

EVERY WEEK A LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL TALE!

The Magnet Library

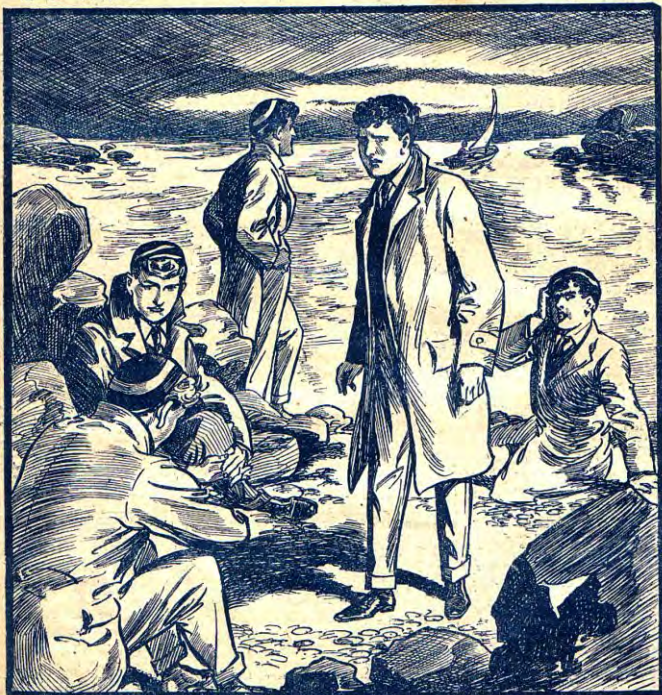
With which is incorporated
The Greyfriars Herald.

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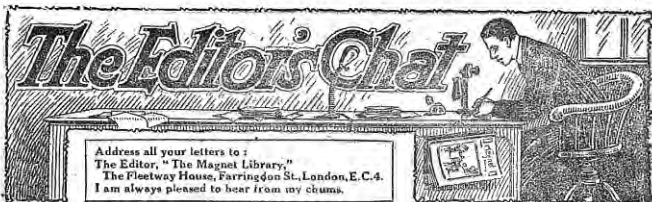
No. 686. Vol. XVIII.

April 2nd, 1921.



HARRY WHARTON & CO. ARE MAROONED!

(A Serious Situation for the Chums of Greyfriars. See our Long-Complete School Story in this issue.)



Address all your letters to:
The Editor, "The Magnet Library,"
 The Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.
 I am always pleased to hear from my chums.

FOR NEXT MONDAY

For next Monday we have another magnificent programme. The grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled:

"WAKING UP ALONZO!" By Frank Richards.

Alonzo Todd, known to the Removites as the Duffer of Greyfriars, is made the subject of jokes, japes, and attacks by Skinner & Co., the cads of the Remove. Even Billy Bunter, never ready to put up his hands at the best of times, takes part in the baiting of the Duffer. Then it is that Harry Wharton & Co.—and especially Bob Cherry, the fighting-man of the Remove—decide that it is time Alonzo woke up. They talk to him very seriously, and are successful in

"WAKING UP ALONZO!"

to such an extent that Skinner & Co. regret having interfered with the Duffer. So, as might be expected, they plot a plot, which succeeds just a little too well for their liking.

This is a story which will greatly amuse any readers, so they can look forward to next week's issue of the MAGNET LIBRARY.

THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD" SUPPLEMENT.

Next week's supplement will be packed full of fun and fiction, as usual, and full of interest from the first word to the last. There will be included another of Peter Todd's wonderful stories of "Terrors Shocko, Detective."

Harry Wharton will contribute his usual article, and the intangible Billy Bunter will fill a column of the supplement in his own wonderful way.

Readers are asked to tell all their chums of the grand supplement which appears in the MAGNET every week. They will be doing them a good turn, and doing me a good turn at the same time.

THIS WEEK'S "POPULAR."

This week's issue of the "Popular"—on sale at all newsagents on Friday morning—will contain another fine bundle of school stories. The story of Harry Wharton & Co. is written by Frank Richards, and is entitled "The Boy with a Secret." There is another long complete school story of Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood, entitled "Spoofo!" written by Owen Conquest.

Then there is a grand four-page supplement entitled "Billy Bunter's Weekly." Readers of the MAGNET have already enjoyed the wonderful stories and articles which Billy Bunter manages to get for his "Weekly." And, although Billy has taken his paper to the pages of the THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 686.

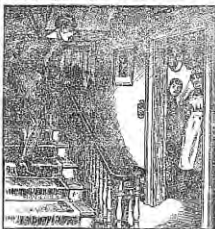
"Popular," the stories are just as good as when they appeared in this paper.

There is also an easy competition for money prizes to be won every week, particulars of which will be found in the Chat page. I am reproducing on this page the cover of this week's issue of the "Popular," so that you can make no mistake when you go for a copy on Friday.

Replies in Brief.

"Kath and Ally."—The Famous Five have always been great friends with the

LOOK OUT! For this on the book-stalls on Friday.



"THE BOY WITH A SECRET!" By FRANK RICHARDS.

A Long Complete School Tale.

girls at Cliff House School. I will see what Mr. Richards says about a story dealing with a dance at Greyfriars. Doubtless a Scout story will appear during the summer. Many thanks for your letter. I'd like another, please!

"A Subscriber" (Vancouver, B.C.)—The idea of binding cases has not been given up, my chum. The matter is still under consideration.

Beaty (Manchester).—Harry Wharton says that you must "ask him another." He points out that many of the adventures which have befallen him took far less than a week from start to finish, so that probably accounts for some of the time.

"Two Losers of Bob" (Dundee).—You want the MAGNET to be a daily paper

instead of a weekly periodical. I told Mr. Richards, and I verily believe twenty grey hairs appeared at the mere thought! The answer to your first question is "No." The boys of Greyfriars attend chapel on Sundays. Bob Cherry has never told us anything about being in love with any particular girl at Cliff House. We think he loves them all!

"Fred" (Hafslund).—I will ask Mr. Frank Richards what he thinks about your suggestion. It's more than likely he will do as you ask! Write to me again when you've a few minutes to spare.

M. Hurdwick (Cardiff).—Thanks very much for your letter. I am glad you like the MAGNET in its present form. Thanks, too, for trying to get new readers.

Charles Davis (Middlesbrough).—You wish me "every kind of luck" with my papers. That's very nice of you, Charles. Same to you and many of 'em, as Bob Cherry would say. I want more keen readers like you. "Billy Bunter's Weekly" is in the "Popular," so I don't suppose he wants to bring it to the MAGNET LIBRARY again just yet.

Correspondence.

Henry Tacey, 51, Donkerly Road, Windmill Hill, Bristol, wishes to hear from readers overseas interested in stamp collecting, as that is his favourite hobby.

Wm. Cleary, 52, Ravine Grove, Plumstead Common, S.E., wishes to hear from an amateur journalist willing to contribute to an amateur magazine.

Wm. A. Clements, 4, Alfred Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham, sends me a copy of his sparkling little paper, "Nuts and Bolts." It is one of the best amateur magazines I have seen.

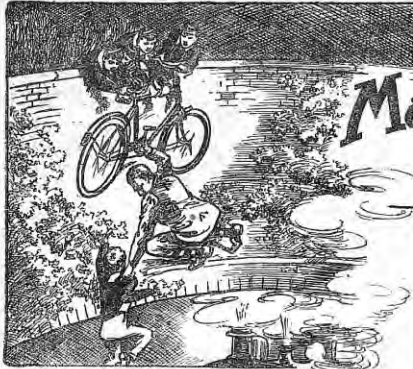
Earl Thompson, Box 15, Vanport, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., sends me a very letter of congratulation about the "Popular." He says it is a wonderful paper, and he would be glad to correspond with readers of it, or the MAGNET, in any part of the world.

J. Peimell, 760, Ashton New Road, Clayton, Manchester, wishes to correspond with a reader of the Companion Papers in Australia.

"Alteration."

Alan Hyslop, 614 Cathcart Road, Govanhill, Glasgow, tells me he has read the MAGNET for years, and he considers it the finest paper he has ever met. He goes on to say that he has discovered that out of the word "alteration" seventy-nine other words can be formed. Can any other reader beat this fine record?

Your Editor



Marooned!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Startling Adventure!

BETTER light up, you claps!" As he spoke, Harry Wharton sprang from the saddle of his machine, and his chums, Frank Nugent, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Horree Singh, promptly did likewise.

Over the quiet countryside the wintry dusk was deepening rapidly. It was close on lock-up time at Greyfriars, and the chums of the Remove had been riding hard to get home before Gosing shut the gates.

They were still some distance from the school, however, and though stopping to light up meant a few minutes' delay, Harry Wharton considered trouble with Mr. Quelch preferable to the risk of trouble with P.-c. Toter, the Friarale constable.

The juniors leaned their machines up against the parapet of the railway bridge on which they stood, and proceeded to light up. Four of the juniors had soon finished the job; but Bob Cherry was not so fortunate.

In his haste he had turned the wick of his lamp the wrong way, and it had dropped into the oil-reservoir.

"Blow it!" growled Bob, in disgust, taking the lamp from the bracket. "Lend me a blessed pocket-knife, somebody. I shall have to fish for the beastly thing."

"My hat!"

The sudden exclamation came from Frank Nugent, who had been idly watching the progress of a goods train brought to a halt almost beneath the bridge by a twinkling red light in the distance.

It was only a momentary stoppage, for almost at once the red signal changed to green, indicating that the line was clear, and the goods train rumbled and clanked on again.

But in that brief halt Frank Nugent's keen eyes had witnessed a curious happening.

From a tarpaulin-covered waggon some way along the line, he saw a dusky figure emerge, and after glancing stealthily about him, climb over the high

side of the waggon and drop to the ground.

"What's the matter, Frank?" asked Harry Wharton quickly.

Frank Nugent leaned over the parapet and stared hard along the dusky permanent-way.

"I fancy I spotted a chap drop from that goods-train," he muttered, without looking round. "It looked jolly suspicious, and— Yes, there he is!"

Frank's chums glanced quickly along the line, and they were just in time to see the dim figure of a man scramble swiftly up the steep embankment and vanish amongst the trees and bushes at the top.

"My hat!" said Harry Wharton.

"That was jolly queer!"

"Only a tramp, or somebody Leen having a joy-ride," suggested the practical Johnny Bull.

"I'm not so sure about that," said Frank Nugent, fixing his chums rather queerly. "I didn't see the merchant

glowly; but he seemed to be dressed in a sort of uniform—like a soldier, or—"

Frank hesitated—"or a courier."

"Great pip!"

Harry Wharton gave a start.

"That's quite possible," he said, with a frown. "He struck me as being a queer-looking man—"

Harry Wharton was interrupted.

From the dusky lane ahead of them came a sudden deep-throated cry. It was followed by sounds of a struggle and loud cries for help.

"Come along!" gasped Harry Wharton, in alarm. "It's that fellow—he's attacked somebody!"

That same thought had occurred to the others also, and they dropped their bikes and followed Harry as he dashed in the direction whence the significant sounds proceeded.

In less than a minute they came upon the scene with a rush.

It was the man they had seen, undoubtedly—a stiff-built, clean-shaven man, with close-cropped, iron-grey hair; and he was, as Frank Nugent had suspected, wearing the garb of a convict.

He was crouching down with one knee pressed in the chest of a second man—a

man lying prostrate on the muddy ground, shabbily dressed, with a thin, yellow face, and close-set, cunning eyes, that now held a light of terror in them.

"You bound!" the convict was ranting hoarsely. "I've got something to settle with you! For three long years—"

He got no farther.

At that moment Harry Wharton & Co. dashed up breathlessly, and the fellow spun round with a gasp of alarm.

"Collar him!" shouted Harry Wharton.

Without hesitation the five juniors flung themselves upon the startled convict, and he went whirling over, and rolled over and over in the mud of the lane.

They were upon him again in a moment; and in grim silence the fellow struggled desperately to escape; but he was helpless in the grasp of many hands.

"Let me go!" he panted hoarsely, endeavoring to struggle at last. "Let me go, young gent, for pity—"

"Not likely!" gasped Harry Wharton. "We've got you, and—"

"Hullo!"

The junior broke off in astonishment.

At that moment the shabbily-dressed man they had rescued sprang to his feet, and, without a word of thanks to his rescuers, he took to his heels in the direction of Friarale.

"Well, my hat!" breathed Harry Wharton angrily. "The ungrateful rascal! He's left us to fight it out! Stop him, Bob!"

As he shouted the warning, Wharton sprang forward; but too late. The eyes of the juniors had for the moment, been following the man they had rescued as he dashed along the road, and in that moment the convict had seen his chance and taken it.

He wrenched himself free from his captor's grasp, and, dodging Bob's outstretched hand, darted off towards the bridge.

"After him!" roared Harry Wharton. But Bob Cherry was already speeding in pursuit. Bob was one of the speediest boys in the Remove; moreover, he was

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lightly shod, whilst the convict was hampered by his heavy boots.

At the bridge Bob was barely a yard behind, and without stopping, he made a tremendous leap on to the man's broad shoulders, hoping to bring his quarry to earth.

But the intention miscarried.

Though taken fairly in his stride, the man merely staggered a pace, and buried, against the bridge parapet, swinging the clinging junior with him.

And then a terrible thing happened.

To an effort to save himself, the man flung out his arm wildly, and his elbow caught Bob Cherry in the pit of the stomach. Half-winded, the junior released his grasp, and fell sprawling across the rounded top of the parapet.

For one breathless moment he hung there, and then, clutching vainly at the smooth stonework, he slid over the edge and vanished from sight.

It had all happened so swiftly that when Harry Wharton and the others rushed up, they found the convict staring stupidly before him as if stunned.

"What—what?" began Harry Wharton. "Good heavens! Has—" "It—it was an accident," said the man huskily, his face ashen. "Heaven knows I would never have harmed the lad! I—I—"

He broke off. Stepping to the parapet, he glanced over, and next instant he uttered a gasp of relief—a gasp echoed by Harry Wharton and the others as they also peered fearfully over.

Like the convict, they had expected, and dreaded, to see their chum lying in a huddled heap on the gleaming tablets below; but they saw nothing of the sort.

Instead, they saw the white, strained face of their chum uplifted towards them. He was clinging desperately by the fingers alone to a ledge low down the bridge face; and, from the torn strands of ivy above his head, it was fairly clear what had happened.

He had clutched at the ivy to save himself. It had not held him, but it had broken his fall and enabled him to get a grip on the narrow stone ledge. He was now hanging, his arms and head against the arch of the bridge, his body and legs dangling idle space.

"Thank Heaven!" breathed Harry Wharton shakily. "There's—there's still a chance—"

"A very good chance if we're speedy!" snapped the convict. In that moment he seemed to change from a hunted animal to a man—a man of action. "Quick, one of those bikes—add hold on for your life!"

As he spoke the convict lifted one of the machines, and held it over the wall; and, though they did not grasp the man's plan, the juniors found themselves obeying his further commands without question.

Wharton and Hurree Singh took hold of the top bar of the frame, while Bob gripped the saddle and Nugent the handlebars. Together they held on like grim death, whilst the convict swung himself without hesitation over the parapet.

And even as he did so came the shrill whistle of an engine in the distance—a sound that struck a chill into the hearts of all. And round the curve appeared first the headlights, and then a long line of brilliantly-lit carriages.

It was the evening express from London. In less than a minute it would dash under the bridge; and full in its path was the swinging, helpless form of Bob Cherry.

As if that junior realised his terrible peril, they heard his voice raised appealingly from below them.

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"Help! Quick!" he cried faintly. "I—I can't hold on much longer, and—"

"Hold on, laddie!" yelled the convict.

"We'll soon have you out of that!"

The express was now barely fifty yards away, and the horrified juniors could feel their hearts thumping against their ribs in that awful moment. But the convict did not falter.

Swiftly, yet steadily, to avoid any undue strain on the junior's arms and wrists, he lowered himself down the framework of the bicycle until his feet rested on the narrow ledge within a few inches of Bob Cherry's numbed fingers.

They saw him twine his strong fingers in the crank-wheel of the bicycle, and, stooping swiftly, grasp Bob Cherry's coat-collar in a grip of iron.

"Hold fast!" he yelled warningly. The juniors felt a tug that almost dislocated their arms; but they held on with the desperation of despair.

Next instant the express was upon them with a rush, and a roar of sound, and what happened in the next few seconds the juniors could not see for the blinding cloud of spark-riven smoke and steam that enveloped them.

Through this they had a fleeting vision of flashing lights beneath them, and then the express was gone.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Fresh Developments!

THE riot of sound died away with startling suddenness, and then, as the smoke lifted, the juniors gave vent to deep gasps of joy and heartfelt relief.

Below them, his heels set squarely on the precarious ledge, his back pressed flat against the face of the bridge, stood the convict; and by his side was Bob Cherry.

Both were clinging desperately to the bicycle above their heads; the convict's face was strained and white; Bob Cherry seemed to be in a half-fainting condition.

But they were safe—for the time being, at least, they were safe.

The danger was not all over, however. "Hold fast, lads!" came the man's deep voice.

He said something to Bob Cherry, who nodded, and, pulling himself together, took a firmer grip of the machine.

Helped by the free hand of the convict, he hauled himself up and swarmed over the framework of the bicycle. The machine swayed and shook, but the junior's grip held firm, and as Bob Cherry came within reach, Harry Wharton disengaged a hand and grasped his chum.

Next moment Bob had swarmed over the parapet, and was standing safe on the bridge.

"All right?" came the convict's voice anxiously.

"Thank Heaven—yes!" panted Harry Wharton. "And now, you—"

Whether the man felt his weight would be too much for the juniors, or whether he was doubtful as to how the juniors would receive him, the juniors did not know. But, to their astonishment, he made no attempt to follow the boy whose life he had saved.

For a moment he stood glancing about him, and then he released his grip on the bicycle, and began to edge his way, sideways, along the narrow ledge.

Breathlessly, the startled juniors watched as he moved, step by step, hugging the ivy-clad wall convulsively. He reached a spot at the side of the bridge where a projecting buttress stopped further progress, and then, without hesitation, he leaped outwards and downwards.

It was only a six-foot drop, and he landed with a crash into a clump of bushes that grew on the sloping embankment, and, losing his balance, rolled sprawling until brought up against the signal-wires in the gutter at the bottom.

Obviously the man was not hurt, for he sprang to his feet immediately. After a sharp glance upwards he scrambled back up the embankment, and, reaching the top, was swallowed up amidst the dark trees.

The juniors lifted the bicycle on to the bridge again, and then they looked at each other queerly. Harry Wharton broke the silence.

"Well, my lad!" he breathed. "That chap may be a convict, and, for all we know, he may be a queer character. But he's a jolly brave man!"

"The bravest fellow is truly terrific!" assented Hurree Janmet Singh gravely. "But how is my esteemed chum feeling now?"

Bob Cherry, who was slowly recovering himself, gave a ghost of his old grin.

"I—I'm all right," he said shakily. "But I thought I was a goner that time. It was a close call, but that chap yanked me up in the nick of time. Another second, and—"

"And he's cleared off without giving us a chance to thank him," put in Frank Nugent, as Bob broke off.

"I expect he thought we might try to capture him again—even after this," said Harry slowly. "I suppose we ought to report this to the police. But—"

Wharton paused; but his chums knew what he meant. They eyed each other uneasily. The man was undoubtedly an escaped convict, and it was their duty to report that such a man was in the vicinity.

But how could they do so, after what had happened?

"I don't know what you chaps think about it," said Bob Cherry, in a low tone. "But I'm hanged if I will give him away. But for him I should be mince-meat now. I won't raise a finger against him."

"That's how I feel about it," said Johnny Bull. "I believe he's a decent sort, and I wish him luck!"

"Same here!" nodded Frank Nugent; and the Nabob of Blunipar added a rider to the effect that the "sameness" was terrific.

"Very well," said Wharton, after a doubtful pause. "We'll keep mum about it, and give the poor beggar a chance. And now, we'd better be moving. What about your lamp, Bob?"

Bob Cherry's lamp was found, and he proceeded to "fish" for the submerged wick. It was a messy job; but they fixed it up at last. The lamp was lit, and the juniors mounted their machines and started for home.

The narrow escape of Bob Cherry had subdued them all, and they were longing for the warmth and lights of Greymouth.

Harry Wharton rode in front, thoughtful and preoccupied. He was thinking of the convict's apparently unprovoked attack on the sorrow-faced stranger in the lane, and he was not at all sure that they were doing the right thing in keeping the strange affair to themselves.

For ten minutes they rode on in the gathering darkness. Suddenly Harry Wharton gave a muttered exclamation, and, calling to his chums to dismount, he slowed down and jumped from the saddle.

"What's the matter?" asked Johnny Bull as they crowded round their leader.

"I saw somebody—that convict chap, I believe—slosh across into the garden of that cottage!" muttered Harry tensely. "We'd better investigate this."

"But—" began Bob Cherry.

"I know what you're going to say,"



Harry Wharton stepped into the kitchen and pushed the coat and hat at the dazed convict. "Get these on," he urged, frantically. "It's your last chance! Make for the Black Cavern on the beach, and Sam or one of us will bring food and news." (See Chapter 3.)

Bob, that we ought to let him alone. But, despite what he's done, we can't shut our eyes to the fact that he's an escaped convict, and probably desperate. We don't know what mischief he may be up to. He may—There he is!"

At Harry Wharton's tense whisper his chains spun round, and were just in time to see the cottage door open and a flood of light shoot out into the darkness.

They had a fleeting glimpse of a stealthy figure slipping through the doorway, and then the light vanished as the door closed upon him.

"The junior's heart's thrilled," muttered Harry, leaving his machine against the hedge. "Come on! We'll see what he's up to first, though."

Even Bob Cherry was scared now. He followed the others, and a moment later all were standing in the little square of garden.

A light was burning in both upper and lower windows of the cottage. The blinds of the lower were not drawn; and, after a slight hesitation, Harry stepped across and peered cautiously through. Strong or no spring, he felt the urgency of the matter justified it.

What he expected to see he hardly knew; but he was not prepared for what he did see.

The convict was there right enough. He was standing by the table, with one arm flung affectionately round the shoulders of a boy—a boy whose lack was to the window, but whose figure was familiar to him.

Harry Wharton's chains joined him silently at the window. Even as they did so the boy nodded his head quickly, and, moving across the little room, he disappeared up a staircase that abutted from the living-room.

The convict waited, with haggard face and bowed head, until the boy returned,

and, in response to a nod from him, he disappeared in his turn up the narrow staircase.

When he had gone the boy flung himself into a chair, and buried his head in his arms. His shoulders shook, and his sobs came clearly to the watchers outside.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at each other in dumbfounded amazement.

"Well, my hat!" breathed Bob Cherry at last, in a curious, husky whisper. "What does it all mean, Harry? Can—can that chap be Sam Ashley's father?"

Harry Wharton nodded without speaking.

The boy—Sam Ashley—was well-known to the juniors. He was employed on the outside staff at Greyfriars as help to Joseph Mimble, the gardener. And a vague recollection came suddenly to Harry, then, of having heard somewhere that the boy's father was in prison—was a convict.

Then this must indeed be his father!

But—but I always thought that his father was dead—that young Sam kept the home going," whispered Johnny Bull, in surprise.

"So he does; but I don't think his father's dead," said Harry quietly. "I seem to remember someone saying that his father was in prison. But we mustn't stay here, chaps. We've already seen more than we ought to have seen. Let's get away, for goodness' sake!"

With the words, Harry Wharton turned from the window and moved towards the gate. He had scarcely reached it when he tripped over something—a wooden outflung hands sending the gate to with a crash.

There was a startled cry from within the cottage. Next moment the door flew open, sending a flood of light across the path, and (full upon the prostrate form of

Harry Wharton. In the doorway, a startled look on his tear-stained face, stood Sam Ashley.

He stared, astounded, as Harry Wharton rose painfully to his feet.

"Who—what— Why, it's you, Master Wharton!" he faltered. "What are—"

He broke off, and paled, as he suddenly saw the juniors standing by the window.

"You—you bin looking through that window?" he gasped. "You—you seen all—"

He broke off again, and there was an uncomfortable silence. Harry Wharton flushed.

"I—I can see you've seen him—you seen my father!" choked the lad hoarsely. "What you going to do about it, Master Wharton? You won't let—ha—clutched Harry appealingly by the arm—"you won't tell the police? You won't give 'em away?"

Harry Wharton did not speak—he could not, for the moment.

"Listen, Master Wharton," begged Sam Ashley, taking the silence for refusal. "Mother's ill—dangerously ill. And as soon as father knew about it, he vowed he'd escape and come to her; and all he's done it. He came to-night, and all he wants is to stay with her till she's out of danger. If he can 'ide here without danger, he swears 'e'll give himself up when the danger's past. For pity's sake, don't tell on him, Master Wharton!"

Harry Wharton cleared his throat with an effort.

"You've no need to worry, Sam," he said gently. "We certainly won't give your father away, especially after hearing this. We've already met him. He saved Cherry's life, and we aren't likely to harm him."

"And you can thank him for me for what he did at the bridge. He'll know what we mean," added Bob Cherry quickly.

The lad's eyes glistened.

"I don't know what 'e's done," he said gratefully. "But I can trust you, Master Wharton. If you'll come inside I'll—"

"Haven't time—we're frightfully late already!" muttered Wharton hastily. "But we'll see you in the morning, Sam."

The boy thanked them huskily, and watched them mount their bikes and ride away. They had told him the secret was safe, and he was satisfied. He knew the word of any one member of the Famous Five was his bond.

"Poor beggar!" muttered Harry Wharton, as they sped down the lane. "I'm afraid our keeping silent won't make much difference. The bobbies are bound to be on his track soon, and he'll be collared as sure as fate."

His chums nodded without speaking, and they knew there would be trouble with Mr. Quelch when they arrived at Geoffrey's. But they were not thinking of that. They were thinking of the humble home they had just left, and of the grievous trouble there, and they wondered what the morrow would bring.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

IMMEDIATELY after breakfast the following morning, Harry Wharton & Co. hurried out of the dining-room and went in search of Sam Ashley.

The strange affair of the previous evening was still fresh in the juniors' minds—indeed, they could scarcely think of anything else. But, though they were full of their exciting adventure, they kept it to themselves. They had given their word to Sam Ashley to keep the secret, and they intended to keep it.

But amongst themselves they had discussed the matter from every point of view. And the more they considered the situation the less they liked it. They did not want the convict to be captured. They hoped he would be allowed to remain at the cottage with his sick wife, to be with her in her hour of need—to be at hand when most needed. And yet in their hearts they knew that this was impossible. They knew that the tentacles of the law would soon close round that humble cottage in Friarlane Lane—perhaps had already done so.

And Harry Wharton had good reason to fear that that had happened. They could not forget the convict's attack on the pedestrian in Friarlane. They could not understand that part of the affair at all. But they knew it was a mad act, to say the least of it. The man undoubtedly would report such a matter to the police without delay, and it seemed impossible that Ashley could still be free.

Anxious to know the worst, the five juniors proceeded to the rear of the Head's garden. At that time in the morning young Sam could usually be found attending to the fires in the hot-houses. But as they reached the fence and looked over, they could see no signs of the boy.

Joseph Mimble, the husband of Mrs. Mimble, the hickshop dame, was visible, and Harry Wharton called to him. "Is Sam Ashley about, Mimble?" he asked. "We just want a word with him."

The gardener ambled across to them and shook his head.

"He ain't come yet, Master Wharton," he said. "It's the first time I ever

knowed 'im to be late. He's a good lad, and ain't the sort as dodges work when there's work to be done. But I expects it's 'cause his mother's ill. He's a good lad to his mother, and—"

"He keeps the home-going, I believe?" nodded Wharton.

"That 'e does. Ever since his father went to—"

He stopped abruptly.

"Yes, we've heard something about that," said Harry meaningly. "By the way, what was the trouble with Sam's father? What did he do? I forget."

"Well, it ain't a thing I like talking about," said Mimble, with some hesitation. "But I know you ain't the sort to 'arm the lad, and I don't mind telling you. Sam's father got five years for burglary. He took part with a fellow named Trent in the theft of some valuable curiosities—Mimble probably meant curies—from Popper Court three years ago."

"My hat!" breathed Wharton, almost to himself. "I didn't think it was as bad as that!"

"It was bad enough," said Mimble, shaking his head. "And nobody was more sure than me what knowed 'im well. 'E was as honest a man as any till that happened."

"Then there's no doubt he was guilty?"

"I dunno. It's hard to say. You see, he was caught in the woods with the bag of valuables in his hand. The other fellow wasn't caught until next day, and as he gave himself up quietly 'e only got three years. But Daniel, like a fool, resisted capture. He knocked a footman down, and so got a heavier sentence."

"All the stolen stuff was recovered, then?"

"No fear! Afterwards they found that a very valuable picture was missin', it 'ad bin cut clean away from the frame. A palooka! worth a thousand of pounds, it was called a rubicon, or summat."

"Rubens?" suggested Wharton, with a smile.

"That's it. Anyways, Trent swore 'e knowed nothin' about it, and though Sir 'Eon offered a big reward, it ain't never turned up to this day. That's the story. But, of course, it ain't got nothin' to do with young Sam. 'E can't help what 'is father done."

"Of course not," said Harry quietly. "Thanks for telling us this, Mimble. We were rather—rather curious."

The juniors strolled away, thoughtful and disappointed. The story had shown the convict to be a desperate character, who had evidently deserved his sentence. But it did not lessen their sympathy with Sam Ashley and his mother, for all that.

"So that's the truth," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Well, from what I saw of the chap, I wouldn't have thought it. But that doesn't alter the fact that we owe him a lot. Anyways, as Sam hasn't turned up I'm afraid his father's been collared. I vote we trot along to the cottage and see if we can pick up some news."

"I was going to suggest the same," said Bob Cherry.

There was still a good half-hour before morning lessons, and a moment later the Famous Five swung through the gates and started at a trot along Friarlane Lane.

They arrived, breathless, at the cottage, and at Harry's suggestion went round to the back door, and Harry Wharton knocked gently. There was a moment's wait, and then Sam Ashley cautiously opened the door. He stared at them in startled surprise.

"What—what's the—"

"It's all right, Sam," said Harry

quickly. "We've just come along to see how things are. Is your father safe?"

"Yes, Master Wharton. But what—"

"Good! But look here, Sam," said Harry earnestly. "Does your father realise the risk he's running staying here—that this is about the first place they'll search for him? If—"

"He knows it can't last for long," was the low answer. "But—but mother's worse, and he sez he won't leave her. He won't go till they drag him away."

Wharton frowned and nodded. He could quite understand how the mother's anxiety and desire to be with his wife at such a time had rendered him reckless of his own safety.

For some moments longer the Famous Five discussed the matter with young Sam, and then they left him.

The juniors had barely stepped through the little wicket gate into Friarlane Lane, however, when Bob Cherry stopped with a startled exclamation.

Coming towards the cottage from the direction of Friarlane were three men. They were some distance away, and, as far as the boys could see, two of the men were strangers. But there was no mistaking the third. His figure and gait were too familiar to the Greyfriars juniors for that. It was Police-constable Cooper. Harry Wharton acted impulsively.

"My hat! It's the police at last!" he said swiftly. "Quick! Get back! They're coming here, without a doubt. We must warn Ashley."

Full of alarm, the juniors dashed to the back of the cottage. As Harry knocked sharply, the door opened, and Sam Ashley faced them again.

"The police are coming!" panted Wharton. "Quick! Warn your father!"

There was a sudden cry from within, and behind Sam appeared his father, who had evidently heard and recognised the juniors' voices. The man still wore his convict garb, and his face was grey.

"The police, did you say? His tone was harsh. "Where are they?"

"Coming along the lane. They'll be here in two minutes. Quick! You've still a chance! Take it! Cut across the fields—"

"I'm stayin' here," said the man doggedly, clenching his fists, savagely. "If they wants me they'll have to—"

"But you must, man! They'll drag you back to prison, and what chance will you have of seeing your wife then? Go while—"

Harry Wharton broke off, and stepping into the little kitchen, glanced round him quickly. On a peg behind the door was a raincoat and cap. He snatched them, and flung them to the dazed man.

"Get these on," urged Harry frantically. "It's your only chance! Make for the Black Cavern on the beach, and Sam, or one of us, will be living food and news of your wife. Go, for her sake!"

The man hesitated. He seemed to be dazed and half-demented. They could hardly believe that this was the same man who had shown such ruck and resource the previous evening. And then, as if Wharton's last words had gone home, he got into the coat quickly, and jammed the cap over his close-cropped hair.

"Good!" said Harry softly. "And now run for it! Keep to the hedges, and when you come to the caves, lie low. Quick! Here they come!"

There was the sound of heavy footsteps coming down the lane outside, and the convict hesitated no longer. He gave his son a last hopeless look, dashed down the garden, and squeezed through a gap in the hedge.



"Hello! What's up?" said Wharton, coming on the scene. Lying on his back on the linoleum was Harold Skinner. A thin trickle of red was running from his nose, and standing over him with clenched fists and blazing eyes was Sam Ashley. (See Chapter 4.)

"Now, we'd better look it," said Harry Wharton. "We'll hang round, though, for a bit, and see what happens. We shall have to risk being spotted."

"Right-ho!" The juniors nodded to Sam as he closed the door again, and then they sped down the garden and through the gap in the hedge. And not a moment too soon.

Even as they crouched down in hiding, the garden gate clicked, and through the hedge they saw the pompous form of P.E. Tozer, followed by the two men—evidently plain-clothes policemen—enter the garden. One of the men stayed, watchful, at the front of the cottage, while P.E. Tozer and the other hurried round to the back door, and the constable knocked loudly.

The juniors in hiding saw the door open, and almost instantly the men passed into the cottage. They were inside several minutes, and when they emerged both looked surried and disappointed.

"Looks as if the bird's flown!" The plain-clothes man's words reached the juniors clearly now. "What sort of chap was this who gave you the information, constable?"

"I didn't see him clearly, but he was tall and thin," grumped P.E. Tozer sourly.

"Then why on earth didn't you act on the information at once—last night?" snapped the man.

"Cause I didn't know no convict 'ad escaped," was the sullen reply—"not till you come this morning; and I thought it was an 'acc."

"Phaw!" The detective interred an exclamation of disgust, and glanced around him keenly. His eyes gleamed as they fell upon a ramshackle shed at the bottom of the garden.

"What about that shed?" he said sharply. "We'd better have a look inside."

He led the way down the garden, and the juniors waited anxiously. In the distance the convict's form was still visible, running in the shelter of a hedge two fields away. If the police happened to come through the gap in the hedge they could not fail to see him.

Breathlessly they watched the two reach the shed. The key was in the lock, and, turning it, the detective flung open the door and stepped into the gloomy interior, closely followed by P.E. Tozer.

The boys heard them moving boxes and rummaging inside, and suddenly Bob Cherry gave a chuckle.

Before his chums could grasp his intentions, he slipped through the gap and stepped softly to the door of the shed. He grasped it, and banging it to, turned the key in the lock. Almost instantly from within came an alarmed shout, followed by a loud hammering on the door.

"Good for you, Bob, you rascal!" grinned Harry Wharton. "They'll be safe there until Ashley gets clear. And now we'll make ourselves scarce."

And next moment, with the thumping and shouting of the imprisoned men raging in their ears, the grinning juniors were making for Greyfriars.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's Idea!

DURING morning lessons the juniors' thoughts were full of the escaped convict, to the detriment of their work and the subsequent wrath of Mr. Quelch, their Form-master.

Harry Wharton, especially, looked worried and uneasy. Now the excitement was over, he could look back on what they had done, and see it all in its true perspective. They had not only failed in their duty to the public by not at once reporting the matter to the proper quarter, but they had now openly helped the fugitive—they had enabled the convict to escape.

It was a serious matter obstructing the police in the execution of their duty. Harry was well aware of that. True, they had some excuse—they had done what they had from generous motives. They had not only acted out of gratitude to the man for his brave rescue of Bob Cherry, and because the man's son—though not one of themselves—was on the staff of Greyfriars, but also out of deep compassion for the man's wife in her illness.

But the police were not likely to accept such excuse, and they knew that if their part of the affair came out they would have to face trouble—serious trouble.

Still, for all that, not one of the five regretted what they had done. They could not forget what the capture of Ashley would have meant to his sick wife. To have been dragged away from her again, and at such a critical time, would probably have had tragic results.

The Famous Five came out of the Form-room that morning with a crop of lines to their credit. But not one of the Five gave lines a thought—not then. And Wharton's first words as they emerged into the passage were on the subject that was uppermost in their minds just then.

"I've been thinking the business over, you chaps," he muttered seriously. "Hux is struck you want a hole we'll be in if Tozer spotted you this morning, Bob? He'll guess—"

"Blow Tozer! Never trouble trouble!" The MAGNET LIBRARY, No. 930.

"It'll trouble troubles you, Harry, old scout!" grinned the irrepressible Bob. "Anyway, I'm certain neither of them spotted me. I was behind the door, you know."

"I don't think so, either," put in Johnny Bull. "If Tozer had spotted us he'd have been along here before this."

"The aggressiveness is terrific!" purred Hurree Jagmeet Singh. "But why not see if the esteemed Sam has arrivedly come yet?"

"Good! We will," said Harry. "He'll tell us what happened after we left. I expect there was a jolly good old row."

The juniors bent their steps to the rear of the Head's garden in search of Sam Ashley. But again they were disappointed.

"No, 'e ain't come yet," said Joseph Mumble, shaking his head gravely, "an' I think I knows why. I suppose you ain't 'eard the news yet, Master Wharton?"

"What's that?" inquired Harry, with a sinking heart.

"That Sam's father's broken out of prison an' is 'anging round 'ere somewhere, though nobody knows how he got 'ere."

Wharton strove to hide the relief he felt. He had feared the news was indeed news to them—that the man had been recaptured.

"My hat!" he said, with affected surprise. "Who told you, Mumble?"

"Gosling did. He met Tozer in the village about an hour ago, and he told him. I expect this explains why the lad ain't come to-day."

"Very likely," agreed Harry. "Anyway, you might tell him I'd like to see him, if he does turn up."

The juniors turned away with mixed feelings. It was certain that P.-c. Tozer had not seen Bob, or he certainly would have told Gosling, the school porter, who was a crony of his. And they were not a little relieved.

As they wended their way indoors again Billy Bunter rolled up to them. His fat face was ablaze with excitement.

"I say you fellows," he panted, "have you heard—"

"That a convict has escaped, and that a certain fat body named Grunter has turned himself into a one-man-agency-for-the-propagation-of-the-gladdings? Now, we have," said Bob Cherry. "Yow roll off, you bullock of gas!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared at the look of disappointment and surprise on Bunter's fat features. As a matter of fact, Cherry's words were true enough. Billy Bunter had overheard Gosling and Mumble discussing the matter, and had immediately made it his business to spread the startling news to all and sundry.

"Oh really, Cherry," expostulated Bunter. "I didn't know you knew. But I say, Harry, old man—"

"Run away and play, Bunter."

"But look here, I bet you don't know who the blessed convict's son is," said Bunter, with a sniff. "What would you say, Harry, if I told you—that low cad Sam Ashley's father is—"

"I'd say shut your fat face and mind your own business," put in Cherry.

"Oh really, Cherry, I wasn't addressing you," said Bunter, with a lofty look. "I was addressing my pal, Harry. Look here, Harry, old chap—"

"Oh, buzz off, you fat ass!" snapped Harry Wharton.

"I was just going to ask a favour of you," went on Bunter, dismayed.

"Well, what is it?"

"I want you to let me have the key of the Remorse Dramatic Society's property box—"

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"The—the what?" gasped Harry Wharton. "But what for?"

"That's my little secret," grinned Bunter. "I should be a fool if I told you chaps. You'd go and queer my pitch—"

"Then I certainly won't give you the key; and, in any case, I don't keep it. Wibley has it, you ass—"

"But look here, you could easily get it, Harry," said Bunter persuasively.

"And, here, wait a bit. As you're a pal, Harry, I don't mind telling you what I want the key for. I want to disguise myself—"

"To disguise yourself?"

"Yes," said Bunter, blinking eagerly at the Famous Five. "You chaps know what a dah I am as an amateur detective—"

"His, ha, we do!"

"Well, I'm going to disguise myself, and track the convict down," said Bunter. "And if I don't rope in the reward—"

"Fallow! Who told you there was a reward offered?"

"Nobody; but there's bound to be one. I expect it'll be for at least a hundred quid. Get me the key, Harry, and—I'll tell you what I'm going to do," said Bunter generously. "I'll start a series of extensive feeds every week for the rest of the term. Now what do you think of that?"

"You—you ass!"

"I've thought it all out. Now what would an ordinary 'tec. do?" asked Bunter. "Why, he'd waste time fooling round looking for the blessed convict all over the shop. Well, those are not my methods. I'm going to—Bunter lowered his voice—"I'm going to watch young Sam."

"Young Sam?"

"Yes. I've worked it all out. He's bound to know where his father's hiding, and he's bound to take him food and stuff. That's where I get him. I'm going to dog him. I'm going to shadow him like a—like—a—"

"Oh, you are, are you?" said Harry Wharton grimly. "Well, you deserve a reward—a jolly good reward, if only for suggesting that. And you're going to get one, Billy. Now, you chaps?"

Bunter gave a jump.

"Here—I say—Leggo!"

But Billy Bunter's fierce yells and protests were unheeded. He was lifted in the grip of many hands and dropped again—hard—not once, but many times.

Then the Famous Five passed on to dinner, leaving the very amateur detective roaring.

The juniors found the dining-hall in a buzz of excitement. Billy Bunter had indeed done his propagandist work well, for the story of the escaped convict was on every tongue. That an escaped convict was at large in the neighbourhood was alone enough to cause a great deal of interest. But the fact that the wretched man was the father of a member of the school staff made it doubly exciting.

But while most of the fellows felt nothing but pity for Sam Ashley, there were others—fellows of Skinner's kidney—who had plenty of ill-natured things to say about a convict's son being at Greyfriars—even in the humble position of gardener's boy. And they said them—taking good care that Mr. Quelch, who was at the head of the table, did not hear them.

But the Famous Five heard, and though they could scarcely restrain their anger and scorn, they kept themselves

in hand. It was a half-day at Greyfriars, and they did not want to risk any more trouble with Mr. Quelch.

"Well, my hat!" growled Bob Cherry, as they trooped out at last. "I was very nearly ramming that cad Skinner's head in the soap, only we also should have been in the soup if I had. But what are we going to do with ourselves this afternoon, Harry?"

"I don't know," said Harry, contracting his brow. "I don't like leaving things as they are. I vote we go and see if Sam has turned up yet. Come along!"

The juniors went to their studies, and got their caps, and made made for out of doors. As they approached the hall, however, they heard a commotion, and saw a group of juniors standing in a circle there.

"Hallo! What's up?" said Harry. "Somebody scuffling? Well, I'm blessed!"

The Five stared in astonished alarm as they came up to the group.

Lying on his back on the linoleum was Harold Skinner. A thin trickle of red was running from his prominent nose, and his face was convulsed with rage. And standing over him, with clouded fets and blazing eyes, was Sam Ashley.

"Here, what's this mean?" gasped Harry, in alarm. "Sam, you fool, stop—"

"Let him alone, Wharton," said Vernon-Smith, with a grin. "Sam's only giving him what he asked for."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Peter Todd. "Let Sam finish the job."

Harry Wharton frowned. He saw what had happened at once. Skinner evidently had been taunting Sam about his father, and, naturally, the latter had upheld his father's honour in the only way he knew.

"He insulted my father!" said Sam Ashley hoarsely, feeling Harry's eyes upon him. "I expect I'll be sacked for it. But I wasn't going to 'ear 'im say things about my father."

Skinner glared up at him.

"I—I'll see you get sacked for this, you—you beastly cad," he muttered savagely. "I—I'll have my own back for this. I'll report to Mr. Quelch. You attacked me—"

"Yes, do Skinner," said Vernon-Smith pleasantly. "And I'll come with you as a witness. I'll tell him what you said—that Dr. Locke was a weak-minded old fool to allow a convict's son to be at Greyfriars. You said that, didn't you? Quelch would be pleased to hear that, and so would the Head. Come along; do it now, Skinner, dear."

Harold Skinner scowled furiously, and there was a chuckle. It wasn't likely that Skinner would go to Mr. Quelch with a witness like the Bouncer to back him up.

"Seems to me, you only got what you deserved, Skinner, you ill-natured cad," said Harry Wharton, frowning. "And now clear out, Sam, before anyone comes along."

The group broke up, and Harry and his chums followed Sam Ashley out into the Close. Skinner staggered to his feet, dabbing his nose savagely, and limped away. There was a look on Skinner's face that was not good to see. He had said he would have his own back off the unfortunate convict's son—and meant it.

And, though Skinner did not know it then, that chance was to come sooner than he expected.

(Continued on page 9.)

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The

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Election Snapshots.

By BOB CHERRY.

Rather early to talk of cricket, isn't it? But the election of a new cricket captain generally takes place several weeks before the season starts; and at the present moment the Remove is simply seething with excitement!

Don't ask me who is going to win! The sportsmen in the Form—the fellows who know what's what—the enterprising coves who want us to have a successful season—will vote for Wharton!

The champion clumps who desert the "old firm" at every available opportunity—the pudding-headed pumpkins who don't care whether we have a successful season or not, so long as Harry Wharton is made to take a back seat—will vote for Smith!

The dithering imbeciles who are always clamouring for new blood—the glibble idiots who believe all the tall stories about Jack Drake's cricketering prowess at St. Winifred's—the fatuous fatherlods who listen to Rodney's smooth, persuasive eloquence—will vote for Drake!

And the ignorant duffers who have bats in their belts—who don't know a cricket-ball from a mallet over—who want the welfare of the Remove to pass into the hands of a paddy porpoise in spectacles—will vote for Hunter!

I was having the other day to Alonso Todd, who intends to back Billy Hunter. I questioned Lenny concerning cricket, and he didn't know a thing about the game. He spoke of goals and full-backs and penalty kicks! "You cross as I snored," he said. "I don't believe you know what 'I snored' means!" "Oh, yes, I do, my dear Cherry!" murmured the guileless Alonso. "It means, 'let Hunter win!'" I promptly collapsed!

I also had a conversation with Wim Lang—another supporter of Hunter. You know jolly well that Hunter isn't a cricketer," I said. "Why are you are enough to vote for him?" "Because handsome Hunter gives me a share of postal-order—when it comes!" was the reply. Well, if ever there was a case of bribery and corruption which deserved to be brought before the Greyfriars police-court, it's this! Still, bribery and corruption isn't going to win the day, and I look forward with confidence to seeing Harry Wharton returned at the head of the poll!

EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

We live in stirring times! There is to be an election in the Remove this week. No, I haven't resigned the captaincy of the Form. It so happens that a cricket captain is wanted, and I've got to seek re-election. Whether I get the job again this season depends, of course, on the number of votes I bag.

There are three rivals in the field—two serious rivals, and one whose candidature is a standing joke.

Smithy intends to make a bold bid for the cricket captaincy, and so does Jack Drake, the fellow who came to us from St. Winifred's. Both are very popular fellows, and I shall have to look to my laurels.

The remaining candidate is W. G. Hunter! I'm afraid Remove cricket will become a farcical opera if Billy Hunter bosses the show.

A fancy I shall just about pull through, but it isn't going to be a walk-over. Smithy has a very large backing in the Remove; while Drake is an enterprising, go-ahead fellow who means business.

With all this excitement in the air, I seized the opportunity of publishing a Special Election Number of the "Greyfriars Herald."

There are some critics who will say that I've done this in order to advertise my candidature, and get fellows to vote for me. But, in order to be fair, I am allowing all the rival candidates to have a say in this issue. So you pay your money and take your choice, as the saying goes.

Of course, Bob Cherry is my right-hand man, and he is moving heaven and earth to bring about my re-election. I don't know where I should be without Bob, and happy indeed is the fellow who can boast such a loyal chum.

The other members of the Famous Five are doing their bit, too, and we are looking forward to election-day with chery confidence.

The electorate consists of forty-two fellows, and Billy Hunter's forecast of the result is as follows:

1st W. G. Hunter	... 55 votes
2nd H. Vernon-Smith	... 5 "
3rd Jack Drake	... 2 "
Also ran H. Wharton	... 0 "

We shall see!

Harry Wharton.

How to win an Election.

A few cheap tips for Unscrupulous Candidates.

By HAROLD SKINNER.

The forthcoming election of a new cricket captain for the Remove leaves me cold. I'm not a bit interested, and I don't care who gets the job, so long as it isn't Wharton. (Thanks!—Ed.)

Cricket is a played-out, prehistoric game that any really modern youth would scorn to play. The poet was quite right when he described cricketers as "flannelled fools." Fancy chasing a ball all the afternoon in the broiling sun, and calling it pleasure! Jove, I'd rather work a treadmill! (Which you probably will.—Ed.)

But I'm wandering from my subject. I want to advise those hardened readers without conscience—like myself—how they may win an election, should they ever have occasion to put up for one.

We will assume that I am interested in cricket, and that I am anxious to become skipper of the Remove team. Wharton, Drake, and Smithy are up against me as rival candidates. Well, the first thing I should do would be to draw up an announcement, and post it on the notice-board. Something of this sort:

"NOTICE!

A FREE PEE!

will be given in the Junior Common-room this evening at seven o'clock.

All are invited to come, and bring their own crickeryware.

COME EARLY, AND FRED AT SKINNER'S EXPENSE!"

Well, I'll wager that at least thirty fellows in the Remove would jump at my invitation. I should feed them well, and be careful to breathe up word concerning the election.

After the feed, however, when my guests were merry and bright—the ginger-pop having got into their heads—I should make a rousing little speech, the gist of which would be: "Vote for Harold Skinner, the founder of the dinner!"

In this way I should win quite a number of voters over to my side.

If I was still in need of more voters, I should arrange with some of my pet pals—Snugg and Stott and Blower—to kidnap me. They would then proceed to kidnap me into the crypt until the election was over. (First catch your goose!—Ed.)

Having got Wharton out of the way, and caused Drake to retire, there is no doubt that I should get home by a staggering majority. (Yes, you'd get home all right. You'd be expelled.—Ed.)

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WHOM TO VOTE FOR!

WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE FOR ME.

By Billy Bunter.

All the grate leaders in history have been fat men. All the really grate athletes have been plump and peggy.

Take Napoleon Bonaparte, for egg-sample, Nappoddy could say that he was a slim fello. He was the merchant who believed in an army marching on its stomach; and he practised what he preached by having plenty of nourishing, substantial meals.

Then we've got George Hirst, the famous Yorkshire cricketer. Not even his worst enemy could accuse George of being a skinny skellington. He is nice and plump, and for that reason alone he has become one of the best cricketers of our jennyfication.

Why, even W. G. Grace had a stout and substantial figger. He couldn't have made such a name for himself if he had been a scraggy person. It was his plumpness that carried him threw.

The day has now dawned when it is necessary for a cricketer kaptein to be elected in the Greyfriars Remove.

There are four candidates—Wharton, Smithy, Drake, and my 'owned self. Place the four of us in a row, and see which is the fattest. And then vote for him, dear reader—vote for him! A plump fello always makes the best leader. And, as a matter of fat, you couldn't choose a better man than me for the jobb.

I appeal to all my pals in the Remove to give me a solid backing. I promise them that if I am elected, and become cricketer kaptein, their will be no favoritism or unfare influence employed, as in Wharton's case. Moreover, every fello who gives me his vote will be given a place in the team!

Do we want a successful season, dear readers? We do! Do we want to vanquish and overcome all rival schools? We do! Do we want the Remove team to go all to pieces, and lose its reputation as a sporting kombination? We do!—I mean, we don't!

Very well, then. Don't support Smithy; don't Ruleigh round Drake; don't vote for that bumptious beast Wharton. But back Billy Bunter!

I have got three loyal supporters already, and the number is rapidly growing.

Alonso Todd, Fieby, and Wun Lung have promised me there votes, and I have no doubt that there egg-sample will be followed by dozens of others.

Wharton is already shivering in his shooze, because he nose that I mean bizzness, and that I shall romp home by a thumping majority. The best advice I can give him is to stand down from the cleeckshun, and leave me a kleeer feeld. (Nothing doing, Benty.—Ed.)

I feel konfident that I shall be well up the pole when the cleeckshun is over, and I am writing to my pater today to tell him that my cleeckshun to the post of cricketer kaptein is a 4-gone konklusion.

Now, dear friends, let us berry our old greenness; and when the day of the cleeckshun dawns, mind you do the rite thing, and

VOTE FOR BUNTER!

WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE FOR SMITHY.

A Rousing Election Poem.
By Dick Penfold.

If you wish to do the right,

Vote for Smithy!

Brains and skill in him unite—

Vote for Smithy!

Do not make the mad mistake

Of voting for that doffer Drake;

The fellow's only half awake!

Vote for Smithy!

If you want a topping season,

Vote for Smithy!

He's a sportsman—that's the reason!

Vote for Smithy!

Wharton is a sportsman, too,

But he's got too much to do.

Smith's the man for me and you—

Vote for Smithy!

If you want success to shine,

Vote for Smithy!

Back him, all along the line!

Vote for Smithy!

As for Bunter—cheeky glutton,

His chances are as dead as mutton!

I would sooner back Tom Dutton!

Vote for Smithy!

If you want a game each week,

Vote for Smithy!

He will give you what you seek—

Vote for Smithy!

Smithy's splendid skill amazes,

He loves sport in all its phases.

Let his rivals go to—Jericho!

Vote for Smithy!

Sportsmen tried, and sportsmen true,

Vote for Smithy!

He's a Trojan, through and through,

Vote for Smithy!

He's a white man—he's a brother,

All opponents he will smother!

Have no truck with any other—

Vote for Smithy!

OUR WEEKLY CARTOON.



"TUBB!"

WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE FOR DRAKE.

By Dick Rodney.

Opinions differ as to who is the best cricketer in the Remove.

Some fellows plump for Wharton; others are loud in their praise for Smithy; and a few misguided fools, who ought to be in strait-jackets, bring forward the name of Billy Bunter.

At present, not many fellows seem to want to support Jack Drake. This is because he is an unknown quantity. He wasn't at Greyfriars' last cricket season, so the fellows haven't had an opportunity of seeing how he shapes.

Let me hasten to assure the Remove that Jack Drake's a better cricketer than Wharton and Smithy rolled into one!

Fortunately, I happen to have in my possession the scoring-book which was used at St. Winifred's last season. It is on view in my study, and the public is at liberty to come and inspect it.

It will be seen that Jack Drake made a couple of centuries last season, and fifties galore. And their opponents were, in every case, strong schoolboy sides. They didn't play any blind schools or homes for incurables!

Drake's average for the season worked out at thirty-five runs per innings. This is pretty good going, and I don't think anybody here can beat it.

As a bowler, too, Jacky is dead on the mark, and he took over a hundred wickets at St. Winifred's. People talk of Hurree Singh's wizardry with the ball; but Inky isn't in the same street as Drake!

Wharton and Smith are both decent fellows. But it will be a false move if either of them get elected.

I have a great admiration for Smithy, but I'm afraid he's too quick-tempered to make an ideal leader. If the game was going against us, and our bowling was being flogged all over the field, Smithy would be inclined to lose his cool, and slate the bowlers. And that, instead of making them better, would make them a jolly sight worse!

As for Wharton, he certainly possesses all the qualities of a cricket captain. But, to my way of thinking, Wharton's got far too many jobs on his hands already. He is captain of the Form, president of the Amateur Dramatic Society, captain of the footers, boss of the boat-crew, and cox of the walk in a dozen different ways.

Give Wharton a rest; give Drake a test. That, in a nutshell, is my advice to the electors.

What the Remove wants is new blood. And if Jack Drake doesn't lead the team to victory in the very first match of the season, why, I'll digest my Sunday topper!

I can imagine certain cads of the Skinner type saying that I was bribed by Drake to write this article. Well, if I catch them saying it in public, I warn them that I shall distribute a few thick ears and black eyes, not to mention swollen noses!

There is no bribery and corruption about this article at all. It is a straightforward appeal to the Remove electorate to do the right thing—to have the right man in the right place. In other words, to

VOTE FOR DRAKE!

THE NEW KRICKET KAPTAIN!

Or, How Jimmy Joy Reeced the Top of the Pole.

By BOLSOVER MINOR.

(We are publishing this story just as it was received. At least fifty per cent. of our readers will agree that half its charm lies in Bolsover minor's original spelling.—Ed.)

L

"I resined!"

Tom Taylor uttered the words in a ringing voice.

In the junior Kommon-room at St. Kit's there was a buzz of engagement.

"I resined from the post of kricket kaptin!" cried Tom Taylor.

"Why?" inquired several voices.

"Because I've got too many jobs on my hands already," said Tom. "I'm skipper of the 4th, kaptin of football, prezident of the amacher dramatick sossiety, and the 4th Form Debating Sossiety, head cook and bottle-washer, rooler of the roast, master of the revvle—"

"Cut it out, Tint!" said Jimmy Joy, a lamsom-looking yewth of 14 summers. "We all no that you have yore hands full. Besides, you wouldn't be any good as a kricket kaptin. Yore ignorance of the game is appawling! If it was hopakotch, or marbels, it woud be another matter!"

"Har, har, har!"

Tom Taylor sneezed.

"That's coad, yare Joy!" he said. "I've resined, and there's an end to it. You must now eleeck a new skipper."

"Good!" said Jimmy Joy. "I'll eleeck myself! It is proposed by Jimmy Joy, seconded by Jimmy Joy, and carried unanimously by Jimmy Joy, that the said Jimmy Joy be kricket kaptin of the 4th!"

At this there was a grate uproar.

"A tick, Joy!"

"Don't speak too soon!"

"You're not the only candied date!"

"There's Sammy Stumper!"

"And Larry Longstop!"

"Both duds!" said Jimmy Joy, with a snarl of contempt. "What they don't no about kricket woud fit for volumes!"

"They will have to be an eleeck hum," said Tom Taylor. "Joy, Stumper, and Longstop are the three candied dates, and the polling will take place on Saturday afternoon."

"Is that agreed?"

The 4th-Formers bellored there approval.

Jimmy Joy stroled out of the Kommon-room arm-in-arm with his two chums, Merry and Bright.

"I'm bound to win this eleeckshun," he said, "unless I lose it!"

"That's perfectly trew," said Merry.

"I don't want to be a wet blanket, Jimmy," said Bright, "but, personally, I don't think you've got the rest of a chance!"

You see, you're not a bit popular in the Form. Merry and I are the only chums yore haps to get, and that's merely beakase you happen to be in fowls. When the eleeckshun comes off, you'll get two votes—Merry's and mine. The rest of the votes will be divided between Stumper and Longstop."

Jimmy Joy looked grim.

"By hook or by crook, I mean to win this eleeckshun," he said. "And if I can't win it by fars meens, I must win it by fowl!"

"Trussed you to resort to fowl play!" said Merry, with a laff. "What are you going to do?"

"I'll give a big spread in my study to anybody who cares to come. And when the feed is over, and the guests are in a good yewmer, I shall make a little speech, I shall say, 'It's up to every firlfith boy to tow the line and vote for Joy.'"

"Well, I wish you luck, Jimmy," said Merry. "If you finish at the top of the pole, it'll be a reglar Joy-day for you, and no mistak!"

"And the three chums went along to the tuckshop for the purpus of laying in supplies."

II.

Jimmy Joy was not the sort of fello to let the grass grow under his feak.

That aile he perswaded a duzen chaps, who were under the influence of jingerpopp, to give him there votes.

"I'm doing kwite well," he confided to his chums after the seellybration. "But a duzen recruits is not enuff. Their are fifty felloes in the 4th, and twenty of them will remane loyal to Sammy Stumper thow thick and thin. So far, I've certain of fourteen votes, but I shall have to bring the number up to twenty-one."

There was silence for 1 an hour, while Bright made a rappid mental kalkulation.

"That means," he said, "that you will rekwise seven more votes."

"Eggesactly!"

"And how are you going to get them?" asked Merry.

Jimmy Joy rose to his feet. He glanced under the table, and in the cubberd, and up the chimney, to make sure their were no spies about. Then he said, in a horse whisper:



A wild shriek rang out, and the figger disappeared. "He's gorn!" cried Jimmy Joy, drammatikally.

"I shall kidnapp Larry Longstop!"

"But what good will that do?" asked Bright.

"Ass! Can't you see for yoreself that it's a master-stroke! I shall imprizon Larry Longstop in the coal-seller, and the only kondishun under which I shall set him free is that he terns all his supporters over to me."

"My hat!"

"And then, of course, I shall wipe up the ground with Sammy Stumper! I shall beet him by a hole krowd of votes."

"How are you going to wrangle the kidnapping stunt?" inquired Merry.

"Kwite simple, dear boy. Every nite, just before bed-time, Larry Longstop goes for a spint in the quail. Well, on Friday nite—the nite before the eleeckshun—I shall leave the flapp of the coal-seller open. Longstop

won't see it in the dark, and he'll pitch three into the sacker."

"But he mite braker his neck!" protested Bright.

"That will be to his own advantage. He always carries a kopy of the 'Dally Mail' about with him, and he'll be entitied to a thousand pounds insurance benyfit."

"I never thoust of that."

"Of course you didn't! You haven't the +sile of yore Uncle Jimmy. But we won't discuss the matter any further until Friday nite."

When Friday evening dorned, Larry Longstop went for his kustomary spint in the quid. We saw his hansom, olidstick figger sitting there the gloom.

Prezently a wild shriek rang out, and the figger disappeared.

"He's gorn!" cried Jimmy Joy drammatikally. "The coal-seller has klaimed its victim!"

Merry and Bright shuddered. They were looking anything but merry and bright now.

Supposing Larry Longstop had gorn to a terrible fate? Even a thousand pounds insurance munney woud not compensate him for a broken neck or a frackchered thigh.

The three chums crossed over to the sellers flapp.

Hollo groans came from below:

"Are you their, Longstop?" asked Jimmy Joy.

"Yes. Help me out of this, yore fellows!"

"Before I help you out, said Jimmy Joy, "you must consent to my terms. You must withdror from the eleeckshun for a new kricket kaptin, and you must make all yore supporters promiss to vote for me."

"Never!" cried Larry Longstop.

"Very well," said Jimmy Joy. "I'll shot down the flapp, and leave you hear all wite to think about it. Methinks you will chanje yore mind by the mourning."

"Joy! You—you kann't be such a hartless beast—"

But Jimmy jammed down the orler-flapp, and hit his rival to his hile.

All three the long nite Larry Longstop was confined in the dark recesses of the coal-seller. And his thoughts were as black as the nobos around him.

When the mourning came the flapp was lifted, and Jimmy Joy's grinning face peered down.

"I forced yore mind yet, Longstop?"

"Yes, hang you!"

"You will stand down from the eleeckshun?"

"Yes."

"And you'll perswade yore supporters to vote for me?"

"Yes," came the choking reply.

"Good! You no wite aside yore broed's buttard. I'll fetch a pear of steepe and set you at libberty."

When Larry Longstop emerged from the coal-seller he was as black as Jack Jansen. He couldn't speak for rage and constent, but he had given his ward to Jimmy Joy, and he had to keep it.

The eleeckshun took place, that afternoon, and Jimmy Joy was eleecked kricket kaptin by a thumping majority, much to the disguse of Sammy Stumper, who had komated on getting the job.

There is no doubt that the junior eleecken of St. Kit's will be a grate power in the land now that Jimmy Joy is at the head of affairs.

Jimmy kann't play kricket for toffy; but he's up to all sorts of tris, and he jenerally manidges to get on the rite side of the snappes.

This being so, St. Kit's may expect a unsuksesful season. For Jimmy Joy's fowl tatticks will prevent him getting any ducket.

THE END.

OUR ELECTION LIMERICK.

No. 14.

If Bunter were captain of kricket,

I don't think the fellows woud stick it.

I'm sorry to state,

He woud share the ball's fate,

For he woud be "dead" on the wicket!

TALES OF GREYFRIARS SCHOOL!

THE FISHY FINANCE COMPANY!

A Protest Against the Biggest Fraud of Modern Times.

By PETER HAZELDENE.

Early this year I found myself in the miserable position of not having a bean to my name. In other words, I was "broke."

I sent a heartrending appeal to my pater and I told him that I simply must have some funds, or I should chuck myself under an express train.

Next day I got a telegram, as follows:

"Good-bye, my dear boy.—FATHER."

I was absolutely in despair. I didn't know which way to turn. I approached Smithy for a loan, and went out of his study backwards, with a cushion in my middle. I went to Mauly, and he drowsily told me that there was "nothin' doin'." I tackled Wharton, and he said that he was in the same boat as myself.

And then I caught sight of an advertisement in the "Greyfriars Herald" to the effect that the Fishy Finance Company—registered offices, Study No. 14—would be willing to lend anything from a penny to five pounds, on note of hand only, without any awkward inquiries as to the life and habits of the borrower.

Accordingly, I made my way to Study No. 14, and I interviewed the manager, principal, proprietor, and actual lender—in fact, the whole company, which consisted of Fisher T. Fish.

"Look here," I said, "I'm desperate, and I want to borrow a fiver!"

"Are you a householder?"

"Of course not!"

"Can you produce a hundred references as to your honesty and straightforwardness? You can't! Guess I can't advance you more than five bob, then."

I clutched at Fishy's offer like a drowning man clutches at a straw.

Unlocking a cash-box, Fish produced a couple of half-crowns and handed them over. And I dashed out of his study before he had time to think better of it.

That was on January 7th. Exactly a month later I received the following account:

"P. Hazeldene, Esq. De. to the Fishy Finance Company."

£ s. d.

To loan contracted on

July 7th 0 5 0

To interest on same to

date 1 15 0

Total 2 0 0

I rushed round to Study No. 14, bubbling over with indignation.

"Fish, you Shylock!" I shouted. "What does this mean? You're charging me interest at the rate of hundreds per cent.!"

"Guess you know my terms," said Fish coldly. "Have you come to square up?"

"Yes!" I roared, beside myself with rage. "I'll square up to you now! Put up your hands, you swindling Yank!"

I then gave Fish the soundest hiding he's ever had in his life. But here I got out of his clutches? No jolly fair! He's just sent me in an account for eight quid! Ow!

THE MANAGER, LIBRARY.—No. 686.

THE NECESSITY OF PUNISHMENT!

By Horace H. Quelch, M.A.

Quite by accident a recent issue of the "Greyfriars Herald" came into my hands. On perusing it I was amazed and indignant to discover an article by Harold Skinner, entitled "Punishment Made Easy."

I frankly confess that I was appalled by Skinner's statements. I had no idea that such an organisation as the Painless Punishment Society was in existence. It staggered me to know that the members of this precious society were in the habit of rubbing resin into the palms of their hands, and of "harricading their bags," as Skinner very vulgarly expressed it.

Neither did I know that lines were being rolled off by the hundred by a patent duplicating process.

Skinner's disclosures overwhelmed me, and I thought at first that he must be joking or exaggerating.

However, I made up my mind to investigate the matter, and I discovered, to my horror, that Skinner's statements were true. I kept an eye on the wretched boy during lessons, and distinctly saw him rubbing a resinous substance into the palms of his hands.

"Skinner!" I roared. "Stand out before the class!"

White to the lips, Skinner shuffled out from his seat.

"I have caught you in the very act!" I thundered. "You were in anticipation of being caned, so you endeavoured to fortify yourself against the ordeal by smearing your hands with resin!"

"Nunno, air! I—I—"

"Do not lie to me, Skinner! I have reason to know that you are the president of a society which guarantees painless punishment."

"Oh crumbs!"

"I can assure you that the punishment I am about to administer will be anything but painless. Touch your toes!"

Skinner obeyed with suspicious alacrity.

My cane sang through the air, and descended on to the wretched boy's anatomy with a dull thud.

"Ah!" I exclaimed. "I can clearly see what has happened. You have 'harricaded your bags,' as you call it. I will trouble you to remove the obstruction."

Skinner then produced a couple of exercise-books, which had been concealed beneath his clothing.

"I have often wondered how you have contrived to endure the severest punishment without a murmur," Skinner, I said. "Touch your toes once more, and I will see if I can elicit a few murmurings now."

Swish, swish, swish!

The yells which followed were of an ear-splitting nature. So penetrating were they that they reached the ears of Mr. Prout in the Fifth Form-room, and my colleague came rushing in, under the impression that I was committing murder. When I explained that Skinner was merely getting his just deserts Mr. Prout understood.

I warned Skinner that the Painless Punishment Society must cease to exist from that date; and then I gave my pupils a lecture on the necessity of punishment. I pointed out to them that the school would get into a terrible state if the floggings and impositions were abandoned.

WHO I SHALL VOTE FOR—AND WHY!

A Number of More or Less Prominent Removites Reveal Their Intentions.—Ed.

JOHNNY BULL:

Wharton gets my vote. And if any fellow thinks of supporting one of the others, then he'd better see a doctor, and get a certificate to the effect that he's of unsound mind.

WUN LUNG:

Me vote for handsome Billy Bunter, for reasons which Bob Chelly gives in another column.

HURREE SINGH:

The votefulness on behalf of the worthy and esteemed Wharton will be — (Exactly)—Ed.

DICK PENFOLD:

Metinks that I shall vote for Smithy.

MICKY DESMOND:

Faith, Penfold darling, an' I'm with 'ee!

HAROLD SKINNER:

I shall put the names of the candidates into a hat, and vote for the one I pick out first. They're all much of a mushness, and one fathended fathend is as good as another fathended fathend!

PETER TODD:

The walls of Study No. 7 are plastered with notices saying "Vote for Bunter!" But I'd as soon vote for Gosing the porter! My choice rests between Wharton and Smithy; but it's just possible that at the last minute I shall put up for election myself, in which case I shall rump home an easy winner.

DAVID MORGAN:

Smithy's my man, look you! And if I catch anyone saying a word against old Smithy, why, I—I'll burst him!

LORD MAULEVERER:

I shall vote for—or—let me see—the abolition of cricket. It's too exhausting in an nerve-rackin' game, begad!

DICK RODNEY:

Drake! Drake! Drake!!! (Rats! Rats! Rats!!!—Ed.)

BOLSEVER MAJOR:

I shall wait and see which way the wind's blowing before I make a definite decision.

SIDNEY SNOOP:

I shall not vote for anybody until the last minute. Then, if it appears as if the candidates are likely to tie, I shall offer my vote to the highest bidder.

FISHER T. FISH:

If I had not given my promise to Bunter, I should follow Snoop's business-like example.

MARK LINLEY:

I have a great admiration for all three candidates—I regard Billy Bunter as an "also ran." But I think I shall vote for Harry Wharton, who has always succeeded as cricket captain before.

FRANK NUGENT:

Don't ask silly questions! I shall certainly vote for Wharton!

GEORGE BULSTRODE:

I'm backing up Wharton with both fists!

"MAROONED!"

(Continued from page 8.)

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter on the Trail!

THERE was a scared look on Sam Ashley's miserable face as the Famous Five joined him in the Close.

"I've gone 'n' done it now, Master Wharton," he gulped. "I shall lose my job. But I couldn't 'elp myself, Mister Minble told me you wanted to see me, an' I was coming in when Master Skinner stopped me and ordered me out. He said—"

"Never mind what Skinner said—he doesn't count!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "He won't report you. He knows better. There were plenty of decent chaps who'll back you up every time. But blow Skinner! What happened after we'd gone this morning, Sam?"

The youth gave a ghost of a grin. "There was a tidy old row," he said. "But none of 'em seed you do it, and they couldn't do nothin'. The bloke at the front heard and seen nothin'. I watched you from the window, and when I seed you'd got clear I let 'em out. They was hoppin' mad. But they knowed I couldn't have done it, and after another look round they 'opped it."

"Good!" grinned Harry Wharton. "But they'll be jolly suspicious now, Sam."

Sam's face grew serious again. "One of 'em followed me 'ere this morning," he said, in a low tone. "They're watchin' me."

"My hat! That's thumping awkward!" muttered Harry. "Then it won't be safe for you to see your father, Sam."

"I know," said the lad miserably. "What am I to do? I promised 'im I would—"

"No, you didn't!" said Harry Wharton quickly. "We did that. We said if you couldn't go, one of us would. But—"

Harry Wharton paused, and gave his chums a troubled look.

"We'll have to do it, Harry. We can't back out now," muttered Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton nodded silently. They had given their word, in the excitement of the moment, without thinking what it would mean. And they would keep it—there was nothing else for it. They would be running a grave risk, but—

Harry Wharton's face set grimly as he made up his mind.

"Look here, Sam," he said. "Don't you worry about that part of the business—we'll see to that. We've nothing special on this afternoon, so we'll run along to the caves with some grub and stuff—"

"But—but, it's too risky!" stammered Sam, in alarm. "Suppose you're caught—"

"We'll not be caught—we'll watch that, Sam. And now buzz off. Here's that fat as Bunter coming!"

The boy hesitated a moment, his face troubled. But the arrival of Billy Bunter just then settled the matter. He moved away quickly. And Harry Wharton also moved. They had no desire for Bunter's charming society.

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter, glaring after them wrathfully. "I do believe they walked away like that just because they saw me coming. Beasts! But, my hat! What were they doing with that cat, Sam Ashley, I wonder?"

Bunter pondered the matter deeply.

He was still full of the escaped convict business, and it certainly looked very fishy—to Bunter.

For a moment he stood undecided whether to follow Sam Ashley or the Famous Five. But Harry Wharton & Co. were making for the tuckshop, and that settled the matter.

Bunter followed them stealthily, his eyes gleaming behind his big glasses.

Bunter had claimed to possess exceptional abilities in the detective line, and there was certainly nothing wrong with his methods—of shadowing, at least—that afternoon.

Unseen and unsuspected, he watched as Harry Wharton & Co. emerged from the tuckshop, their arms laden with packages, and disappeared into the School House. And when they came out ten minutes later, Billy Bunter, like a great fat shadow, was after them, more suspicious than ever now.

And certainly the appearance and further actions of the Famous Five were warranted to arouse suspicion in the breast of a naturally suspicious chap like Bunter.

Harry Wharton carried a bulky cricket bag, while Bob Cherry lugged a large bundle of newspaper parcels under his arm. And all five looked nervous and guilty as they scuttled round the cloisters and swarming over the chapel rails, dropped quickly into the playing-fields beyond.

"My hat!" thrilled Bunter, watching from the shelter of the dark cloisters. "I—I thought at first it was a feed; but blessed if I don't think it's something more than that. There's grub in that bag, I know; but what's in that parcel? I wonder—"

Bunter fairly gasped as a glimmering of the truth dawned upon him. Could it be—as it was possible, that the grub was for the convict, that the parcels held clothes for the convict? Did that explain Wharton & Co's sudden friendship for Sam Ashley?

Bunter decided it was not only possible, but the fact. He turned almost giddy with triumph. He felt that hundred pounds' reward—so far the product of his vivid imagination only—already within his grasp.

Next moment Billy Bunter struggled over the Chapel rails and was on the trail.

Unfortunately, Harry Wharton & Co. were blissfully unaware of this. They had no suspicion that the sleuthhound of Greyfriars was on their track. And whether they would have shaken in their shoes if they had, was doubtful.

They hurried across the playing-fields—as yet deserted—without a glance to the right, until they reached the Cliff Road. From there the juniors began to exercise a little caution. They realised only too well the risk they were running.

Keeping a sharp look-out they descended the cliff path. But they reached the caves at last without meeting or seeing a soul.

"Here we are!" said Harry Wharton at last, stopping at the mouth of a large cave. "Let's hope he knows the Black Cavern, or we shall be dodging about looking for him all the afternoon. Why the thump didn't we bring an electric torch?"

"What about a candle—plenty in the bag?" said Cherry.

"Good egg!"

A candle was taken out and lit, and the juniors entered. The system of caves on the coast hereabouts was elaborate and confusing—to a stranger, at least. But the Greyfriars juniors knew them well. In single file they turned up one of the narrow tunnels that opened off from the outer cave. Harry Wharton led the way, the flickering flame from the candle

he carried sending gigantic shadows bobbing eerily around the rocky walls of the tunnel.

For about twenty yards they tramped on, and then they emerged into a large boulder-strewn cavern. As Harry held the light aloft, he gave an exclamation of relief as the dim figure of a man was seen crouching in the dusky recesses.

"It's all right," called Harry Wharton. And almost immediately the convict stepped into the circle of candle-light, his face drawn and anxious.

"So you've found the cave?" said Harry Wharton. "We were wondering whether you'd understand when I said the Black Cavern—"

"I've known it since I was a boy. But what's happened, young sirs?" demanded the man hoarsely. "Where's Sam, and—"

"Everything O.K.," exclaimed Harry Wharton cheerfully. "We've brought you along some grub and stuff. Sam couldn't come, so we undertook the job, as promised."

And Harry gave the man a brief account of what happened after he had escaped. When he had finished the man's face was full of misery and alarm.

"I don't like you young gents to think I'm not grateful—you know I am; but you oughtn't to have done it—you oughtn't to have taken such risks for me," he said huskily. "I ought to have given myself up. They're bound to catch me now the police know I am in these parts. It's hopeless—"

"Not a bit of it. It's a pity they know you're about, certainly!" said Harry quietly. "But that's your own fault, you know. You shouldn't have gone for that chap in the lane last night. He must have gone straight to Tozer and reported it."

"I was afraid he would," muttered the man, gritting his teeth. "But—but I couldn't help myself. You gents would have done the same if you'd spent three long years in prison knowing you was innocent, like me, and then come face to face with the man what sent you there."

"My hat! Then you know the chap?"

"Knew 'im? I've good reason to know 'im! That man was Trent, the scoundrel that did the robbery! I expect you young gents know all about it—"

"Very little," said Harry awkwardly. "We haven't heard your side."

"Then you shall!" said the man fiercely. "I'd like to convince you gents that you haven't been helping a guilty man. I don't expect you to believe me—very few did—but you shall hear and judge for yourselves."

And forthwith the hunted man told his story briefly and earnestly.

At that time Daniel Ashley was out of work and desperate. And he had succumbed to the temptation to poach on Sir Hilton Popper's estate, a single step from the path of honesty that had cost him dearly. On that fated night he was in the woods near Popper Court, when he heard a sudden commotion, and next moment a man dashed into him in the darkness, running from the direction of the house. They rolled on the ground, and, thinking the man a game-keeper, Ashley was astonished when the fellow sprang to his feet and bolted, leaving behind him a bag which proved to contain valuable curios and articles of jewellery. Ashley was staring dumfounded at these, when Sir Hilton Popper and a small bevy of servants rushed up and surrounded him.

Ashley was not a known poacher, and his stout denials of the burglary were ignored. And then he had foolishly lost his head and fiercely resisted capture, injuring one of the footmen. And when

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the real burglar was arrested at Peggs the next day the sounder had sworn Ashley was his accomplice. At the trial Trent—who was a former footman at Popper Court—received three years for burglary, and Ashley, owing to his conduct when resisting capture, a heavier sentence of five years.

"That was three years ago," continued the convict harshly. "And you young gent's know the rest. I heard from young Sam 'ow had his mother was, and when I got the chance to escape, I took it. Goodness knows how I got here, but I did. And the first man I set eyes on when I got 'ere was Trent. I knowed it was fate, and you can guess what I felt like, knowing he was out on ticket-of-leave, practically a free man, while I was a hunted man with another two years to run. And I couldn't 'old myself in—I couldn't keep my hands off him. It's a good job you young gent's came along when you did!"

The man paused, and hid his face in his hands. The juniors were silent. The story was told with such deep feeling and honest sincerity that Harry Wharton was more than convinced, and they felt a deep compassion for the unfortunate man.

"But—'but surely—hang it all!—surely Trent, when he knew he couldn't get off himself, owned up and tried to clear you? What could his motive—"

"He didn't, the bounder! I expect he thought it would be better for him with two of us in it. And he thought he'd never have been caught but for the description of him I gave the police, and I expect he wanted to have his own back on me."

Harry Wharton nodded, and for fully a minute there was an awkward silence. Harry Wharton broke it.

"Well, we'd better be going," he said quietly. "But, if it's any consolation to you, I believe all you've told us, and I'm sure my chum do. Anyway, we'll do what we can while you're here. There are some clothes and food in that bag, besides candles and other things, and to-morrow we'll bring you blankets if we can."

The unhappy fugitive stammered out his thanks, and next minute the juniors were feeling their way out of the tunnel.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Spotting Bunter I.

OUTSIDE in the bright sunlight Harry Wharton stopped, with a queer, startled look in his eyes.

"Lay!" he whispered quickly. "Did either of you chaps notice anything when you came through the outer cave?"

"No. Why, what—" began Bob Cherry.

"Well, I did. I'm almost certain there was somebody hiding there—somebody with big round glasses. I just caught the glimmer of them, and I'm wondering it—"

"Bunter!" breathed Frank Nugent and Bob Cherry almost together.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Just what I thought," he said, frowning. "He's followed us. The fat fool is on that detective stunt he was gassing about. He must have spotted us with the grub and stuff, and unrolled to the game."

"More likely thought it was a feed!" grinned Cherry.

"Well, whatever he suspects, it's jolly serious!" muttered Harry Wharton, in alarm. "If that fat n— explores that

tunnel he's bound to see Ashley, and if he does the game's up!"

"No doubt about that!"

The juniors were now thoroughly alarmed. They knew that if Bunter once saw the convict it would be impossible to stop his gossiping tongue. At all costs the discovery of the fugitive by the Paul Pry of Greyfriars must be prevented.

"We'd better rush back and yank the fat fool out if he's there!" gasped Bob Cherry at once. "Come on!"

"Right, Scott—yes!"

In a body the juniors dived back into the cave; but barely had they taken half a dozen steps, when they stopped again suddenly. From somewhere in the darkness ahead came a faint yell—a yell of alarm in the unmistakable tones of Billy Bunter.

"He's seen him!" gasped Johnny Bull savagely. "We're too late!"

"We're not! I've got an idea!" hissed Harry Wharton. "We've got—Look out!"

The juniors just had time to dodge into the dark recesses of the cave, when sounds of stumbling feet and sundry grunts announced the approach of Billy Bunter. They just caught a brief glimpse of his fat figure as he burst from the tunnel and blundered blindly across the cave, and then they heard his pattering footsteps on the sands outside.

"It's Bunter right enough!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "But what's the wheeze, Harry? You're not letting that fat idiot—"

"For the moment, yes," said Harry swiftly. "But you've got to fetch him back in a sec—to capture the convict!"

"What?"

"But that giddy chuckle will be me!" grinned Harry. "Everything depends, though, on whether Bunter saw me leave the cave just now."

"Couldn't have done. It was too jolly dark, and the fat Owl's too short-sighted. He'd only hear us go."

"Then my wheeze ought to work. Now, listen."

And in brief sentences Harry Wharton outlined his plan.

"Topping!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "The fat idiot is too dense to see through the trick. And he'll come like a shot when he knows we're willing to do the scrapping."

"Then cut off. But don't be too reckless with the life-and-death struggle stuff," warned Harry Wharton darkly. "For there'll be some thick ears distributed afterwards."

"Hs, ha! No!"

And with that, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, Nugent, and Hurree Singh set off at top speed after the departing figure of Billy Bunter.

And then Harry Wharton dived into the cave again, and made his way along the tunnel. As he emerged into the cavern the convict turned a startled face towards him.

"Quick! Get those clothes off!" gasped Harry urgently. "I suppose that fat idiot saw you—"

"Him what's just bin in—yes," said the man, staring. "He just looked in, and when he saw me he yelled out—fair startled me. Who is—"

"A fat fool who'll get you recaptured if he can," said Harry, tearing open the brown-paper parcel. "Get into those tugs and I'll give you hours, and for goodness sake, hurry!"

As he spoke, Harry flung a bundle of clothes across to the startled man. The suit was the property of the Remore Amateur Dramatic Society, and was of a decidedly "horsey" pattern; but it served the purpose. The man proceeded to change without further question, and

while he did so Harry hastily explained the position.

"Now get behind that pile of rocks," said Harry, "and don't show yourself, whatever happens!"

The man promptly did as he was bid, and Harry proceeded to drag the discarded broad-arrow suit swiftly over his own clothes. They were much too big even then, but Harry hoped the feeble light and Bunter's short sight would cover that.

Then, after smudging his face with mud and ruffling his hair, he sat down on a rock, with head in hands and waited.

He did not wait long. Stumbling footsteps were heard, and next moment Bob Cherry, closely followed by his chums, and with Billy Bunter well to the rear, dashed into the cave.

"There he is!" yelled Bunter excitedly. "There's the blessed convict! Collar the villain, you fellows! Go on, Bob!"

"What-ho!"

And looking very business-like, the juniors—excepting the valiant Bunter—dashed to the attack. They closed with the desperate-looking "convict," and next moment a realistic struggle was taking place on the rocky floor of the cave.

To and fro, clasped in each other's arms, they waltzed in what—to the suspicious Bunter, dancing excitedly on the fringe of the struggle—seemed to be a desperate life-and-death fight.

Curiously enough, no blows were struck; curiously enough, also, both juniors and convict were grinning—facts that might have struck Bunter as strange had he not been too excited—or short-sighted—to notice.

And then, quite suddenly, all the fight seemed to go out of the convict, and he slipped to the floor of the cave, and next moment Bob Cherry was kneeling triumphantly on his chest.

"Give in, you unspeakable—I mean, rascal!" he bawled. "We've got you!"

"Well done, Bob!" yelled Bunter. "Don't let him get up. Hold him down while I fetch the police!"

And then for the first time the "convict" spoke.

"You shut up, Bunter!" he said calmly. "And now, if you've had enough of sitting on my chest, Bob Cherry, I'll rap you'll let a fellow get up!"

Bunter gave a jump—a tremendous jump, that almost dislodged his spectacles from his fat little nose.

"M-mum-my hat!" he gasped. "Why—what—"

The fat junior broke off and stared speechless as Harry Wharton sprang to his feet and rapidly divested himself of his convict's attire. Then he picked up the flickering candle, and turned his grinning face to Bunter.

"Mum-my hat!" ejaculated Bunter. "It—it's Wharton!"

The fat junior's face was a study. He was utterly dumfounded. And then, as he glared round at the grinning faces, he understood—or thought he did.

He saw it all now. It was spoof—the whole thing got up for his special benefit. They had known he was out to track the escaped convict, and they had led him to the caves just to spoof him! Of course, their conversation with young Ashley was a blind, and the brown-paper parcel had contained a convict's outfit, taken from the Remore Dramatic Society's property-box—or so Bunter thought.

As he realised fully what it meant, all Bunter's rose dreams of glory and visions of a substantial reward faded away, and he gave vent to a howl of disappointed fury.

"You—you boasts!" he yelled, his

eyes fairly glittering with rage. "You've been pulling my leg, you rotters! There ain't no convict at all. You've brought me out all this way just to play a trick on me, you heunts!"

"My dear Bunter," exclaimed Wharton blandly. "We didn't ask you to come—you followed us, you know. I'm sorry if you're disappointed. Still, as you can't take a real live convict back with you, we'll let you take the convict's clothes back—save us carrying it. What do you chaps say? Shall we send Detective Bunter back to Greyfriars dressed up as a giddy convict?"

"Good idea!" said Bob Cherry, seeing his chum's idea was to get rid of the troublesome Bunter. "It'll be a topping joke—especially if he meets old Tover!"

"Then help me take his own clothes off—"

"Here, I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter, in great alarm. "You jolly well won't—"

Bunter did not stay to finish his sentence. Even as the juniors advanced grimly upon him, he spun round with a gasp of alarm, and scuttled into the dark tunnel as fast as his fat little legs would take him.

"Come back, Bunter!" yelled Bob Cherry.

But Bunter did not come back. He did not wish to make a sensational arrival at Greyfriars in convict's garb. His patterning footsteps died away, and to make certain he had really gone, Johnny Bull hurried along the tunnel after him.

He reached the outer cave, and glancing along the seashore saw the fat junior scuffling for very life in the distance, his short, fat legs fairly twinkling beneath him.

With a chuckle, Johnny Bull returned to the cavern. He found his chums talking to the escaped convict, who had now emerged from hiding.

"All serene, Harry," reported Johnny. "He'll be half-way to Greyfriars by now."

"Good!" said Harry, picking up the empty cricket-bag. "So that settles Bunter. I don't think you've anything to fear from that fat body now, Ashley."

And feeling confident that all danger from Bunter was now over, the Famous Five returned leisurely to Greyfriars. But the Famous Five were wrong there.

They had forgotten Bunter's prattling tongue. If he was too obese to go through the trick, other fellows who heard the story might not be.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Informer!

"OLD Skinner's looking pretty chirpy," said Bob Cherry, coming into Study No. 1 after dinner next day. "I met him in the passage just now, and he grinned at me like a Cheshire cat."

Harry Wharton, who was chatting with Nugent and Hurree Singh, looked round and smiled.

"Yes, I noticed that myself, Bob," he said, with a nod. "He's evidently up to his old tricks again. But is that what you came to tell me?"

"Nunno! Blow Skinny! I suppose we're going to the cave again to-day, Harry?" asked Bob, lowering his voice. "What about going now? Just about now."

"Too risky," said Harry, shaking his head. "We'd better wait until dark, I think. You know what happened yesterday. We shouldn't spoil even Bunter's second time. Besides, Sam Ashley hasn't

turned up with news of his mother yet, and—"

Harry was rudely interrupted. The door flew open, and Billy Bunter dashed into the room, his fat face full of excitement.

"I say, you fellows!" he fairly gasped. "Have you heard the news? The blessed convict's been captured!"

"What?"

"Yes," panted Bunter. "He was collared last night, and—"

"You fat fibber!" snapped Wharton, going pale.

"It's true enough!" shouted Bunter.

"He was caught in the caves last night by the 'ees. Ask old Gosling."

The juniors looked at Bunter and then at each other, and their hearts sank. But before anyone spoke again, Johnny Bull came in, his face clouded.

"You're always causing trouble with you—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Here, leggo, Cherry, you beast!"

"Get out!" roared Bob Cherry, and, lifting a hefty boot, he sent the yelling and astonished Bunter hurtling through the doorway.

"Well, what a thundering shamo!" said Harry Wharton. "Poor old Ashley! I suppose it was that old Skinner—"

"Of course it was. That's why the toad was looking so chirpy!" said Bob Cherry, clenching his fists. "My hat! I vote we go and settle with him now."

"What's the good of that?" muttered Wharton. "The mischief's done now. Still, we shall have the satisfaction of knowing the truth."

And Harry Wharton led the way out of the study, looking very grim. But it



Almost feverishly Harry Wharton opened the sheet of canvas, and then they found themselves staring at an oil-painting, dull with age. "It's the missing old master—the Rubens that was stolen from Popper Court three years ago!" cried the Remove captain. (See Chapter 9.)

"Is this true, Johnny? Bunter's told us the convict's—"

"It's true enough," said Johnny Bull bitterly. "I've just heard it from Gosling. Some howling cat 'phoned the police last night and gave him away!"

"My hat!"

Harry Wharton's face darkened, and his eyes rested on Bunter.

"Look here, Bunter!" said Harry sharply. "Who have you been gassing to about what happened yesterday?"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I haven't been gassing to anyone! I merely mentioned the matter to Skinner, and—"

"You told Skinner?" snapped Bob Cherry suddenly, his eyes gleaming.

"Then—"

"Nunno! Certainly not!" gasped Bunter, alarmed at the look on Cherry's face. "I never mentioned a word. Besides, what does it matter—?"

"Oh, shut up, and get out, you fat fool!" snapped out Harry Wharton.

was not necessary to visit Skinner's study. At that moment the end of the Remove came along the passage.

"We're just looking for you, Skinner," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Just come inside a moment. We want a word with you."

"With pleasure!" said Skinner, with unusual insolence.

Harry did not speak until all were within the room.

"Look here, Skinner!" he said bluntly. "Was it you who sent that 'phone message to the police last night?"

"My hat!" murmured Skinner blandly. "What ever makes you think I should do it, Wharton?"

"Did you do it, or not?"

"Perhaps I did it, and perhaps I didn't," grinned Skinner, eyeing the Famous Five coolly. "But what if I did? Isn't it a chap's duty to the public to put

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the police on the track of an escaped criminal!"

"Duty!" snapped Wharton hoily. "What do you care about duty? You've done it out of rotten spite—it got your own back on Sam Ashley! You can't deny you did it!"

"I don't intend to, come to that!" said Skinner calmly. "In fact, I don't mind admitting it. I spotted you dodging out yesterday afternoon with that stuff, and I guessed something was on. And when Hunter came in I nabbed him. It cost me a feed at Mrs. Nimbles', but the yarn was worth it. If you spoofed that fat idiot, you didn't spoof me! I saw through it all at once."

"You—you cad, Skinner!" said Harry Wharton thickly. "You deserve a good lading for giving that poor chap away!"

"And he's going to get one!" shouted Bob Cherry fiercely. "Put your fists up, you rotter! I'll give you—"

"No, you won't!" said Skinner, with an unpleasant grin. "You'll be sorry for it if you do! Where would you be if I went to the police and told them who helped the beastly convict—who took him grub and stuff? And I'll do it if you lay a finger on me! So put that in your pipe and smoke it!"

And with that Skinner strutted carelessly out of the study, not one of the juniors attempting to stop him.

"For a full minute Harry Wharton & Co. looked at each other in silence.

"He's got us!" said Harry quietly, at last. "We can't touch him, and he knows it!"

"No doubt about that."

"And the worst of it," said Johnny Bull, "we can't trust the cad. Any time he may give us away, yet."

"I don't think so," said Harry grimly. "He knows the fellows' sympathies are with poor old Ashley, and he knows that if his dirty trick comes out, it'll mean a rough time for him. But if our share it does leak out, it can't be helped. We were willing to risk it, and we'll have to face the music!"

The Famous Five had plenty to think about for the rest of that day. The capture of the convict was a staggering blow to them, and their hearts were heavy as they thought of what his capture would mean to the man and his family. Before they had heard the story, they had felt sorry enough for the unfortunate man. But since becoming convinced of his innocence that feeling had changed to deep compassion.

Added to this was the uncertainty of their own position. If their part in the affair came to light, they knew it would mean trouble—serious trouble—and every minute they expected to see the pompous figure of P.-c. Tozer arrive at the school.

But as the day passed, and night came without a visit from the police or a summons from the Head, they began to think that the affair of the escaped convict was ended as far as they were concerned.

But it had not, as they were to find out shortly.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Ticket-of-Leave Man!

"LOOKS like rain, you chaps," said Harry Wharton, after a glance at the overcast sky. "We're in for a squall, I'm afraid."

Even as Harry Wharton spoke, a strong gust of wind sent a few heavy drops of rain into the faces of the juniors.

It was after ten the following day, and Harry Wharton & Co. were returning THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 689.

from a ramble along the cliffs. There was plenty of time before calling-over, and until Harry Wharton uttered the warning the juniors had been taking it easy.

Now, however, they turned up their overcoat collars and quickened their pace. For ten minutes the juniors battled against the wind and the rain, which was now falling heavily. Suddenly Harry Wharton gave a startled exclamation, and, stopping in his stride, stared hard out to sea.

Two hundred yards beyond, where the cold, grey waves broke in lines of white foam on the shingly beach, a row of black, ugly rocks jutted above the surface of the sea. Quite by chance Harry Wharton's eyes had happened to fall upon them, and he had fancied he saw a movement on one of them.

"What's the matter, Harry?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I believe I saw something move on those rocks," said Harry, contracting his brows. "It looked—Yes, there you are! That big rock at the end, on the right—a splash of white. I saw it distinctly then."

"My hat! You're right, Harry!" muttered Frank Nugent, whose eyes were very keen. "I can see it clearly, and—Great Scott! There's a fellow clinging to the rock, waving a handkerchief!"

"But—but it can't be. How on earth—" Johnny Bull broke off with a gasp of alarm as he, too, caught sight of the dim outlines of a man's figure clinging to the rock.

There was no doubt about it. Someone was stranded out there, waving for help. "What on earth can we do?" gasped Bob Cherry. "The tide's coming in fast. It'll be over the rock soon."

"I don't think so," said Harry Wharton quietly. "I don't ever remember seeing those rocks covered, even at high tide. Still, the sooner the poor chap's taken off the better. I noticed a boat in that cove we passed just now. We must get it."

Harry Wharton led the way at a run along the cliff. A couple of minutes later they were hurrying down the cliff path that led to the cove where the boat was drawn up on the shingle.

Without hesitation the juniors ran it down to the water. It was a tricky business launching the little craft. But they managed it at last. There was a man and sails in the boat, but the juniors did not bother about them. Harry Wharton

and Hurree Singh grasped the oars, and were soon pulling desperately towards the rock.

As they drew nearer a faint cry reached the juniors' ears. Looking over his shoulder, Harry caught a glimpse of a white face thrust towards them.

"Hold on!" shouted Harry. "We'll soon have you out of that!"

Nearer and nearer the boat crept, and then Harry ceased rowing and stood up in the boat, armed with an oar to keep it from crashing on the treacherous rocks.

It was a critical moment, fraught with danger. Again and again the tiny craft was sent hurtling towards the rocks, but each time Harry staved off disaster by deft glances with his oar.

To add to their difficulties, the man seemed too exhausted to help himself. But at last he lowered himself on to a submerged ledge, and, pulling himself together with a mighty effort, he sprang for the boat.

His feet touched the gunwale, and Johnny Bull grabbed his arm and pulled him into the boat, where he collapsed in a heap. Next moment a few strong pulls sent the boat dancing on the choppy waves out of the danger zone.

And then, for the first time, the juniors got a clear view of the man they had rescued, and as they glanced curiously at the thin, sallow features they exchanged startled glances.

For the man they had rescued from the waves was the man they had rescued from the escaped convict in Friarale Lane two nights ago—Trent, the ticket-of-leave man.

As if the fellow felt the juniors' eyes fixed upon him, he sat up slowly and scowled at them. Harry Wharton gave him a warning glance and waited for the man to speak.

But if they had expected any gratitude from the man for saving his life they were doomed to disappointment. For a minute he eyed the juniors in sullen silence; and then, as Harry Wharton began to row again, he spoke.

"Look here, you kids!" he muttered harshly, with a nod towards the shore. "Do you happen to be in a hurry to get back there?"

"Of course," said Harry, considerably astonished. "We're about drenched through already, and the sooner we get ashore the better. But why—"

"Because I want to get to Black Rock Island badly," said the man, changing his tone suddenly. "I left something—something very important on that island and I've got to fetch it. I know it's asking a lot of you young gents after what you've done. But—but I thought p'raps you'd take me there. It ain't far and we'd soon be back again."

"Great Scott!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at the man in astonishment. His cool and extraordinary request staggered them. It certainly must have been something very important he had left on the island, for the man to wish to go there in his present state.

"It can't be done," said Harry, after a pause. "If you want to visit the island, you'd better go on your own when the weather's better."

"My boat's sunk!" muttered the man savagely. "I started out this morning for the island, but I smashed the boat up on a confounded rock hereabouts. I just managed to get to this rock, and I've been here ever since."

"I'm sorry, but it can't be done," said Harry, eyeing the man queerly.

"I should jolly well think not," added Bob Cherry warmly.

The fellow muttered an oath below his breath.

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HARRY TATE
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"Then will you lend me your boat when we get ashore?" said Trent sullenly. "I suppose the old tub's yours—"

"No, it isn't!" snapped Harry. "And it was—"

The junior broke off suddenly, and his eyes gleamed. This man was the moundie who had burgled Popper Court three years ago. And quite suddenly a certain detail in the story of the burglary had flashed across Harry's mind.

What was it the man had left on the island? When had he left it there? And why was he so anxious to get it? A sudden curiosity to know came to Harry Wharton then, though he already had his suspicions.

He made up his mind at once. "Round with the boat, Inky!" he ordered quietly. "We've just about time to do it before dusk, and as the rain's stopped we might as well."

"But—" Bob Cherry was beginning warmly, when he caught his chum's eye, and he shut his mouth tight. The other juniors were equally astonished; but they knew that when their leader made a decision like this there was reason for it.

Next moment the boat had been turned, and Harry and Inky bent to the oars. The sudden squall had died away as quickly as it came, and the pulling was comparatively easy now.

Beyond the dreaded Black Rocks the dark mass of Black Rock Island stood up stark and bare. The island was but a rock itself—barren and uninhabited, save for seabirds. In the summer the juniors often visited it in search of eggs, and they knew how to approach it.

Keeping well clear of the treacherous Black Rocks, Johnny Bull steered straight for the island, and after another five minutes' pulling the boat grated on the shingle.

During the long, strenuous row Trent had not spoken a word. But as Harry and Inky dropped their oars he picked them up and sprang ashore.

"I'll take charge of these in case of accidents," he said, with a cunning grin. "And now, just a warning! If any of you follows me you'll regret it!"

And before the juniors could answer this strange threat—had they wanted to—the ticket-of-leave man turned and tramped away.

"Well, I'm blessed!" breathed Bob Cherry. "He's a beauty, and no mistake! I suppose he fancied we'd want to maroon him—taking the oars like that. But what on earth possessed you to take the job on, Harry, you are?"

"Because I've a good idea of what he's after. But we've no time to waste. The fugitive's threats don't frighten me, and we're going after him!"

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors climbed the little slope, and a moment later they reached the top. The island was only a hundred yards or so across; but, though they looked in every direction, they could see no signs of their quarry. The coastline was irregular, in some places shelving down to the water's edge, and in others miniature cliffs dropped sheer to the seething waves.

The juniors worked their way half round the island, and then quite suddenly they came upon the ticket-of-leave man. He was crouching amidst a pile of rocks, and appeared to be digging in the sand.

Wharton saw him first, and with a warning hiss, dropped to earth. But too late. The man had seen them. With a yell of fury he sprang to his feet, and scrambling up the rocks, he dashed at them with rage and suspicion in his eyes.

"Look out!" yelled Harry Wharton warily. "Collar him low!"

Next moment the fellow was upon them. What followed gave the furious ruffian the surprise of his life. Evidently he had felt himself more than a match for a dozen schoolboys. If he had he was speedily disillusioned.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry ducked, and grabbed his legs, whilst Hurree Janset Ram Singh and Johnny Bull each grabbed a wildly-waving arm. And then Franky Nugent leaped upon the ruffian from behind.

For one brief instant he staggered about, struggling to shake off the clinging juniors, and then he went down with a crash.

But the juniors had regained their hold, and never was a man reduced to such complete helplessness—for the time, at least. For a couple of minutes he squirmed and kicked, but it was useless. And he ceased his efforts at last, with a savage imprecation.

"You—you spyin' young buns, let me go!" he ground out. "I—I'll—"

"No, you won't!" panted Harry Wharton. "We don't let you go until you're trussed up safely, my pippin. There's some rope in the boat, Franky. Just run along and get it!"

Nugent grunted, and trotted along at once. At that moment Bob Cherry, evidently thinking the fellow had accepted defeat, unwisely relaxed his grip a little. And in that instant Trent saw a slender chance and took it.

The man wrenched his leg free, and, swinging it round, sent Harry Wharton spinning backwards with a brutal kick that half-winded the junior.

At the same moment he turned over swiftly, and, butting his head against Johnny Bull's legs, he bugged at his arm, pulling the junior over on top of him.

The sudden and unexpected jerk had caused Inky to lose his balance, and tripping over his chum's prostrate form, he sprawled helplessly forward. Next moment the three were mixed up in a struggling heap.

The whole thing had been done so neatly and quickly, that, ere the juniors knew what had really happened, the slippery rascal had wriggled from the scrum and was on his feet.

For a brief space of time he hesitated, and then, as if realising his chances against the juniors were hopeless, he dashed away towards the boat.

"Look out, Frank!" yelled Bob Cherry, jumping to his feet.

The juniors dashed after the man as fast as they could pelt. They reached the little cove where the boat had waited, and were just in time to see the man send Nugent spinning to the sands, and running the boat into the water, he splashed after it.

Then he jumped lightly aboard, as the boat rose like a cork on the choppy waves.

When a dozen yards from the shore, he stepped the little mast, and shook out the sail. And next moment the little craft glided out of the sheltered cove, and disappeared into the gathering dusk.

Harry Wharton & Co. were marooned!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

At Grips With Death!

FOR a brief moment the juniors regarded each other in stupefied silence.

"Well, this is a go!" muttered Harry Wharton at length, aghast. "What on earth are we to do? We are stranded here. I suppose it means we'll have to stay here all night—unless one of you have any matches."

There was a general shaking of heads.

"Then we can't signal to the coast-guard station," said Harry dismally.

The juniors' hearts sank as they realised their predicament. They were stranded—marooned upon that tiny rocky island, with no hope of rescue until morning, and possibly not then.

Added to this, they were drenched through and through, and chilled to the bone. The prospect was dismal, to say the least of it.

"Well, we must make the best of a bad job," said Harry, at last, trying to speak cheerfully. "We must try to find a shelter somewhere. But, first of all, I'm jolly curious to know what that merchant was digging for. I vote we put our suspicions to the test now."

Harry's chums agreeing, a general move was made back. They found that Trent had not been digging in the sand, as they had supposed, but had merely been clearing sand and seaweed from the base of the cliff.

Excited and curious, the juniors quickly finished the job, and then, to their astonishment, a tunnel-like aperture was disclosed.

"My hat! It's the entrance to a cave, I do believe!" gasped Harry Wharton. "I'll have a squint!"

He went down on his hands and knees and crawled into the hole. For fully a minute his chums heard him scrambling about inside, and then suddenly they heard him give a triumphant exclamation. Next moment he came backing out again, his face flushed and excited.

In his hands was a long, rolled package wrapped in waterproof material, and, without a word, he began to cut the string that bound it.

The others crowded round him curiously, and he rapidly took off the waterproof covering. Underneath this was a thick roll of rough sack material, and as this in turn was taken off, a rolled sheet of canvas was disclosed.

Almost feverishly Harry Wharton opened this out, and then they found themselves staring at an oil-painting, dull with age.

In the deepening dusk the juniors stared at it in astonishment.

"Just as I had expected," said Harry Wharton, speaking at last. "It's the missing old master—the Rubens that was stolen from Popper Court three years ago. It was hidden on a shelf of rock in that little cave."

"Mum-mum! mum!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, peering at the canvas in disgust. "Do you mean to say that smudgy thing's worth thousands of pounds? Why, I wouldn't give tuppence for it! I'd even prefer one of Franky Nugent's water-colour perpetrations."

"Look here, Cherry—" began Frank Nugent warmly.

Harry Wharton laughed, as he rolled up the precious painting again.

"No wonder that fellow was so anxious to get it," he said. "I thought it must be something jolly valuable he'd left here. But—"

"But—but I don't understand," said Johnny Bull, in wonder. "What—"

"It's plain enough," said Harry. "This thing's been lying hidden here three years. It was the only thing—and the most valuable—that Trent got clear away with. Knowing that the police were on his track, he must have hidden it here before his arrest, intending to fetch it at a more favourable opportunity. I expect, since he came out of prison, he's been dodging about trying to get hold of a boat, and only managed to do—"

"Sounds feasible enough!" muttered Bob Cherry. "But—"

"It's the truth, I'm certain," said

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Harry. "And I'm also certain," he went on gravely, "that Trent hasn't finished with us yet—"

"You mean he'll come back!"

"Yes. He's taken risks enough, and he'll take more to get that thing back. There's no reason why we shouldn't make ourselves comfortable in that little cave, and get some sleep to-night. But we must take turns at keeping watch."

"Yes, rather!"

For an hour or so the stranded juniors walked about the island, discussing their position, until it became too dark to see, and then they took shelter within the little cave.

The cave was barely three yards square, but it was dry, though somewhat cramped. For hours the juniors sat there, talking gloomily. But gradually the conversation grew desultory, until, one by one, worn out by the physical and mental strain of the past few hours, the juniors dropped off into troubled sleep; only Harry Wharton, who had elected to keep first watch, remaining awake.

It was not, however, until Johnny Bull's watch in the early hours of the morning that anything happened.

The junior had just crawled outside to stretch his cramped limbs, when he stiffened suddenly as his ears caught a strange sound above the hissing and crashing of the waves on the beach. Not wishing to waken his chums on a false alarm, Johnny Bull climbed the little slope and glanced around the island.

It was raining hard, and a strong wind was blowing. It was still dark, but over in the east a long, white streak of light heralded the approach of dawn. Johnny scanned the dark sea closely, but nothing was to be seen but the white-topped waves racing towards the island.

And even as he stood there, a sound like the creaking of a mast reached his straining ears, and this time he looked it. Next moment Johnny was stumbling in the darkness across the island. He reached the edge of a miniature cliff, and stared out to sea. As he did so a slight

sound below caused him to glance down quickly, and he gave a violent start.

Barely a yard below, a man was climbing the steep cliff face. Even as Johnny saw him, the fellow glanced up, and at sight of the junior his sallow face became convulsed with rage.

The startled junior just had time to send a yell for help ringing across the island, when Trent—for it was indeed he—hauled himself over the edge, and flung himself upon him.

Johnny Bull felt the man's hot breath on his cheek, and then they were at grips. The man was wiry and powerful, but the junior knew he would be shown no mercy, and he fought with the strength of desperation.

Swaying backwards and forwards in the darkness, their breath coming and going in great gasps, the man and boy struggled for the mastery. Both, in the excitement of the struggle, had forgotten where they stood, and on numerous occasions they came within an ace of hurtling over the edge of the cliff.

And then quite suddenly Johnny Bull's heart gave a leap of joy as he heard the welcome sound of footsteps rapidly approaching. As if Trent also heard them, he sprang backwards in a frantic effort to wrench himself free from the boy's clinging grasp.

And in that moment the terrible thing happened.

One of the man's sprawling feet stepped upon empty air, and with a cry of fear he strove frantically to balance himself, but it was useless. Next moment he went over, dragging the junior with him.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Gallant Swim.

JOHNNY BULL gave a stifled gasp of terror as he felt himself falling, and then they struck something with a sickening crash—something that lurched and swung beneath them unaided.

At the same moment Johnny felt the man's fierce grip relax, and as he staggered drunkenly to his feet, he realised in a dazed sort of way what had happened.

They had fallen together on the boat that had been tethered to a rock at the base of the cliff. It was but a twenty-foot drop, but they had fallen with terrible force, and while the junior had escaped with but a few bruises, Trent had borne the brunt of the fall, and was now lying unconscious across the gunwale of the boat.

As the junior stood, white-faced, staring down at the wretched man, Harry Wharton, Nugent, Bob Cherry, and Hurree Singh scrambled down the rocky face of the cliff.

"You all right, Johnny?" panted Wharton anxiously. "What's happened?"

"I—I'm all right," muttered Bull shakily. "But—but Trent—he's in a bad way!"

As Harry Wharton splashed to the boat and peered in, he gave a gasp of alarm.

"Quick! We must have him out of that!" he gasped hoarsely. "The boat's sinking!"

It was true enough. The weight of the two when they fell had apparently sent the boat grinding on a submerged snag, for water was pouring in from a jagged hole in the bottom of the boat.

With frantic haste the juniors waded out, and, though the effort taxed their strength to the uttermost, they carried the unconscious man ashore and laid him on the narrow strip of sand at the base of the cliff.

Even as they did so, the waves washed over the sinking boat.

The sea-mark to which the tide would rise was far above their heads—and the tide was coming in fast!

But that was not all. They were standing in a little bay, and already the incoming waves were dashing against the headlands at each extremity.

If they stayed where they were, they knew that within an hour the treacherous waters would envelop them.

To save themselves by climbing the jagged cliff would be a comparatively easy matter. But what of Trent? It was impossible, they knew, to carry the unconscious man up the face of the cliff without ropes.

The juniors looked at each other, white-faced and trembling.

Harry Wharton scanned the dark waters hopelessly. In the murky distance the twinkling light of the coast-guard station stabbed the darkness, and that was all. But as Harry's eyes fell upon the light a sudden thought occurred to him, and he set his teeth hard.

Before his chums realised his intention, he rapidly divested himself of half his clothes, and kicked off his boots. Then he turned to the others, his eyes gleaming with resolution.

"I'm going to try to swim to the coast-guard station for help," he said quietly.

"There is a big, flat-topped rock over there, and if you can lift him on to that—"

"But—but—" began Bob Cherry, aghast. "It's madness—"

"There's no time to discuss it, Bob," said Harry. "Do what you can for that poor chap until I return."

And with that, Harry Wharton plunged into an advancing wave, and was taken out by a receding one. They saw him swimming strongly for some

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seconds, and then he disappeared into the murky darkness and rain.

Of that terrible struggle against time and the elements, Harry would rarely afterwards speak. At the first plunge the icy coldness of the water chilled him through and through. But the exercise soon warmed him a little, though he scarcely noticed that. All his energies and thoughts were concentrated on the task in hand.

And it was a task to daunt the stoutest heart. Outside the bay the sea was rougher than he had supposed. In the darkness and blinding rain he struggled on desperately, buffeted by the waves and blinded by the stinging spray, until the plucky junior's senses reeled.

But he stuck to his guns with indomitable resolution.

Several times as he rose on the crest of a wave he caught a fleeting glimpse of the twinkling light he was striving to reach, and each time he seemed to be no nearer to it. But he fought on, though despair was in his heart, and he felt his strength failing.

He swam on as in a stupor, numbed with cold, bruised, and half-conscious. And then, quite suddenly, he became aware that his task was becoming easier—that he was ploughing on at a speed which surprised him. And in a flash of joy, he understood.

He had reached the estuary of the River Sark; and happily the strong current was in his favour. He knew also that he was nearing the end of his strenuous fight now.

But his strength was failing him rapidly, and his limbs were like lead.

Presently, from the crest of a wave, he saw the light again, now surprisingly near, and could even make out the shape of the whitewashed coastguard station, in the faint half-light of the early dawn. And with renewed hope he fought against the storm that threatened to overwhelm him.

How he reached the shore he never knew. But he managed it, and sank, limp and exhausted, on the beach. For some moments he lay there, utterly spent, and then, remembering the urgency of his errand, he staggered to his feet and tottered towards the buildings.

After that he only had a vague recollection of figures running towards him, of hearing his own voice shouting something, and then the mental and physical strain he had undergone overcame him, and he collapsed in a sodden heap, and knew no more.

When Harry Wharton came to himself, he was lying on a couch, wrapped in blankets before a roaring fire, and the early morning's sunshine was streaming in at the window of the coastguard station.

Seated round him were Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, Nugent, and Hurree Singh, and his eyes met theirs in mingled relief and joy.

"Feel better now, Harry?" asked Bob Cherry anxiously.

Harry struggled to a sitting position, and grinned faintly.

"Bit of a headache—that's all. But—b-but did I—"

"Yes, you did it," said Bob quietly. "The coastguard chaps only heard you shout something about Black Rock Island; but they guessed something was wrong, and got a boat out. And they reached us in the nick of time."

"And Trent?"

"Very bad," said Bob gravely. "They're sending for the doctor now."

Harry was silent for a moment.

"And what about the painting?" he asked at last. "Did you—"

"Got it here," said Johnny Bull, packing a long package on his knee. "I cut off to the cave for it, when I saw the boat coming. But don't worry—"

At that moment a burly coastguard entered the room, carrying a bundle of clothes.

"So you've come round?" he said cheerily. "Feelin' better?"

"Fairly fit," smiled Harry. "Only—"

"Then if you like you can go along in the trap with my nite. He's goin' into Frimale for the doctor, and he'll drop you off at the school gates."

"Oh, good!"

Five minutes later the juniors were bowling along towards Greyfriars.

Of the sensation and over-whelming joy and relief their unexpected arrival caused at Greyfriars, little need be said here. They went first to Dr. Lucke, and after telling their story and handing over the precious painting, they took the Head's

(Continued on page 16.)

SPORT TOPICS.

An Interesting and Instructive Article, dealing with all kinds of Sport. By "SPECTATOR."

FOOTBALL.

The football season is now rapidly drawing towards a finish, and, with but one month to go ere it closes down until the end of August next, we find the League competition as interesting as ever it was. Clubs are fighting hard for promotion or to avoid relegation, and even now it is hard to say what will be the outcome of it all. Two clubs I hope to see gain promotion are Birmingham and Cardiff City, of the Second Division. The former tried very hard last season, and were only just ousted by the Spurs and Huddersfield Town. Remember the motto: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again!" Birmingham have been trying, and that is why I hope that they will succeed. My reason as regards Cardiff City is that this club, straight from the Third Division, has played so consistently.

The long-looked-for Cup Final, to be played on Chelsea's ground at Stamford Bridge, takes place on the 23rd. It is to be hoped that a good game will be witnessed, and that the better club "bags" the trophy. The Cup should be won on merit, not by luck, as is so often the case.

Another game which will, I am sure, be worth while seeing is the Amateur football Cup Final on the 16th. Amateur football should be boomed more than it has been done up to the present, and, at the same time, the players should be nursed. However, it did receive some recognition when E. H. Coleman, of Dulwich Hamlet, was chosen as goal-

keeper in the recent International trial matches, and I am sure the F.A. Selection Committee was well satisfied with their choice.

Some little time ago I mentioned the enthusiasm shown by the schoolboys at football. I was asked to witness a schoolboy match a few weeks back, and this I did. Talk about enthusiasm during this match! It was a revelation to me, and, at the same time, very pleasing. One little incident in the game showed that enthusiasm can be carried too far. One side was attacking strongly, and the youthful spectators swarmed round the goal and encroached upon the playing-pitch. The ball was kicked towards goal—the goal had no net attached to it—and there was a terrific shout of "Goal!" The official blew his whistle; but, owing to the crowd of players and spectators round the goalmouth, he had not seen the ball kicked. Naturally, a great argument arose there and then. One would have it that the ball went between the posts; another that it went just outside. The linesmen could not say, and when I was approached on the matter I had to admit that I had not been in a position to see what had happened. As a result the ball was bounced near the goal, and then cleared. Enthusiasm is what is wanted with all sports, but never let it interfere with play as it did on this occasion.

CRICKET.

What a severe set-back the M.C.C. team received with their defeat in the

fifth and final Test Match at Sydney! Five matches, five defeats—it certainly looks an inglorious display on paper! But still, our representatives suffered these defeats at the hands of a team much better all round than they themselves were. Let there be no grumbling at the inevitable; the Colonials deserve much praise for their splendid achievement, and I, for one, do not begrudge them their due. And now a very important question arises, "Shall we be able to avenge ourselves and to regain the lost 'Ashes' during the Australians' tour in our country this summer?" No one is in a position to give a decisive answer upon this point. I cannot see many of our first-class cricketers lowering the colours of the "Aussies"—they will try, but as to whether they will succeed I have my doubts. One thing is absolutely certain as regards the Test team, and that is our present representative team must be rearranged a great deal. The bowling strength is the chief item to be seen to, and this will, no doubt, cause the selection committee much worry and anxiety.

It will be interesting to many to know that the first Test Match in this country, which will be played at Nottingham, will have an additional interest. It will be the hundredth match played between England and Australia. At the present each side can claim forty victories, the remaining nineteen games being left drawn. It is to be hoped that we shall manage to pull off this hundredth match; but, as I have already said, as regards winning back the "Ashes," it is a very hard question to answer.

SWIMMING.

A new world's record has been created at Adelaide by Kealeha, who won the 100 metres swimming championship in 52 1/4 seconds. This is a very fine performance, and Kealeha deserves much praise on gaining such a distinction as being a world's champion.

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