye!"

"Really, Gossy," said Bunter, trying a new method of argument; "you know what ripping remittances I get! How would you like a fiver out of one of them?"

"Keep your remittances, you young rip!" said Gosling contemptuously. "You never gets any that I knows on!"

"Very well, Gosling," said Bunter, drawing himself up haughtily. "Then there is no recourse left to me but to report you to the Head!"

And he walked off with his nose in the air.

Billy Bunter really went along to Dr. Locke's study. He thought himself an extremely bright and intelligent fellow, and he did not see why he should not be granted the same privileges as the Famous Five!

Before knocking, Bunter looked through the keyhole. The study was empty.

Instead of waiting for the Head to return to the study, Billy Bunter coolly entered, and had a look round among the papers on the Head's table. Bunter's curiosity was one of his leading characteristics.

Bunter found nothing of importance for some seconds. But presently his eyes fell on a letter or document which seemed to be in a hand which was familiar to him. Yes, of course, it was Kipps' handwriting!

Bunter read the document through eagerly. It was Jenkins' promise to relinquish all rights to the children, which Kipps had entrusted to Dr. Locke's keeping. As Bunter understood what it was that had fallen into his hands, his eyes glistened greedily. If he offered to restore the document to Jenkins, was he not likely to get a good price for it?

Bunter popped the document into his pocket and hastily left the study.

If he was to interview Jenkins, it was absolutely necessary that he should do so that night. On the morrow the circus would have left Courtfield. He must get out of gates somehow.

Once again he sped across the Close, his fat little legs going like clockwork.

Gosling, who was sitting in his porter's lodge, was surprised to hear Dr. Locke's voice.

"Gosling," the voice said, "open the

gate for Bunter at once! He has my permission to go to Courtfield."

"Yes, sir!" said Gosling quickly, as he rushed out of the lodge to obey the Head's command. "My heye! Where is 'e?"

The Head was nowhere to be seen. Only William George Bunter was standing at the locked gate.

"The Head's gone back to his study," explained Bunter. "Open the gate quick! I'm in a hurry!"

"What bike is that?" asked Gosling, looking inquisitively at the bicycle Bunter was holding.

"Mine, of course," said Bunter. "But it's not your business, anyway. Unlock the gate, sharp!"

Gosling obeyed grumblingly. As Bunter wheeled the bicycle into the road the porter stared after him.

"The 'Ead's goin' soft!" he said to himself. "Lettin' that young rip off this time of night! An' it ain't 'is bike, either. It looks to me like Master Wharton's bike!"

And Gosling shook his head.

But the school porter had no idea that the voice he had heard had not been the Head's voice at all, and that William George Bunter was once more adopting his favourite device of ventriloquism to gain his own ends.

Bunter, as he cycled towards Courtfield, chuckled. But he, for his part, did not know that he was about to land himself in a scrape from which it would not be easy for him to extricate himself. Bunter was feeling very happy. He was sure that Jenkins the Joker would be willing to pay a good sum in order to regain possession of the document he had signed.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter and Punter!

"A H, Copper! Here you are!" said Captain Punter, as Kipps arrived at the circus in his Red Indian rig-out. "I can't make out what's become of Jenkins! If he doesn't turn up in time for the performance we'll be in a hole, and no mistake!"

"Hasn't Jenkins turned up yet?" asked Kipps, in some concern.

"No. And if he isn't here in time you'll have to give a double performance, youngster!"

"Oh, that will be all right, captain!" said Kipps confidently. "But double show, double pay, of course!"

Punter shook his head.

"What—what—what's that?" he said. "Pooh, pooh! Nonsense! Ten shillings a night is more than enough for a boy of your age!"

Kipps looked dogged.

"Double show, double pay, captain!" he repeated. "That's my offer. Take it or leave it!"

Punter shrugged his shoulders.

"We shall see!" he said airily. "Jenkins may turn up in time."

"If it's not impertinent to ask you, captain," ventured Kipps, "why do you keep such a drunken rascal in the circus? You could easily get better men for the same money."

Punter turned on Kipps furiously.

"Mind your own business, hang you!" he said.

"No offence meant, captain," he said. "And a little politeness on your side would not come amiss, either!"

Punter controlled himself with an effort.

"Sorry, youngster!" he said. "You are quite right. I shall certainly get rid of Jenkins when I get the chance!"

Then he walked away towards Jenkins'

tent. He peered into it, but the tent was empty.

"I say, Captain Punter——"

Punter looked around to discover who was addressing him, and saw William George Bunter trotting towards him at a rapid glance.

"I say, Captain Punter——"

Punter stopped, and waited for the fat junior to come up with him.

"Don't be so free and easy with my name, you fat clam!" he growled. "I seem to have seen you before."

"Oh, rather! I've seen you two or three times before, Captain Punter. By the way, you aren't really a captain, are you? You just call yourself one to take in people. Ow-ow! Leggo!"

Captain Punter had taken Billy Bunter by the ear, and was twisting it round and round. The fat junior yelled in agony.

"Ow! Stop it! Leggo, I tell you!"

"See here, you fat clam," said the so-called captain, "if you've come here to insult me, you've mistaken your vocation!"

"I—I haven't!" wailed Bunter. "Leggo my ear! I've come to see Jenkins the Joker!"

"Vamoose the ranch!" growled Captain Punter. "I guess Jenkins isn't expecting the pleasure of your visit!"

"No, he isn't!" chuckled Bunter. "He, he, he!"

Captain Punter looked at Bunter curiously.

"Jenkins isn't here just now!" he said. "What do you want to see him about?"

"That's telling!" said Bunter cunningly. "I may know something, and I may not! I may have a letter that he'd like to get hold of, and I may not!"

"Bah!" growled Captain Punter. "You are a young bluffer!"

Billy Bunter looked indignant.

"Oh, really!" he said. "I know jolly well that Jenkins would like to get back a letter I've got in my pocket!"

"Hand it over!" rapped out Captain Punter. "I'll give it to him!"

"No, you don't!" said Billy Bunter. "I haven't brought it all the way from Greyfriars for nothing!"

"Greyfriars!" said Punter, "Oh, you are a Greyfriars boy, are you?"

"Rather!" replied Billy Bunter.

"Oh, I say, what are you doing? Leggo!"

Captain Punter had grasped Billy by the scruff of the neck, and began examining his pockets.

"You thief!" howled Billy Bunter. "Leave my things alone!"

"Oh, here it is!" said Captain Punter, as he glanced through the document which Jenkins had signed. "What—what's this?"

Billy Bunter loosened himself from the so-called captain's grip.

"Gimme back my letter, you thief!" he yelled.

Captain Punter folded the letter very carefully and put it in his breast-pocket. Then he turned once more to the fat junior.

"Clear!" he rapped out.

And he gave Billy Bunter such a threatening glance that the fat junior ran pell-mell out of the tent.

Bunter ran full into Jenkins the Joker.

"Look out where you're a-going to!" roared Jenkins.

"Oh, really, Jenkins! I came here to see you!"

"Want a taste of the whip?" growled the joker, who was in the worst possible humour, and reeking with liquor.

"Ow! No!" said Billy Bunter, in terror. "I've brought you back the letter you signed saying you'd been very cruel to the kids and wouldn't bother about them any more."

"Eh? Where is it?" asked Jenkins eagerly.

"That beast Punter has just taken it away from me!" wailed Billy. "He didn't give me a thing for it, either!"

"Oh!" said Jenkins, as he rushed off towards the tent.

"Here, I say! Stop!" yelled William George Bunter. "Ain't I going to get anything at all for all my trouble?"

But there was no one left to answer him. Disconsolately Bunter wandered away. His dreams of untold riches had vanished into thin air.

William George Bunter felt very aggrieved.

"Beastly set of swindlers!" he growled. "I never saw such a lot of mean thieves in all my life!"

And then he approached the big tent in the hope of finding some way of entering without paying! Bunter did not recognise dishonesty when he was perpetrating it himself!

"I say, captain, where's that letter?" roared Jenkins, rushing into his tent.

Punter faced him calmly.

"Quietly, my good Jenkins—quietly!" he said. "The letter is sound and safe in my possession!"

"Let's have it!" said Jenkins, stretching out a grimy hand.

"No so fast, Jenkins!" said Captain Punter. "Not so fast, my friend! It seems to me we ought to come to a little reckoning first!"

"Eh? What do you mean?" asked Jenkins.

It was at that moment that Bunter once more approached the tent. He listened eagerly as he heard the voices within.

"My good Jenkins!" said Captain Punter. "Let us see what the possession of the children means to you! Why are you so anxious to retain your hold on them? Is it out of love for the little ones? No!"

"Hang you!" growled Jenkins.

"Why is it, then?" pursued Captain Punter. "It is because there is a fortune settled on the children!"

"What's the good of all this?" growled Jenkins. "I told you all this long ago!"

"As long as the children are under age," went on Captain Punter, "you get a yearly income for looking after them. Once the children are out of your care this yearly income is lost to you!"

"See here, Punter——"

"Allow me to go on, my good Jenkins. If the children die, the fortune goes to you! That is why you are so anxious to keep them alive as long as you can! Why you are so kind to them! Why you wish to expose them to the lions! You are a model uncle, Jenkins!"

Jenkins glared. But he said nothing. His feelings were too deep for words.

"Why am I telling you all this, Jenkins? Only to remind you of it! And to make clear the full value of the letter which has just come into my possession! Anyone in possession of such a letter can deprive you of the custody of the children at once! How did you come to write it at all?"

"I was mad!" said Jenkins hoarsely. "The policeman was standing there waiting to take me to gaol if I didn't write it!"

"An extraordinary policeman, Jenkins! There is something queer in this!"

"But—but——"

"The letter is much safer with me than with you! Where are the children now?"

"Hand over that letter, hang you!"

"Not a bit of it, my dear Jenkins! I prefer keeping it in my possession! Where did you say the children were?"

"At a little house in Friardale!"

"Then I shall let you off the performance to-night, Jenkins! You have much more important work in hand!"

"What the dickens do you mean?"

"Gently, my dear Jenkins! If I were to turn against you it would be a very black look-out for you!"

"You're not a-going to do that!" sneered Jenkins. "You know which side your bread's buttered as well as the next!"

"Exactly, Jenkins! My advice to you, as a pal, is to go straight back to Friardale and look out for an opportunity of stealing the two children away!"

Jenkins sat silent for a second.

"You're right, captain!" he said at last. "And if I don't come back to-night with both the kids, I'll be hanged!"

"Hanged you probably will be in any case, sooner or later, my dear Jenkins!" said the so-called captain sweetly. "You may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb!"

Without another word Jenkins left the tent. Bunter got round the corner just in time to avoid being seen.



Miss Priscilla

—Form Master!

A Tale of
TOM MERRY & CO.
At St. Jim's

You will not find a more exciting, interesting, or amusing story anywhere than this latest brilliant long complete tale of **TOM MERRY & Co.** Do not miss it! You'll find it on Wednesday in

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THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Is Useful!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five arrived at the circus. "Here we are at last!"

"And here is Kipps!" said Harry Wharton, as that junior approached them in the guise of Copper, the Red Indian witch-doctor. "Doesn't he look a treat!"

"Ripping!" chorused Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull.

"The rippingfulness," added Hurree Singh, "is—"

"Terrific!" grinned Kipps. "Exactly! I say, you chaps, I'm on for a double performance to-night!"

"Double performance?" asked Wharton wonderingly.

"Yes! It seems that Jenkins isn't turning up to-night, and I've got to lengthen my own show to make up for his absence!"

"Jenkins not turning up!" said Harry Wharton anxiously. "Why, what's become of the rotter?"

Kipps shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know," he said. "Punter told me Jenkins wasn't turning up, and asked me to give a double performance! Of course, I told him double show, double pay!"

"Good old Kipps!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Don't let yourself be done down!"

"No fear!" said Kipps.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pen is also turning up to-night with his folks!" said Kipps. "There'll be a regular crowd at the last performance!"

"Oh!" said Harry Wharton. "And what about the kids? Are they to be left at home all alone?"

Kipps nodded.

"They'll be safe enough!" he said. "You're not afraid they're going to be kidnapped, Wharton, are you?"

"I don't know!" said Wharton anxiously. "You never know what a rotter like Jenkins will do!"

"My hat!" said Kipps. "If I thought that I'd return to the village straight away!"

"Oh, I don't think Jenkins'd dare to do that!" said Bob Cherry. "We'd hand over the letter Harry made him sign to the police and set them on his track!"

"Jenkins is the sort of rascal who doesn't think about what he's doing when he's desperate!" said Harry Wharton.

"I say, you fellows——"

"My hat!" gasped Nugent. "It's Bunter!"

"Bunter!" yelled the rest all together. "Bunter!"

"How the dickens did you get here, Bunter?" gasped Wharton. "I'm sure Quelch didn't give you a pass!"

Billy Bunter confusedly explained all that had happened. When he had finished, the Removites stared at him.

"You fat toad!" howled Kipps. "So Punter has got Jenkins' confession through your beastly interference!"

"Oh, really, Kipps, if you call that being grateful——"

Kipps advanced with clenched fists towards Bunter. The fat junior hastily retreated behind Wharton.

"Keep him off!" he yelled. "I say, Wharton, keep him off!"

"Let me get at him!" howled Kipps. "The miserable rotter!"

Wharton intervened.

"It's not worth while wasting any time on Bunter!" he said contemptuously. "And, besides, he really has been useful for a change!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 636

"That's true!" said Kipps. "At least, he has had the decency to come and tell us all about it!"

"Decency!" snorted Bob Cherry. "He did it out of revenge, because Punter took the letter from him! But I agree with Wharton that we haven't any time to waste on Bunter. We've got something more important to do."

"Rather!" said Harry Wharton. "The first thing to do is to get the letter back from Punter."

"It seems to me," said Kipps, "that the first thing to do is to return to Friardale and stop Jenkins from running off with the kids."

"I tell you what," said Frank Nugent, "let's divide our forces! We'll go along to Friardale to look after the kids, and Kipps had better stay here and look out for a chance of bagging the letter."

"All right!" said Kipps. "I depend on you fellows to look after Gerty and Tiny and see that that rotter Jenkins doesn't get hold of them again!"

"You may depend on us!" said Wharton earnestly.

"I do!" said Kipps.

And these few words spoke volumes.

"I say, Wharton——"

"Well, Kipps, ta-ta!" said Harry Wharton. "And good luck!"

"Good luck!" said Kipps. "Oh, good luck!"

The Famous Five looked curiously back at him as they departed. The deep interest which Kipps took in his two little friends was extraordinary.

Bunter walked off towards the circus-tent grumbling. Nobody seemed to possess any gratitude at all.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

In the Nick of Time!

"COPPER," said Captain Punter, "you are slow, my lad! It's time for the show to start!"

Kipps restrained his anger with difficulty.

"Very well, captain," he said quietly.

The circus-tent was packed. But Kipps was not at all nervous. In spite of the anxiety which was weighing heavily on his mind, he performed his conjuring-tricks with extraordinary skill.

But he was glad for his first performance to be over.

It so happened that the next item on the programme was a horse-training act by Captain Punter himself.

Kipps seized the opportunity to go into Captain Punter's private tent and look for the confession.

He searched high and low, and at first unsuccessfully.

"I say, Kipps——"

Kipps started, as Bunter's plaintive voice hailed him. He turned round angrily.

"Bunter!" he yelled. "Will you never be satisfied till I've given you the thrashing you deserve?"

Bunter trembled at the anger in Kipps' voice.

"Oh, really, Kipps, that's jolly ungrateful of you! C-c-can you give me a tanner to buy a ticket for the show?"

Kipps stared at Bunter, and then burst out laughing. The fat junior was really too stupid and self-centred to be taken seriously.

"See here, Bunter!" said Kipps, as a sudden thought struck him. "What coat was Punter wearing when he took Jenkins' confession from you?"

"A—a blue coat with a golden stripe on the shoulders," said Bunter. "What—what does that matter?"

"And he put the confession into the

breast-pocket of that coat, did he?" said Kipps.

Bunter nodded.

"Yes; but why——"

Kipps groaned.

"That's the coat he's wearing now!" he said.

"About that tanner——" began Bunter again.

But Kipps rushed out of the small tent again without heeding him. He reached the big tent just as Captain Punter's horse-training item came to an end.

"Now it's Jenkins' turn," said Punter. "Are you ready to take his place, Copper?"

Kipps nodded.

"I'll do some sleight-of-hand tricks," he said. "But I want your assistance, captain."

"Oh, very well!" said Punter. "What do you want me to do?"

"There's no time to explain now!" said Kipps. "You must do just what I tell you when we're in the arena captain."

"Right-ho, sonny!"

Kipps' eyes gleamed. He had the chance at last of removing the confession from Punter's pocket.

Meanwhile, the Famous Five were hurrying towards Friardale to intercept Jenkins, if that worthy really intended to get hold of the two little ones again.

"I hope we'll be in time!" panted Wharton. "My hat, if that rotter Jenkins gets hold of the kids again, you never know what he will do!"

"Oh, we'll be in time!" said Bob Cherry comfortingly.

But Bob proved to be a false prophet. When the Famous Five reached the Penfolds' little cottage it was empty.

"He—he can't have got hold of them already!" said Frank Nugent, turning pale. "It's—it's impossible!"

"Look here, chaps!" said Wharton, who was white to the lips. "Look at these marks!"

"A man's footprints! Muddy footprints!" said Bob Cherry.

"Leading up to the window!" said Johnny Bull. "My hat!"

"We are too late!" said Nugent. "Too late to save the kids!"

"No!" said Wharton fiercely. "Never say die!"

"But what can we do actually?" asked Hurree Singh, in despair.

"Return to the circus," said Wharton, back there."

"Jenkins is bound to bring the kids. The rest of the Famous Five nodded.

What had really happened?

Jenkins the Joker, maddened with drink and desperation, had reached the Penfolds' cottage and found it apparently deserted. To his savage delight, however, he discovered Gerty and Tiny asleep in a little room at the back of the house.

His step woke Gerty, who gave a wild shriek.

"Jenkins!" she screamed. "Help!"

At that, Tiny also awoke, and, at the sight of his unnatural uncle, the little fellow began weeping bitterly.

"Stop that row, both of you!" said Jenkins brusquely.

Tiny shivered through and through his little body, and was too frightened to speak. Gerty made a rush for the door.

"No, my dear," said Jenkins unpleasantly, "you don't get out that way! You're going home with me to-night! Home, d'you hear?"

"No, no!" said Gerty. "Leave me alone!"

Before she could say more a handkerchief was stuffed into her mouth. The next moment Jenkins was carrying the two children back to Courtfield through the darkness of the night.

And as he carried them a devilish plan, which had long been forming in his mind, at last took shape.

Kipps' surprise and dismay may be imagined when, just as he was about to begin the act in the course of which he intended to extract the confession from Punter's pocket, Jenkins lurched into the ring!

"See here, captain," said Jenkins, "it's my turn now!"

Punter stared at him.

"Did you get hold of the kids?" he whispered,

Jenkins smiled unpleasantly.

"That I did!" he said. "And they're going to be sorry they ever ran away!"

Kipps, catching the whisper, shivered.

"What act are you going to perform?" asked Punter.

"The lion act," said Jenkins grimly.

"Bring the cage into the ring!"

"But—but are you strong enough?"

asked Punter. "Will you have the lions under control?"

"Leave that to me," said Jenkins brusquely. "I'm going to introduce the novelty we've promised 'em."

Punter stared at him for a second. Then he started.

"What?" he said. "You're not going to put the children into the cage to-night?"

"I am!" said Jenkins. "That's just what I am going to do!"

"It's—it's murder!" whispered Punter. Jenkins shrugged his shoulders.

"Accidents will happen," he said. "I'm not responsible for that."

"I forbid it!" said Punter.

Jenkins smiled sarcastically.

"They're my lions, and my children," he said. "It's got nothing to do with you!"

But this was more than Punter would stand.

"You're drunk, you fool!" he said roughly. "You're not going to do anything of the kind!"

Jenkins glared at him with bloodshot eyes. Then he began wheeling the cage into the arena.

The audience applauded deafeningly. The lion act was one of the most popular items on the programme.

Then Jenkins once more disappeared, and presently returned with two children.

"Olly!" shrieked Gerty wildly. "Olly, he's going to throw us to the lions!"

At the sight of Gerty and Tiny, Kipps bounded forward.

"Stop!" he yelled. "Stop!"

Gerty's cries and Kipps' action were enough for the audience. The next moment a rush was made at Jenkins from all parts of the circus.

The drunken man, rendered desperate by the cries, opened the lion's cage and entered.

For a second there was breathless silence. Then there came a wild outcry.

"The lions are on him!"

It was true! Jenkins had lost his control of the beasts, and they were turning on their tamer.

Was it too late to save the wretched man?

Horror-struck, the people gazed at the lions and their victim. The next moment Kipps had sprung into the cage.

His heart was panting fiercely, and he nearly fainted as one of the lions turned towards him. But he grasped Jenkins by the shoulders and pulled him out of the cage, mauled and bleeding.

At the risk of his own life Kipps had saved the man who was the deadly enemy of the children whom Kipps loved.

The Famous Five arrived at the circus in time to be told of the gallant deed.

The rest can be quickly told.

Jenkins recovered from his wounds, and became a changed man. The children, however, were taken out of his charge, and sent to a boarding-school, where Kipps visited them from time to time.

Captain Punter gave up the circus soon afterwards and crossed the Atlantic. Wharton & Co. never discovered what had brought him to Courtfield as manager of a circus.

The Famous Five and Pen received praise all round for the share they had had in looking after Gerty and Tiny. Bunter went around singing his own praises, but he got more kicks than ha'pence.

The hero of the occasion, however, was undoubtedly Oliver Kippa!

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled "CUPTIE CHAMPIONS!" Order your copy early!)

EDITOR'S CHAT.

"CUPTIE CHAMPIONS!"

By Frank Richards.

is the title of next week's grand long story of Greyfriars. It is a splendid football story, in which Larry Lascelles, the popular mathematics master, is the hero of the hour.

Loder, the cad of the Sixth Form, and the most thoroughly disliked prefect in the school, contrives, by a mean action, to get Mr. Lascelles dismissed from Greyfriars; and he nearly succeeds—but not quite!

"CUPTIE CHAMPIONS!"

will tell you how the master was saved from this humiliating ordeal, so be sure that you read it. Order your copy of next Monday's MAGNET at once!

WHAT A FELLOW WOULD LIKE TO DO.

It is a question, but as likely as not most lads, had they their way, would start out exploring and pitching a camp somewhere on the lines of Huckleberry Finn and his friend Tom Sawyer. They would certainly not worry about Latin. Julius Cæsar would go flying out of the first window.

But exploring in this old country is not really possible. So many fellows have been there before. The moment you hit on a noble wilderness, and decide to fix headquarters there and put the kettle on to boil, you catch sight of a notice-board bearing the words, "Trespassers will be prosecuted."

So perhaps it is just as well there is no chance of giving free rein to the wish to go out into the wilds.

THE BOY AUTHOR.

We have just heard about him. He is living in America, and his name is Horace Wade. He is eleven. Ap-

parently he is an A1 genius, and with ability enough to show those who are decades older how to run the author business. His portrait appeared in a daily paper the other day, and he looks capable.

Anyhow, he is writing about daring deeds, and unfortunate heroines, and wicked millionaires, and the rest of the crowd. If he can do this at eleven, what will he be doing at twenty? But perhaps he will have retired on a princely fortune by then, or have grown tired of writing.

Anyhow, I hope this brilliant prodigy will not fall into the mistake of despising the men who wrote before he became an asset. This kind of thing happens, you know. It is a big mistake. Just take a quiet hour or two in any library and look at some of the vanished men's work, note how good it is, the trouble they took, the splendid thoughts they set down.

LETTERS TO HAND.

An editor does not exactly live among letters. He could do so if he chose, but naturally he has other things to do. Still, some part of his time has to be devoted to communications, and he often feels regret that he cannot do all the things he is asked to, for Fate made him an editor, not a universal provider. So that's that!

I wonder if there is any snobbishness among letters as they jostle one another in the mail-bags—the proud and haughty take-it-or-leave-it sort of note, and the shabby, dog-eared envelope, with no pride about it, the letter which has got a long way to go and has suffered through general weakness of texture and misuse in the post? You cannot expect a begging letter to appreciate the society

of an official message on that thick paper-like cardboard.

A mail-bag is just so much concentrated life. It mirrors the world. It contains the swanky notes, the hypocritical ones, the wooden variety, likewise the letters full of good feeling. I am privileged, in that many of the last named come to me.

IN THE COUNTRY.

Holidays in the country will soon be a subject of everyday talk. There is always a rare lot more to see in the country. One feels disposed to smile at the cynic who said he could not bear the country. It was to him just looking at the same scene, and he found it monotonous. Yet there is just as much variety in the country as in the town.

Robert Louis Stevenson, who saw as much as most folk, and more than many, found it like this. Things just struck him as his lines about an old mill show: "Sounds of the village grow stiller and stiller,

Stiller the notes of the birds on the hill;

Dusty and dim are the eyes of the miller,

Deaf are his ears with the moil of the mill."

But then Stevenson, like the prince of writers he was, found deep significance and interest in everything, just as was the case with Burns.

Your Editor

THE SECRET OF THE SILENT CITY.

Our Grand New Serial.

By DAGNEY HAYWARD.



Dr. Harland advanced slowly towards the dwarfs, and began to address them in a native language. They chattered a lot in reply, but he could not make out what they were saying. (See page 12.)

THE MISSING MAP.

LOOKING up, they waved to the party above, and heard their answering cheers. They also saw Tom Rackett, appearing quite a small figure from below, stretched out along the plank with his faithful camera. He had been filming their descent.

Tung Wu, experienced as he was to mountaineering in his native country, soon found a likely spot to ascend the other side. Though difficult and perilous, they got to the top and signalled their arrival to Mr. Sherwell.

While they had been descending, Mr. Sherwell and his men had been busy preparing the rocket-apparatus.

The signal went up. The next instant a rocket went hissing and soaring into the air. The specially-constructed mortar that fired it was a very strong one, and carried the rope well across the chasm and safe to the farther side.

It was a beautiful shot. The rocket, with the rope attached, landed about fifty yards from where Tung Wu and the boys were standing.

With Tung Wu's quick wits and strength and the boys' dexterity they quickly hauled in the wire cable and secured the end in such a way that nothing could disturb it. Then the other rocket was fired, this time carrying the rope that was attached to the cradle. This, too, was made secure.

Then Augustus from his side tautened the first rope by pulling with his mighty

strength till it stretched across the chasm like a tight-rope.

Tung Wu signalled that he was ready for Augustus, whom he and the boys had seen put into the cradle.

The rope supporting the cradle was raised above the edge of the cliff some fifteen feet at either end, to allow the cradle and its living freight to land well

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, Augustus, an elephant, Wonga, a chimpanzee, and Boris, a bulldog.

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 Wonga, the chimpanzee, that a rival film company is making for the Silent City.

Later Dr. Harland, an Englishman, who has been masquerading among a savage tribe as a "magic-man," joins the party. Later they arrive at a chasm, over which they have to pass. They construct a special travelling cradle, which is to carry them and their belongings across.

(Now read on.)

over the edge of the chasm. The cradle, swinging and balancing evenly by the force of its weight and that of Augustus, ran along the wire rope on two wheels, one at either end.

Tung Wu, Dick, Larry, Mike and Wonga then gave a shout, and simultaneously began to pull with all their might.

The cradle, with Augustus and Quambo, travelled along beautifully for some distance. Then suddenly it came to a dead halt!

There was Augustus, swinging in mid-air, the great brute terrified at his new experience. Quambo, who had evidently lost his head, seemed to be paralysed with fear.

Vainly Tung Wu, the boys, and Mr. Sherwell shouted to Quambo to see what was the matter. But the negro was panic-stricken, and merely yelled with fright and clung on to the elephant's head.

"Me climbee ropee out there," said the Chinaman, "and velly quick see why no movie!"

"You're not going without us," put in Dick. "Is he, you chaps?"

"Rather not!" replied Larry promptly. "Sure and bedad, if he goes alone, I'll go with him!" cried Mike.

The Chinaman protested. But the boys won. There was not an instant to be lost. Their two splendid friends, Quambo and Augustus, were in danger. Every now and again the cradle, owing to the elephant's frantic plunging, swayed to and fro in a most dangerous way.

There were some twenty feet to clamber out to the cradle, and Tung Wu set out dauntlessly, followed by the boys. The rope quivered and swayed as the cradle rocked with Augustus' struggles. It was no easy matter to keep a firm grip on the taut steel cable.

Inch by inch they crawled out over the yawning abyss, whilst their every movement was eagerly followed by the anxious watchers on the other side. A single mistake, a moment's giddiness, might mean death!

"You keepee still, you sillee nigger!" gasped the Chinaman to Quambo, as he dragged himself into the cradle. "Why no see what is the matter?"

But Quambo seemed quite to have lost his head.

"Me afraid!" he cried. "Dis nigger no like crossing on rope with 'Gustus. Me and 'Gustus both afraid."

By this time Dick was already in the cradle, and was looking to see what had happened. Tung Wu joined him, whilst Larry and Mike did their best to quiet Augustus. The cause of the trouble was very simple. Whilst moving, Augustus had evidently shifted the lever of a patent brake, which had, of course, instantly stopped the cradle from proceeding any farther. If he had not lost his head Quambo could have put the whole thing right himself in a moment and saved all the excitement.

It did not take long for them to get back to terra firma, and draw the cradle after them. Augustus gave a loud trumpet of joy when he felt the ground beneath his feet, and Quambo, a little ashamed of his escapade, tried to make up for it by hard work.

Journey after journey the cradle made, loaded with all the paraphernalia of the expedition, and pulled across by Augustus. At last the final trip was accomplished, the cradle was drawn to the ground, and Tung Wu, the expert mountaineer, went back, unlashed the

rope, and after a climb down the chasm and up the other side, rejoined the party.

The road now led down a gentle slope for some miles. At the bottom was a swift-flowing river, which Mr. Sherwell told them was the Guirry. As the map showed, the jungle ceased a short distance from the river, and as they emerged from the trees an interesting sight met their eyes.

"Look!" cried Dick, who was in advance of the party. "Look, Mr. Sherwell, there is something resembling an old castle! What is it?"

"That is an ancient walled town," said the producer. "It is marked on the map as the City of Yriquo. I don't know much about it, but we will explore it."

Ordering the expedition to halt, for he did not know what the city contained, Mr. Sherwell, Dr. Harland, Tom, and the boys pushed forward towards the huge gate which faced them. The city was walled all round, and the gate was the only way of entering.

"Take care!" said Dr. Harland. "You never know what you may find in these places, and there may well be some hostile natives dwelling in the ruins."

"There does not appear to be anyone," said Larry, who had been looking about him. "All the same, I have got my revolver ready."

The street they entered through the gate was narrow, and led to a huge temple, which not even the passage of time had been able to ruin. Massive columns, built of stone brought from afar, supported the roof, and strange stone figures of men and beasts guarded the approach. In front of this temple was a large open space, where the little party of whites stood for a while, gazing in awe at the mighty ruins of a bygone age.

"The silence of this place is positively eerie," said Mr. Sherwell. "Evidently there is not a soul in it but ourselves."

"If some of you will go and walk about in front of those columns, I will take a picture," said Tom Rackett. "You cannot realise the size of a place like that unless there is someone standing near to compare. Go on, Mike! Go and pose in front of that large column."

"Sure and I will!" was the reply. "It is almost as fine as the Giant's Causeway in dear old Ireland."

But he had hardly taken a step forward when Larry, whose eyes were roaming around, suddenly shouted:

"Duck Mike! Duck for your life!"

Mike ducked, and only just in time. For three or four spears came whistling through the air, and the next moment a shower of missiles fell around the party. One of the spears nearly killed Dr. Harland, for it passed between his arm and his body, tearing a great hole in his coat, and sending him reeling into Dick's arms.

"By gum!" he gasped. "That was a near shave! Dodge into cover, quick!"

Tom Rackett whisked up his camera, and they all ran to the nearest ruined house, where they crowded into the gaping doorway.

"There they are!" cried Dick. "Look! There are five or six natives in that ruin opposite!"

As he spoke they saw some litho, brown figures crouching under the cover of a huge block of stone. They were armed with spears, and were evidently preparing another volley for the white men as soon as they should leave their shelter.

"Quick, lads!" cried Mr. Sherwell. "Take a good aim, and fire when I give the word. A good salvo may scare them away."

The natives crept a little farther into the open in order to get a good aim,

and this was the moment for which the white party were waiting.

"Fire!" cried Mr. Sherwell suddenly. Like one shot the revolvers rang out. There was a shriek, a chorus of cries, and one of the brown figures fell to the ground and lay still. The others had disappeared amongst the ruins.

"Now, then, let us run for it," said Dr. Harland. "They will be fetching help, and will overpower us unless we are quick."

Hurriedly leaving the shelter of their doorway, they ran down the deserted street, shoulder to shoulder, in the direction of the gateway.

What had seemed a deserted city now appeared to be full of danger, and they knew that enemies might be lurking behind every ruined wall.

They had only a few more yards to go to reach the gate, when their way was suddenly barred by a crowd of dwarfs, who ran out from the buildings in front of them, and with levelled spears forced the party to stop.

"Stop!" cried Dr. Harland to the others of the party. "Don't attack; let me see if I can talk to them."

Holding his hands up as a sign of friendship, he advanced slowly towards the dwarfs, and began to address them in a native language. They chattered a lot in reply, but he could not make out what they were saying. He pointed to his friends, and then to the gateway, showing that he wanted to leave the town, and they evidently understood this, for they gesticulated amongst themselves, and gabbled excitedly.

Then one of them came forward, and laid his spear on the ground in a token of friendship.

"It's all right!" said the doctor. "Come along slowly, and don't appear

frightened. Keep your revolvers ready, all the same!"

As they approached the natives, the latter shrank back, as though afraid of these white men. Some of them turned away, and slunk back into the shadow of a doorway.

Suddenly Mike caught Mr. Sherwell excitedly by the arm.

"Look, sor!" he cried. "Look at that ugly spalpeen slinking away there."

"Why, what about him, Mike?"

"What about him, sor? Can't you see he has got something like a map tattooed on his back?"

"A native with a map tattooed on his back," whispered Mr. Sherwell excitedly. "Are you sure, Mike?"

"Bedad, yes, sor! If it had been meself tattooed there I couldn't be surer than I am!"

"Where is he now?" asked the leader.

"I watched him slink away with the others," answered Mike, "and if he isn't with them, he's with someone else!"

"We mustn't lose sight of him," said the producer. "We must get at him somehow, Mike."

Word was quickly passed to Dick and Larry what Mike had seen, and everyone, as they stood keenly on the alert, kept a sharp look-out for the tattooed native to reappear.

Presently Rackett, who had been a little way behind, came up to Mr. Sherwell. He heard the news about the tattooed native, and was instantly on the watch for a chance to take a snapshot of the man. He had a small hand-camera with him.

There was absolute stillness as the party stood, waiting for something to happen. The situation was a tense one. None knew from one instant to another

(Continued on page 20.)

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what was going to happen. At any moment there might be sudden treachery among the dwarfs, and a sheaf of spears come hurtling towards them.

Suddenly Larry clutched Dick by the arm and pointed to his left. Everyone looked in that direction. An exclamation of astonishment escaped Dick at what he saw.

A large snake, of a particularly venomous species, was writhing and twisting its way right across their path, in the direction where some of the dwarfs had disappeared.

The next instant a native ran out from behind a rock-house brandishing a spear. Evidently he did not see the reptile, for he ran on until he was almost right on it.

Suddenly he gave vent to a scream of terror as he saw it.

The snake instantly reared its neck and head, and was about to strike, when Dick whipped out his revolver, and, taking quick aim, fired.

It was a splendid shot, and shattered the reptile's head.

For a few moments the serpent coiled and twisted in its death agony. Then it lay still.

The native looked round, scared and

frightened. Then gave vent to a shout of joy, and all the other dwarfs, who had taken cover, ran out, with cries of delight and surprise.

"Well done, Dick!" cried Mr. Sherwell. "You've done the trick. The whole tribe of them will regard you as a wonder, and your act will reflect credit on the lot of us."

The native who had been saved from the snake pointed to the whites, turned to his comrades, and apparently told them that one of the strangers had saved his life.

The next instant a swarm of dwarfs appeared, all lowering their spears, and holding up their right hands in token of friendship.

At a word from one who was evidently a chief, they all threw down their spears, and stood before Mr. Sherwell and the boys unarmed.

The chief pointed to the native who had been saved from the snake, and he came forward. They both approached the producer, and prostrated themselves before him.

Mr. Sherwell pointed to Dick, and the two natives then bowed before him, both apparently comprehending that he had killed the reptile.

The producer unfastened a spare belt he carried, and handed it to the chief, who received it with exclamations of delight and surprise.

The chief then beckoned to another dwarf who stood some distance away. He instantly obeyed the summons, and approached the whites.

As he made his obeisance, he bowed so low that Mr. Sherwell, with an exclamation of astonishment, noted that he had actually a map tattooed on his back. Unfortunately, the dwarf was too far away from Rackett to take a snapshot.

"The map, it is the map—I am almost sure of it!" whispered the leader to Mike. "You were right, my lad!"

The boys were intensely excited. What was going to happen?

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